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### **Ages & Stages: 14-18 Year Olds**

#### **Our Bodies: *Physical Development & Abilities***

- Most of us have overcome the awkwardness of puberty and are approaching physical maturity with our development.
- Some of us—especially boys—are still experiencing growth spurts and our voices deepen.
- Acne, weight, exercise, and other physical changes make us self-conscious.
- We are very concerned with our body image, and we are swayed by images we see in advertising and the media. We worry if we fit into society's standards of beauty.

#### **Our Minds: *Cognitive Development***

- We are capable of high levels of abstract thought and solving complex problems. We need our learning and activities to be meaningful, complex, and challenging. So challenge us!
- We think about the meaning of life. We enjoy having philosophical discussions and we are developing our own personal philosophies.
- Setting and attaining goals is important to us.
- We are better able to plan for the future and to imagine the future consequences of our actions. We have started thinking about our future goals and ambitions, including our career and post-secondary aspirations.
- We are very curious and we may experiment with drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other risky behaviors.

#### **Our Ears & Mouths: *Language Development***

- We enjoy discussing and debating, particularly concerning issues of moral rights and privileges and the meaning of life.

- We are realizing that sometimes the way we speak at home or with our friends is not appropriate in every setting.
- We want to become experts in our chosen art and forms of self-expression such as music, poetry, drama, visual arts, and creative writing.

### **Our Hearts & Souls: *Social & Emotional Development***

- We are learning more about ourselves and we are figuring out how we fit into the world and how others see us. We try out different answers to the question, “Who Am I?” At different points in our identity formation, we may feel uncertain about our gender, sexual, religious, ethnic and/or racial identities.
- Our friends remain very important to us, but our social networks are growing.
- Our social standing is important to us, and we want to be recognized as unique individuals.
- We care about the wellbeing of others. We are developing a community consciousness, including a sense of social justice.
- We are gaining our independence and further distancing ourselves from our parents.
- Developing our self-confidence is important to us, as is receiving respect for our skills and contributions.
- We often want to take on adult leadership roles and demonstrate our knowledge and skills.

### **Tips for Educators: 14-18 Year Olds**

- Give us opportunities to demonstrate our independence and skills by involving us in the planning of our learning experiences and giving us adult responsibilities.
- Push us to stretch our thinking by providing us with real life problems to solve, make decisions, reflect, and evaluate.
- Give us opportunities to positively contribute to our communities.
- Hold us to high standards and hold us accountable for the success or failure of our plans to keep us on our toes.
- Challenge us on our thinking on our identity, values and beliefs. Encourage us with learning experiences related to self-discovery, self-understanding, and getting along with others.