Social and Emotional Changes During Puberty

Lesson Goals
- Review questions that students left in the question box from the last lesson
- Discuss the social and emotional changes that occur during puberty
- Describe the changing emotions and mood swings that are common during puberty
- Discuss ways to manage moods/emotions during puberty and throughout life
- Identify characteristics of a healthy friendship
- Learn to recognize peer pressure and develop strategies to avoid being negatively influenced by peers

SEL Skills Addressed
- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Relationships skills

Terms Used:
- Peer Pressure
- Mood Swings

TIME: 45 minutes

Materials: Folders, Index Cards, Question Box, and Handouts (Things Change, What’s Happening to Me? Puberty, and Peer Pressure)
Activity 1 - Looking at How Interests Have Changed Over Time

Greet students and ask volunteers to pass out folders, index cards and handouts. Ask students to start filling out the *Things Change Worksheet* while all the other materials are being handed out. Give students some time to finish. Have students share some of their responses. Students should begin to see that many of their interests have changed since they were in kindergarten. Remind them that puberty is a time of great change and that they should be prepared to see many exciting changes in their lives over the next few years.

Activity 2 - What’s Happening To Me (During Puberty)

Pass out the handouts titled *What’s Happening to Me?* and *Puberty: Social and Emotional Changes*. Have students volunteer to read out loud. Switch the reader with each new paragraph. Stop to clarify and explain changes in more detail along the way. Respond to individual questions.

Additional Supporting Material: Website: kidshealth.org (see all about puberty)

Activity 3 - Peer Pressure

Pass out the *Peer Pressure* Handout. Have students read the opening paragraphs that define peer pressure. Assure students that they have a right to abstain from behaviors that are harmful to their health. These are sometimes referred to as “risky behaviors.” Explain that this includes physical harm as well as social, emotional, and spiritual harm. Encourage students to think of examples of risky behaviors that they should abstain from. Guide them to an understanding of some of the possible physical, social, emotional and spiritual harm that could come from participation in risky behaviors.

NOTE: This lesson introduces students to the term “abstinence” and refers to it as not participating in those behaviors that are harmful to one’s well-being (physical - social - emotional - spiritual). At this time, we will apply the word abstinence to a wide range of harmful behaviors such as smoking, drinking, drinking sugary drinks, staying up too late, etc.
Activity 4 - Healthy and Unhealthy Friendships

Pass out the Characteristics of Friendship Chart. Tell students that you want them to list characteristics of a healthy friendship in the left hand column and characteristics of an unhealthy friendship in the right-hand column. You can provide some examples (listed below). Once students have completed their lists, ask them to share some of the characteristics they have come up with and talk a little bit about how the social and emotional changes they are experiencing can affect their friendships.

EXAMPLE:
A good friend...
- is there for the good and bad (not a fair-weather friend)
- respects you for who you are and who you want to become (doesn’t force you to do things that you don’t want to)
- gives you space
- listens

A bad friend...
- makes you feel ashamed and embarrassed easily
- tries to get you to do things that you don’t want to do
- talks behind your back
- is not trustworthy

Activity 5 - Anonymous Questions
Answer some anonymous questions from the question box.

Activity 6 - Closure
Collect folders and index cards. Have students put their index cards in the Anonymous Question Box. Inform students that our next lesson will focus on the physical changes that occur during puberty.
Things Change

Name______________________________________________

Directions: Try to remember some of the things that you were interested in when you were in kindergarten. List those in column marked “kindergarten.” Then, fill in the column marked “now” with some of the things that you enjoy now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Now</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My favorite toy</td>
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<td>My favorite TV show</td>
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<td>My favorite food</td>
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<td>My best friends</td>
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<td>My favorite holiday</td>
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<td>My bedtime</td>
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What’s Happening to Me?...Puberty

Don’t let anyone fool you...everyone goes through it...only nobody talks about it! The years between 9 and 14 are fun, but physically and emotionally they’ll be one of the most puzzling times in your life. Why? You’re turning from a child into a young adult just like the rest of the world. Remember...it’s nothing to be embarrassed or ashamed about...all the changes are normal and you’re not the only one who has ever gone through this difficult time. Remember...your parents, teachers, professional athletes, movie stars, models, etc. were young too!

Why do we change?

The main reason why our bodies change is to prepare our bodies to reproduce the human species (have children of our own should we chose to do so someday). Reproduction is common to all living beings from cows, to pigs, to bugs, to flowers, and elephants. Puberty is the time in our lives when our reproductive systems mature and change.

What is Puberty?

Both boys and girls develop at different rates. Girls usually begin to go through puberty as early as 8 years of age and as late as age 16. Boys can go through puberty as early as age 10 or as late as 18 years. The average for both is between 9 and 14 years of age.

Puberty is the process of growth and development in which males and females become capable of producing children. Puberty begins when a small gland near the brain called the pituitary gland starts to release hormones. A hormone is a special chemical which is made in a gland, and is released into the blood stream. Hormones carry messages from one part of your body to another. The hormone adrenaline, for example, is released when you need extra energy, and helps you run faster or perform better during athletic performance.

The pituitary gland is responsible for your growth. In addition, the pituitary hormones also notify the reproductive glands that it is time for some changes in your body. The reproductive glands start making their own hormones. The two major female hormones are called estrogen and progesterone. Both of these hormones are made in the ovaries, and will help a girl develop into a woman. The major male hormone is called testosterone. Testosterone is made in the testicles, and will help a young boy develop into a man.
Puberty: Social & Emotional Changes

1. **Mood changes may occur (limbic system). May become irritated, angry, or upset easily.**

   Strategies for dealing with being upset (from Second Step):
   - Think about how you feel at that moment (physically and emotionally)
   - Try to calm down by: Taking deep breaths, Counting backwards, thinking calming thoughts, talking to yourself
   - Think out loud to solve your problem
   - Think about it later. Don’t forget about it! Does it still upset you? Use a personal journal to revisit the situation or talk to a parent/guardian or other trusted adult

2. **Proactive strategies for dealing with mood swings**
   - Getting your 60 minutes of exercise per day can decrease stress, can improve mood, and help you manage mood swings
   - Eat regularly scheduled meals (including a well balanced breakfast)
   - Get at least 8 hours of sleep
   - Limit your screen time
   - Balance your schedule to include some quiet time (reading, listening to music)
   - Plan ahead and try to stay organized and prepared
   - Drink water - it’s good for you!
   - Talk about your feelings with a parent or a trusted adult
   - Control your feelings - Don’t let your feelings control you. When negative feelings start to take over - take a break (leave the room, take a short walk, take three deep breaths). Try to figure out what your feelings are trying to tell you. When you are calm - you’ll be able to communicate how you are feeling in an appropriate way.
   - When you do respond inappropriately - apologize and learn from the experience. Ask yourself, how could I have handled that differently. It’s always helpful to ask a parent/guardian or other trusted adult for advice.
2. **Sometimes there is a desire for more independence. This may create a strain on your relationship with your parents/guardians.**

Strategies for becoming more independent:
- BE HONEST (but be kind) with your parents/guardians about your desire to be more independent
- COMPROMISE! If you are given more independence expect to have some more responsibility too.
- NEGOTIATE expectations/rules for your new independence.
- UNDERSTAND that if you don’t live up to agreements about expectations - there will be consequences.
- ASSESS your progress. Check in periodically with your parents/guardian so they can tell you how you are doing. Mistakes and consequences are ways to learn to become more responsible.

3. **You may find that you want more privacy and/or spend some time alone.** This is OK as long as you let your parents know where you are and that you will join them at a determined time (e.g., I need a half hour to myself).

4. **Sometimes there are more conflicts with friends, because of different interests or values.** Old friendships may end while new friendships may begin. Always be respectful to everybody.

5. **Feelings of attraction may begin to develop.**
You may begin to feel strong feelings of attraction towards others. You might experience feelings of excitement to be with a particular person or persons. These feelings can be towards same sex friends or opposite sex friends. All these feelings are normal at this time in your life.
### Characteristics of Friendship

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<th>“Healthy”</th>
<th>“Unhealthy”</th>
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Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is when someone in your peer group tries to influence you to do something. Peer pressure can be used to influence you to do something that is positive or negative. Examples of positive peer pressure could include: joining a new club at school, or trying a new sport. Examples of negative peer pressure could include: using drugs, cheating on a test, or shoplifting.

During adolescence, you may try really hard to hold onto an old friendship, or try really hard to make new friends. Do not give into peer pressure to pursue behaviors that will have a negative effect on your life. What does it feel like when you are being pressured?

When making a decision if you feel pressured ask yourself these three questions:

1) Is it safe? (physically - emotionally)
2) Is it legal? (how would I know)
3) Is it something I can share with my parents? (would I disappoint them by my behavior)

Strategies for dealing with peer pressure:

*The “Broken Record.” When someone tries to influence you to do something negative give them an honest reason why. Whenever they try to pressure you give them that reason. Repeat it like a broken record repeats over...and over...and over...

- Take time to think of a negative behavior you could be pressured into such as: smoking a cigarette, drinking alcohol, or cheating on a test. What is an honest reason why you would not do it that you could repeat over and over like a broken record.

Negative Behavior:

An honest reason why you will not do the negative behavior