

ADOLESCENCE

“ Redoing childhood in a different way”

“Adolescents are excessively egotistic, regarding themselves as the center of the universe and the sole object of interest, and yet at no time in later life are they capable of so much self-sacrifice and devotion. They form the most passionate love-relations, only to break them off as abruptly as they began them. On the one hand they throw themselves enthusiastically into the life of the community and, on the other, they have an overpowering longing for solitude. they oscillate between blind submission to some self-chosen leader and defiant rebellion against any and every authority. They are selfish and materially-minded and at the same time full of lofty idealism. They are ascetic but will suddenly plunge into instinctual indulgence of the most primitive character. At times their behavior to other people is rough and inconsiderate, yet they themselves are extremely touchy. Their moods veer between light-hearted optimism and the blackest pessimism. Sometimes they will work with indefatigable enthusiasm and at other times they are sluggish and apathetic.”

- Anna Freud, The Ego and the Mechanics of Defense

Characteristics of Adolescents

Mood Swings	Selfish/Selfless
Touchy/Inconsiderate	Optimistic/Pessimistic
Idealism/Materialistic	Enthusiastic/ Apathetic
Seek time alone/ Are lonely	Abstract reasoning/Appear not to think at all
Projection	Peer relations
Extraordinary body changes	Sexuality

Individuation & Separation

Developing a stable sense of self separate from and safely connected to parents and family.

Individuation: to be or not to be oneself.

Separation: from the family unit to independent living.

Individuation

Who am I? The Search for Self

Exploring talents, interests, traits, habits, abilities, challenges, etc.

Searching : for missing people

for wholeness

for the meaning of and the *continuity* of one's past and present

How am I different from my parents?

How am I like and different from my birth parents?

How am I a unique individual with some similarities to and some differences from my parents(adoptive/foster) and my birth parents?

What 3 things do all young people who joined their families through adoption/fostercare know about their birth parents?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Separation

Young adults have images of how and when they will leave home. These images are often very different than the parents realize. Many youth who joined their families through adoption/fostercare as toddlers and older have image of leaving based upon their memories and perceptions of the earlier partings from birth and/or foster parents.

How and when will I take control of my life?

Need for increasing levels of responsibility while still in the family.

Where am I going?

Must have a sense of where one has been to confidently see where one is going.

How will I get there?

How will I be connected to my family?

Definition of Roles

Work Role:

Gender and Sexual Roles:

Social Roles: