



**Who Am I?**

**Where am I in my development?**

**How am I doing? Who/what can help me?**

**What is important to me? What are my values?**

**What challenges will I face? How are they different?**

This workbook will help you to get to know yourself and your situation better. This will help you survive your teen years. Answer the questions, or fill in the sections to remind yourself about you and your experiences. Knowledge can set you free. Be specific with examples of what you have done, what people have done to you and for you, what others have said to you or about you, your results, your accomplishments and your challenges.



# **It's all about me.**

**An Autobiographical Workbook to Help Young People Survive Adolescence**

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**Who am I? (A Self-Discovery Checklist From Canadian Heritage)**  
**(Answer these questions in point form)**

What kinds of things do I like doing? Consider school work, clubs, hobbies, cultural activities, sports, etc	
What kinds of activities do I enjoy the most? What am I good at? What do I dislike doing?	
What would I consider my greatest accomplishment(s) so far? What knowledge and skills helped me do this well?	
What are my strongest skills and abilities? What skills have I gained at school and through extra-curricular and leisure activities? What kinds of skills would I like to develop? What new activities would I like to try?	
Do I prefer to work as a part of team or on my own? Do I like taking on a leadership role or do I try to avoid it?	
What occupations or types of jobs appeal to me? What would my ideal job be?	
What would I like to accomplish over the next five years? What do I picture myself doing in ten years in my professional life? In my personal life?	
What kinds of things am I concerned about beyond my own personal life? If I could change one thing for the better in my community, my country or the world, what would it be?	
What kinds of things do I admire in other people and why? How would I define a successful life?	

## Where am I in my development? (From Normal Adolescent Development, American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychology)

A teenager's development can be divided into three stages –early, middle and late adolescence, but they actually do not happen in a structured, lockstep way. The normal feelings and behaviors of adolescents for each stage are described below. In the space provided, add notes on times when you have displayed those behaviours, or had those thoughts or feelings.

Stages of Development	Examples in My Life
<b>Early Adolescence (12-14 years)</b>	
<b>Movement Towards Independence</b> Struggle with sense of identity, Moodiness, Improved abilities to use speech to express views, More likely to express feelings by action than by words, Close friendships gain importance, Less attention shown to parents, with occasional rudeness, Realization that parents are not perfect; identification of their faults, Search for new people to love in addition to parents, Tendency to return to childish behavior, fought off by excessive activity, Peer group influence interests and clothing styles	
<b>Career Interests</b> Mostly interested in present and near future, Greater ability to work	
<b>Sexuality</b> Girls ahead of boys, Same-sex friends and group activities, Shyness, blushing and modesty, Show-off qualities, Greater interest in privacy, Experimentation with body (masturbation), Worries about being normal	
<b>Ethics and Self-Direction</b> Rule and limit testing, Occasional experimentation with cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol, Capacity for abstract thought	
<b>Middle Adolescence</b>	
<b>Movement Towards Independence</b> Self-involvement, alternating between unrealistically high expectations and poor self-concept, Complaints that parents interfere with independence, Extremely concerned with appearance and with one's own body, Feelings of strangeness about one's self and body, Lowered opinion of parents, withdrawal of emotions from them, Effort to make new friends, Strong emphasis on the new peer group with the group identity of selectivity,	

<p>superiority and competitiveness,          Periods of sadness as the psychological loss of the parents takes place,          Examination of inner experiences, which may include writing a diary</p>	
<p><b>Career Interests</b>          Intellectual interests gain importance,          Some sexual and aggressive energies directed into creative and career interests</p>	
<p><b>Sexuality</b>          Concerns about sexual attractiveness,          Frequently changing relationships,          Movement towards heterosexuality with fears of homosexuality,          Tenderness and fears shown towards opposite sex,          Feelings of love and passion</p>	
<p><b>Ethics and Self-Description</b>          Development of ideals and selection of role models,          More consistent evidence of conscience,          Greater capacity for setting goals,          Interest in moral reasoning</p>	
<p><b>Late Adolescence (17-19 years)</b></p>	
<p><b>Movement Towards Independence</b>          Firmer identity,          Ability to delay gratification,          Ability to think ideas through,          Ability to express ideas in words,          More developed sense of humor,          Stable interests, Greater emotional stability,          Ability to make independent decisions,          Ability to compromise,          Pride in one's work          Self-reliance,          Greater concern for others</p>	
<p><b>Career Interests</b>          More defined work habits,          Higher level of concern for the future,          Thoughts about one's role in life</p>	
<p><b>Sexuality</b>          Concerned with serious relationships,          Clear sexual identity          Capacities for tender and sensual love</p>	
<p><b>Ethics and Self-Direction</b>          Capable of useful insight,          Stress on personal dignity and self-esteem,          Ability to set goals and follow through,          Acceptance of social institutions and cultural traditions,          Self-regulation of self esteem</p>	

## How am I doing? Who has helped me? Who Else Can Help? (From Health Canada-Growing Healthy Kids)

Based on extensive research, the factors that predict a successful transition through adolescence have been identified. That same research has identified how families/parents, schools, communities and workplaces can help young people. Read through the section of adolescence from [www.growinghealthykids.com](http://www.growinghealthykids.com) to identify the specific things that parents, teachers, community leaders and employers can do for you. Then, note when and where you have received such help, or try to identify ways that you can access that help individually, or ways that you can encourage those people to help you or other young people. To do this, complete the chart below. (We have added some items to get you started.)

Ways to a successful transition to and through adolescence	Ways that people and agencies to help young people	Note times when this help has been provided, (or not)	Try to identify ways that you can encourage those people or agencies to help youth better.
Develop a secure and integrated sense of identity	<p><u>Parents/Families can:</u> Praise their kids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Set limits</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul> <p><u>Young people can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Recognize people develop at different rates</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul> <p><u>Schools/Teachers can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sponsor parent groups</li> <li>o Offer peer helper programs</li> <li>o Establish fair school discipline polices</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul> <p><u>Communities can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Help young parents learn how to be good parents</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul> <p><u>Employers can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Encourage employees to volunteer at schools</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mom thanked me for taking care of my kid brother when she had to go to the Doctor</li>   <li>o the no-smoking policy at school is not applied to teachers, only students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o ask the Principal to form a committee to review the school discipline policies</li> </ul>

<p>Develop strong social skills</p>	<p><u>Parents/Families can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o allow kids to express their feelings (respectfully) especially when there is a crisis or argument</li> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul> <p><u>Young people can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul> <p><u>Schools/Teachers can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o teach conflict resolution skills</li> </ul> <p><u>Communities can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o</li> <li>o</li> </ul> <p><u>Employers can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o</li> </ul>		
<p>Make a commitment to learning and participating in school</p>	<p><u>Parents/Families can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o ask questions and provide support about homework</li> <li>o ask their child questions about bullying</li> </ul> <p><u>Young people can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o report or intervene with bullying</li> </ul> <p><u>Schools/Teachers can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Offer a variety of extra-curricular activities</li> </ul> <p><u>Communities can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sponsor campaigns to reduce family violence and abuse</li> </ul> <p><u>Employers can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Encourage parents to attend</li> </ul>	<p>joined a club after school</p>	

	<p>school meetings and teacher interviews</p>		
<p>Make healthy choices</p>	<p><u>Parents/Families can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Take young children to libraries, exhibits</li> </ul> <p><u>Young people can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Seek out healthy activities, sports, hobbies</li> </ul> <p><u>Schools/Teachers can:</u></p> <p><u>Communities can:</u></p> <p><u>Employers can:</u></p>		
<p>Be adaptable to different needs, circumstances and challenges</p>	<p><u>Parents/Families can:</u></p> <p><u>Young people can:</u></p> <p><u>Schools/Teachers can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Reach out to immigrant families</li> </ul> <p><u>Communities can:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Provide support to families going through divorce or a death in the family</li> </ul> <p><u>Employers can:</u></p>		

## What is important to me? What are my values?

A group of university students have studied how young people develop the values that will guide them for the rest of their lives. Visit their web site at Penn State University (<http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/n/x/nxd10/transition/group210/home.htm> ) Read about the eight things that influence (positively or negatively) the development of our values. Then list the specific ways that these eight things influences the development of values. In the third column, note if and how some of those things apply to you.

<b>Influence on Values</b>	<b>How this influences Youth</b>	<b>How this might be influencing me</b>
<b>Sex/Sexuality</b>		
<b>Media Influences</b>		
<b>Leisure Activities</b>		
<b>Feelings of Belonging</b>		
<b>Friendships</b>		
<b>Family/Parents</b>		
<b>Religion and Beliefs</b>		
<b>Gender</b>		

## What Challenges will I face?

The Vanier Institute, a research and public policy organization that studies families has published a paper on young Canadians today. Read that paper and reflect on of and how the challenges that paper identifies are relevant to you.

Challenges Facing Young Canadians Today	Notes on the Paper (Describe what those challenges are and how they may be different than those faced by other generations)	Is this relevant to my life? How?
Finding Work/Planning a Career		
Volunteering		
Getting an Education		
Pressure to Consume		
Difficulty Coping		
Drinking or Not		
Having Someone to talk to		
Sexual Orientation/Gender/Identity		
Body Image		
Staying at Home Longer		
Cultures/Aboriginal Youth		
Crime/Bullying		
Sex /New Consequences/ Pregnancy		
Other Challenges not Identified in Paper(List them)		