OMNI youth services

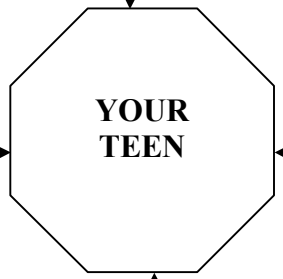
What is "Normal" Adolescent Development?

Physical Development

- Increase in production of estrogen (females) and testosterone (males) which leads to many changes in the body. For males: facial hair, an increase in muscle mass and strength, change in voice, etc. For females, beginning of menstrual cycle, increase in body fat, development of breasts and hips, etc.
- Growth spurt in prefrontal lobes and corpus callosum in brain, which change the way teens think.

Social/Sexual Development

- Peers begin to take on more importance so teens can test different relationships and practice social skills.
- Teens extend themselves away from the family and become more involved w/ society, including forming more adult relationships. However, they continue to maintain connection with their family through this process.
- Increased interest in "dating"
- Sexual curiosity and trying to figure out the "mating dance". Mild anxiety over relationships w/ the opposite sex emerge.
- Experimentation w/ mildly risky behavior, such as alcohol use.
- Testing morals as new relationships are built. Rebellious behavior occurs as teens test the waters.



Cognitive Development

- Development of abstract thinking (which allows teens to understand more challenging concepts)
- Logic and rational thinking continue to lag behind impulses but show their face during arguments and conflicts.
- Disagreeing w/ family norms and expectations as they begin to see life from a different and larger perspective.
- With new perspectives on life, teens begin the endless process of questioning adult rules and expectations.

Emotional Development

- Beginning to experience and verbalize a wider array of emotions
- Need for more emotional outlets
- Mood swings happen occasionally but teen can move through them in a reasonable amount of time. The "ups and downs" are reasonable for the situation at hand.

For more information, contact Christine Santini, LCPC, Parent Services Coordinator at OMNI Youth Services. (847) 353-1716.