GUYS AND DOLLS
Unraveling The Mystery of Adolescent Males and Females

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ZITS/ by Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman

**UNSPoken COMMUNICATION**

**Girls**
- Check out hair
- Evaluate skin
- Inspect jewelry
- I've seen that top
- Compare figures
- Is that a real tank?
- Annie or cutie?
- Check dentist
- Ugly cellulite?
- New jeans or tights?
- New shoes or flip-flops?
- Nails or ankle bracelets?

**Guys**
- Hi
- Hi
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 thinks 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
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

DID ANYTHING HAPPEN AT SCHOOL TODAY?

CATHY MARTIN WINKED AT ME.
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 males 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
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
  - Clear mind
  - thought stopping
  - 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happiness</th>
<th>Caring</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Inadequateness</th>
<th>Fear</th>
<th>Confusion</th>
<th>Hurt</th>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Loneliness</th>
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<td>Feeble</td>
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(*) Tom Drummond, North Side Community College

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<tr>
<th>STRONG</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>LIGHT</th>
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<td>Thoughtful</td>
<td>Serene</td>
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| Appreciative | Appraising | Attentive |
| Considerate | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Doting    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |
| Devoted    | Appraising | Attentive |

| Dry | Blah | Disappointed |
| Incomplete | Disappointed | Down |
| Meager | Disappointed | Funk |
| Punny | Disappointed | Glam |
| Tenuous | Disappointed | Low |
| Tiny | Disappointed | Moody |
| Uncertain | Disappointed | Morose |
| Unconvincing | Disappointed | Somber |
| Unsure | Disappointed | Subdued |
| Weak | Disappointed | Uncomfortable |
| Wishful | Disappointed | Unhappy |

| Anxious | Dry | Disappointed |
| Careful | Dry | Disappointed |
| Cautious | Dry | Disappointed |
| Disquieted | Dry | Disappointed |
| Goose-bumped | Dry | Disappointed |
| Shy | Dry | Disappointed |
| Tense | Dry | Disappointed |
| Timid | Dry | Disappointed |
| Uneasy | Dry | Disappointed |
| Unsure | Dry | Disappointed |
| Unwatchful | Dry | Disappointed |
| Worried | Dry | Disappointed |

| Distracted | Anxious | Dry |
| Uncertain | Distracted | Disappointed |
| Uncomfortable | Distracted | Down |
| Undecided | Distracted | Dry |
| Unsettled | Distracted | Disappointed |
| Unsafe | Distracted | Disappointed |

| Let down | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Minimized | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Neglected | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Put away | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Put down | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Put down | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Ruffled | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Tender | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Touched | Bugged | Disappointed |
| Unhappy | Bugged | Disappointed |

| Blue | Bug | Disappointed |
| Detached | Bug | Disappointed |
| Distant | Bug | Disappointed |
| Insulated | Bug | Disappointed |
| Melancholy | Bug | Disappointed |
| Remote | Bug | Disappointed |
| Separate | Bug | Disappointed |
| Withdrawn | Bug | Disappointed |

| Bashful | Blue | Bug |
| Blushing | Blue | Bug |
| Chagrined | Blue | Bug |
| Chastened | Blue | Bug |
| Crestfallen | Blue | Bug |
| Embarrassed | Blue | Bug |
| Hesitant | Blue | Bug |
| Humble | Blue | Bug |
| Meek | Blue | Bug |
| Regretful | Blue | Bug |
| Reluctant | Blue | Bug |
| Sheepish | Blue | Bug |
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