

Let us identify stages in life after childhood

You have now passed your childhood and reached adolescence. You were conceived in your mother's womb after an ovum and a sperm were fertilized. After adolescence you will go to the stage of youth followed by middle age and finally old age. Each stage in life has different needs. When obtaining these needs we face many challenges. Knowledge about these stages will help you to function with ease and cope with people of different age groups during these stages in your life.

In grade 10 you learnt about the different needs during childhood.

In this lesson we will study the different needs, problems and challenges faced during adolescence, youth, middle age and old age.

Stages in life

Below are the stages in childhood you learnt last year.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Prenatal period | - period in mother's womb |
| 2. Neonatal period | - from birth to 28 days |
| 3. Infancy | - from birth to one year |
| 4. Early childhood | - from one year to five years |
| 5. Late childhood | - from six years to 10 years |

Let us learn the stages after childhood

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Adolescence | - 10- 19 years |
| 2. Youth | - 20 - 39 years |
| 3. Middle age | - 40 - 59 years |
| 4. Old age | - above 59 years |

Adolescence- stage between 10 and 19 years

Adolescence is a period of transition where one is neither a child nor an adult. During this period one has to face many physical, mental and social changes.



Figure 2.1 - Adolescence

Physical changes

- Rapid physical growth
- Emergence of secondary sexual characteristics
- Maturation of reproductive organs

Changes during adolescence

Mental changes

- Quick to respond to emotions such as anger and happiness
- Creative
- Likes to be independent

Social changes

- Likes to socialize
- Interest in the opposite sex
- Enjoy the company of peers

You will have the opportunity to study more on the above in chapter 16 of this book

It is important that you learn to identify physical, social and mental changes that occur during adolescence.

Needs during adolescence

Physical needs

Nutritional needs

For growth, energy and prevention of illnesses the daily requirement of calories, micro and macro nutrients is important. Growth is rapid during this period and the proper nutrition is needed to have optimum growth and become a healthy parent later.

Exercise

To be healthy, be protected from non-communicable diseases (high blood pressure, diabetes) and be strong, you should engage in exercise.

Rest

Rest is essential to regenerate the body

Mental needs

Love

Love of parents, teachers and relations is very important especially during this period. This is the period where peer company is enjoyed. There is an interest in the opposite sex . It is difficult to differentiate between love, infatuation and emotional acts which can lead to very risky situations. Therefore you should react very intelligently during this stage.

Security

Security from parents and elders is important due to the physical and mental changes. Therefore do not hesitate to discuss your problems openly with your parents.

Rest

It is important to rest your mind to deal with stress and be clear headed

Personality development

This is the period when you want to show your capabilities, be appreciated, show leadership, make independent decisions. Self esteem and personality are developed through these qualities.

Social needs

Education

To maintain an acceptable social standard and get good employment, an adequate level of education is needed.

Socializing with peers

This helps to exchange ideas and interests. The feeling of not being isolated increases self esteem.



Figure 2.2 - Peer groups

Spiritual needs

Learn and practice a form of meditation according to your religion and engage in religious practices together with your parents.

Problems encountered when providing needs of adolescents

Many challenges and problems are encountered during adolescence. Below are few such problems one may face.

1. Deterioration in financial status
2. Inadequate rest
3. Neglect
4. Get misled by others, into wrongdoing
5. Inappropriate relationships
6. Not getting adequate sexual education
7. Inability to balance education and other activities

Steps we can follow to make adolescence a success

1. Engage in educational activities
2. Engage in extra curricular activities
3. Good time management
4. Listen to teachers, parents and trustful elders' advice
5. Associate with good friends
6. Develop the abilities of being creative, making good decisions, rational thinking and good communication.

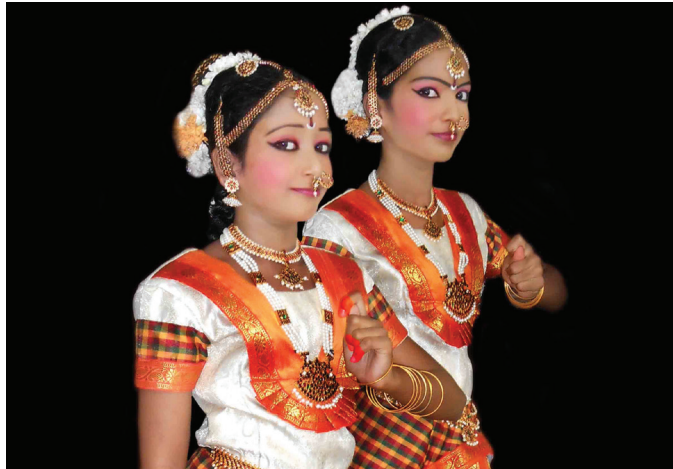


Figure 2.3 - Developing creative abilities



Activity

Write how you coped in the following situations.

1. An instance where your father/mother scolded you for spending a long time in-front of the TV/ computer
2. When your closest friend got angry with you
3. An occasion when your friend persuaded you to go against your parents' wishes
4. When you were disappointed with a result at an exam
5. When a stranger got into an argument with you or your family

Ask an experienced older cousin how he/she would act in a similar situation and add their comments to your answers.

Youth- The period between 20 to 39 years of age

The period between 20 to 39 years of age is youth. This is the period with most human resources. When social responsibilities and duties are performed and one becomes a responsible citizen. By this time the person becomes mature, completes the education, finds jobs and attempts to establish himself in a wide social circle.



Figure 2.4 - Youth

Needs of youth

Physical needs

Nutrition

It is important that you consume foods that generate high energy needed to function and prevent diseases. You should not get used to bad dietary habits that lead to non-communicable diseases.

eg: instant food

food with high salt, sugar or oil

This is the child bearing period, so females should pay more attention to their diet.

Exercise

Exercise might be neglected due to the work load during this period. Obesity, being out of shape, increase in weight and getting non-communicable diseases can occur as a result of this. This can be prevented by sparing some time for exercise and sports.

Rest

Working hard for an extra income and family involvements might not allow you to get adequate rest and can result in ill health. It is important that you identify a form of relaxation suitable to you.

Sexual Needs

A tendency towards sexual needs.

Psychological needs

Rest

Mentally too one should get rest. Stress can be prevented by not being excessively competitive and agitated.

Love and marriage

This is the period where love affairs may end in marriage. In marriage the commitment, economic stability and social status should be considered. Acting on reasoning than on emotions will help to lead a good life. Education and other activities should be balanced. Marriage should be considered at a suitable age to have a successful family life.

Social needs

Higher education

You should enter a field where there is scope and suitable social status, when progressing with higher education.

Employment

It is important that you find a job suited to your level of education and social acceptance.

Housing and possessions

During this period you strive to own a vehicle and home to live a socially accepted life style.

Spiritual needs

It is important that you engage in some form of religious activities to fulfil your spiritual needs. Practice a religion you believe in.

Challenges and issues faced by youth

- Deterioration in economic status
- Not getting suitable employment
- Not having suitable educational qualifications
- Restlessness and competitiveness

You may notice that the above issues are interrelated. Inadequate educational qualifications lead to unsuitable employment which in turn leads to a poor socio

economic status. Therefore to make youth a successful period it is important to lay a good foundation during childhood and adolescence.

In addition, unrest at work and not having an understanding about people causes problems with your associates.

Steps to overcome problems

1. Achieve a high level of education
2. Obtain necessary qualifications for suitable employment
3. Develop skills to get an additional income
4. Have an aim in life
5. Good time management
6. Lead a responsible life with understanding
7. Get involved in creative and religious activities



Figure 2.5 - Achieve a high level of education

Middle age- period between 40 to 59 years

The age group between 40 years and 59 years is called middle age. By this age one portion of this sector who have achieved success in life, face it efficiently and with maturely. The other portion is trying to correct the mistakes and trying to achieve success. Stress, unrest and emerging illness may disturb the life style of this age group.



Figure 2.6 - Middle age

Needs during middle age

Physical needs

Nutrition

There is a risk of getting non-communicable diseases so consumption of sugar and oil should be minimized. It is important that you control your weight and have a balance meal.

Exercise

It is important to engage in daily exercise and lead an active life style

Rest

Although this can be a specially in-restful period, more rest is needed than in a youth

Sexual needs

Sexual need increase.

Psychological needs**Love**

You might feel depressed if your children have migrated or are living separately after marriage

Rest

Physical and mental rest is needed.

Social needs

Desire for promotions and increase in salary to be financially stable
Interest in children and welfare of their families
Interest in obtaining additional source of income

Spiritual needs

Be more involved in religious activities and become more spiritual
Get more involved in charity and creative activities to reduce stress

Problems encountered during middle age

If a solid foundation has not been laid in previous stages this stage can become problematic.

Some issues are given below.

1. Financial difficulties
2. Difficulties in employment
3. Unrest
4. Illnesses
5. Distance from children
6. Sexual problems

Ways of overcoming difficulties to lead a good middle age

- Proper management of finances
- Time management
- Exercise
- Necessary treatment
- Developing good habits
- Guide children in the proper path
- Engage in children's activities in a tactful way
- Recreational activities
- Social welfare activities
- Religious activities to improve one's spiritual life



Figure 2.7 - Involve in religious activities

Old age- Period after 59 years

People over 59 years are referred to as the elderly

Some physical changes occurring during this period are given below

- The skin gets thin, loses its elasticity, becomes dry and wrinkled.
- Hair turns gray and becomes fine and falls.
- The head protrudes forward compared to the body. Shoulders get hunched and become more concave. Therefore the height too is slightly reduced at this age.
- There can be problems associated with hearing, the skeletal system, taste and body functions.



Figure 2.8 - old age

Needs during old age

Physical needs

Nutritional needs

The body becomes weak in this period. There is no growth. Therefore energy producing foods including proteins and minerals are very important. The menu has to be changed depending on the illnesses one has.

Exercise

Age appropriate exercise has to be done as in other stages. Illnesses can be minimized by engaging in daily activities energetically.

Rest

Expects more rest

Psychological needs

Love

Expects more love and attention from others than during previous stages of life. Isolation and loneliness due to children living away. Expects love and kindness from children and grandchildren



Figure 2.9 - Love and attention

Social needs

Important to stay on good terms with children and neighbours. Likes when prominence is given at public places such as hospitals, banks etc., transport facilities and loan concessions. Likes to hold important positions in committees to feel that they are of some service to the society and likes to be appreciated by others.

Spiritual needs

Stress and loneliness during this period can be overcome by engaging in religious activities. Spiritual development should be sought through religion. Even though one's physical and other desires not fulfilled, he/she will be ready to accept it through religion. Religion will give a hope to live and in advance stages of spiritual maturity will give the courage even to face the death peacefully.

Issues faced when supplying needs of the elderly

Problems faced when overcoming loneliness and helplessness which are felt more in this period are given below.

1. Poor socio economic status
2. Different illnesses
3. Physical weakness
4. Distance from children
5. Distance from society
6. Difficult in controlling emotions

Ways of reducing problems of old age

1. Engaging in more religious activities
2. Understanding the future and facing it
3. Getting involved in social work or household activities
4. Remain socially active by joining societies for the elderly
5. Control impulses



Figure 2.10 - Reading religious books



Activity

The elderly population is growing very fast but care of the elderly is deteriorating gradually. Write an essay on “It is our duty to look after the elderly” stating how this situation can be prevented from getting worse.

It is important as an adolescent that you try to help the elderly as much as possible.

As an adolescent, try to pay more attention to your grandmother or grandfather. Ask your parents how your grandparents helped to look after you when you were an infant. You will remember the way they showed their love and affection to you when you were a child.

Your grandparents might be weak or disabled, but don't forget to care for them by showing your love and affection. Do you understand how that it will help them to live in the evening of their lives?



Figure 2.11 - Looking after the elderly



Activity

Identify people of different age groups in your home or relations/ friends or neighbours.

Using the information given below, make a questionnaire to see if their physical, social, mental and spiritual needs are met.

Nutrition: The food they eat
The food they like to eat but don't get often
The amount eaten from each item
eg: breakfast; 1 cup of rice,
2 tablespoons of vegetables

Exercise: Engage in exercise
Daily/weekly/how many days a week
Type of exercise: walking / running
Duration of exercise : $\frac{1}{2}$ hour

Summary

Four post childhood stages with differences can be identified. They are adolescence, youth, middle age and old age.

Each stage has its own physical, mental, social and spiritual needs. Fulfilling these needs lead to different problems.

Identifying ways of overcoming these challenges at every stage will help us lead a happy life.

You are currently in the adolescent stage and should strive to work harmoniously with people in other stages and contribute to alleviate their problems.



Exercise

1. Line up the different stages from childhood to the end of life?
2. Name six needs during adolescence
3. What are your social responsibilities as a youth?
4. Name four social needs during youth
5. Name five common needs in middle age and old age
6. What are the skills you should develop to solve problems and lead a successful life?