St PETER'S SCHOOL
Barcelona

UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENCE

Wellbeing Department.

Lic. Juan Pedro Benitez

PROGRAM

1. Current situation of adolescent mental health.
    - Factors influencing how adolescence is experienced today.

2. Main Tasks of Adolescence: The Four Crises.

3. How can we improve adolescent mental health?
    - Risk and protective factors.
    - What we should do as adults.

1

Current situation of adolescent mental health.

“Factors influencing how adolescence is experienced today”

"Adolescence is a stage where individuals aim to develop competencies at all levels "

- Physical Competencies: Muscular Strength, Body Awareness and Control. Challenges.
- Psychological Competencies: Identity building, self-invention, autonomy, and resilience.
- Cognitive Competencies: acquisition of complex thinking (moving away from concrete thinking) that helps them above all, in decision making.
- Social Competencies: Gaining the ability to relate to others in a mature way.

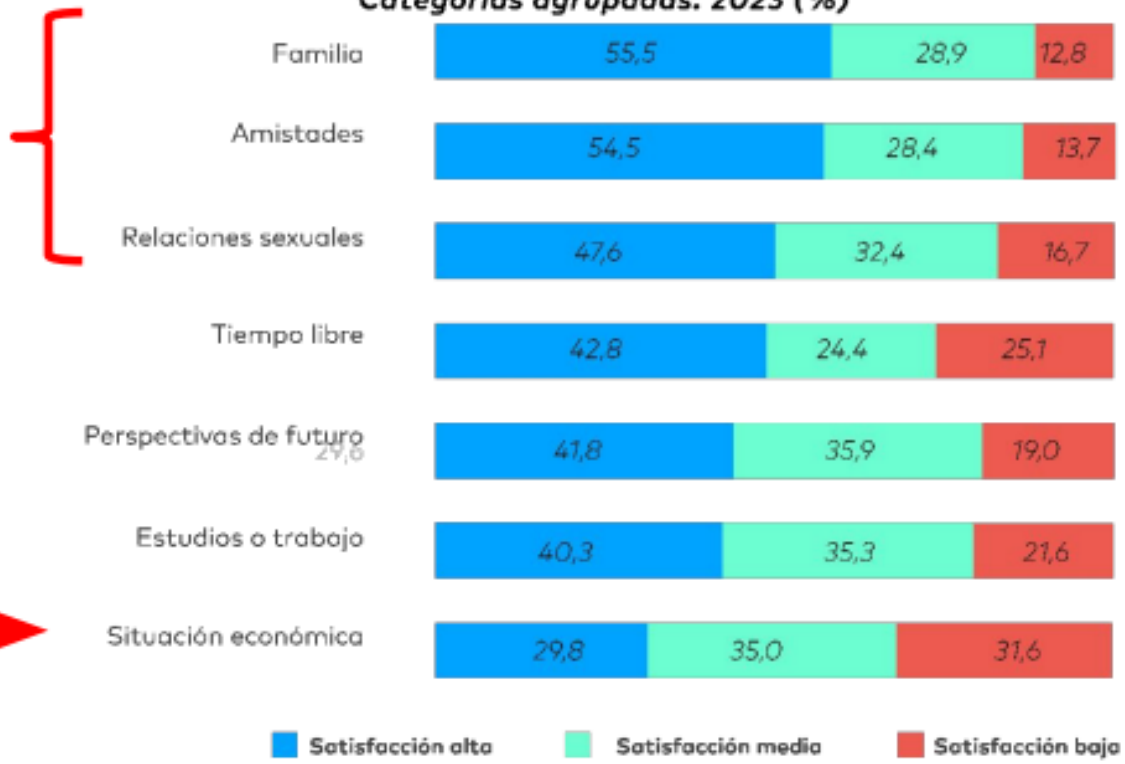
What factors do you think have changed since your own adolescence that influence the way teenagers experience adolescence today?

“Factors that have influenced how adolescence is lived nowadays”

- New Family Models.
- Changes in Educational Styles.
- Duration and Transition to Adulthood.
- Megatrends (social and technological changes).

BIENESTAR adolescentes

Gráfico 50. Grado de satisfacción con diversos aspectos de la vida. Categorías agrupadas. 2023 (%)



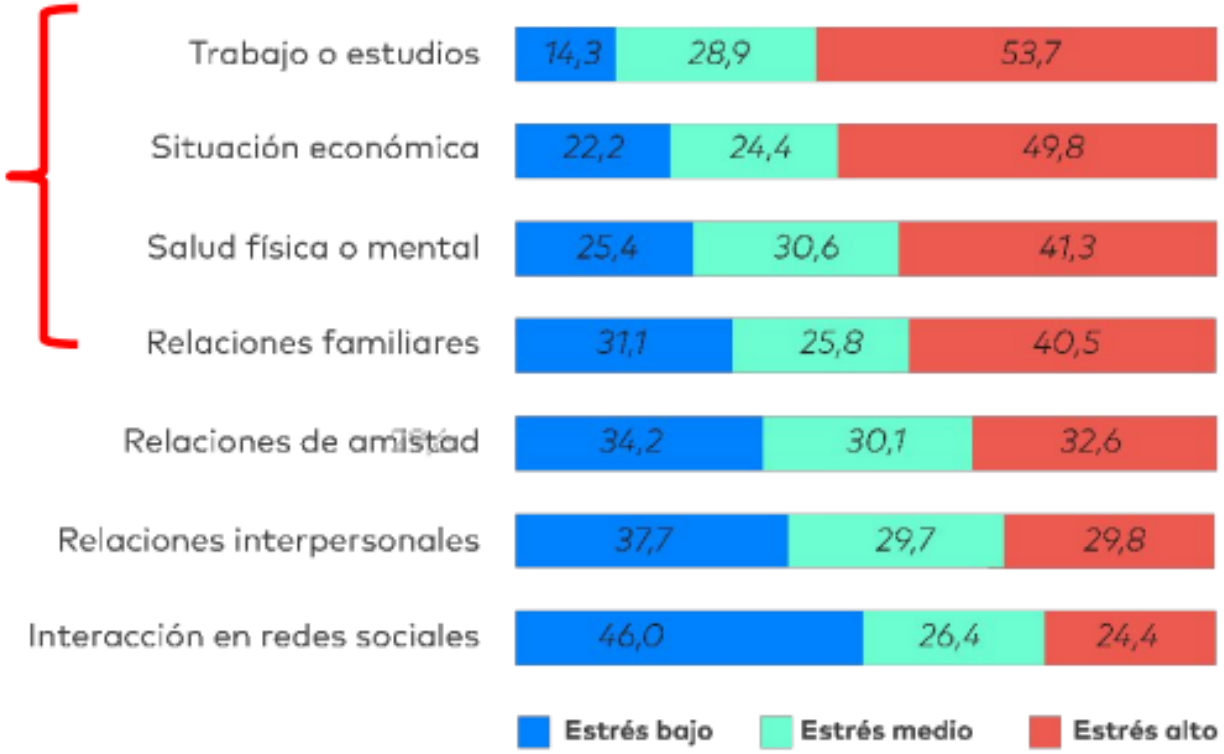
15-29 años

P69_75. ¿Cuál dirías que es tu nivel de satisfacción con relación a las siguientes aspectos de tu vida personal? Categorías agrupadas: 0-3=Satisfacción baja; 4-6=Satisfacción media; 7-10=Satisfacción alta. Datos en %. Base: N = 1.200.

Kuric, S., Sanmartín, A., Ballesteros, J. C. y Gómez Miguel, A. (2023) Barómetro Juventud, Salud y Bienestar 2023. Madrid: Centro Reina Sofía de Fad Juventud. DOI: 10.52810.5281/zenodo.8170910

ESTRÉS adolescentes

Gráfico 55. Estrés generado por diversas situaciones de la vida cotidiana. 2023 (%)



P62_68. ¿Qué grado de estrés te generan los siguientes aspectos de tu vida diaria? Categorías agrupadas: 0-3=Estrés bajo; 4-6=Estrés medio; 7-10=Estrés alto. Datos en %. Base: N = 1.200.

Kuric, S., Sanmartín, A., Ballesteros, J. C. y Gómez Miguel, A. (2023) Barómetro Juventud, Salud y Bienestar 2023. Madrid: Centro Reina Sofía de Fad Juventud. DOI: 10.52810.5281/zenodo.8170910

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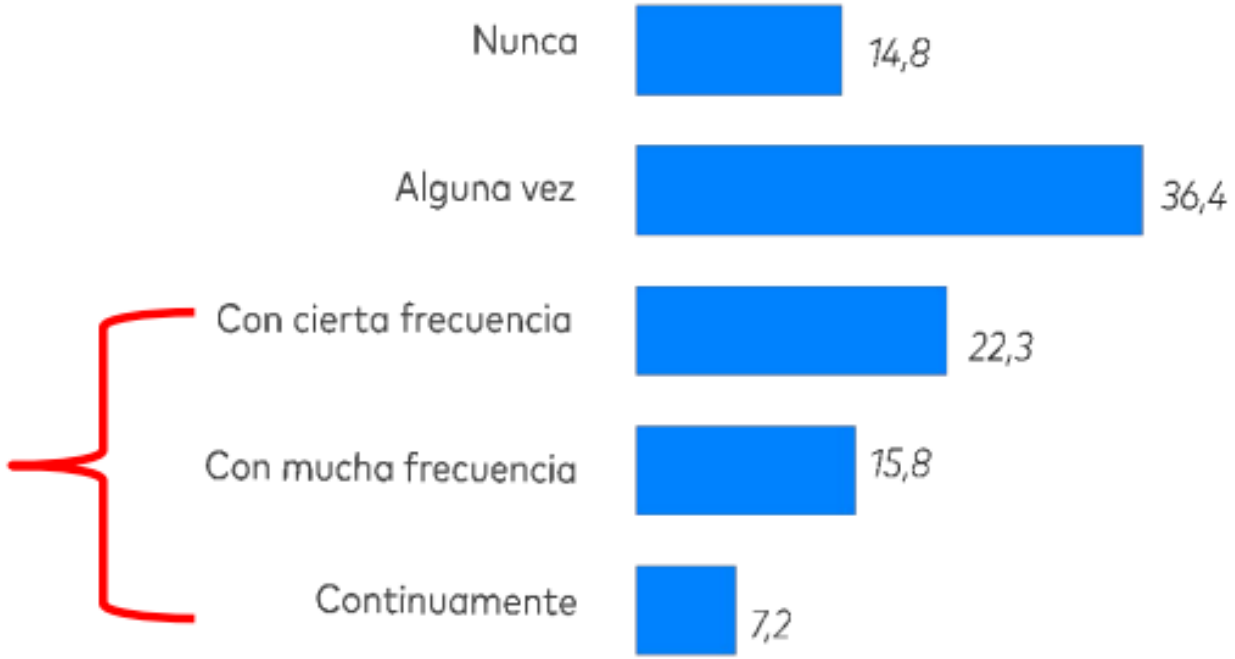
SOLEDAD adolescentes

Gráfico 62. Frecuencia sentimiento de soledad últimos doce meses (%)



P80. Durante los últimos 12 meses, ¿en qué medida has sentido soledad o aislamiento social? Datos en %. No se muestran Ns/Nc. Base: N = 1.200.

Kuric, S., Sanmartín, A., Ballesteros, J. C. y Gómez Miguel, A. (2023) Barómetro Juventud, Salud y Bienestar 2023. Madrid: Centro Reina Sofía de Fad Juventud. DOI: 10.52810.5281/zenodo.8170910

CICAE

Percepción salud por los adolescentes

1. El **malestar emocional** es una realidad en la población joven que se manifiesta de forma particular como **NERVIOSISMO E INQUIETUD, INSEGURIDAD, PREOCUPACIÓN EXCESIVA, AISLAMIENTO SOCIAL, ALTERACIÓN DEL SUEÑO Y COMPORTAMIENTOS AUTOLESIVOS.** Necesitan **servicios** que puedan prestarles ayuda se adapten a sus necesidades de flexibilidad, sean asequibles y culturalmente sensibles, pero que no sea en sus centros educativos.

2. Los jóvenes tienden **A EXPRESAR SU MALESTAR CON ETIQUETAS PSIQUIÁTRICAS** probablemente por la necesidad de encontrar una explicación. Aun **a riesgo de confundir reacciones emocionales normales con problemas graves.**

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Percepción salud por los adolescentes

3. Se sienten **MUY PRESIONADOS POR CUMPLIR LAS ELEVADAS EXPECTATIVAS (**amplificadas por las redes sociales) en diferentes áreas de su vida, en especial la académica y profesional, pero también en su imagen corporal y vida social.

4. Los jóvenes han nacido en la **ERA DIGITAL** y ven las **VENTAJAS** (facilitar el contacto social, espacio de expresión de la diversidad), pero también los **RIESGOS SI SE REALIZA UN USO INADECUADO O NO SALUDABLE** (aislamiento, alteración del sueño, acoso). Reconocen que **NECESITAN EDUCACIÓN EN EL MANEJO DE LAS REDES** al igual que lo han precisado en otros aspectos.

“Biological Perspective: Adolescence as a Process of Transition and Maturation”

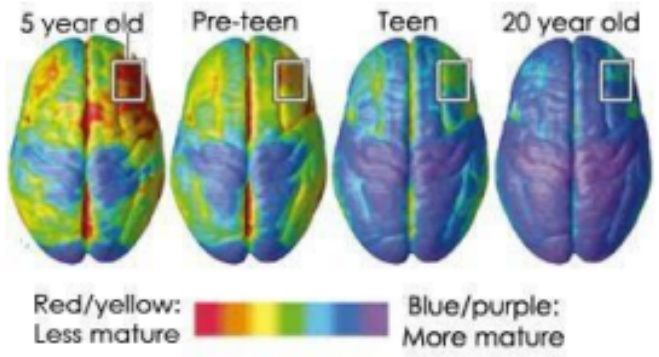
“Occurs from the late first decade to the third decade of life.”

1. Dendritic Arborization
2. Synaptic Pruning
3. Myelination: Enhances the efficiency of brain connectivity.

Adolescencia:
VULNERABILIDAD Y OPORTUNIDAD

- **Neuroplasticidad** APRENDIZAJE
- Hipersensibilidad sináptica
- Inmadurez cortical (frontal)
- Hiperactivación subcortical

RIESGOS



National Institute of Mental Health; Paul Thompson, Ph.D., UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging.

CEREBRO SENSIBLE EXPUESTO AL ENTORNO QUE LE HARÁ MEJORAR O EMPEORAR

El desafío de la adolescencia. Ed Espasa Calpe 2024. Montserrat Graell Berna

2

“Main Tasks of Adolescence: The Four Crises”

We often worry about adolescents because we tend to see them as a problem.

- This *imagined adolescence* is seen as something threatening to adults, something that might carry a certain risk. Adults often believe that things are worse now than they were in previous generations:

"This is usually when conflict starts at home, difficulties in how we relate to each other, lots of arguments…" Susana Brignoni "Pensar las Adolescencias" UOC 2012

“Adolescence is a time when boys and girls feel that anything is possible.”

Alexandre Stevens "Growing in Contemporary: A Crisis Inside the Crisis“ December 27, 2019, in *EC Psychology and Psychiatry*, Volume 9, Issue 1, pages 1–9.

Adolescencia: vulnerabilidad y oportunidad

- **IDENTIDAD**: "Invención de sí mismo"
- **Buena ESTIMA CORPORAL**
- Apertura y gran motivación **SOCIAL**
- Explorar **nuevas sensaciones/experiencias**
- **LÍMITES** que eviten la dependencia y que a la vez protejan
- Focalización de la **atención** y aparece el **pensamiento** creativo

El desafío de la adolescencia. Ed Espasa Calpe 2024. Montserrat Graell Berna

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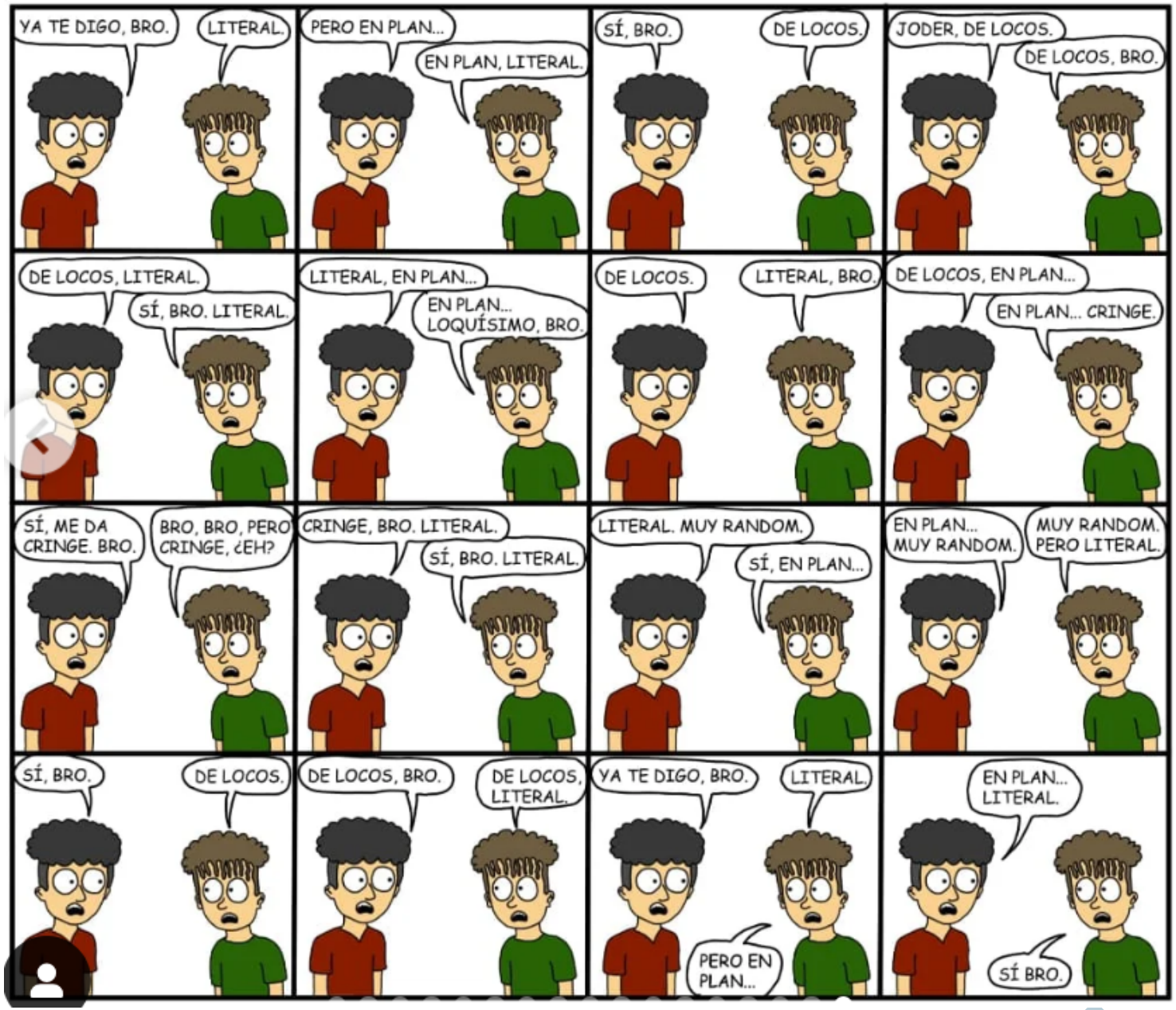
The Four Levels of Crisis

1. Language Crisis.
2. Identity Crisis
3. Crisis of Desire.
4. Crisis of Time



Cristo Chaparro
2025

Prodigal Son

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMPWx1v7ioM

3.
How can we improve adolescent mental health?

- Risk and protective factors.
- What should we do as adults?

What does an adolescent need?

- Appropriate environments with **GOOD OPPORTUNITIES, CONSISTENCY OF RULES AND BOUNDARIES**, **VALID REFETENTS** for their development. Home is their learn school is their best social setting and social relations.
- **PRESCENCE** (accompaniment) **SECURITY, PATIENCE** (emotional instability, preferences, sensitivities) **RESILIENCE.**
- **PESRPECTIVE AND JUDGEMENT. COHERENCE**. **EMOTIONAL CONTAIMENT. HUMAN VALUES, EDUCATION.**
- Connecting, especially with others outside the family, but also with the family**:** **COMMUNICATING**.
- Acquiring **SKILLS TO FEEL COMPETENT** e.g. emotional management, responsibility to comply with rules and limits, learning to make decisions.
- Feeling of **CONTROL/AUTONOMY** of their life: to be able to make mistakes, to learn: **TRUSTED ADULTS**
- Having **REFLECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY.**

The challenge of adolescence. Ed Espasa Calpe 2024. Montserrat Graell Berna.

What do children want from their parents?

- **Family** are the most important people for most young people.
- They expect respect. To be allowed privacy. To be given time. Y..... some **admiration**.
- To be there to listen and support when they need it (**unconditional love**).
- Teach them about life by example. Give them **perspective**.

That the Family gives them **PROTECTION AND CARE**. Accept age even with the paradoxes. Adolescents need to detach themselves and at the same time they are afraid of it, which irritates them and generates arguments.

Let the family give them **AUTONOMY** (explore the world): have another opinion, preferences, discuss opinions.

Learn **NEW COMMUNICATION CODES** (including silence) in the face of messages arising from anxiety, uncertainty and confusion about the new world they are discovering.

NEVER DISCONNECT EMOTIONALLY FROM CHILDREN.

”Adolescence is the art of becoming real.“

Open floor for sharing thoughts, questions, comments, opinions, and personal experiences.