

INTASC

Standard 1(e)
Standard 1(f)
Standard 7(i)

Parents influence values, plans;
peers influence immediate
status

Highschool

Girls are more likely than boys
to experience anxiety about
friendships

3-5b Social Characteristics: High School

1. *Parents and other adults are likely to influence long-range plans; peers are likely to influence immediate status.* When adolescents look for models and advice on such social matters as dress, hairstyle, speech patterns, friendships, and leisure activities, the peer group is likely to have the greatest influence (as a visit to any high school will reveal). Peer values can also influence academic performance. When the issues are which courses to take in school and what different careers are like, teachers, guidance counselors, and parents are likely to have more influence over decision making than peers. For questions about values, ethics, and future plans, the views of parents are usually sought (Steinberg, Vandell, & Bornstein, 2011).

Not surprisingly, most conflicts between parents and their adolescent children are about such peer-influenced issues as personal appearance, friends, Internet and cell phone use, dating, hours, and eating habits (Nucci, 2006). This general pattern may be modified, however, by type of parenting style. The adolescent children who experience authoritarian parenting (see Diana Baumrind's work on parenting styles in the section on the cognitive characteristics of preschool and kindergarten children) have a stronger tendency than other adolescents to make decisions that are consistent with peer group advice. The adolescent children of parents who have an authoritative style, on the other hand, are more likely to make decisions that are consistent with parental advice (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Perhaps this is why the influence of parents appears to be greatest when there are mutual affection and respect between parent and child (Baumrind, 1991b, 2012; Baumrind et al., 2010).

2. *Girls seem to experience greater anxiety about friendships than boys do.* Factors that cause girls to become concerned about the reactions of others were summarized in the preceding chapter. Adolescent girls tend to seek intimacy in friendships. Boys, in contrast, often stress skills and interests when they form friendships, and their tendencies to be competitive and self-reliant may work against the formation of close relationships with male companions. Because adolescent girls often wish to form an intimate relationship with another girl, they are more likely than boys to experience anxiety, jealousy, and conflicts regarding friendships with same-sex peers. You should not be surprised, therefore, if secondary school girls are much more preoccupied with positive and negative aspects of friendships than boys are (Hardy, Bukowski, & Sippola, 2002; Pleydon & Schnier, 2001; Steinberg, Vandell, & Bornstein, 2011).
3. *Many high school students are employed after school.* For any number of reasons, a fair percentage of high school students have part-time jobs during the school year. In 2010, 16 percent of sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds worked after school. These percentages have declined considerably since 2000, when they averaged about 34 percent (Aud et al., 2012).

The pros and cons of after-school employment have been vigorously debated. On the positive side, it is thought to enhance self-discipline, a sense of responsibility, self-confidence, and attitudes toward work. On the negative side, part-time employment leaves less time for homework, participation in extracurricular activities, and development of friendships; it may also lead to increased stress, lower grades, and lower career aspirations. Most experts agree that students who work more than 20 hours per week are likely to have lower grades than students who work less or not at all (Steinberg, Vandell, & Bornstein, 2011).

INTASC

Standard 1(e)
Standard 1(f)
Standard 7(i)

3-5c Emotional Characteristics: High School

1. *Many psychiatric disorders either appear or become prominent during adolescence. Included among these are eating disorders, substance abuse, schizophrenia, depression, and suicide.* Eating disorders are much more common in females than in males. *Anorexia nervosa* is an eating disorder characterized by a preoccupation with body weight and food, behavior directed toward losing weight, peculiar patterns of handling food, weight loss, intense fear of gaining weight, and a distorted perception of one's body. This disorder occurs predominantly in females (more than 90 percent of the cases) and usually appears between the ages of fourteen and seventeen (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Bulimia nervosa is a disorder in which binge eating (uncontrolled rapid eating of large quantities of food over a short period of time), followed by self-induced vomiting, is the predominant behavior. Binges are typically followed by feelings of guilt, depression, self-disgust, and fasting. As with anorexia, more than 90 percent of individuals with bulimia are female (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

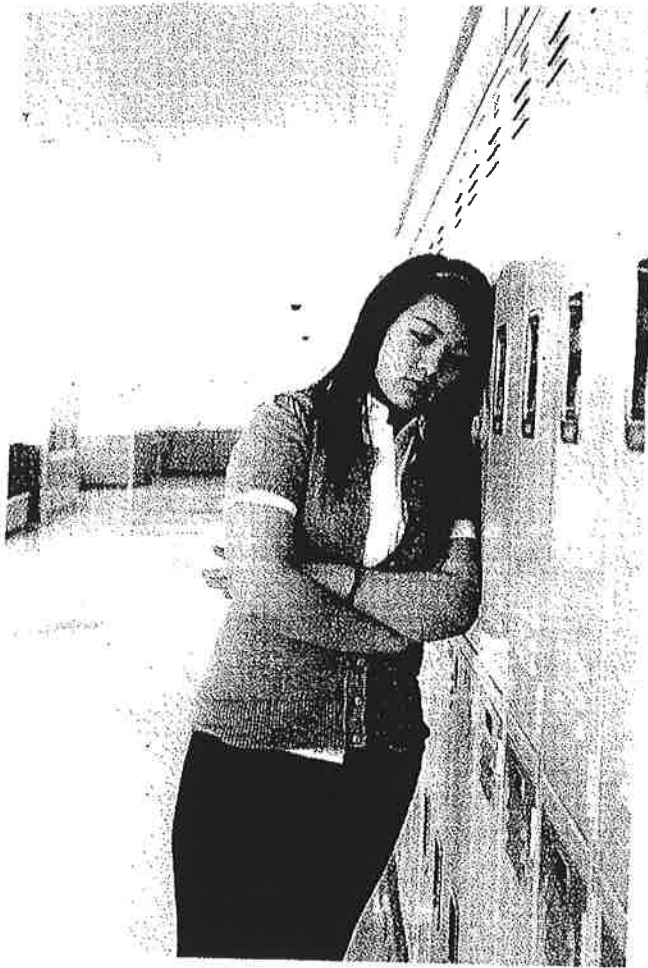
Adolescents who engage in *substance abuse* (tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs) not only jeopardize their physical and emotional health but also increase their risk of doing poorly in school or of dropping out of school. A 2007 survey of high school students (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008) found that:

- Twenty percent reported smoking on one or more of the 30 days before the survey, and about 8 percent reported smoking on 20 or more of the previous 30 days.
- Almost 45 percent of high school students reported drinking in the previous 30 days. Twenty-four percent of female students and 27.8 percent of male students engaged in episodic heavy drinking (commonly known as binge drinking).
- Thirty-eight percent had used marijuana at least once during their lifetimes, and 19.7 percent had used marijuana one or more times in the preceding 30 days.
- A little more than 7 percent reported using some form of cocaine at least once during their lifetimes, and 4.33 percent reported using cocaine in the preceding 30 days.
- About 4.5 percent of students reported using methamphetamine at least once during their lifetimes.

Schizophrenia, a thinking disorder characterized by illogical and unrealistic thinking, delusions, and hallucinations, is relatively rare among adolescents, affecting less than 0.25 percent of all thirteen- to nineteen-year-olds. Yet it is the most frequently occurring psychotic disorder, and the number of cases diagnosed between the ages of twelve and eighteen is steadily increasing. Early symptoms include odd, unpredictable behavior; difficulty communicating with others; social withdrawal; and rejection by peers (Beiser, Erickson, Fleming, & Iacono, 1993; Conger & Galambos, 1997; Gilberg, 2001).

2. *The most common type of emotional disorder during adolescence is depression.* The most common forms of **depression**, from least to most serious, are *depressed mood*, *depressive syndrome*, and *clinical depression*. Depressed mood is primarily characterized by feelings of sadness or unhappiness, although emotions such as anxiety, fear, guilt, anger, and contempt are frequently present, as well (Peterson et al., 1993). In 2007, 35.8 percent of high school females and 21.2 percent of high school males reported feeling so sad and hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped engaging in some usual activities

Depression is most common among females, students of color



Jena Productions/Getty Images

Photo 3-8 Many high school students, girls in particular, experience periods of depression, loneliness, and anxiety. Because severe depression often precedes a suicide attempt, teachers should refer students they believe to be depressed to the school counselor.

increases in sex hormones, specifically testosterone and estradiol, have been linked to depression (Angold, Worthman, & Costello, 2003).

Common symptoms of depression include feelings of worthlessness and lack of control over one's life, crying spells, and suicidal thoughts, threats, and attempts. Additional symptoms include moodiness, social isolation, fatigue, hypochondria, and difficulty concentrating (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998; Peterson et al., 1993). Depression in adolescents precedes substance abuse (Mackay et al., 2000). High school students who experience such symptoms typically try to ward off their depression through restless activity or flight to or from others. They may also engage in problem behavior or delinquent acts carried out in ways that make it clear they are appealing for help. (A depressed fifteen-year-old boy may carry out an act of vandalism, for instance, at a time when a school authority or police officer is sure to observe the incident.)

Although many techniques exist for changing a negative self-concept to a positive view of self, one effective approach to minimizing depression is to help as many of your students as possible to experience success as they learn. Techniques to accomplish that goal will be discussed in subsequent chapters of this book.

3. *If depression becomes severe, suicide may be contemplated.* In 2007, 14.5 percent of high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide during the previous 12 months, 11.3 percent had made a suicide plan, and 6.9 percent had made one or more attempts. Many more females than males considered attempting suicide (18.7 percent versus 10.3 percent, respectively) and made one or more attempts (9.3 percent versus 4.6 percent). The only good news in these statistics is that they are lower than they were in 2005.

Depression and unstable family situations place adolescents at risk for suicide

The single most important signal of a youth at risk for suicide is depression. Along with the common symptoms noted earlier under point 2, other signs of depression and potential suicide include poor appetite, weight loss, changes in sleeping patterns, difficulty in concentrating, academic problems, poor self-concept, withdrawing from friends and/or social activities, giving away prized possessions, lack of interest in personal appearance, and feelings of loneliness. These symptoms take on added significance when accompanied by a family history of suicide or parents who commit abuse or use drugs and alcohol excessively. The factors that usually trigger a suicide include a shameful or



Video Case 3-2

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Social and Emotional Development: Understanding Adolescents

Watch online, and then answer the following questions:

1. The preceding material describes signs of adolescent students who might be "at risk." Based on your observations of the students in this video, would you consider any of the students in this video to be at risk? Are there observable factors/characteristics that you can detect?
2. How does this video illustrate the powerful influence of peer groups in adolescents' lives?

Political thinking becomes more abstract, less authoritarian, more knowledgeable

humiliating experience, such as perceived failure at school or rejection by a romantic partner or parent (Fisher, 2006; Perkins & Hartless, 2002; Sofronoff, Dalgliesh, & Kosky, 2005).

If you notice that a student in one of your classes seems extremely depressed, take the trouble to ask if there is anything you can do to provide support and seek the advice of the school counselor. To encourage students to discuss their concerns with you, suggest that they read books written for adolescents that address suicide in a direct and forthright manner (Fisher, 2006). Your interest and sympathy may prevent a suicide attempt. Also, be aware that recent prevention efforts include school-based programs. These programs, which are run by a mental health professional or an educator (or both), are typically directed at high school students, their parents, and their teachers. They usually include a review of suicide statistics, a list of warning signs, a list of community mental health resources and how to contact them, and a discussion of how to refer a student or peer to counseling.

INASE

Standard 1(e)
Standard 1(f)
Standard 4(k)
Standard 7(i)

3-5d Cognitive Characteristics: High School

1. *High school students become increasingly capable of engaging in formal thought, but they may not use this capability.*

These students are more likely than younger students to grasp relationships, mentally plan a course of action before proceeding, and test hypotheses systematically. Without supervision and guidance,

however, they may not use such capabilities consistently (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007). Accordingly, you might take advantage of opportunities to show students at these grade levels how they can function as formal thinkers. Call attention to relationships and to ways that previously acquired knowledge can be applied to new situations. Provide specific instruction in techniques of problem solving. (Ways you might do this will be discussed in Chapter 10, "Constructivist Learning Theory, Problem Solving, and Transfer.") Although some students may ignore your advice, others will probably take it more seriously. Despite the constant attempts of adolescents to appear totally self-sufficient and independent, they still view parents and teachers as knowledgeable authority figures when it comes to school achievement (Amiram, Bar-Tal, Alona, & Peleg, 1990; Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007).

2. *Between the ages of twelve and sixteen, political thinking becomes more abstract, liberal, and knowledgeable.* Joseph Adelson (1972, 1986) used an interview approach to obtain information about the development of political thought during the adolescent years. At the start of the interviews, the participants were requested to imagine that 1,000 people had ventured to an island in the Pacific for the purpose of establishing a new society. The respondents were then asked to explain how these people might establish a political order; devise a legal system; establish a balance among rights, responsibilities, personal liberty, and the common good; and deal with other problems of public policy.

The analysis of the interview responses showed no significant gender differences in the understanding of political concepts and no significant differences

Improving Practice Through Inquiry: One Teacher's Story

Helping High School Seniors with Low Grades Succeed

By Jennifer Mann

I was assigned to teach a group of 28 high school seniors with a colleague, a special education teacher. The seniors had performed poorly on the state-mandated test, and unless they could improve their performance to a level of "proficiency," they would not be allowed to graduate. It was a daunting task. We decided our first task was to collect information about the learners for whom we were to be responsible. We started by analyzing their academic histories. What we discovered were average to below-average grades across the board, various identified learning difficulties, high absenteeism, and a very high number of behavioral referrals, many of which began in middle school. What had happened? How did they get to this point? Most importantly, how would we help students with a history of failure, succeed?

After reviewing their histories, we asked the students to journal about their feelings regarding school: what they liked; what they did not like; what gave them the most trouble; and we asked them, "What would you change?" We also tested each student to determine a reading level. What we discovered was that every student in our class was below grade level in reading, some only by a year or so and some as much as eight years. All of the students struggled in classes that required intense reading. Their journals provided data that explained a great deal. Many of the students were embarrassed that they had been assigned to the "remediation" class; they felt as if it was a class for stupid students, they also felt as if they were not part of the school and were looked down upon by peers and teachers.

We had many class discussions about their behavior. They explained that they knew the faculty hated them and did not respect them like the smarter students, so they just set out to make the teachers'

lives as difficult as possible. Additionally, many described being fearful that they would not be able to succeed after high school; after all, they weren't passing here, why would they pass somewhere else? The class was diverse: many students had been raised by a single parent or a relative, one of the students was homeless, several students lived with drug addicted or alcoholic parents, as well as students from two-parent homes. Regardless of their home life, they all had one thing in common: the need to feel respected, valued, and capable.

Passing the test was only one small part of what we had to accomplish; we also needed to validate them as students worthy of success. The class worked hard on both academic and social fronts. As reading proficiency increased, grades increased, absenteeism decreased as did behavioral referrals. In addition to the hours spent on data collection, evaluation, and assessment, we also sought ways for the students' talents to shine in and out of the classroom. Using the journals, we created reading groups based on interest and experiences. One particularly successful project was the outgrowth of reading a novel in which the protagonist was abused by his mother. The students decided to create public service announcements about recognizing child abuse, which we played for other classes and teachers.

At the end of the year, only two students were not identified as advanced or proficient on the state test, which was considered a huge success. The true measure of success, however, was seeing the students helping and encouraging one another, feeling capable, and qualified to be a part of any discussion, and that was the greatest success of all.

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attributable to intelligence and social class, although brighter students were better able to deal with abstract ideas, and upper-class students were less likely to be authoritarian. The most striking and consistent finding was the degree to which the political thinking of the adolescent changed in the years between ages twelve and sixteen. Adelson concluded that the most significant changes were (1) an increase in the ability to deal with such abstractions as freedom of speech, equal justice under law, and the concept of community; (2) a decline in authoritarian views; (3) an increase in the ability to imagine the consequences of current actions; and (4) an increase in political knowledge.

Increased ability to deal with abstractions is a function of the shift from concrete to formal operational thought. When thirteen-year-olds were asked, "What is the purpose of laws?" a typical answer was, "So people don't steal or

kill" (Adelson, 1972, p. 108). A fifteen- or sixteen-year-old, by contrast, was more likely to say, "To ensure safety and enforce the government" (p. 108).

When considering punishment for crimes, younger children (Piaget's moral realists) hold the conviction that laws are immutable and that punishment should be stern. But by age fourteen and fifteen, the adolescents whom Adelson interviewed were more likely to consider circumstances and individual rights and to recommend rehabilitation rather than punishment.

If you will be teaching courses in social studies, you may find this information useful in lesson planning. It may also help you understand why students may respond to discussions of political or other abstract matters in different ways.