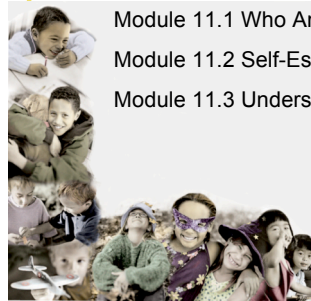**Understand self and others**

IIE 366: Developmental
Psychology

Greg Francis

Lecture 27

Chapter 11: Understanding Self and Others

Module 11.1 Who Am I? Self-Concept

Module 11.2 Self-Esteem

Module 11.3 Understanding Others

Children and Their Development, 4/e by Robert Kail

11.1 Who Am I? Self-Concept

Origins of Self-Recognition

The Evolving Self-Concept

The Search for Identity

11.1 Origins of Self-Recognition

- By 15 months, infants begin to show self-recognition in mirror task
  - Before this babies like to look at themselves in the mirror, but they do not appear to recognize themselves, they just find the image interesting
  - Easy test: put a red mark on the child's nose. If they recognize themselves, they reach to their physical nose to touch the mark
- At 18-24 months, children look more at photos of self than others and refer to self by name or personal pronoun
- Awareness of self extends to an understanding of ownership
  - toys
- Self-concept comes from self-awareness
  - An internal view of their properties and traits

11.1 The Evolving Self-Concept

- Preschoolers mention concrete characteristics such as physical characteristics, preferences, possessions, and competencies
  - Focus on features that are observable and concrete
- At 6-8 years, children begin to mention emotions, social groups, and comparisons to others
  - Emotion and social groups exists earlier, but children do not seem to consider to be part of their identity
- Adolescents mention attitudes, personality traits, religious/political beliefs, variation with context, and an orientation to the future
  - Often describe in terms of what they will be when they reach adulthood

Developmental Changes in Self-Concept

| Summary Table: Developmental Change in Self-Concept		
Preschoolers	**School-Age Children**	**Adolescents**
Possessions	Emotions	Attitudes
Physical characteristics	Social groups	Personality traits
Preferences	Comparisons with peers	Beliefs vary with the setting
Competencies		Future oriented

I like cars and trucks.

I'm the best goalie in my class.

I'm quiet and shy at school.

11.1: The Evolving Self-Concept

11.1 The Search for Identity

- Adolescents use hypothetical reasoning to experiment with different selves
  - Careers
  - Romantic relationships
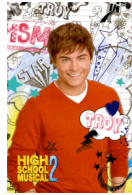
11.1 The Search for Identity

- Adolescence characterized by
  - self-absorption (adolescence egocentrism): believe that they are the focus of other's thinking
  - imaginary audience: feel that they are being watched by others (and thus over react to mistakes)
  - personal fable: believe that their experiences and beliefs are unique
  - illusion of invulnerability: believe that misfortune only happens to others (sex and pregnancy, reckless driving)
- Effects tend to disappear as adolescents form an identify

11.1 The Search for Identity

- Stages of identity (not necessarily in this order):
  - *Diffusion:* doing little to form an identity; confusion
  - *Foreclosure:* identify is determined largely by adults
  - *Moratorium:* examining different alternatives
  - *Achievement:* deliberately chosen a specific identify
- Different parts of identify can develop at different times
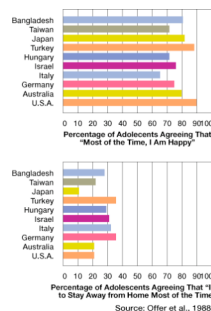 - Religion, politics, career

11.1 The Search for Identity

- Most teens don't experience conflict and turmoil
  - In contrast to the portrayals in movies and novels
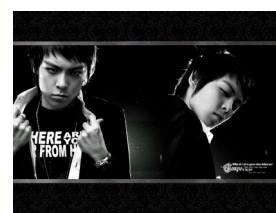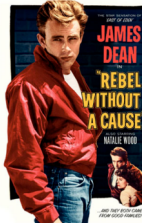
Attitudes and Behaviors of Adolescents

- Most teens
  - Admire and love their parents
  - Rely upon their parents for advice
  - Embrace many of their parents' values
  - Feel loved by their parents
- This doesn't mean that they tell their parents!

Percentage of Adolescents Agreeing That "Most of the Time, I Am Happy"

Percentage of Adolescents Agreeing That "I Try to Stay Away from Home Most of the Time"
Source: Offer et al., 1988.

11.1: The Search for Identity

11.2 Self-Esteem

Measuring Self-Esteem

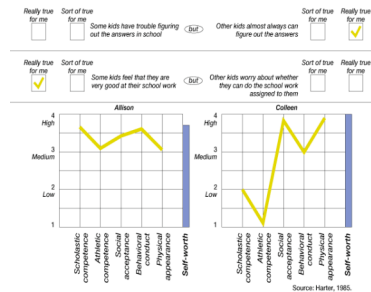Developmental Change in Self-Esteem

Sources of Self-Esteem

Low Self-Esteem: Cause or Consequence?

11.2 Measuring Self-Esteem

- One common measure: Self-Perception Profile for Children
- Measures overall self-esteem as well as self-esteem in 5 specific areas (all about how the child *feels* about their abilities):
  - > scholastic competence
  - > athletic competence
  - > social acceptance
  - > behavioral conduct
  - > physical appearance

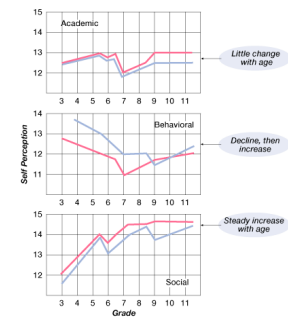### Sample Items and Profiles from SPPC

| Really true for me | Sort of true for me | Some kids have trouble figuring out the answers in school | but | Other kids almost always can figure out the answers | Sort of true for me | Really true for me |

| Really true for me | Sort of true for me | Some kids feel that they are very good at their school work | but | Other kids worry about whether they can do the school work assigned to them | Sort of true for me | Really true for me |

Allison   Colleen

Source: Harter, 1985.

11.2: Measuring Self-Esteem

11.2 Developmental Change in Self-Esteem

- Self-esteem is highest in preschoolers
  - ◆ Cannot really measure self-esteem for younger children
- Drops during the elementary school years due to social comparisons
  - ◆ Discover they are not the fastest runner or the best speller
- Self-esteem sometimes drops during the move to middle school or junior high
- Pattern of change in self-esteem varies for different domains

Changes in Self-Esteem

Academic — Little change with age

Behavioral — Decline, then increase

Social — Steady increase with age

■ Boys ■ Girls

11.2: Developmental Change in Self-Esteem

11.2 Sources of Self-Esteem

- Children have higher self-esteem when parents:
  - ◆ are nurturing and involved
  - ◆ establish rules concerning discipline
- Comparisons with others (particularly peers)
- Self-esteem is high when others view positively and low when others view negatively
- Gifted children in gifted classes may have lower self-esteem than those in regular classes

11.2 Low Self-Esteem: Cause or Consequence

- Children with low self-esteem are more likely to
  - ◆ have problems with peers
  - ◆ have psychological disorders
  - ◆ be involved in bullying and aggressive behavior
  - ◆ do poorly in school
- Sometimes it's difficult to establish cause and effect relations regarding low self-esteem
  - ◆ Low self-esteem cause peers to avoid them?
  - ◆ Or self-esteem is low because peers think negatively about them?
  - ◆ Can produce a vicious cycle

11.3 Understanding Others

Describing Others

Understanding What Others Think

Prejudice

11.3 Describing Others

- Descriptions of others follow similar course as descriptions of self
- Descriptions that include appearance and possessions become less common
- Between 8 and 14 years, descriptions of personality traits increase

11.3 Understanding What Others Think

- Preschoolers are egocentric
  - Cannot see the world from another's perspective (three mountain problem)
- According to Selman, *perspective taking* increases with age and depends on cognitive development
  - Undifferentiated (3-6 years): often confuse self and others
  - Social-informational (4-9 years): understand that people have different information and so different perspectives
  - Self-reflective (7-12 years): can view themselves as others do
  - Third-person (10-15 years): can step outside the immediate situation and consider how they and another person are viewed by a third person
  - Societal (14-adult): realize that a third-person's perspective is influenced by personal, social, and cultural contexts
- Children with good perspective-taking skills get along better with their peers

11.3 Understanding What Others Think

- Measure a stage of perspective taking with dilemmas:

    Holly is an 8 year old girl who likes to climb trees. She is the best tree climber in the neighborhood. One day while climbing down from a tall tree she falls off the bottom branch but does not hurt herself. Her father sees her fall. He is upset and asks her to promise not to climb trees anymore. Holly promises.
    Later that day, Holly and her friends meet Sean. Sean's kitten is caught up in a tree and cannot get down. Something has to be done right away or the kitten may fall. Holly is the only one who climbs well enough to reach the kitten and get it down, but she remembers her promise to her father.

- Ask questions children to see how they are able to take on the perspective of different characters

11.3 Understanding What Others Think

- Undifferentiated: confuse their own thoughts with other characters
  - Holly's dad will be happy she rescued the kitten.
- Social-informational: father's response depends on what he knows
  - Holly's father will not be angry if he knew why she climbed the tree.
- Self-reflective: understand that father can view the situation from Holly's perspective
  - He won't be mad because he understood that she wanted to save the kitten's life.
- Third-person: considers both Holly's and father's perspective
- Societal: considers both Holly's and father's perspective *and* puts the issue in a broader context of the relationship between Holly and her father (e.g., she usually obeys him)

11.3 Prejudice

- *Prejudice*: a negative view of others based on group membership
- Preschoolers and kindergarteners attribute many positive traits to their own group
  - Negative views of other groups are usually just that they are not "as good"
- Usually declines some during elementary school as children learn about diversity in different groups
  - But they do become aware of prejudice
  - Racial stereotypes
- Prejudice increases during adolescence due to exposure to prejudice around them and an increased preference for own group
- Can reduce prejudice by encouraging friendly, constructive contact between groups and role playing

Next time

- Moral understanding