Chapter 16 discusses the adolescent's efforts to achieve an identity, focusing on the impact of parents and peer groups on psychosocial development. While the search for identity brings with it certain difficulties, most adolescents reach adulthood safely and securely.

The chapter also examines the influences of family, friends, and society on adolescent psychosocial development, including the development of romantic and sexual relationships. The discussion relates choices made by adolescents to their cognitive abilities and typical shortcomings and to the influence of parents and peers, and it suggests ways in which adolescents may be helped to make healthy choices.

The final two sections look at the toll sadness and anger and drug use and abuse can take on adolescent lives. The chapter concludes by noting that most adolescents and families survive the adolescent transition fairly well.

What Have You Learned?

The “What Have You Learned?” questions at the end of the text chapter are reprinted here for your convenience in checking students' understanding of the chapter contents.

1. What is the relationship between the identity crisis and the past and future?
2. How does identity confusion differ from identity moratorium?
3. Why is foreclosure considered less mature than identity achievement?
4. Why is it premature for adolescents today to achieve their vocational identity?
5. What role do parents play in religious and political identity?
6. What assumptions did most adults hold 50 years ago about sexual identity?
7. Why do parents and adolescents often bicker?
8. When is parental monitoring a sign of a healthy parent-adolescent relationship and when is it not?
9. What are the differences between the influence of parents and that of nonparent adults on adolescents?
10. What are the differences between the influence of peers and the influence of parents?
11. Why do many adults misunderstand the role of peer pressure?
12. What are the similarities and differences in crowds and cliques?
13. What is the role of parents, peers, and society in helping an adolescent develop an ethnic identity?
14. What are the differences in friendship during adolescence and in adulthood?
15. When is an adolescent romance healthy and when is it not?
16. How does culture affect the development of sexual orientation?
17. Where and from whom do adolescents usually learn about sex?
18. What are the variations in sex education in schools, and how does this affect adolescent sexual behavior?
19. What is the difference between adolescent sadness and clinical depression?
20. Why do many adults think adolescent suicide is more common than it is?
21. How can rumination contribute to gender differences in depression and suicide?
22. Why are cluster suicides more common in adolescence than later?
23. Why do arrest statistics show more gender and ethnic differences than self-reported lawbreaking?
24. What are the similarities between life-course-persistent and adolescence-limited delinquents?
25. What are the differences between life-course-persistent and adolescence-limited delinquents?
26. Why are psychoactive drugs particularly attractive in adolescence?
27. Why are psychoactive drugs particularly destructive in adolescence?
28. What are the implications of national differences in drug use during adolescence?
29. What works and doesn’t work in reducing adolescent drug use?

Chapter Guide

“On Your Own” Activities: Developmental Fact or Myth? Portfolio Assignment
Teaching Tip: The Seven Keys to Excellent Teaching
AV: The Journey Through the Life Span, Program 6: Adolescence; Transitions Throughout the Life Span, Program 16: Who Am I? Adolescence: Current Issues
Classroom Activities: Using Literature to Teach Adolescent Psychosocial Development; Problem-Solving Skills; Introducing Adolescents, the Risk Takers—Especially in the United States

I. Identity

**Instructional Objective:** To describe identity statuses, and to explain their importance to the adolescent’s search for self-understanding.

AV: The Development of Self; Who Am I? Psychosocial Development During Adolescence; Adolescence: Social and Emotional Development; Adolescent Personality Development; Girls in America: Identity and Adolescence; Reviving Ophelia; Cultural Identity Development
Teaching Tips “Coming of Age” in Films, TV Programs, and Music Videos; Vocational Identity
“On Your Own” Activities: Who Am I?; How to Speak Gen X and Gen Y
Critical Thinking Activity: Identity Statuses: Four Cases

1. Adolescence heightens the search for self-understanding—that is, to find an identity, because of the momentous changes that occur during the teenage years.
2. According to Erik Erikson, the psychosocial challenge of adolescence is **identity versus role confusion.**
3. For Erikson, the ultimate goal, **identity achievement,** occurs when adolescents establish their own goals and values by abandoning some of those set by parents and culture while accepting others.
4. Some adolescents experience **role confusion,** with few commitments to goals or values, whether those of parents, peers, or the larger society.
5. Other adolescents achieve identity prematurely, a process called **foreclosure.**
6. Many adolescents declare a moratorium, often by using an institutionalized time-out such as college or voluntary military service as a means of postponing final decisions about career or marriage.

7. Erikson described four arenas of identity formation: religious, sexual (gender), political (ethnic), and vocational.

8. For most adolescents, religious identity is similar to that of their parents and community.

9. The term identity politics refers to the tendency to identify with others of one’s group. Identity politics is more limited than Erikson proposed, and in some ways the young are less devoted to group identity than are their elders.

10. Vocational identity in adolescence is no longer relevant. Many adults change vocations several times.

11. Gender identity refers primarily to a person’s self-definition as male or female. It usually leads to a gender role and a sexual orientation, but not always.

II. Relationships with Adults

**Instructional Objective:** To broaden students’ appreciation of the role of parents and the peer group in adolescent behavior, and to discuss the development of male–female relationships during adolescence.

- AV: Building on Adolescent Experience; Drugs and Sex; The Neglected Generation
- Classroom Activities: The Scoop on Generation X and Generation Y; Classroom Debate: “Resolved: Today’s Parents Are Too ________”

1. A certain amount of conflict between parents and adolescents can be found in most families.

2. Parent–adolescent spats are more common in early adolescence, particularly with mothers and their daughters. This conflict often involves bickering, which refers to repeated, petty arguments about daily habits.

3. Some cultures value harmony above all else and avoid conflict. The very idea of adolescent rebellion may be a social construction in middle-class Western culture. In every nation, culture affects the topics of disagreement and the methods of expression.

4. In addition to conflict, another key factor in parent–teen relationships is overall closeness, which has four aspects: communication, support, connectedness, and control.

5. An important part of control is parental monitoring, which is a powerful deterrent for risky sex and drug use. Too much interference, however, may contribute to adolescent depression.

6. Parents have a major impact on their child’s life through guidance, modeling, and decision making.

7. (A View From Science) A longitudinal study of African American families in rural Georgia found that family training that encouraged youth to postpone alcohol use, marijuana use, and sex resulted in healthier development. This was especially true for youth who inherited the short allele of the 5-HTTLPR gene.

8. Other relatives (siblings, cousins, etc.) and those with no biological relationships to the young person (ministers, school counselors, etc.) also are important to adolescent psychosocial development.

III. Peer Power

**Instructional Objective:** To broaden students’ appreciation of the role of the peer group in adolescent behavior, and to discuss the development of teenage sexuality.

- AV: Among Equals; Teenage Relationships; My Bodyguard; Breaking Away; Coping with Peer Pressure; Woman’s Talk 5: Sex Education; Good Girl
- Teaching Tip: Gangs, Cliques, Crews, and “Posses”
- Classroom Activity: The Role of the Peer Group
- Observational Activity: Adolescent Peer Relationships
- “On Your Own” Activity: Survey of Sexual Knowledge
1. Peers serve to bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood.

2. Adolescents group themselves into *cliques*, which are clusters of close friends, and *crowds*, a larger group of peers who share common interests.

3. The notion that *peer pressure* often forces adolescents to act in ways that they otherwise would not is often exaggerated. Furthermore, peer pressure is not necessarily negative and can be constructive. Destructive peer pressure (*deviancy training*) occurs when an adolescent is shown by someone else how to rebel against social norms.

4. Young people usually choose to associate with friends whose values and interests they share. Most peer-inspired misbehavior is a short-lived experiment. Two helpful concepts in understanding the influence of peers are selection, meaning that peers choose one another; and facilitation, referring to the fact that peers encourage one another to do things that none of them would do alone.

5. Heterosexual involvement generally follows a four-step progression, beginning with groups of same-sex friends; followed by loose, public interactions between a girl's group and a boy's group; a smaller mixed-sex group formed from the more advanced members of the larger group; and a final pairing off of couples. Culture affects the timing and manifestation of these stages.

6. Early, exclusive romances are more often a sign of social trouble than maturity, especially for girls.

7. Contrary to adult fears, many teenage romances do not include sexual intercourse.

8. A person's sexual attraction to people of the same sex, other sex, or both sexes constitutes his or her *sexual orientation*.

9. An increasing number of adolescents do not identify with their biological sex and may be diagnosed with what DSM-IV calls *gender-identity disorder*.

10. Almost all parents want other adults to provide their adolescents with up-to-date sex education.

11. Sex-education policies vary dramatically by nation. A controlled study in the United Kingdom found that sex education in school has less of an impact on an adolescent's sexual awakening than family, peers, and culture.

### IV. Sadness and Anger

**Instructional Objective:** To discuss the possible causes and prevention of adolescent suicide and suicidal ideation, and to explore the possible causes and prevention of adolescent lawbreaking.

- AV: Dealing with Teens: A Guide to Survival; Teen Depression; Childhood's End: A Look at Adolescent Suicide; Gifted Adolescents and Suicide; Everything to Live For; Suicide: The Teenager's Perspective; Teenage Suicide; Teen Suicide: Sara's Diary
- Classroom Activity: Suicide Prevention

1. The general emotional trend from late childhood through adolescence is toward less confidence.

2. Research indicates that depression increases at puberty, especially among females. One explanation is that talking about and mentally replaying past experiences (*rumination*) is more common among females. Those who have feelings of hopelessness, lethargy, and worthlessness that last for two weeks or more are *clinically depressed*.

3. Thinking about suicide (*suicidal ideation*) is most common at about age 15. Fortunately, most suicide attempts in adolescence do not result in death. Deliberate acts of self-destruction that do not cause death are referred to as *parasuicide*.

4. Older teenagers today are twice as likely to take their own lives as in 1960 but less likely to do so than in 1980.

5. Although males are more likely than females to kill themselves, females are more likely to suffer depression and parasuicide in every nation except China. This gender difference is due in part to the fact that males use more lethal means and are less likely to ask for help. Media reports regarding suicide may lead to *cluster suicides*. 
6. Experts find it useful to distinguish **adolescent-limited offenders**, whose criminal activity stops by age 21, from **life-course-persistent offenders**, who become career criminals.

7. Two clusters of factors, one from childhood and one from adolescence, predict antisocial behavior and serious crime. The first cluster relates to brain functioning. The second cluster of primarily psychosocial factors includes deviant friends; few connections to school; living in a crowded, violent, unstable neighborhood; not having a job; using drugs; and having close relatives in jail.

### V. Drug Use and Abuse

**Instructional Objective:** To discuss drug use and abuse during adolescence, and to describe possible preventive measures.

- AV: Altered States: A History of Drug Abuse; Drugs: Uses and Abuses; The Next Generation; The Addicted Brain; Obsessions: The Biological Basis of Addiction; Alcohol and the Family: Breaking the Chain; The Buzz Is Not for You: Teenage Drinking; The Cliffs; Kids Under the Influence; Inhalant Abuse: Breathing Easy; Running on Empty: Teens and Methamphetamines; Pretty Colors: Inside America's Rave Culture
- Classroom Activity: Adolescent Drunken Driving
- “On Your Own” Activity: Cohort Differences in Drug Use: A Questionnaire
- Internet Activity: Adolescent Drug Experimentation

1. Between 10 and 25 years of age, both the incidence and prevalence of drug use increase. The best predictor of drug abuse as an adult is drug use before age 18. Drug use varies markedly from nation to nation.

2. In the United States, use of most drugs has decreased over the past 35 years. Adolescent boys use more drugs than girls do.

3. **Drug abuse** is defined as using a drug in a manner that is harmful. When the absence of a drug in a person's system causes physiological or psychological craving, **addiction** is apparent.

4. **Alcohol** is the most frequently abused drug among North Americans. Heavy use of alcohol impairs self-control and memory by damaging the brain's hippocampus and prefrontal cortex.

5. An important factor in drug use is **generational forgetting**, which is the idea that each generation forgets what the previous generation learned.

6. The most effective preventive measures are “anti” ads that appeal to the young, changing the social context, and parental influence.