

Puberty Activity Method

Target Group: Young People 13+	Length of Session: 20 Minutes
Keywords: Body, Hormones, Emotions, Changes, Genitals, Gender, Identity, Reproduction	Main Discussion Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact of puberty changes in people physically, mentally and emotionally ○ Importance of hygiene ○ Everyone changes at different rates, shapes and sizes ○ Not helpful to compare yourself to others. ○ Reproductive system in preparation for sexual health session
Resources Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Flip chart paper ➤ Pens and coloured felt tips ➤ Arts and crafts (optional) ➤ Puberty Crib Sheet ➤ Reproductive Cycle Diagram 	

Aims of Activity: To better understand the changes that happen to people during puberty including physical, mental and emotional changes and reproductive systems.

Discussion Points:

Experience of puberty is individual and not everyone will go through the same changes at the same time. Stress the importance that it is ok to be different from someone else. In this session we consider puberty in the context of gender assigned at birth. It is not always possible to assign gender at birth; there are a variety of conditions that fall under the umbrella term 'intersex' – more information at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/differences-in-sex-development/>.

Individuals receiving treatment as part of any gender transition care may experience bodily changes relating to both female and/or male genders, and it is important to recognise that everybody, regardless of gender identity experiences bodily changes.

Discuss with group that bodies mature and change as they transition into adulthood. As part of this experience the reproductive system develops, its function is to enable pregnancy. During puberty feelings and emotions may be heightened which might be confusing and overwhelming. Some changes may not feel comfortable and offer reassurance that puberty is an individual and holistic experience. Participants can get support to discuss any concerns or worries. Despite how everybody changes and what people experience, it is important that participants remain respectful of others and considerate that some people might be finding puberty a very confusing and challenging time. Psychical and mental well-being is really important, and promoting self-care is essential in looking after one's self and others.

As long as the session remains respectful, allow for young people to express themselves, sometimes they may exhibit 'immature' behaviour. This may be due to embarrassment or feeling uncomfortable.

Use the puberty crib sheet for further discussion about bodily changes.

Method:

1. Split the group into equal groups (recommended 4) give each group a piece of flipchart paper get them to draw a large 'gingerbread person' body outline on the sheet.
2. Assign groups to either male body changes and or female body changes
3. Inform the groups that they have 10 minutes to draw the changes that happen during puberty on the gingerbread person. Use the coloured pens or arts and crafts. Changes needs to include physical as well as emotional, such as thoughts and feelings.
4. Bring the groups back to a whole group and discuss their drawings. Use the crib sheet to discuss the changes they might have missed.
5. Use the main discussion points to have conversations about how changes affect different people including those that may not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth or that are finding puberty challenging (e.g. body shape, mental health, sexual orientation, gender, periods).
6. Be sure to discuss how these changes affect people and how hygiene becomes more important as a result.
7. Use the reproductive cycle diagram to explain periods in more detail in preparation for contraceptive sexual health session.
8. End this activity by reassuring the group that everyone changes at different rates, everyone comes in different shapes and sizes and it is normal to notice what other people look like, but not always helpful to compare yourself to others. We are all unique.

Puberty Crib Sheet

	<u>Assigned Male at birth</u>	<u>Assigned Female at birth</u>
Hormones	<p>Testosterone (testes)</p> <p>Progesterone (adrenal glands prior to puberty)</p>	<p>Oestrogen (Ovaries)</p> <p>Progesterone (adrenal glands initially then Ovaries from puberty onwards),</p> <p>Testosterone</p>
Physical changes as a result of hormones	<p>Hair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Body hair – legs, arms, chest - Facial hair (bum-fluff) - Pubic hair – groin and armpits 	<p>Hair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Body Hair- legs, arms - Pubic hair – groin and armpits
	<p>Genitals develop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penis grows longer and thicker - Testes take 6 years to mature - Fertile - Foreskin – retraction and Smegma 	<p>Genitals develop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labia minora and majora develop and grow as does the clitoris <p>The uterus and ovaries – fertile</p>
	<p>Voice ‘breaks’ deepens – can be unpredictably squeaky for a period before it permanently deepens.</p>	<p>Eggs are produced from the ovaries (one per month normally)</p>
	<p>Muscle development</p>	<p>Menstruation (periods) – monthly cycle of the uterus preparing to receive a fertilised egg and renewing each cycle when this doesn’t occur</p>
	<p>Body odours</p>	<p>Body odours</p> <p>Breasts develop</p> <p>Areolae may darken</p>
	<p>Ejaculation can occur – wet dreams, erections, morning wood, masturbation</p>	<p>Hips and thighs widen – allowing for a wider birth canal</p> <p>Fat redistribution (thighs, bum, arms and hips)</p> <p>Lips (facial) redden too.</p>
	<p>Acne</p>	<p>Acne</p>
Emotional	<p>Increased emotional fluctuations</p>	<p>Increased emotional fluctuations</p>
	<p>Increased interest in sex and partners</p> <p>Increased self-awareness (Looks, style, opinions, social wellbeing)</p> <p>Comparing one’s self to others</p>	<p>Increased interest in sex and partners</p> <p>Increased self-awareness (Looks, style, opinions, social wellbeing)</p> <p>Comparing one’s self to others</p>

Reproductive Cycle Diagram

