

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT— THE ART OF GROWING UP

STUDENT HANDOUT

Table of contents

What's this about?	3
Activity 1: The art of growing up	4
Activity 2: Teenage types	5
Activity 3: Adolescent interaction	9
Activity 4a: Fitting in	10
Activity 4b: Role models	11
Activity 5: Fitting in	12
Activity 6: Where to go	13
Sites and services	15
Adolescent development	15
Resilience	15
Seeking help	15

What's this about?

You are going to watch a short animation called 'The art of growing up'. It's about the changes that take place during adolescence. The most obvious of these are physical, but there are other changes, such as the way you feel about things, the way you behave and the friends and activities you choose that are just as much a part of adolescence. The animation will tell you a bit about why these changes happen and you will then have a chance to explore these things further in some classroom activities. During the activities you will look at some of the things that make getting through the ups and downs of adolescence a little easier, like adult role models and resilience.



After doing these activities, you should feel a bit more knowledgeable about:

- the changes we all face during adolescence
- some of the typical challenges faced in adolescence
- your own adolescent challenges
- where to go for more information and support.

One of the important things to remember is that we all experience adolescence, and we all experience it differently. Maybe sometimes you feel a little uncertain on how you are going with it all, and maybe during these activities you will have some questions you want to talk to someone about. Your teacher will be able to provide some guidance about concerns that you may have. You may also like to find out more from the websites you will look at later, or choose to contact someone from the support services you will hear more about in the activities.

Activity 1: The art of growing up

In the animation you heard how the growth of our brains is at first faster than the growth of our bodies. Then, during adolescence, our bodies get going and our brain development lags behind. It's a time of big changes that can be both fun and scary.

In your class, see how much you can remember from the animation. If you wish, you can use the outline below to record your notes.



Activity 2: Teenage types

Remember how the animation talked about physical changes during adolescence leading to behavioural changes as well? No doubt you have observed these in your friends, classmates, and maybe in yourself as well. Imagine now that you need to cast five teenagers to take part in a reality TV show. An important aspect of your job is to think about how each of your cast members will behave and interact with each other.

Get together in a small group, and have a go at 'profiling' a variety of teenagers to join the fun at Castaway Cay.



Courage and craziness at Castaway Cay













"Somewhere, in the middle of nowhere, sits Castaway Cay, a lonely speck of land far from civilization. Six regular teenagers will be dropped on this remote paradise to fend for themselves. There will be challenges, heartache, betrayal, unpleasant things to eat..." - I'm sure you've got the picture.

Use the table below to describe the five teenagers who you plan to send to Castaway Cay. What are their characteristics? How do they behave? What are the reasons they behave as they do?

You can see that one young man has already been chosen – Damien, the producer's son. Have a look at his profile, and create profiles for the other members of the cast.

Some of the profile characteristics for other cast members have been added to help you get started, plus there are a couple that you can create from scratch.

Note: Leave the last column for the moment. You'll come back to that shortly.

Person	Characteristics	Behaviour	Possible reasons	
 Damien	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks older than he really is Strong / sporty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self confident Likes to win Likes to show off Sometimes a bit of a bully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body more developed than brain Feels special being so physically developed High expectations of what he can achieve physically Confident of his sporty identity 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conscious of appearance Active – sometimes hyperactive 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends and peers are very important Tries very hard to fit in Sees herself as a 'people person' 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet Reflective Sensitive Not a risk taker 		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong positive relationships with parents/adult role models Good sense of own abilities Sees herself as a confident leader 	
				
				

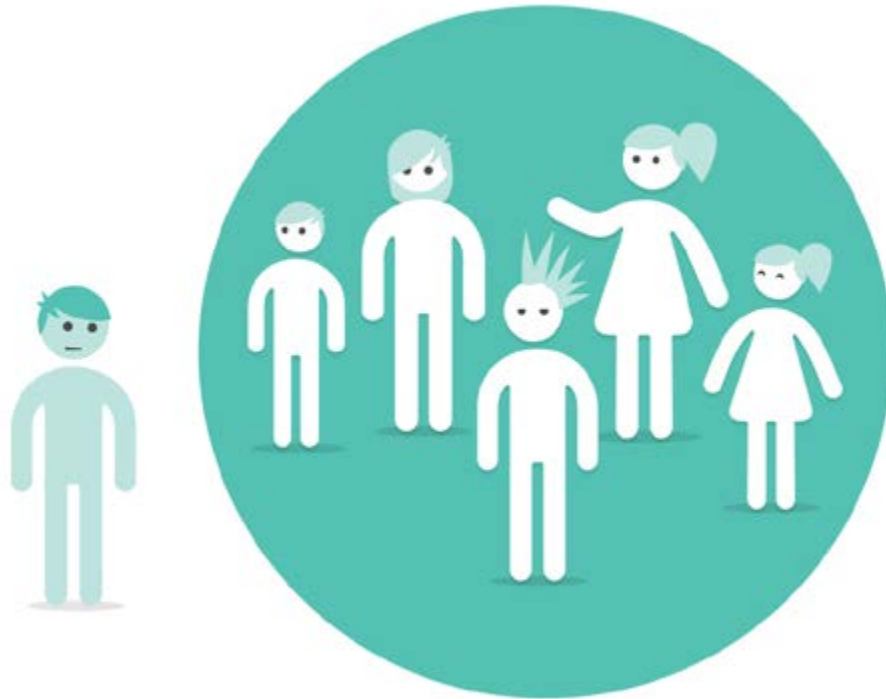
When you have finished your profiles, move on to the **Secret success** notes below.

Secret success notes

“Expect the unexpected” is the motto at Castaway Cay, and for good reason – our contestants are never quite sure what is coming their way. Sure there are the physical challenges – which can be a bit, well, challenging. But the real challenges are the mental ones. How will our contestants cope when their ‘best friend’ nominates them for expulsion? How will they feel when other contestants gang together and exclude them? When these things happen, will they be able to gather themselves and still make good?

That quality that helps people bounce back after a knock down is known as resilience. It’s something we all have, but sometimes our resilience is high while sometimes it’s low. Luckily it is also something we can build in ourselves.

In your group, someone start by reading the first dot point on resilience out loud. Then move on to the next person and the next dot point, until all the points have been read.



Resilience

- Resilience is sometimes referred to as 'bouncing back' after a challenge. This might mean being able to cope and bounce back after losing someone you care about, or having a relationship break up, or moving house.
- Resilience is something that changes across a person's life. Someone who had trouble bouncing back when they were a little kid might be able to bounce back when they're an adolescent.
- Usually changes to resilience happen because people have learned new skills or have different kinds of supports around them.
- Resilience is shaped by a mix of factors. It can be shaped by the circumstances that a person is born to, the circumstances that they're in, and also by the choices that the person makes.
- Some of the things that can lead to an individual feeling resilient are: being able to problem-solve and being persistent (able to stick at a task); being able to manage emotions; being able to adapt to new circumstances; and having helpful relationships with family and friends.
- Resilience is really important in adolescence because it is a period of your life where there might be more tough times. There are big changes like moving from primary school to secondary school or like leaving secondary school. Some people have losses like having a grandparent die. Resilience is the set of skills that will help you to get through if this happens to you.
- There are some great resources on resilience listed at the end of this handout. You might like to explore these after class.
- You can also ask your teacher for more information on resilience and resilience programs.

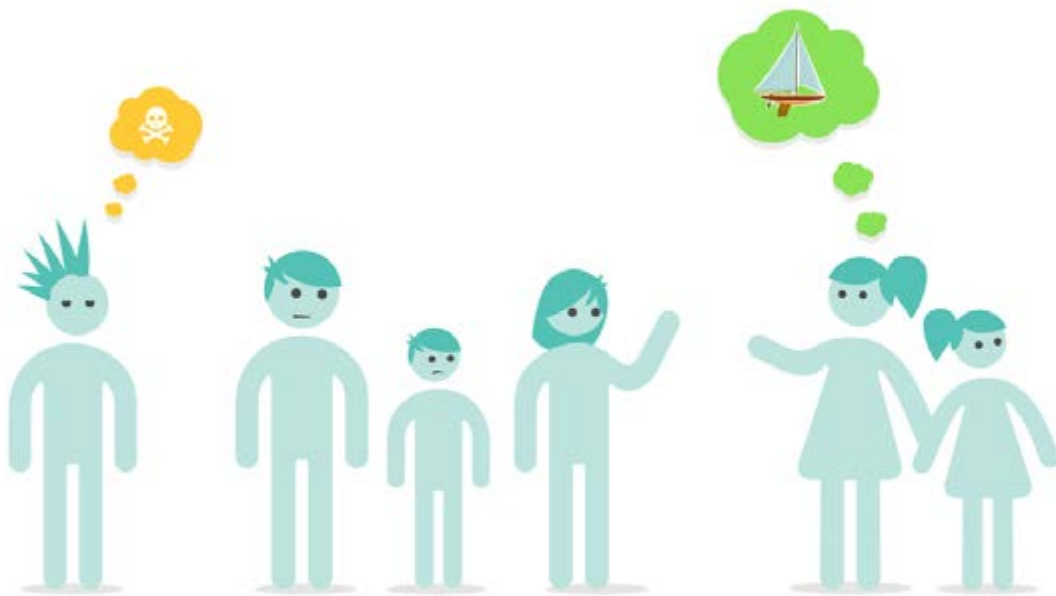
When you have finished, discuss how resilient each of your Castaway Cay crew might be. Add the title 'Resilience' to the top of your last column and mark each character's resilience on the scale.

Person	Characteristics	Behaviour	Possible reasons	Resilience
--------	-----------------	-----------	------------------	-------------------

Activity 3: Adolescent interaction

Lights, camera, action!

You've chosen the cast, and they have been parachuted in to Castaway Cay. What's going to happen now is anyone's guess, but you probably have a few ideas based on the profiles you have put together.



In your group, discuss how things might unfold on your island, based on the characteristics, behaviours and resilience of your cast.

- Who is going to get along with whom?
- Who is going to be a leader, be a good friend, have trouble fitting in or possibly cause trouble?
- Who is going to bounce back after trouble strikes?

Ask one or more members of your team to make some notes as you discuss, so you can present your group of reality stars to the rest of the class.



Activity 4a: Fitting in

You're needed!

There's trouble on set and Damien has been jetted out with a broken leg after falling from a coconut tree. The show must go on, and everyone is looking to you to join the team of castaways. Wow – that wasn't part of the plan. So how do you think you'll do? Work with a partner and think about your characteristics the same way you did for the other members of the cast.

- What aspects of your adolescence will help or hinder you on Castaway Cay?
- What uniquely 'you' things will benefit the team?
- Who would you buddy up with?
- Is there anyone you mightn't get along with?
- How well would you bounce back from disappointments?

Make notes if you wish, use the table below or just talk about it with your partner. You will *not need* to present your ideas to the rest of the class.

Person	Characteristics	Behaviour	Possible reasons	Resilience
 You				

Activity 4b: Role models

A friend in need...

It can be a great support to have a trusted adult in your life – even more so when you're dumped on a desert island with a bunch of crazy teenagers. Who are the adults in your life that are great role models for you? It may be that your adult role model is someone who simply inspires you by the way they live their life. You may not even know them personally.

With your partner, first talk about your adult role models, and then consider who you would take with you to Castaway Cay?



You might like to consider the following:

- How would your chosen role model support your challenges at Castaway Cay?
- What qualities would they bring to the crew? For example:
 - good at listening
 - think about others
 - solid values
 - problem solving skills
 - ability to overcome obstacles
 - able to inspire
 - resilient

Activity 5: Fitting in

My life (unscripted)

How did you enjoy life on Castaway Cay? Hopefully you dodged the quicksand, swam the crocodile infested river and made it to the top of Mount Vertigo to light the rescue flare. Of course we all know that you don't need to be on a TV set to be in a reality show – you live in one – all day, every day. The people you meet, the friends you have, the important adults in your life, and not to forget the things you need to do like school work, sports, hobbies and chores are all part of your show.

You might be the star of your own reality show, but it has a lot of different scriptwriters and supporting cast. In fact sometimes it might not seem like it's your show at all as you deal with all the different things life throws at you.

Take a few minutes now to think about all you have heard and talked about during the activities about adolescent development. How well are you dealing with everything in your life?

Work by yourself, and think about the following questions. Make some notes if you wish.

- **How am I going right now?**
- **Is any aspect of adolescence affecting my life?**
- **Is there anything I want to talk to someone about?**
- **Who are the trusted adults that I can ask questions of or share concerns with?**

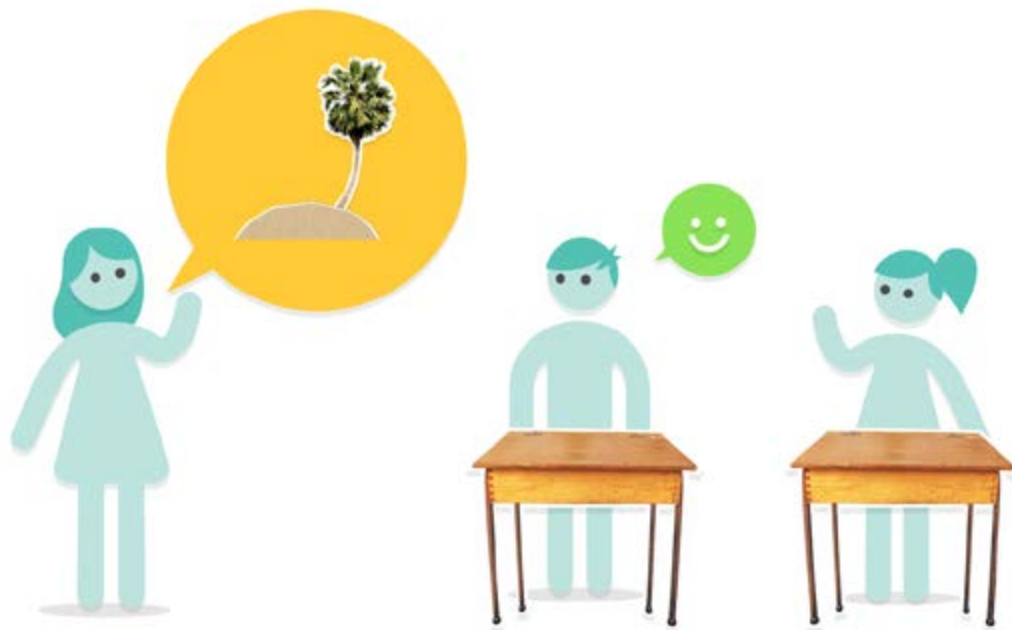
When you have finished thinking all about you, you may have a feeling that you'd like some more information, or that you'd like to talk to someone – like a teacher, trusted adult or friend. That's OK, and be sure you follow instincts in relation to this feeling.

There's a section at the end of this handout on sites and services that can provide information and help for young people.

Activity 6: Where to go

There are many websites and services for young people looking for more information about adolescent development and resilience. There are also services for people looking for a little help with some personal things they wish to talk to someone about.

To help everyone in your class get a bit of an overview of what's out there, work in a small group and take a look at one of the sites and services listed at the end of this handout.



- Get someone to take notes as you go, answering the questions in the table on the next page.
- Present this site or service to the rest of the class.
- Put your summary up on the wall of the classroom or another place chosen by your teacher.

Name of site or service	
URL	
What is the site or service for?	
Who is it for?	
What does it offer?	
What are the benefits of the site or service?	
When would someone use the site or service?	
Would it be helpful if more people knew about this site or service?	
How would you spread the message of this site or service to a friend?	
How could the school help to promote the site or service?	
Other comments	

Once you've looked online and heard about the sites and services researched by other groups, you could think about:

- how you could use this information to help yourself or others negotiate the challenges of adolescence – maybe explain to a friend what the various sites offer
- suggestions for action your school might take – pass these on to your teacher or your school's MindMatters action team.

You could also:

- do your own research to find other online resources such as websites, apps and forums
- ask your teacher about resilience programs and for information on understanding and helping your friends and peers.

Sites and services

There is a lot of information available online about adolescent development, resilience and seeking help. If you haven't already done so, explore the links listed below.

Adolescent development

- Adolescence, Women and Children's Health Network
<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=243&np=291&id=2303#top>
- Personal identity, ReachOut Australia
<http://au.reachout.com/wellbeing/personal-identity>

Resilience

Check out these links for more information about resilience and resilience programs:

- WorkOut, ReachOut Australia
<http://au.reachout.com/workout>
- Resilience, mindhealthconnect
<http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/resilience>
- Meditation made easy, Smiling Mind
<http://smilingmind.com.au/>

Seeking help

Resilience doesn't mean being able to cope with everything on your own. Sometimes we need help from others to develop our 'bouncing back' skills.

Check out these links for more information about seeking help:

- headspace
<http://www.headspace.org.au/>
- Orygen Youth Health
<https://orygen.org.au/>
- Kids Helpline
<http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/>
- Youthbeyondblue 1300 22 46 36
<http://www.youthbeyondblue.com/help-someone-you-know/what-to-do-in-an-emergency/get-immediate-support>

MindMatters is a national mental health initiative for secondary schools developed by *beyondblue* with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

See more MindMatters resources at www.mindmatters.edu.au