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ADOLESCENT PROBLEMS AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

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Abstract. This article examines the specific psychological problems of adolescence from a scientific-theoretical perspective. The research studies the main difficulties arising in this complex mental process, including problems of self-understanding, contradictions in relationships with parents and peers, and issues of self-expression. The article analyzes the causes of problems and proposes effective psychological solutions to them. As a result, practical recommendations for supporting adolescent personality and ensuring healthy development have been developed.

Keywords: adolescence, psychological problems, self-understanding of personality, parent relations, peer pressure, self-expression, psychological counseling, developmental period.

Adolescence is considered the most complex and dynamic transitional stage in human ontogenesis, during which the physical, psychological, and social components of personality undergo not gradual, but sharp and sometimes paradoxical changes. This transitional period, directed from childhood toward adulthood, has fundamental importance, as the psychological foundations that determine the future personal and professional success of the younger generation are laid. Adolescents are forced not only to transform their physical shell but also to rebuild their inner world, form a value system, and struggle to occupy their own unique, independent place in society. This complex and multifaceted process, at the same time, constitutes fertile ground for the emergence of various psychological difficulties and problems. Therefore, this article discusses the essence of the psychological problems most commonly encountered in adolescence, the causes of their emergence, and scientifically grounded psychological methods for eliminating them. The psychological landscape of adolescence has unique characteristics that require a special, differential approach to it. This stage typically covers the period from 12 to 18 years of age, although its onset and duration may vary depending on individual, cultural, and social factors. During this period, physical transformations come not only with changes in external appearance but also with the restructuring of the hormonal system and active development of brain structure and functions. The brain, particularly the dynamic interaction between the prefrontal cortex and the centers of emotional responsibility (limbic system), deeply affects adolescents' decision-making, risk assessment, emotional regulation, and behavior in social relationships. Simultaneously, cognitive abilities become more complex, and the capabilities of abstract thinking, thinking about one's thoughts (metacognition), and self-reflection develop. This, in turn, strengthens the adolescent's desire to see themselves as an independent individual with their own decisions and values, which leads to testing traditional parent-child relationships and often renegotiating them.

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The unique psychological characteristics of adolescence lead to the formation of the following complex of main problems:

Personal identification problem. This problem centers around the adolescent's main psychological task - finding an answer to the question "Who am I?" Adolescents strive to form their professional aspirations, religious, cultural, and moral values, and personal beliefs. This quest process often comes with trying out various social roles, internal contradictions, and feelings of doubt and uncertainty about oneself. The identity crisis is not merely a passing phase but a striving to choose an individual path under high psychological stress.

Social adaptation and peer pressure. For adolescents, the importance of the peer group sharply increases, becoming the main source of their self-esteem and behavior. The desire to have status and be accepted in the group creates strong social pressure, which can sometimes manifest as renouncing one's opinion, blindly submitting to group norms, or inclination toward aggressive behaviors. In such conditions, fear of isolation, lack of self-confidence, and development of conformism may be observed.

Parent and independence contradiction. Adolescence is naturally associated with testing parental authority and control. Adolescents' natural striving to be recognized as independent individuals often clashes with parents' concerns for safety and order. This frequently leads to contradictions manifested in the form of arguments, emotional distancing, and mutual misunderstandings. The main problem is balancing emotional dependence and autonomy.

Emotional instability and self-regulation difficulties. Hormonal changes and the activity of the brain's emotional centers cause rapid and sharp mood changes, inability to control oneself, and difficulties controlling impulses in adolescents. This condition can manifest in the form of depressive moods, generalized anxiety, irritation, or groundless anger. Adolescents often struggle to identify their emotions and manage them in constructive ways.

Variability of self-esteem and attitude toward one's body. During adolescence, attention to one's physical image sharply increases. External changes related to puberty, unrealistic standards disseminated by media and social networks cause dissatisfaction with one's body, comparison, and decreased self-esteem. This, in turn, can lead to self-harm, self-isolation, or decreased success in studies.

Psychological approaches applied to solve and prevent the above problems should be such that they correspond to adolescents' unique developmental needs and include protection and guidance while respecting the striving for independence. Psychologically directed assistance to adolescents (such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy) plays an important role in understanding their emotional and social problems and mastering problem-solving skills. In the counseling process, creating an environment of trust, supporting personal autonomy, and establishing cooperative relationships with the counselor are the aspects to which primary attention is paid. Working with parents is an important direction, in which teaching the "authoritative" (loving but with clear boundaries) parenting style, active listening, mutual respect, and developing skills to genuinely recognize adolescents' feelings have great importance. Informing parents about adolescent psychology helps them understand mood variability as a normal process.

Teaching adolescents conflict resolution, resistance to pressure, clearly expressing their needs (assertiveness), and empathy skills is appropriate. Teaching these skills can be implemented through group trainings, role-plays, and psycho-educational sessions. Through clearly recognizing and encouraging adolescents' personal strengths and achievements, their level of self-esteem can be increased. Also, involving them in various creative (drawing, music, writing) and physical activities provides opportunities to find their means of expression and direct positive energy. Teaching adolescents practical techniques such as breathing exercises,

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progressive muscle relaxation, meditation basics, time management, and logical reasoning enables them to self-regulate in stressful situations. These methods serve to protect them from emotional instability. Adolescence is considered a complex and dynamic transitional stage in personality development, characterized by the sharp intersection of physical, psychological, and social transformations. During this period, the individual undergoes not only transforming their biological shell but also the obligation to rebuild their inner world, form a value system, and struggle to occupy their own unique place in society. This multifaceted process constitutes fertile ground for the emergence of various psychological difficulties and problems.

Main psychological problems of adolescence:

Personal identification crisis is the central task of adolescence, where the adolescent seeks an answer to the fundamental question "Who am I?" This process includes identifying professional aspirations, choosing cultural, religious, and moral values, and forming personal beliefs. These quests often come with internal contradictions, doubt about oneself, and trying out various social roles (Erikson, 1968).

Social adaptation and peer pressure acquire special importance during adolescence. The strengthening of peer group influence and the desire for status create strong social pressure, which can lead to renouncing one's opinion, conformism, or aggressive behaviors (Brown & Larson, 2009). Fear of social isolation from the group negatively affects mental state.

Contradictions in relationships with parents arise from the clash between adolescents' desire to be recognized as independent individuals and parents' concerns for safety and order. This frequently manifests in the form of arguments, emotional distancing, and mutual misunderstandings (Smetana, 2011). The main problem is balancing emotional dependence and autonomy.

Emotional instability is associated with hormonal changes and the activity of the brain's emotional centers (limbic system), causing rapid mood changes, difficulty controlling impulses, and self-regulation problems (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008). This condition can manifest in the form of depressive moods, anxiety, and groundless anger.

Variability of self-esteem during adolescence is associated with a sharp increase in attention to one's physical image. External changes related to puberty, unrealistic standards disseminated by media and social networks cause dissatisfaction with one's body and decreased self-esteem (Harter, 2012).

Professional psychological assistance (cognitive-behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy) plays an important role in understanding adolescents' emotional and social problems and mastering problem-solving skills. An environment of trust, supporting personal autonomy, and cooperative relationships are fundamental principles.

Developing healthy communication with parents is implemented through teaching the "authoritative" (loving but with clear boundaries) parenting style, active listening, and mutual respect. Informing parents about adolescent psychology helps them understand mood variability as a normal process.

Developing social and communicative skills includes teaching conflict resolution, resistance to pressure, assertiveness, and empathy skills. Teaching these skills can be implemented through group trainings and psycho-educational sessions.

Increasing self-esteem is accomplished through clearly recognizing and encouraging adolescents' personal strengths and achievements. Also, involving them in various creative and physical activities provides opportunities to find their means of expression.

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Stress management methods include teaching practical techniques such as breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation basics, and time management. Schools and families can help adolescents' personal and social development by properly guiding them and teaching them values and life skills. Educational institutions should offer programs aimed at meeting not only academic knowledge but also adolescents' psychological and social needs. Teaching skills to be conscious and responsible in using modern technologies and social networks has great importance.

In conclusion, the fundamental principle of the approach to solving adolescent problems is understanding adolescents, supporting them, and helping their personal development. Only in this way can adolescents grow up to be successful, adaptive, and psychologically healthy individuals in society.

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