

## WAYS TO PREVENT DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY AMONG TEENAGERS

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### Abstract

The article scientifically analyzes the role of emotional intelligence (EQ) in preventing depressive states in adolescence. The influence of hormonal changes and psychological crises on emotional instability in adolescence is considered. The main purpose of the study is to substantiate the importance of components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy) in increasing adolescent stress tolerance. The author offers theoretical conclusions that prove that adolescents with a high level of emotional intelligence are less prone to depressive symptoms.

The purpose of the article is to identify the structural components of emotional intelligence in adolescence and to provide a scientific and theoretical justification for its preventive role in suppressing depressive states. We are considering the possibilities of strengthening the concept of the "I" of a teenager through the development of emotional intelligence and increasing his psychological stability (endurance).

**Keywords:** adolescence, emotional intelligence, depression, prevention, emotional regulation, psychological resilience, empathy, the concept of "I".

### Introduction

The development of emotional intelligence (EQ) in the prevention of depression and anxiety among adolescents is the most effective strategy.

Adolescence is characterized as a period of "storm and stress" in the development of personality. At this time, there is a big gap between the physiological maturity and the psychological needs of the child. According to the World Health Organization, depressive disorders among adolescents are increasing over the years. In this regard, the development

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of emotional intelligence (EQ) is becoming an important tool for maintaining the mental health of adolescents.

Currently, adolescence is one of the most difficult and critical periods in human development, and it remains the focus of attention of the scientific community. In psychological science, this period is classically described as a period of "storm and stress." This characteristic stems from the obvious discrepancy between the acute physiological maturity of a teenager and his socio-psychological needs. Hormonal changes in the body lead to lability of the nervous system and enhance the adolescent's response to external stimuli.

According to the latest reports from the World Health Organization, every seventh teenager in the world is confronted with mental disorders, and depressive states are becoming one of the main causes of disability and social maladjustment. In particular, the rapid development of digital technologies and social networks adds additional weight to the emotional state of adolescents and contributes to the growth of factors such as isolation, cyberbullying and low self-esteem.

The first signs of depressive symptoms often begin with the fact that a teenager cannot recognize his feelings and the mechanisms of their regulation are not formed. Although the main focus in educational institutions is on academic achievement (IQ), the problem of emotional literacy, which ensures internal stability of the individual, remains in the shadows. In this regard, the concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) should be considered as an internal resource for maintaining a teenager's mental health and preventing depression. Emotional intelligence is not just "good behavior", it is a complex psychological structure that allows a teenager to consciously manage his emotional reactions, show stress tolerance and establish constructive social connections.

Emotional instability and depressive tendencies in adolescence are based on complex processes of restructuring the neuroendocrine system. At this stage, the relationship between biological factors and psychological reactions is carried out through the hypothalamus–pituitary–peripheral glands axis.

The most important structural feature of the adolescent brain is the gap in the rate of development of the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex . A sharp increase in the level of sex hormones increases the sensitivity of the limbic system. This causes the teenager to react to any little thing too emotionally, aggressively or melancholically.

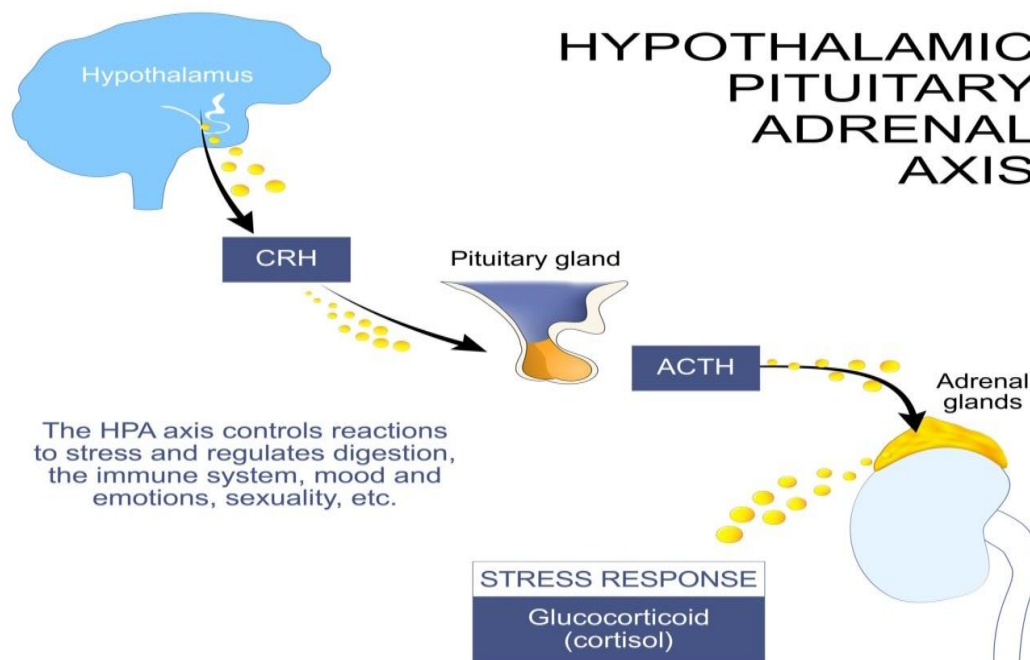
## Results and Discussion

Hormonal changes directly affect neurotransmitter metabolism, in particular, the synthesis of serotonin and dopamine:

Serotonin deficiency: fluctuations in the levels of estrogen and progesterone can reduce the activity of the "hormone of happiness" — serotonin, which causes unreasonable sadness, anxiety and depressive thoughts in a teenager.

Dopamine system remodeling: The density of dopamine receptors changes in the adolescent brain. This leads to instability of the "reward system", causing a teenager to have new experiences, increased risk-taking, or, conversely, a complete loss of interest in the environment .

During adolescence, control over the level of cortisol ,released by the adrenal glands weakens. Any psychological pressure ,leads to a prolonged increase in cortisol levels in the body. Chronically high cortisol levels negatively affect the neurons of the hippocampus , impairing cognitive functions and strengthening the depressive background.



## Materials and Methods

The development of emotional intelligence is, in fact, the process of training the prefrontal cortex to resist the "power" of the limbic system. When a teenager learns to recognize his emotions, neural connections in the brain are strengthened, and it becomes possible to consciously restrain hormonal "storms". This neuroplastic process is the main psychological and biological barrier that opposes depressive states.

Thus, the behavior of a teenager is not just "lack of education" or "prank", it is a complex adaptive reaction of the nervous system in the context of a hormonal explosion. Therefore, at this stage, teaching a teenager emotional support and self-regulation skills is a biological necessity.

Modern teenagers are "digital natives", most of the process of their socialization takes place in the virtual space. However, digitization has brought not only opportunities to the emotional world of a teenager, but also deep psychological dangers.

Social media (Instagram, TikTok, etc.) offer teenagers an idealized, filtered lifestyle. The teenager begins to compare his real life, his physical body with the virtual "ideal" image of others.

This process causes a teenager to feel "I'm worse than them," "my life is boring," which leads to chronic dissatisfaction and body dysmorphic phobia.

Getting virtual approval— stimulates the dopamine system of the brain. Less of it leads to the teenager feeling unnecessary and emotionally exhausted.

Aggression or cyberbullying in a digital environment is much more dangerous than harassment in a traditional school. The reason: harassment lasts around the clock, and its audience can be endless. A teenager continues to be subjected to psychological attacks using a gadget, even while at home. This condition creates a feeling of a "vicious circle" and becomes the main trigger of deep depression and suicidal thoughts.

There is a widespread "fear of being excluded from an important event" among teenagers. They will have to constantly monitor the news on the web. Too much information and sleep disturbances deplete the nervous system. The "blue light" emitted by the screen suppresses the release of melatonin, the sleep hormone. It has been scientifically proven that there is a direct correlation between chronic sleep disorders and depression.

In virtual communication, emotions are exchanged with emoticons or short texts. This weakens a teenager's ability to recognize "live" emotions, facial expressions, and tone of voice in real life. The inability to understand the feelings of others and hide their emotions behind a virtual mask deprives a teenager of real social support, which leaves him alone during depression.

The development of emotional intelligence in the context of digitalization is the main tool of "digital hygiene", which helps a teenager to maintain the boundaries between the virtual world and real life, resist cyber aggression and not lose self-esteem.

High emotional lability In adolescence can often lead to social maladaptation. Therefore, the formation of personality resistance through the development of emotional intelligence at this stage is the main strategy for the prevention of depression.

In psychology, resilience is the ability of a person to maintain psychological well-being and recover quickly from difficulties, despite stress and difficult life situations. The point is not only to "endure", but also to use this difficulty as a resource for development. For a teenager, resistance is the main immunity to depression. Optimism, self-confidence, the ability to accept social support and strategies aimed at solving the problem.

Social maladaptation is a violation of the balance between personality and the social environment, the process of a person's inability to adapt to the norms, requirements and roles of the society in which he lives. Declining academic performance, breaking off relationships with peers, isolation, or deviant behavior. Maladaptation is often caused by low emotional intelligence: a teenager cannot correctly read social signals and resolve conflicts.

In psychology and physiology, lability is the tendency of mood, feelings, and physiological reactions to very rapid, unstable, and unexplained changes. The adolescent nervous system is characterized by high lability. For example, he can go from endless joy to deep sadness or aggression within a few minutes. This is due to the fact that the aforementioned hormonal background and the inhibitory functions of the cerebral cortex (prefrontal cortex) are not yet fully developed.

Adolescent depression can manifest itself differently than adult depression. This often manifests itself through aggression, suppression of motivation to learn, sleep disorders, and social isolation. The main reason for these conditions is that the teenager cannot recognize and control the strong emotions that arise in him.

Emotional intelligence as a defense mechanism. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and effectively manage one's emotions and the feelings of others. D. Gulman and J. According to Mayer's theories, the equalizer consists of four main components, each of which is important for preventing depression:

A sense of Self-awareness: when a teenager realizes in time that he is sad or angry, he does not plunge into the "abyss" of emotions.

Emotional regulation : the ability to maintain inner balance without resorting to impulsive actions under stress. This will prevent you from falling into a depressive "stress spiral".

Social skills and empathy: Making the right connection with the environment. A teenager with developed empathy can find support from friends and not feel lonely.

## Conclusion

Thus, emotional intelligence in adolescence is not just a means of communication, it is an internal psychological immunity. Improving a teenager's emotional literacy in educational institutions and in the family is the main guarantee for the prevention of serious depressive disorders, suicidal behavior and social maladaptation in the future. Scientific studies show that teenagers with low levels of EQ are often prone to "reflections" (repetitive negative thoughts). And young people with high emotional intelligence who use cognitive reappraisal perceive a challenge as an "experience" rather than a "tragedy." This increases their psychological resilience and endurance.

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