

Understanding the psychosocial challenges of life-skills-trained vulnerable adolescent populations

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Abstract:

Due to a wide range of psychosocial challenges caused by developmental shifts at the family unit, children and adolescents are considered the most impacted and most vulnerable groups. During the adolescent stage, which is a stage of psychosocial and biological development, the family system is one of the most important sources of support and guidance. The family system works best to help adolescents cope with psychosocial challenges. Additionally, the family system can support adolescents to develop coping mechanisms and solutions. One response to the psychosocial challenges of adolescents and the responsibilities of the family system is the psychosocial response of life skills. The author of this responds to the realities of the current day by providing the psychosocial life skills to help the adolescent cope with the psychosocial challenges brought about by the inadequate parenting of the adolescents, the poor social media and smartphone usage, and the inadequate psychosocial health and the growing number of mental health challenges of adolescents. This paper will review the psychosocial intervention and life skills needed by adolescents to help them cope with both the psychosocial and biological changes during the adolescent developmental stage. The author utilized qualitative research methods. The qualitative research studies, articles, and media sources were collected and analyzed. Discourse analysis, and a multitude of case studies collected from journals and news articles were used to highlight the current state of adolescent girls. Issues regarding the pressures on adolescents and the repercussions that follow are pressing and systemic globally. The adolescent phase as a developmental stage represents the most susceptible segment of society. This research aims to explore the psychological issues of the growing adolescents and aids in understanding traumatic experiences as well as integrating life skill development techniques to empower adolescents to recover from the identified issues. Broadly, initiatives aimed at reducing the stressors in adolescents' lives typically begin with informing adolescents and young adults about the risks that stressors pose. The use of a particular approach should be included in recommendations to encourage adolescents to engage with the internet in a manner that promotes their health and well-being. Active monitoring of adolescents and the timely resolution of issues that arise are necessary to avoid the onset of adverse psychological issues during the adolescent stage.

Keywords: Adolescents, deficient parenting, developmental changes, digital harassment, life skill enhancement, mental health crisis, internet use

1. Introduction

“Adolescence is the period of storm and stress”- G. Stanley Hall. Hall's assertion encapsulates a journey from childhood to adulthood, straddling the ages of 12 through 19. This journey is often accompanied by a great deal of conflict involving the young person and his/her parents as a result of the young person's developing autonomy, a variety of moods, and other behaviors that may be deemed inappropriate. Hall's assertion may point to the fact that a great deal of turmoil probably serves the developing person in process of reaching the next level of development. In other words, the period of adolescent turmoil may be seen as a variety of ways

to enhance the fostering process of maturity. In fact, through the process of developing a set of behaviors and attitudes, the individual may derive several lessons to form the basis of his/her planning process for the future. Adversity and setbacks in life offer the individual a chance for reflection, level improvement and insight (Sisk and Gee, 2021). This is where the life lessons are truly derived. Hall's adolescent period is plagued by turmoil, risk and compulsive behaviors. In the process of developing these behaviors and attitudes the individual is likely to cause a change in the nature of his/her relationship with his/her parents. This is often the result of the young person's inability to remove the veil of perceived maturity to distinguish between right and wrong. Change is evident in a person's external and internal behaviors and traits. Change in the nature of relationships is where the person is less evident. During adolescence, the individual establishes a set of relationships based on the nature of his/her self-expectation. This self expectation can be healthy or unhealthy, and may or may not develop in a similar manner to the person's peers. The individual may exhibit psychologically or emotional signs of maturity. The lack of self-confidence can be due to an adolescent's existing psychological or emotional maturity (Arnett, 1999).

Teenager Social Interactions

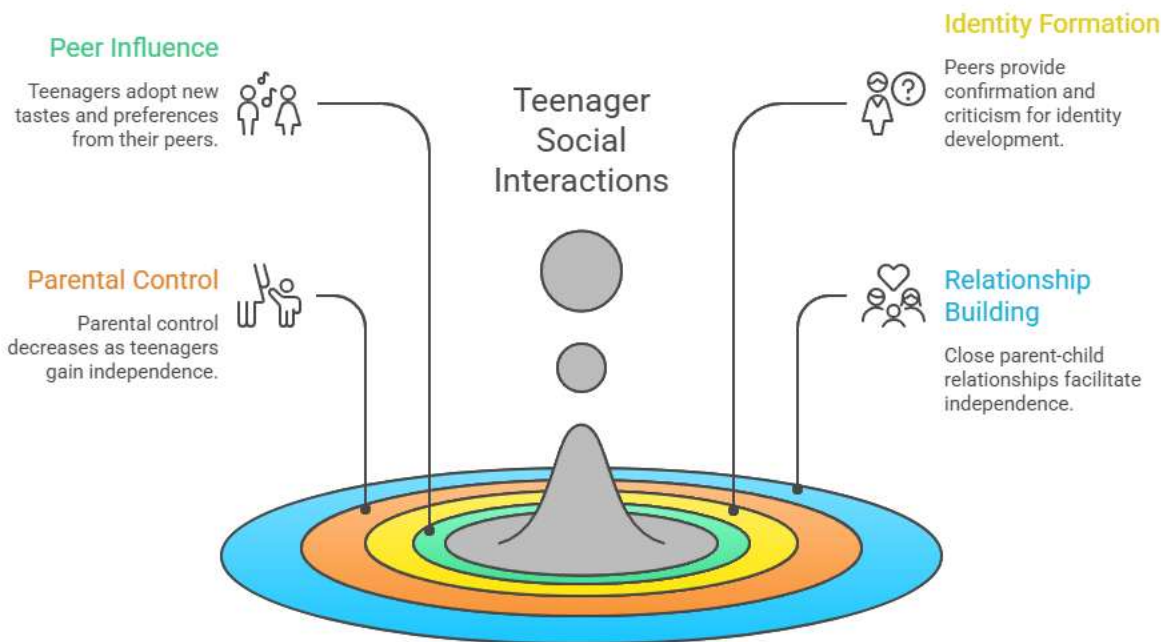


Figure 1: Kinds of Problems Facing Teenagers. Peer groups work together to develop new personal tastes and preferences. A teenager may change their clothes, taste in music, and way of speaking as a result of interacting with a new peer group. Young people often view their peers as a source of confirmation and criticism when they are trying to understand who they are. Since peer influence on adolescents is strong and powerful, it brings to the fore, concerns around the social interactions of teenagers. While parents may still wish to regulate some aspects of their control over their adolescent children, it is recognized control over teenagers is dialed down as they move towards greater independence (Arnett, 1999). Helping parents to establish this process is likely to be easier when a close relationship has been formed with the child before they reach this stage.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Study Design and Setting

For this research, a qualitative approach was employed. This research draws on methodologies from various fields, specifically discourse analysis, and centers on several qualitative methods, including textual analysis, global studies, and explanations based on actual events.

2.2 Data Collection and Techniques

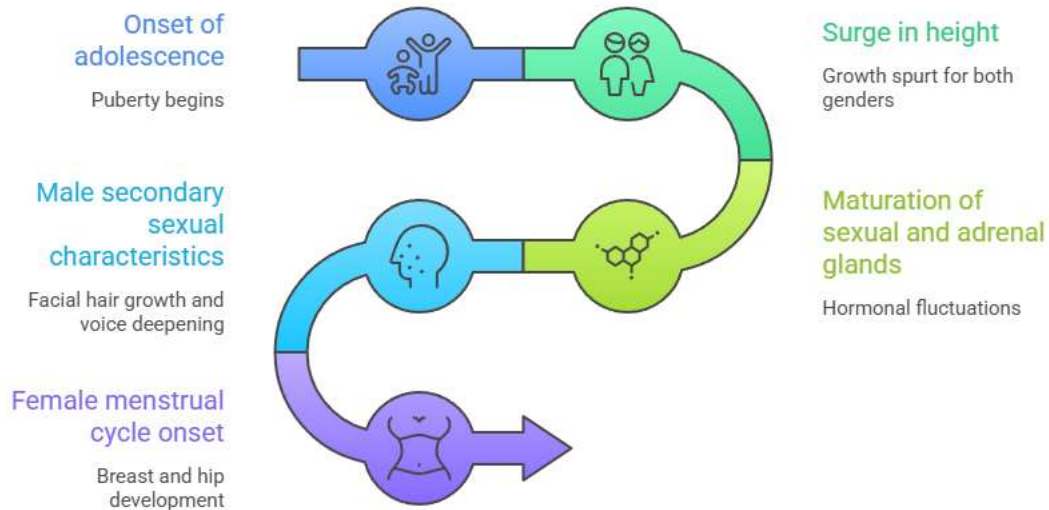
The qualitative research findings were obtained from various secondary sources, including newspaper articles, scholarly journals, and a collection of previously published theses. During the study, a descriptive survey approach was used. The study is based on real events that occurred in the surrounding regions of India.

3. Adolescence

An Indian Family Structure is said to Transmit Values and Teach future generations the value of an honest life. Rakesh K. Chadda and Koushik Sinha Deb state that Indian families have been joint families since the Puranic ages, meaning that all members of the same clan live together. In smaller subsets of the family, this concept of lavish living collapsed (Arnett, 1999). The study goes on to describe the immense value that the joint family system structure offered in India and how it worked to reinforce the system of family relations. Over time and in the context of far reaching globalization, the Indian family structure has been modified due to Urbanism and Western ways of life (Branje, 2018). The splitting up of joint families has had an adverse effect on adolescent girls, as they lose the inclusive support of their families during critical phases of their lives. As a social institution, the family has had to adapt to the social context and has gone through a social evolution. In all traditional societies, the family has been the main social and economic unit of the society providing subsistence and support to all members. The 20th century has witnessed a dramatic change in the family structure of India which is a resultant of the rising commercialized economy and the organized pattern of development of the modern state. In the past few decades, there has been a lot of change in the family system.

Social development has also impacted the preservation and enhancement of the identity of adolescents who do not have adequate joint family support and the cultural and ideological shifts. There is a degree of self-awareness and awareness of those around them. The assigned position of the adolescent in the family or community influences their way of living.

Adolescent Development and Puberty



Risks faced by adolescent girls the start of puberty brings the start of adolescence which brings about numerous physiological changes. Eg: there is a noticeable growth spurt in both sexes of about 7-8cm. The sexual and the adrenal glands start to mature and that is because of hormone changes. In boys there is the growth of facial hair and the voice becomes deeper (these are secondary sexual characteristics). In girls there are also a significant number of changes due to the start of the menstrual cycle and there is also the development of breasts and widening of the hips. During this phase the changes are very obvious. Adolescents often take part in a lot of physical activities such as sports, dance and also drama as they test their different interests, but many due to a lot of academic pressure as well as societal pressure, are unable to do so. These activities are important, but due to the limited opportunities of the activities being available recently, people have also lost the chance to gain experience. During the 1950's culture, music, tv shows, films and fashion were dominated by teens in most countries, including the developing ones. This is because teens in developed countries had very few responsibilities and those in developing countries were focused on basic survival. During adolescence, there is also an overall enhancement in the development of the brain as well as improvements in both selective and divided attention.

The development of working memory and long-term memory is similar. Processing speed as well as internalizing (thinking) and reflecting are positively correlated with self-reflection and social awareness. These abilities are improved by a strong self-concept. Some social constraints apply to adolescents (Sisk and Gee, 2021). Young minds are restricted by social hierarchy and stereotypes. Cultivation of psychological resilience is influenced by revolutionary and disruptive ideas and transformations in the environment. Psychologically and biologically, adolescents suffer and change during this stage of life. Many alterations in the attributes of the brain have been observed (Branje, 2018). The amygdala, which is responsible for processing and the triggering of reflexes, as well as stress and emotional instinctive reactions starts. The development of the frontal cortex development coincides with the years of self-directed and rational thinking, moral judgment, and the development of self-control. These changes begin in adolescence and continue to the end of this life phase. According to the World Health Organization, adolescents as they experience social, psychological, and behavioral changes. They acquire self-awareness, reason at a higher cognitive level, learn

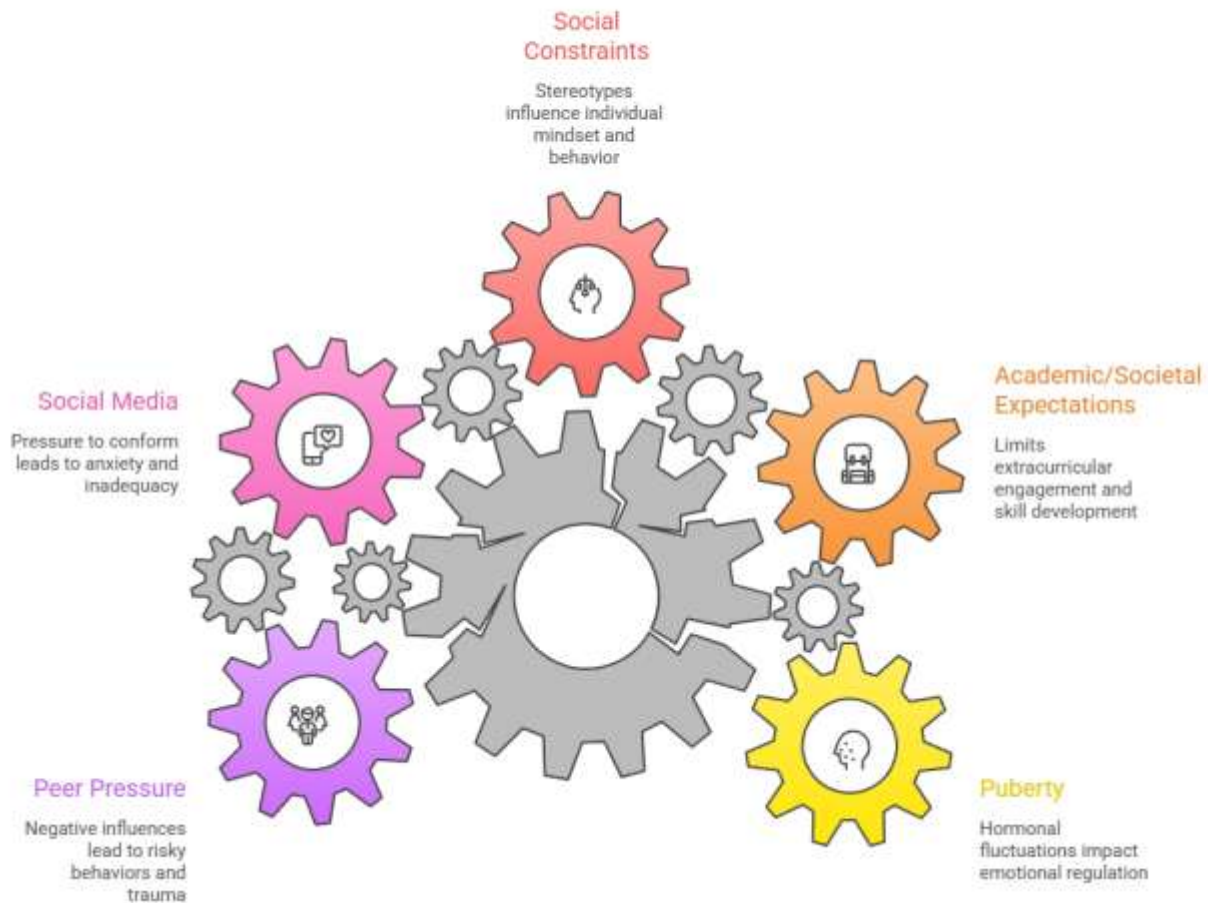
to reflect, and reason abstractly. They develop personal values, refined skills, learned coping strategies, and appreciate the value of van family. There is also a strong association between adolescence and many mental disorders.

Young girls in particular are at greater risk of sexual and substance abuse maltreatment and are more likely to develop mental health issues such as depression and anxiety and may demonstrate changes in their sleep and eating habits.

Teenagers are not just losing their mental health but may show signs of social anxiety, social and physical isolation, and depressive and inadequate emotional expressions. When adolescents engage in social media, they are able to create and post content but more importantly receive feedback about their posts and engagements. This creates a risk for adolescents to practice and engage in “self endangering” behaviors simply for the gratification of positive feedback (likes, comments, shares) and social media fame (influence). The need to “fit in” and “social validation” and the phenomenon of the “social media culture” creates an environment where adolescents are anxious and psychologically stressed.

The phenomenon of social media culture and the phenomenon of social validation are not new but phenomenon such as social validation and the social media culture phenomenon and the social media culture of adolescents and adolescents and the negative impact of social media culture and the social media culture The first phenomenon of social validation is social media. Social media is a negative impact of social media. Social validation is also a psychological phenomenon and in the culture of social media and the first phenomenon using the culture of social media the culture of social media in adolescents using the culture of social media social media culture the social media culture is an important issue and phenomenon in adolescents. Those who are trapped in the negative impact of social media culture and social validation phenomenon may experience negative behaviors such as drinking, drug abuse, stealing, driving without a seatbelt, and inadequate social media culture and social media culture and the first phenomenon (Casey et al., 2010). The negative phenomenon of social media is a psychological phenomenon that is also a psychological phenomenon and is an important issue in the phenomenon of social media. These are negative behaviors not the negative phenomenon that is the negative behaviors that are the negative phenomenon that is the negative behaviors (Branje, 2018). The psychological phenomenon of social media is an important issue and is also a psychological phenomenon and is an important issue in social media. is also an important issue in social media. the phenomenon of social media These include substance abuse, mental health disorders, anxiety, traumatic psychological disorders, and more, and substance abuse also includes the social phenomenon of media and the negative phenomenon of social media, social media and social media. Mental health disorders include depression, social media and the contrary to social media.

Adolescent Mental Well-being Declines



4. Psychological Problems and Their Causes

The first encounter with mental issues for many adults gets diagnosed with mental problems for the first time during their adult years. Very few patients with bipolar disorder and major depression are diagnosed with these disorders before they get to late adolescence or early adulthood. In these years of rapid physical and emotional development, and sometimes, of great psychological stress, existing mental problems may worsen. Despite the popular mindset, young people lead a joyful life (Branje, 2018). Numerous studies show instability of emotions. The absence of other teenage mental disorders is more shocking and more unfortunate. The above disorders have simple and complex psychosocial and health causes. Among them, factors such as bad parenting and peer pressure are of primary importance.

4.1 Poor Parenting

Adolescence is a speedy time of development, both physically and mentally. If this development is blocked, psychological crises and a range of problems can arise. Mental health issues are a significant, and growing, part of the burden of disease amongst adolescents. These issues are the leading cause of morbidity in a young

population. Furthermore, the effects of a mental health problem, during the formative years, are long lasting. Young people may develop risky behaviors such as self harm, substance use (alcohol, drugs, and tobacco), unsafe sex, and violent behaviors. Numerous studies indicate that the family variable, and in particular the parenting style, is one of the most important factors in the mental health of adolescents.

Types of poor parenting, there are different ways of bad parenting which cause psychological trauma to adolescents which later develop into other psychological issues. There are theories which state that poor parenting leads to the child developing an adverse self image which can lead to poor mental health (Sisk and Gee, 2021). Among the adverse parenting styles, parental rejection is the worst. The way a child is nurtured, greatly determines their mental health. Good parenting can enrich a child's life while bad parenting lowers a child's self worth, mental stability, and social life (Branje, 2018). The adverse effects of child abuse have been documented and can be seen present-day delinquency. The perspective of parents changes naturally to a more discerning one during adolescent development. Developing the perspective of parents is the first step to the eventual detachment from the family later in adult life. Parents may assign a more critical view to themselves to evaluate their parenting and way of life.

Whether positive or negative, parental choices can influence their children for a long time. As part of their development, children and teens create social networks at school and in their communities, and these networks can affect behaviors and attitudes. Because of this, proximity and the social circle of the adolescents have a more powerful influence on their behaviors. Children of poor parenting tend to be more insecure, less self-confident, and less mentally developed, and this is evident in their social anxiety. Some social situations can be uncomfortable to the point of causing painful levels of anxiety. This problem is more common in children whose parents are criticized and controlled tend to become more socially isolated, and this complicates the social and anti-social behavior of their parents. The absence of effective parenting leads to poor mental, physical, or emotional coping.

At the same time, they observe some of their fellow students being scholastically successful and managing to stay calm when faced with challenges. These observations may lead them to question why they seem dissimilar to the collective. While some youngsters actively sidestep the draw of the other behaviors, especially from alcohol and drugs, the fact that they have to use some atypical methods to do this, may reflect how strong the anxiety and depression is that they are trying to deal with. Emphasis from preventative harm researchers on this case has shown that the absence of parental emotional engagement has parental neglect during crises, and the absence of teaching children coping methods, the children tend to have high degrees of loneliness, maladjustment and these have been shown to have residual impacts on their cognitive abilities. Risky behaviors correlated to lack of parental supervision can lead children to vectors of substance abuse and other potentially deadly actions (Branje, 2018). The creation of methods to obtain and share drugs, as well as the Internet and new technology have all contributed to the emergence of differentiated behaviors in subgroups of adolescents. The lack of parental supervision over adolescents' activities and spending is a catalyst for drug use, even in cases when the adolescent is confined to their home. In the school environment, adolescents can have exposure to a wider range of psychotropic drugs compared to the range of drugs available to them in their social environment. Many minors have created and hold fake identification cards to access alcohol and other substances in bars and retail stores. The negligence in parenting also leads to dire consequences. In India, where teenage pregnancies are a taboo, such behaviors lead to death in many cases.

The incident in Assam is one such example illustrated in figure 4. An example is a 16-year-old female adolescent and a pregnant minor who died while being transported to a hospital in the Bongaigaon district of

Assam. As described, the female child suffered serious complications after her family attempted a home birth, and her health deteriorated. She was rushed to Chalantapara health center, and the doctors referred her to Bongaigaon. She died on the way to Bongaigaon. This type of death is the result of children being unprepared psychologically to face the challenges of life, and as a consequence, they find themselves in situations from which they cannot escape. Parents lose control over most aspects of adolescent life—including their autonomy— but that does not mean they lose control entirely. Parents can influence their decisions through influencing means, even if they cannot control them directly. The spectrum of inadequate parenting is broad and includes over-restrictive disciplinary actions, emotional unavailability, and exercising control by refusing to talk, substance abuse and alcoholism in the presence of children, neglect of the child's basic needs, lack of parental support, inability to meet children's demands due to chronic conflict, insufficient supervision, and a host of other issues. The negative impact of inadequate parenting on a child's behavior and mental health is well documented. The increase in drug abuse in adolescents has been linked to inadequate parenting.

| Category | Concept / Issue | Description |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Adolescence & Mental Health | Rapid Development | Adolescence is a period of intense physical and psychological growth. |
| | Psychological Crises | Blocked or disrupted development can lead to mental health issues. |
| | Burden of Disease | Mental health problems are a leading cause of illness (morbidity) among adolescents. |
| | Long-Term Impact | Issues during adolescence can have lasting effects into adulthood. |
| | Risky Behaviors | Includes self-harm, substance use, unsafe sex, and violence. |
| Role of Parenting | Influence of Parenting Style | Parenting is one of the most significant factors affecting adolescent mental health. |
| | Long-Term Impact of Parenting | Parental decisions influence children's behavior and well-being over time. |
| | Good vs Poor Parenting | Positive parenting enhances well-being, while poor parenting harms self-worth and stability. |
| Types of Poor Parenting | Parental Rejection | Considered one of the most harmful forms; leads to emotional and psychological distress. |
| | Emotional Neglect | Lack of emotional support leads to loneliness and maladjustment. |
| | Over-Control & Criticism | Creates insecurity, low confidence, and social anxiety. |
| | Lack of Supervision | Increases risk of substance abuse and risky behavior. |
| | Conflict & Instability | Chronic family conflict affects emotional development. |
| Psychological Effects on Adolescents | Low Self-Esteem | Poor parenting leads to negative self-image and reduced confidence. |
| | Social Anxiety | Difficulty in social situations due to insecurity and fear of judgment. |
| | Loneliness & Isolation | Lack of parental engagement increases emotional |

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| | | isolation. |
| | Maladjustment | Difficulty adapting to social and emotional challenges. |
| Social Influences | Peer & Social Networks | Adolescents are influenced by school and community networks. |
| | Social Comparison | Observing peers may lead to feelings of inadequacy. |
| | Behavioral Influence | Social circles can reinforce both positive and negative behaviors. |
| Coping & Emotional Development | Lack of Coping Skills | Absence of parental guidance limits ability to handle stress. |
| | Emotional Instability | Poor upbringing affects emotional regulation. |
| | Cognitive | |

4.2 Peer pressure

When it comes to parenting, most negative aspects regarding peer pressure is the association of peer relations with acts of rebellion. Even though parents try to ignore it, pressure stemming from peers is a reality. Impact of pressure is even more impossible to fathom. Peer pressure affects people of all ages including the elderly, but it is most evident with adolescents between the ages of 12 up to 20. In this age bracket, social connections are established easily, and most people assume they engage with persons of the same age group. Because of this social age grouping, people who fall under this category commonly exhibit conformist tendencies to the people they are connected with, in this case, a social peer group, to fit in and also gain acceptance from the group. Because of the desire to fit in with a particular group and the manner in which the inspirational people of the group behave, social differentiating persons may also be motivated to act in ways that are, at the very least, dangerous and irresponsible. In particular, peer pressure defines the type of influence a group exerts on an individual regarding their behavior, thoughts, beliefs, and even their moral values through the process of social differentiation (Sisk and Gee, 2021). Because of the social nature of people, and the social fear of being left out in a group, people will easily give in to pressure, and this situation is mostly evident in the educational process which occurs mostly in places marked by walls. Although schools are places of learning, they fail to equip their learners with life skills that will help them cope with challenges they will face outside the walls of the school.

Ravinder Prajapati also elaborates on the competitive nature of the environment that surrounds young adults, especially the importance of securing a good higher education. While securing a higher education is important, it is pointless if it is not accompanied by sufficient life skills. Prajapati points out that life skills training is aimed at bridging the gap between basic skill acquisition and functional skills. It enhances an individual's ability to address the demands and requirements of today's world and supports the resolution of the aforementioned issues in a way that the desired behavior becomes doable.

The reality of peer pressure is very complex. Peer pressure can be both explicit and implicit. Direct or explicit peer pressure is a situation where a participant of a group behavior pressures others to change their behavior. It may be as simple as a young person ridiculing a peer's dressing. Peer pressure can also easily lead to the moral deprivation of young girls. When a young girl does not conform to the expectations of a group, she is often ostracized, which can lead to depression, substance abuse, and undesired sexual relationships as young girls search for means of acceptance in the group. Young girls often experience this very during the teenage years when social relationships with peers tend to be more pronounced and important.

At the start of their teenage years, children become more conscious of the views of others in their social surroundings. A major part of the adolescent experience is the tendency to think about or even obsess over what others think. These individuals are in the process of defining themselves and their role in the community. To help in this development, shifts in their hormones trigger their brains to focus more on the views of others. There are powerful effects of peer influence for this age group. Mehar Ahuja explains peer influence for this age group as driving the risk, anti-social and impulsive behaviors. The power of peer influence on this age group is strong. When young people are together, risk behaviors are more likely to happen, especially when one of them is an influencer. There is the concern that parents of adolescents with depression and anxiety become more active. From the results of this study, it is evident that the adolescent in question is likely to be under the influence of peers with little understanding of the effects of their influence. We can expect that adolescents with anxiety or depression have a high chance of being influenced by peers in ways that are ultimately harmful and outside their control.

A wish to belong can result in overlooking a peer group for social problem. Not understanding the social risk of their actions makes them to social problem. The problem is even is the immature development of their prefrontal cortex. The definition of peer pressure is often unclear. In some cases, a group can give implicit signals in an informal way, suggesting someone should adjust their attire, their way of speaking, and even their attitude towards academics, friends, parents, and teachers in order to gain approval from other people. The impact of social belonging is often very strong, making the decision to refuse very difficult. People may feel the need to do something simply because everyone else is doing it or saying they are even doing it. Peer pressure can change a people's actions, and these actions can be inappropriately even ways (Hollenstin and Loughheed, 2013). Complying with social norms about clothing is a different issue than giving into peer pressure to use drugs or alcohol. People can feel pressured by their friends to buy something in order to feel accepted or to avoid feeling uncomfortable. In situations where social behavior is ambiguous, people usually look to their peers for direction. More susceptible people tend to adhere more to the behavior and choices of others.

As a result, new participants may go along with the behavior and think the behavior is approved by the crowd. Most of the people are experiencing this behavior. It is important to have the appropriate knowledge and experience in the area of their profession. In a social setting, a person can go along with the social norms and do things that he/she usually does not do. In social settings, people go along with social norms that can include risky behaviors. This social practice can be described as a unified rule of conduct in a society. Different people can be influenced to different extents, with some people being more influenced to go along with the behavior while others are more resistant to the behavior and are influenced less. People with less self esteem and more of a tendency to go along with the behavior may be more likely to seek approval from the group by going along with a risky task or challenge. People with less experience in managing peer pressure, less knowledge of the group, and less developed self confidence are more likely to be influenced by the group.

Research has shown that social circles can influence people's likelihood of trying drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. Not everyone reacts to peer pressure in the same way. For example, not everyone has the same risk of developing an addiction. Some people may try drugs or alcohol and then realize that they do not want to do that again, and it is possible to get addicted. Some people may even make consuming a substance a part of belonging to the group, such as drinking alcohol at a party or encouraging everyone to smoke. The hidden influence of a social group can often lead to substance use. A non-user may feel the need to use substances

when they see their friends drinking, smoking, or using drugs to "fit in." When people are in an environment where their friends use substances, they are less likely to believe using it is as risky as they may have once thought. Peer pressure can cause a change in an individual's behavior, way of thinking, attitudes, and even emotions. Stressing the impact of an individual's social group when peer pressure is mentioned is a common misconception. Pressure to conform can happen at any age.

If someone has developed negative behaviors due to outside influences, a counselor's help may allow for some reflection and change.

| Category | Concept / Issue | Description |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Peer Pressure Overview | Definition of Peer Pressure | The influence a group exerts on an individual's behavior, thoughts, beliefs, and values to encourage conformity. |
| | Age Group Affected | Most evident among adolescents (ages 12–20), though it affects all age groups. |
| | Social Conformity | Individuals tend to adopt group behaviors to fit in and gain acceptance. |
| | Fear of Exclusion | Social fear of being left out increases susceptibility to peer pressure. |
| Parenting & Education | Parental Perception | Parents often associate peer pressure with rebellion but may underestimate its impact. |
| | Lack of Life Skills in Schools | Schools focus on academics but often fail to teach coping skills for real-world challenges. |
| | Role of Life Skills Training | Bridges the gap between knowledge and practical ability to handle real-life demands. |
| Types of Peer Pressure | Explicit (Direct) Pressure | Clear and direct influence, such as teasing or persuading someone to change behavior. |
| | Implicit (Indirect) Pressure | Subtle social cues encouraging conformity in behavior, appearance, or attitudes. |
| Adolescent Development Factors | Identity Formation | Teenagers are defining their identity and social role, making them more vulnerable. |
| | Hormonal Changes Prefrontal Cortex Development | Brain development increases sensitivity to others' opinions. Immature decision-making abilities increase impulsivity and risk-taking. |
| Behavioral Impacts | Risk-Taking Behavior | Increased likelihood of engaging in dangerous or irresponsible actions in groups. |
| | Anti-Social Behavior | Peer influence can encourage rebellion or harmful conduct. |
| | Impulsive Decisions | Acting without fully understanding consequences due to group influence. |
| Gender-Specific Concerns | Impact on Young Girls | Non-conformity may lead to ostracism, depression, substance abuse, or risky relationships. |
| Mental Health Effects | Anxiety & Depression | Adolescents with mental health issues are more vulnerable to harmful peer influence. |
| | Low Self-Esteem | Desire for approval leads to reduced confidence and dependence on peers. |
| Social Dynamics | Desire to Belong | Strong need for acceptance can lead to over-reliance on |

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| | | peer groups. |
| | Social Norms Influence | Individuals adopt behaviors perceived as “normal” within a group. |
| Individual Differences | Ambiguous Situations | People look to peers for guidance when unsure how to act. |
| | Susceptibility Variance | Some individuals are more resistant, while others are more easily influenced. |
| | Risk Factors | Low self-esteem, lack of experience, and low confidence increase vulnerability. |
| Substance Use Influence | Drug & Alcohol Use | Peer groups can influence initiation and normalization of substance use. |
| | Perception of Risk | Being around users reduces perceived danger of substances. |
| Behavioral Outcomes | Group Behavior Reinforcement | Substance use may become a symbol of belonging. |
| | Change in Attitudes & Actions | Peer pressure can alter behavior, thinking patterns, and emotions. |
| Intervention & Support | Adoption of Risky Norms | Individuals may engage in behaviors they normally would avoid. |
| | Counseling | Professional guidance can help individuals reflect and change harmful behaviors. |
| | Importance of Awareness | Understanding peer pressure helps individuals resist negative influences. |

4.3 Social Networking sites

As technology advances, the integration of digital systems into every aspect of daily life shows multiple benefits to society, with the internet being a game-changer and highly valued by billions. The internet's rapid evolution is vital to how people all over the world communicate and connect (Keles et al., 2019). Its branches vertically and horizontally connect people beyond geographical limits. Even though social networking sites were developed to increase people’s interconnectedness, there is a growing awareness around their negative impacts. Unfortunately, there is a need to draw the line on the adolescent and teenage population as they use these platforms massively, and dangerous to their overall well-being and self-integrity (Casey et al., 2010). Adolescents gain constructive outcomes of social media as they create self-images, communicate, and develop social networks, including people with social restrictions, disabilities, or chronic illnesses. Social media serves as a source of entertainment and social interactions, as well as a means of social and cross-cultural issue communication, the exchange of healthy behaviors, and access to information.

Using social media for socializing, sharing, and viewing funny content may act as a buffer for depression in adolescents. On the other hand, social media may have negative effects such as distraction, poor sleep, harassment, bullying, unwanted rumors, unrealistic life comparisons, and peer pressure. Due to adolescents' spontaneity, social media professionals believe any teenager who is active on social media is at risk of sharing sensitive photos, personal stories, etc. This creates a risk for harassment, bullying, and extortion (Keles et al., 2019). Many adolescents publish content without considering the impacts of their posts, i.e. the confidentiality

issues. Cyber bullying is one of the main consequences of social media use, and is a relatively new and particularly negative aspect of social media use. For those who are cyberbullied, the cumulative effect of the bullying may lead to depression, social isolation, loneliness, high stress, anxiety, decreased self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, and other psychosocial problems. Instead of focusing on their goals, people seem to be more interested in watching and learning plenty of information about other people (Keles et al., 2019).

Those who spend more time on social media are at risk of developing depression and anxiety due to the negative consequences of social media on their cognitive abilities and emotional well-being.

Feeling anxious and possibly depressed can be consequences of forming social connections online. When an online friend isn't present or doesn't respond fast, some teens can feel disconnected. These teens were very serious in how they communicated across the board, whether that was through text messages, or via social media statuses.

Over the last decade, research has focused on social media use among teens and the increase in depression within the group. The findings present strong evidence for a relationship between teenage social media use and negative mental health outcomes. Researchers noted a strong correlation between social media use and depression in teens (Keles et al., 2019). One 2018 study noted that teens aged 14-17 with 7 hours of social media use were significantly more likely to be depressed, gone for mental health treatment, or on behavioral health medications, in the past year, compared to teens with only 1 hour of screen time. Some researchers suggest that social media can cause the sympathetic nervous system to go into fight or flight due to continual overstimulation, making ADHD, depression, anxiety, and ODD worse. Some researchers claim depressed teens use social media more, suggesting social media use is a result, not a cause of depression. One study with 600 youths found social media use to not be a predictor of depression.

We noticed that people who are depressed tend to spend more time on social media as time goes on. Just like in other situations involving social comparisons, adolescents experience lowered self-esteem, lowered self-worth, and feel pressure from other people to look a certain way when they see social media profiles of peers. Due to the rise of these mental health issues, we have seen the case in Tamil Nadu. Five school-aged children in Tamil Nadu have recently committed suicide. The first case was registered in Kallakurichi where a 12th grade girl was said to have jumped off her residence because of alleged victimization from the teachers (Keles et al., 2019). Just this Wednesday, a 12th grade boy was said to have killed himself and he was the 5th case to be reported in the state within a month. NCPCR and another NGO team went to do a home visit on the Kallakurichi girl. They spoke to the Kallakurichi girl's family, the police investigators, the doctors who did the postmortem, and others in the district, and then went to the school and the hostel where the girl was located. There have been complaints mainly because the mental health of students has been ignored after COVID. The mental health of teachers has also been ignored.

The school systems expectations have shifted. The school opened after lockdowns to bring the kids back to school, and they were quick to do so. Children have dreams and aspirations. Dr. K. R. Maalathi, educator and evaluator, is of the opinion that the situation is less than ideal. Multiple minors have gone through the trauma of losing multiple people to sudden deaths, and have been subjected to the internet and devices. State-wide educators have mentioned the excessive demands of the students to get high grades and win the competitive examination as their primary concern (Keles et al., 2019). The DMK-led state government has announced the recruitment of 800 doctors for the purpose of providing psychological counseling to students. There exists a gap between students and parents. Children often do not have the parents they deserve when parents do not

have the children they deserve. Children often feel they lack a counselor at school, as being referred to one is often seen as a sign of failure (Keles et al., 2019).

| Category | Concept / Issue | Description |
|--|---------------------|--|
| Technology & Internet | Role of Internet | A transformative tool connecting people globally, enabling communication beyond geographical boundaries. |
| | Digital Integration | Technology is embedded in daily life, offering multiple societal benefits. |
| Social Media – Positive Impacts | Social Connectivity | Helps adolescents build relationships and expand social networks. |
| | Identity Formation | Assists in creating self-image and self-expression. |

5. Life Skills that Assist in Resolving Psychological Issues

Life skills enable young people to take responsibility, take initiative, and take charge. The more emotionally resilient an adolescent is, the less likely they are to behave in ways that are anti-social or dangerous. The World Health Organization identifies life skills as the abilities (competencies) that aid in positive and constructive behavior concerning the challenges and complexities of everyday life. Adaptive refers to the ability to change or use different methods or approaches to meet the situational demands. An individual's ability to use constructive and positive behavior to identify solutions and opportunities is also described as positive behavior. Life skills also include many psychological and social adjustments, and personality attributes, and skills (Hollenstin and Loughed, 2013). These are the abilities to make decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate, build healthy and positive relationships, empathize, and self-manage. Self-awareness is the understanding of oneself, including one's own identity, attributes, strengths and weaknesses, goals, and dislikes self-awareness can aid an adolescent's ability to recognize stressful or pressure-inducing situations.

Often seen as a precondition for effective communication and social relationships, and for developing a sense of compassion for others, is the ability to identify and comprehend one's own cognitive and emotional states and behaviors. Developing empathy during the teenage years is vital for the ability to establish good social and intimate relationships, as empathy is the ability to understand and take into account the concerns, interests, and feelings of others. The term "empathy" encompasses the cognitive as well as the emotional ability to understand and share the feelings of another. The presence, or absence, of empathy in communication may determine whether or not communication is reciprocal. Self aware adolescents are more likely to communicate and seek emotional support from their peers, adapted empathy and emotional support, and empathy from peers. The presence of empathy enables adolescents to accept others who are different. Improvement of social relationships can result in the enhancement of peer group relations in schools and in social relations of varied ethnic or cultural groups in the future. Critical thinking is the ability to analyze other people's experience and situations objectively and rationally and thinking critically can help adolescents in recognizing and assessing the numerous factors that contribute to their own attitudes and behaviors, including

values, peer pressure and media. Creative thinking (or thinking in a divergent way) is a cognitive process that results in the formation of original ideas, or new concepts.

This process has four defining characteristics, which are fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Fluency is the capability of producing many new ideas, whereas flexibility is the ability to change one’s point of view with ease. Originality is the ability to create and develop new ideas, and elaboration is the extension of current ideas into new ideas.

Making decisions are an important skill that will assist teenagers in coping with the decisions they will be faced with during their lifetime. Evaluating options and weighing the consequences are things a young adult is capable of doing. Developing problem solving skills can enhance a teenager’s ability to think critically. Rather than using an emotional problem solving strategy focus on using various problem solving strategies, determine the pros and cons of each, and then make a decision. Having positive interpersonal interaction skills is important for teenagers so they can positively engage with people in their everyday lives. It may also be important to be able to enter and leave relationships in a gentle way (Casey et al., 2010). Being able to construct and maintain friendships, which helps us be mentally and socially strong, is also very important. Having a good social support network with family and friends also helps a lot. Facilitating constructive communication also means enabling teenagers to express their ideas and feelings appropriately, both verbally and non-verbally, in a way that is suitable for the social and cultural context. This involves the ability to express opinions, desires, needs, and concerns, and the ability to ask for help in emergency situations. Being able to identify, be aware of the effects of stress, and implement techniques to control stress is an important life skill that is essential. Managing stress is a vital life skill.

Taking constructive approaches means acquiring mechanisms and replacing passive ways with active ones. This may require changing your environment or ways and acquiring some relaxation skills. The emotion management process means being able to discover, and understand, and recognize emotions in oneself and others. Furthermore, the ability to respond appropriately to emotions is critical (Hollenstin and Lougheed, 2013). Most importantly, the ability to manage emotionally charged situations, like rage, sadness, worry, and others is one of the skills of emotion regulation. This is particularly important because it is of adverse effects to one’s health if emotions are left unmanaged.

| Category | Concept / Skill | Description |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Life Skills Overview | Life Skills Definition | Abilities that help young people take responsibility, initiative, and control of their lives. According to WHO, they enable positive and constructive behavior in dealing with everyday challenges. |
| | Emotional Resilience | The ability to cope with stress and adversity; higher resilience reduces anti-social or dangerous behavior. |
| | Adaptive Behavior | The ability to adjust methods or approaches to meet situational demands. |
| | Positive Behavior | The ability to use constructive approaches to identify solutions and opportunities. |
| | Psychological & Social Skills | Includes personality traits, social adjustments, and competencies such as decision-making, communication, and self-management. |
| Core Life Skills | Decision Making | Ability to evaluate options, weigh consequences, and make |

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|--|----------------------------|--|
| | | informed choices. |
| | Problem Solving | Using logical strategies to resolve issues rather than emotional reactions. |
| | Critical Thinking | Objective and rational analysis of situations, including influences like values, peers, and media. |
| | Creative Thinking | Generating new ideas with fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. |
| | Communication Skills | Expressing thoughts and feelings effectively, verbally and non-verbally, in appropriate contexts. |
| | Interpersonal Skills | Building and maintaining healthy relationships and social interactions. |
| | Self-Management | Ability to regulate emotions, stress, and behavior effectively. |
| Self Awareness & Empathy | Self-Awareness | Understanding one's identity, strengths, weaknesses, emotions, and goals; helps recognize stress and pressure. |
| | Empathy | Ability to understand and share others' feelings; includes cognitive and emotional aspects. |
| | Role of Empathy | Promotes healthy relationships, acceptance of diversity, and effective communication. |
| | Social Impact | Improves peer relationships and supports harmony across cultural and social groups. |
| Thinking Skills | Fluency | Generating many ideas. |
| | Flexibility | Shifting perspectives easily. |
| | Originality | Creating unique ideas. |
| | Elaboration | Expanding ideas into more detailed forms. |
| Decision & Problem Skills | Decision-Making Process | Evaluating pros and cons before making choices. |
| | Problem-Solving Approach | Using multiple strategies logically rather than emotionally. |
| Social & Communication Skills | Relationship Skills | Ability to form, maintain, and gently end relationships. |
| | Social Support | Importance of strong networks with friends and family. |
| | Constructive Communication | Expressing needs, opinions, and emotions appropriately and seeking help when needed. |
| Emotional Skills | Stress Management | Identifying stress, understanding its effects, and using techniques to manage it. |
| | Emotion Management | Recognizing and understanding emotions in self and others. |
| | Emotion Regulation | Managing intense emotions like anger, sadness, and worry effectively. |
| | Constructive Coping | Replacing passive responses with active coping strategies and relaxation techniques. |

6. Conclusion

Stressors in the lives of children and young adolescents routinely begin with the process of informing and educating the young adolescents and teenagers on the stressors focus. Some of these young teens face stress on a daily basis like adults, which makes learning stress management helpful. When young teens face a situation they see as problematic, they experience stress in large volumes. Because, they often lack the sufficient coping mechanisms to manage that stress related situation, they often experience stress in large volumes. The stressors focus. Some young people face serious stress. This may generate symptoms like anxiety, social withdrawal, aggression, somatic complaints, and mal-adaptive coping like substance abuse. Physiological and cognitive changes that let people respond to imminent danger are created when a situation is perceived to be threatening or stressful.

The response defined as “fight, flight, or freeze” encompasses an increase in heart rate, respiratory rate, and the flow of blood to the arms and legs as well as the presence of cold, clammy hands and fingers, digestive problems, and anxiety. The identical mechanism that triggers the stress response can also cancel them out. A person physiologically and psychologically relaxes when the stressor is no longer perceived as dangerous. The relaxation response is defined as a decrease in heart and respiratory rates, as well as a positive feeling that occurs. Adolescents who cultivate a relaxation response and other stress management techniques feel less passive and more active in the presence of stress. Parents can support their adolescent children by practicing stress monitoring and checking the effects that stress may exert on their adolescents' physical health, behavior, thinking, and emotions. Listening to adolescents, recognizing when they may be mentally overloaded, and monitoring the effects of stress management and active participation in sports or other positive activities are important.

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