

ASD and Adolescence Part Five - Emotional and Social Changes

This article is the fifth of a series of eight articles about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and adolescence. The articles are designed to be a guide for parents of children with ASD; they will provide information about adolescence, the extra challenges that may arise for children with ASD during this time, and techniques for teaching your child about adolescence and dealing with the challenges.

The eight articles are:

1. Introduction
2. Physical changes and lifestyle choices
3. Teaching public and private and appropriate sexual language
4. Emotional and social changes
5. Peer pressure, bullying, drugs and alcohol
6. Sexuality
7. Unwanted sexual attention and sexual abuse
8. Techniques and advice for parents

Peer pressure

Peer pressure occurs everywhere at every stage of life but is particularly common during adolescence. Peer pressure is the feeling of having to do something to be accepted by others.

In some instances peer pressure can be good. For example if one member of a group works very hard to succeed, it may encourage the other members of the group to also work hard.

However, peer pressure can also be a problem, especially when someone is being pressured to do something that is wrong, bad or illegal. To be able to say 'no' to peer pressure, children need to be confident in saying so, and have knowledge of issues they are likely to be pressured about, for example, sex, health and drugs. If children are knowledgeable, they will be able to make informed decisions, and will be less likely to give in to peer pressure.

Teasing versus bullying

Teasing is good natured joking between friends. If they are teasing someone in a friendly way, children need to be sure that the person they are teasing is ok with that.

Bullying is being singled out and harassed on a regular basis. Children that are being bullied need to tell others about the bullying and it should be reported to the school.

Drugs and alcohol

Children need to have knowledge of drugs and alcohol, of the effects and of the risks involved. Again, information is necessary to make good decisions. Alcohol and cigarettes are legal drugs, but any drug can cause harm if it is misused.

Reasons that adolescents may turn to drugs and alcohol include peer pressure, being influenced by friends, wanting to rebel, feeling bored or curious, wanting to fit in, and wanting to look grown up.



References and Recommended Reading

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