

# **GUYS AND DOLLS**

**Unraveling The Mystery of Adolescent  
Males and Females**

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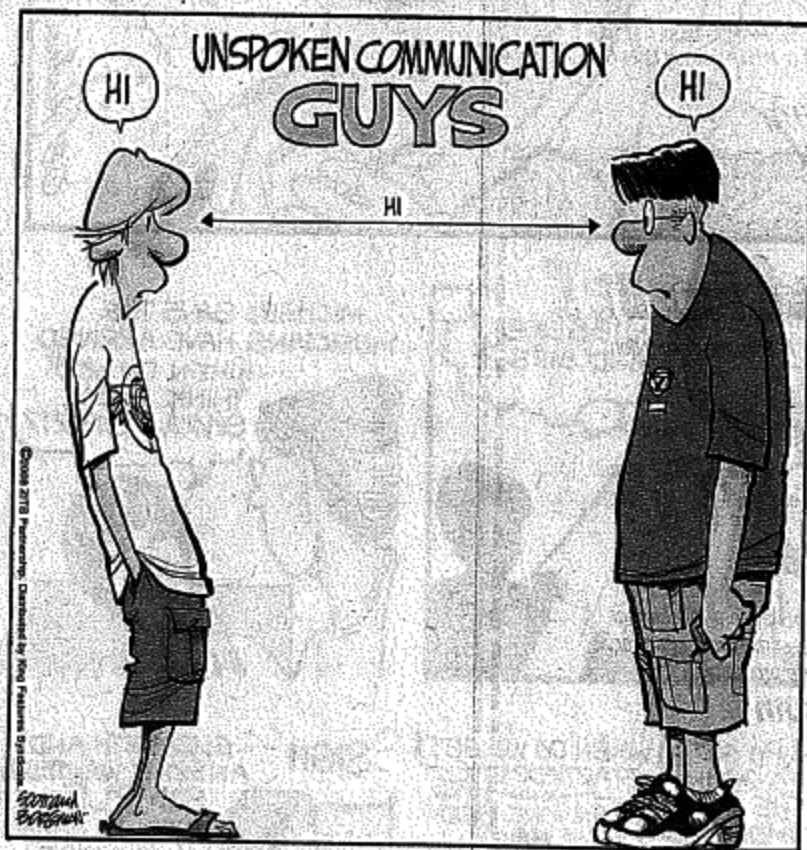
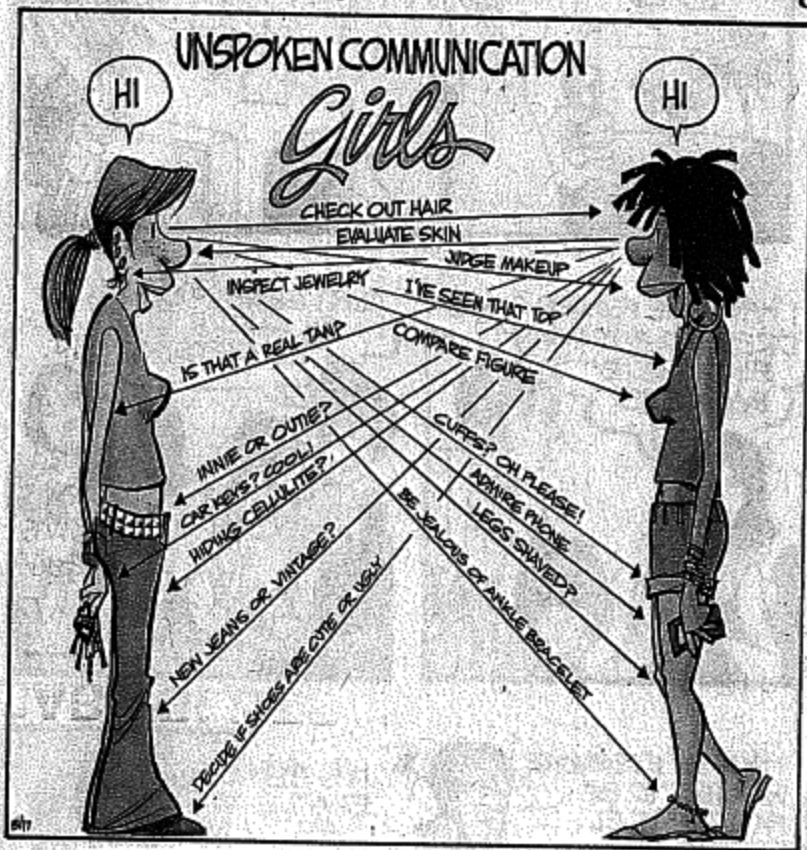
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# ZITS/ by Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman



# WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

## ➤ BRAIN GROWTH


- Brain Growth: The gray matter (the thinking part of the brain in the frontal lobe) thickens and gains connections at a rapid rate between the age of 10 and twelve.
- Brain Pruning: Excessive gray matter connections (the parts of the brain that are not used) prunes, eliminates and thins throughout adolescence and into young adulthood.
- The type of activity in which the teen is involved will determine which parts of the brain survive and which will be lost.

# FRONTAL LOBE DEVELOPMENT

- **The frontal lobe is responsible for executive functions such as:**
- **Planning**
- **Organizing**
- **Controlling Impulses**
- **Inhibit Gut Responses**
- **Regulating Emotion**
- **Thinking through Consequences**
- **This part of the brain is under-developed in teens and will not be completely mature until the teen reaches their early twenties.**

# CERABELLUM

**This is an area in the back of the brain. This part of the brain actually goes through the most changes during the adolescent years and these changes continue well into the twenties. This is the part of the brain which has long been associated with physical movement. We now understand that this part of the brain is responsible for social as well as physical grace. It is critical in smoothing out intellectual processes and assist in navigating complex social situations. This part of the brain is stimulated by movement.**




# MOTIVATION

Research shows distinct differences in the activity levels in the reward achievement responses between adult brains and adolescent brains. The reward activation center in the adolescent brain is under-stimulated which results in teens being less willing to work towards rewards and more willing to participate in activities which they view as providing them with significant rewards with little effort (such as drinking, sex, drug use.) They also need greater rewards to motivate action.

# Decision Making

- Dopamine baseline is lower in teens
- But Dopamine release in response to experiences is higher
- Teens report boredom and seek novel or stimulating experiences
- Over focus on rewards (positives) fail to value risks or downside

# Three Major Effects

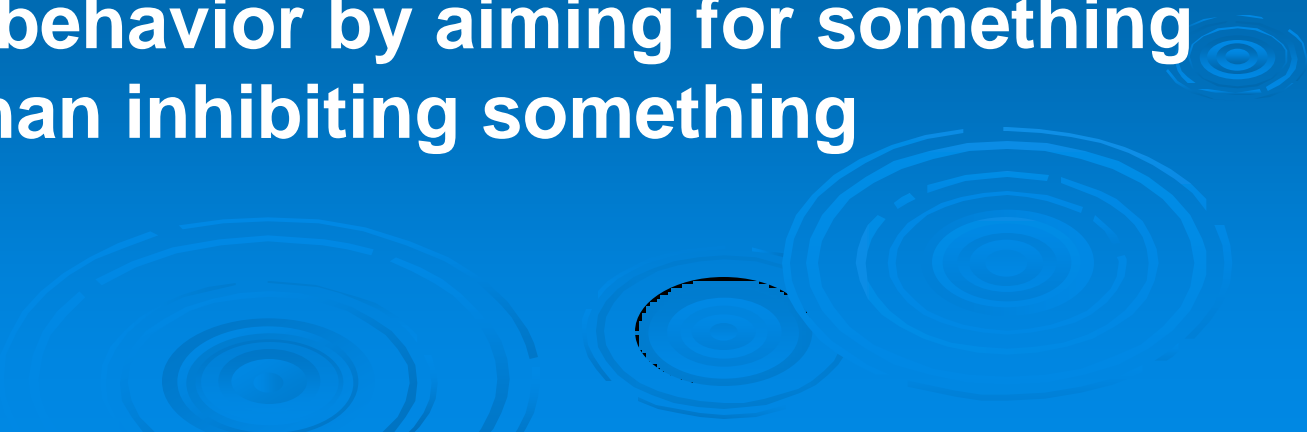
- Increase in impulsive action without pause or reflection
  - Increases susceptibility to addiction
  - Hyper-rationality ÷ Thinking in literal and concrete terms consider just facts of the situation and miss the setting, context, big picture.
  - Aware of risk but put more weight on excitement of potential benefits
- 



# Friends and Decision Making

- Risk behavior increases in company of peers
- Anticipating peer response is stronger reinforcer

# Remember

- **Risky behavior without negative consequence reinforces the behavior**
  - **Experience shapes our development and promotes integration**
  - **Reinforce behavior by aiming for something rather than inhibiting something**
- 

# READING CUES FROM OTHERS

**When using MRI's to monitor how adults and adolescent brains responded to a series of pictures reflecting emotions, researchers discovered:**

- **Adults were able to correctly label the picture representing “fear” with 100% accuracy**
- **Adolescents in 50% of the cases labeled the picture of “anger” or “confusion”**
- **Younger adolescents and males were more likely to be incorrect in this**
- **Adult’s frontal lobes were utilized during this activity**
- **Adolescent’s anterior regions were utilized during this activity**
- **The anterior region relies on “gut responses” as opposed to logic**

# WHAT IS MATURE IN THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN?

**The parts of the brain that are responsible for mediating spatial, auditory, language, and auditory functioning (the Parietal and Temporal Lobes) are mature**

# Communication Patterns

## Girls

- Language of extreme
- Figure out what they think by talking
- Masters of the false agreement
- Discuss feelings
- Talk a lot, means a little
- Avoid conflict
- Process talk
- Girls connect through sharing experiences

## Boys

- Language of minimization
- Don't talk until they figure out what they think
- Masters of the false bravado
- Distract from feelings
- Talk a little, means a lot
- Out macho feelings
- Report talking
- Guys connect through action

# Girls Challenges

- **Looking to others to meet their needs for happiness**
- **Act without deciding instead of deciding to act**
- **React to others instead of acting on their own behalf**
- **Indirect communication**
- **Avoidance vs. resolution**
- **Sense of well being and emotional health correlated with quality of their attachments to others**
- **Define self in comparison to others**
- **Use drama to keep others connected to them**

# TREATMENT IMPLICATIONS

1. **DEMAND THEY TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOOD THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO THEM**
2. **MOBILIZE THEIR ENVIRONMENT FOR SUPPORT. THEY WILL RESPOND TO THIS**
3. **DISCUSS ROLE OF DRAMA**
4. **HELP THEM IDENTIFY REACTIONS TO OTHERS**

# TREATMENT IMPLICATIONS

(Continued)

5. FOCUS ON DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS
6. ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF FEELING
7. TAKING CONTROL OF THEIR SEXUAL EXPERIENCES
8. HOLD ON TO CONCEPT OF SELF



## **9. Teaching emotional regulation skill**

**(Think About What You Can Do To Calm Yourself)**

### **Self Soothing Skills**

- 1. Sight**
- 2. Sound**
- 3. Taste**
- 4. Smell**
- 5. Touch**
- 6. Soothing action**
- 7. Relaxation**
- 8. Breath work**
- 9. Awareness meditation**
- 10. People**
- 11. Movement**

### **Remember**

**Prevention**

**Practice**

**ASAP**

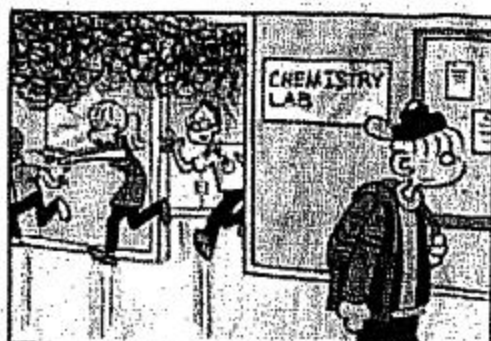
## **10. Normalizing emotion**

- Acceptance**
- Perspective placement**
- This happens to everyone (no one likes it)**
- At this moment someone else feels exactly same way**

# Guys Challenges

- **Quest to prove masculinity**
- **Limited in behavior that is considered “appropriate” for guys**
- **Hidden diagnosis (anxiety, depression, OCD)**
- **Environments not “guy” friendly, therefore guys are over represented in categories such as Learning Disabilities, academic underachievement, dropout rates, discipline referrals**
- **Struggle with ways to emotionally connect with Dads**
- **Are more often victims of violence and harsh treatment from coaches, parents, and other adults.**
- **Define self in opposition to others**

**I & LOIS** / by Brian & Greg Walker



# Guys

- Allow them to set their own “time clock” around communication
- Relationship build by doing things with them. Combine movement with conversation
- Guys like to talk about “things” they like. Learn about things that are important to them
- Communicate under positive assumption
  - “I’m sure you have thought about this”  
instead of  
“I’m sure you have figured this out”  
instead of  
“You need to get this figured out”

- **Time limits on emotional discussions**
- **Approach them with respect**
- **Guys avoid things they don't have a solution for. Communicate by saying things like, "We'll talk about this after you've figured it out."**
- **Directions**
- **Discussion about achievement brings forth emotion**

## Hidden Diagnosis

**Boys are over-diagnosed with behavioral and conduct problems. Other more appropriate diagnoses get over looked because males manifest their problems behaviorally**

**1. Anxiety – Adolescent males who suffer from anxiety:**

- a) Don't understand the word anxiety – they often think it means “looking forward to something.”**
- b) Confuse anxiety with anger because it is physiologically similar to anger.**
- c) Males respond to anxiety with a “fight or flight” reaction. This reaction sets off a chain of events which ultimately present as “behavior” problems.**
- d) Launch into high risk behavior in an attempt to “out match” their vulnerable feelings.**
- e) Use alcohol and substances to dull the intensity – “getting smooth.”**



- f) Feel they are “going crazy” because they “hear” things or “see” things.**
- g) Report “nighttime” anxiety.**
- h) Can tell you they worry, or get nervous or edgy.**
- i) Anxiety makes them become avoidant**

## **2. Obsessive Compulsive Disorders**

**1) Obsessive compulsive behaviors are perhaps the most overlooked and misdiagnosed of all anxiety disorders in adolescent males.**

### **Adolescents Who Have OCD**

**a) Display anger that appears irrational and confusing to others.**

**b) Never talk about it or even think about it until they are asked directly.**

### **c. Report they get mad when:**

- They get set in their minds that things are going to be one way and someone disrupts their plan.**
- They have to do certain things in a certain order.**
- They don't like to be rushed or hurried.**
- Little things – like noises and people chewing, bother them a great deal.**
- Their thoughts get “stuck” in their head.**
- They get “locked in” to activity and get irrational when they are asked to change activity.**
- They get locked into conflict and cannot disengage.**

### **3. Depression**

**Depression is significantly under-diagnosed in adolescent males:**

- a) Adolescent females who are depressed tend to ruminate. Males tend to try to ignore or distract themselves from their moods.**
  
- b) Males attempt to mask their moods. End up as aggressiveness, acting out, alcohol and drug use.**
  
- c) Boys often lack the emotional language to describe their moods.**

- d) Adults are more comfortable viewing boys problems as behavioral vs. emotional and tend to be less supportive, warm, affectionate and more critical, reprimanding and disapproving of boys.**
- e) 45% of girls who are depressed tell their friends. Only 26% of depressed males talk to friends.**
- f) Adolescent depression often manifest in:**
- Irritability
  - Crankiness
  - Short tempers
  - Hostility
  - Negative language
  - Critical
  - Aggression
  - Risk taking
  - Chronic headaches and stomach aches
  - Sullenness
  - Conflict with friends
  - Over reaction to small things

# Strategies for Males and Females

## Dealing With Mood

- **The Way you talk**
- **How to get strong emotionally**
- **Happy people are ones who push selves**
- **Focus on creating opportunity vs. building obstacles**
- **When you re stuck with your negative thoughts at least consider the possibilities**
- **If you are going to make up fantasies – make them good**
- **If you think it might not work out, do it anyway**

## Distractions:

- **Through action**
- **Cognitive distraction**
  - **take a break**
  - **thought stopping**
  - **Clear mind**
  - **refocus thoughts**
- **Other Focus**
  - **Self centered focus**

- **Change your language:**
  - It's a challenge vs. it's overwhelming
  - It's hard vs. it's too hard
- **Pay attention to and focus on “language of change”**
- **Concept of “normal people feelings” emotionally**
- **Listen to your talk:**
  - How many times a day do you say.....stupid, annoying, hate, etc.?
- **Listen to your internal self speak – it regulates behavior**
- **If words going through your head are negative – feeling will be negative**
- **Learn “emotional” language**



(*Tom Drummond, North Side Community College)			Vocabulary of Emotions							
S T R O N G	Happiness	Caring	Depression	Inadequateness	Fear	Confusion	Hurt	Anger	Loneliness	Remorse
	Delighted Ebullient Ecstatic Elated Energetic Enthusiastic Euphoric Excited Exhilarated Overjoyed Thrilled Tickled pink Turned on Vibrant Zippy	Adoring Ardent Cherishing Compassionate Crazy about Devoted Dofing Fervent Idolizing Infatuated Passionate Wild about Worshipful Zealous	Alienated Barren Beaten Bleak Bleeding Dejected Depressed Desolate Despondent Dismal Empty Gloomy Grieved Grim Hopeless In despair Woeful Worried	Blemished Blotched Broken Crippled Damaged False Feeble Finished Flawed Helpless Impotent Inferior Invalid Powerless Useless Washed up Woeful Worthless Zero	Alarmed Appalled Desperate Distressed Frightened Horried Intimidated Panicky Paralyzed Petrified Shocked Shocked Speechless Terrified Wrecked	Baffled Befuddled Chaotic Confounded Confused Dizzy Flustered Rattled Reeling Shocked Shook up Speechless Started Stumped Stunned Taken-aback Thrown Thunderstruck Trapped	Abused Aching Anguished Crushed Degraded Destroyed Devastated Discarded Disgraced Forsaken Humiliated Mocked Punished Rejected Ridiculed Ruined Scorned Stabbed Tortured	Affronted Belligerent Bitter Burned up Enraged Fuming Furious Heated Incensed Infuriated Intense Outraged Provoked Seething Storming Truculent Vengeful Vindictive Wild	Abandoned Black Cut off Deserted Destroyed Empty Forsaken Isolated Marooned Neglected Ostracized Outcast Rejected Shunned	Abashed Debased Degraded Delinquent Depraved Disgraced Evil Exposed Humiliated Judged Mortified Shamed Sinful Wicked Wrong
	Aglow Buoyant Cheerful Elevated Gleeful Happy In high spirits Jovial Light-hearted Lively Merry Riding high Sparkling Up	Admiring Affectionate Attached Fond Fond of Haggy Kind Kind-hearted Loving Partial Soft on Sympathetic Tender Trusting Warm-hearted	Awful Blue Crestfallen Demoralized Devalued Discouraged Dispirited Distressed Downcast Downhearted Fed up Lost Melancholy Miserable Regretful Rotten Sorrowful Tearful Upset Weepy	Ailing Defeated Deficient Dopey Feeble Helpless Impaired Imperfect Incapable Incompetent Incomplete Ineffective Inept Insignificant Lacking Lame Overwhelmed Small Substandard Unimportant	Afraid Apprehensive Awkward Defensive Fearful Fidgety Fretful Jumpy Nervous Scared Shaky Skittish Spineless Taut Threatened Troubled Wired	Adrift Ambivalent Bewildered Puzzled Blurred Disconcerted Disordered Disorganized Disquieted Disturbed Foggy Frustrated Misled Mistaken Misunderstood Mixed up Perplexed Troubled	Annoyed Belittled Cheaped Criticized Damaged Depreciated Devalued Discredited Distressed Impaired Injured Maligned Marred Miffed Mistreated Mixed up Troubled Used Wounded	Aggravated Annoyed Antagonistic Crabby Cranky Exasperated Fuming Grouchy Hostile Ill-tempered Indignant Irate Irritated Offended Ratty Resentful Sore Spiteful Testy Ticked off	Alienated Alone Apart Cheerless Companionless Dejected Despondent Estranged Excluded Left out Leftover Lonely Oppressed Uncherished	Apologetic Ashamed Contrite Culpable Demeaned Downhearted Flustered Guilty Penitent Regretful Remorseful Repentant Shamefaced Sorrowful Sorry
	Contended Cool Fine Genial Glad Gratified Keen Pleasant Pleased Satisfied Serene Sunny	Appreciative Attentive Considerate Friendly Interested in Kind Like Respecting Thoughtful Tolerant Warm toward Yielding	Blah Disappointed Down Funk Glum Low Moody Morose Somber Subdued Uncomfortable Unhappy	Dry Incomplete Meager Puny Tenuous Tiny Uncertain Unconvincing Unsure Weak Wishful	Anxious Careful Cautious Disquieted Goose-bumpy Shy Tense Timid Uneasy Unsure Watchful Worried	Distracted Uncertain Uncomfortable Undecided Unsettled Unsure	Let down Minimized Neglected Put away Put down Rueful Tender Touched Unhappy	Bugged Chagrined Dismayed Galled Grim Impatient Irked Petulant Resentful Sullen Uptight	Blue Detached Discouraged Distant Insulated Melancholy Remote Separate Withdrawn	Bashful Blushing Chagrined Chastened Crestfallen Embarrassed Hesitant Humble Meek Regretful Reluctant Sheepish

## Strategies for Anxiety Management:

- Identify and change negative projections and anticipations
- What percentage of things you worry about have ever actually happened
- Track anxiety
- Break down the time
- Perception vs. reality
- Keep thoughts reeled in
- If going to create fantasy – make it good
- FEAR
- One thing you would do if you weren't afraid
- The anxiety is in the anticipation
- Trust self
- World gets smaller and smaller
- Anxiety is the door you have to walk through to get to the world you want

# Measuring Anxiety

- 1) Identify an anxiety provoking situation
- 2) Walk client through it
- 3) Stop periodically and ask them to rank anxiety on a 1-5 scale
- 4) When they give something a 4 or 5 rank, ask how long that scenario will take before they move through it
- 5) Calculate amount of time anxiety was at peak
- 6) Provide skills for managing those peaks
- 7) What were you thinking during that high anxiety time
- 8) Are those thoughts rational
- 9) What would be rational thinking
- 10) Recognize that the thinking of it is worse than the doing of it
- 11) Now do this again using rational thoughts and breathing
- 12) GO DO SOMETHING THAT FRIGHTENS YOU

# Social Anxiety

- **Let others decide how they feel about you**
- **The world is a walking mass off insecurity**
- **Is the stuff your reacting to coming at you or from within you**
- **Role of substance use in social anxiety**

# INSIDE-OUT

- **When you feel anxious in social situations, you begin to focus inward**
- **Next time this happens I want you to focus on:**
  - **Pick up your head**
  - **Look around the room**
  - **Closely observe others**
- **Identify someone else who looks uncomfortable**
- **Identify what you might be able to do to help that person feel more comfortable**
- **Decide to act on this or not**