

## **Puberty Changes: Emotional**

*(Changes Additional Materials Section 1)*

There are many factors which affect young peoples' emotional state during puberty. Indeed whole libraries and internet sites are filled with this material. References will be provided in the Community Section.

The main pressures are around the following areas:

- Hormones
- Peer Pressure
- Identity/Self Awareness

### **Hormones**

In both boys and girls fluctuating hormone levels can cause mood swings, extremes of emotion and a lack of consistency. There can be stress involved in dealing with all the changes.

In family life this is difficult and many parents remark that it is difficult to know how to respond. For girls there are the added dilemmas around the menstrual cycle. PMS (Pre menstrual syndrome) and the hormone levels can cause difficulties for some girls, as they get used to the changes in their body. Hormone levels affect boys too and they can become more aggressive.

The increasing awareness of their own sexuality through the physical changes produces emotional repercussions. They can be more prone to emotional outbursts which seem to flare up out of nowhere.

### **Peer Pressure**

Peer pressure in these years is enormous and that combined with media and cultural norms can be difficult for families.

The fact that the changes in hormone levels do not tend follow a prescribed timetable causes young people to compare themselves with others. The boy with the squeaky voice at 15 may be worried and will feel pressure from his friends. The 12 year old girl who has fully developed breasts and looks older and more sexually aware than her peers may struggle. She may not know how to deal emotionally with responses from the opposite sex from older boys.

### **Identity/Self Awareness**

The onset of puberty is characterised by a search for identity and with that comes increasing self awareness. Risk taking is associated with this age and yet in taking risks young people often feel insecure and unsure. They can fluctuate between being an adult and child all in the space of half an hour. The challenge to find their own way to do things can result in severe clashes both with their friends and within the family. Often they are very self conscious about the way they look and for many the pressure to conform and yet be their own person affects them emotionally.