

Typical Adolescent Behaviour

Adolescence is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. During this time, youth may undergo many mental, emotional, physical, and social changes. Emotions may be more unpredictable and that can make this a difficult time for caregivers to identify what is typical versus atypical behaviour and what might be symptoms of psychological illness, drug use, or behavioural difficulties.

Typical Early and Middle Adolescence Behaviour (11-17 years old)

- Volatile emotions and boundary-testing behaviour.
- Valuing peer acceptance/rewards.
- Questioning their identity/identity exploration.
- Moodiness and increased interest in sex.

Typical Late Adolescent Behaviour (17 – 25 years old)

- Increased independent functioning and firmer, more cohesive sense of identity.
- Increased ability to think ideas through; conflict with parents begins to decrease.
- Increased ability for delayed gratification and compromise.
- Increased emotional stability, concern for others, and self-reliance.
- Peer relationships remain important and take an appropriate place among other interests.

Atypical Adolescent Behaviour

- Excessively angry or destructive, impulsive; difficulty controlling reckless behaviour.
- Loss of interest in friends and activities they used to enjoy.
- Big changes in energy levels, eating, or sleeping patterns.

Caregiver Tips

- Monitor their behaviour quietly by maintaining respectful relationships with friends, teachers, and coaches.
- Show interest in their activities as a means of keeping communication channels open for when they need to talk to you.

Treatments that Work

Exposure to psychological treatment can be used with children having psychological disorders and with those struggling with the pressures of everyday life. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) explores how thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are linked while providing practical solutions to dealing with problems. By targeting and changing negative thoughts that adolescents experience, CBT ensures that the emotions and behaviours that follow are not destructive.

Knowing that adolescence is a time in which emotions are volatile and children are in a constant state of exploration to figure out who they are, exposure to treatments such as CBT could be an effective way to ensure that children are being properly taught to deal with their emotions.

Sources [CBT for Teens](#)
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