



ASK THE EXPERT QUESTIONNAIRE

PRETEEN - TEEN SECTION

AN UNIQUE PROJECT OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH ACADEMY OF IAP

TEAM

Dr. Sushma Desai | Dr. Shamik Ghosh | Dr. Poonam Bhatia | Dr. Samir Shah

Dr. Rashmi Gupta | Dr. Deepa Janardhanan | Dr. Prashant Kariya

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Questions & Expert Answers

Question 1: I enjoy badminton but feel conscious about my body image, especially my thighs. How can I build confidence?

Expert Answer

First of all, thank you for writing so honestly. Many teenagers have similar thoughts, but very few express them with such courage.

From what you've shared, I see a bright, thoughtful young person who enjoys badminton, cares about her studies, wants to become a leader, values friendships, and wants to improve herself. Those are wonderful strengths.

About your body—please remember that your body is still growing. Strong thighs are often an advantage in sports like badminton because they provide power, speed, and balance. Try not to compare yourself with edited images on social media. Your health and abilities matter much more than looking like someone else.

"Confidence grows when you value yourself for your strengths, not your appearance."

You already have many strengths—your love for sports, your good academic performance, and your desire to improve yourself. Keep nurturing these qualities.

Never let social media decide your self-worth. The world needs your kindness, courage, and character far more than a perfect appearance.

Question 2: How can I develop leadership skills, make good friends, and become more confident?

Expert Answer

Leadership begins with responsibility, kindness, honesty, and the willingness to help others. Volunteer for small responsibilities in school, participate in group activities, speak respectfully, and be willing to learn from mistakes.

Friendships grow naturally when you are genuine and respectful. You do not need many friends—you need a few who value and support you. Confidence develops each time you step outside your comfort zone.

Confidence comes from recognizing your abilities, kindness, determination, and character—not from achieving a "perfect" appearance. Continue playing badminton, eat healthy food, stay active, and appreciate what your body can do rather than focusing only on how it looks.

"True leaders lift others while continuing to grow themselves."

Question 3: Sometimes I speak rudely to my mother and later feel guilty. How can I improve our relationship?

Expert Answer

The fact that you feel guilty shows that you love your mother and value your relationship. During adolescence, emotions can sometimes become intense. When you calm down, apologise sincerely and explain how you were feeling.

Try to spend a little time with your mother every day, share your thoughts openly, and remember that she is also learning how to understand your changing needs. Honest conversations strengthen relationships.

"A sincere apology can heal many misunderstandings."

Question 4: I liked a boy, but when he found out, he reacted negatively. How do I move on?

Expert Answer

Feeling hurt after rejection is completely natural, but please remember that one person's response does not determine your value. Allow yourself time to heal, continue focusing on your studies, badminton, hobbies, and friendships, and avoid blaming yourself.

Every experience teaches us something about ourselves and helps us grow emotionally. The right relationships are built on mutual respect, kindness, and understanding.

"Rejection closes one door but often opens another filled with new opportunities."

Question 5: I have a mobile phone addiction and want to focus on studies, badminton, fitness, and personal growth. What should I do?

Expert Answer

Congratulations on recognizing the problem—that is the first step toward change. Set realistic daily screen-time limits, keep your phone away during study hours, switch off unnecessary notifications, and avoid using it before bedtime.

Replace scrolling with activities you genuinely enjoy, such as badminton, reading, music, exercise, or spending time with family and friends. Remember that every hour invested in your health and learning brings you closer to the person you want to become.

"Control your phone before it begins to control your life."

Question 6: I find it difficult to maintain friendships. How can I make and keep healthy friendships?

Expert Answer

Healthy friendships are based on trust, honesty, kindness, respect, and good communication. Be yourself rather than trying to impress others. Listen carefully, keep promises, support your friends during difficult times, and respect differences in opinions.

Remember that it is better to have a few genuine friends than many superficial ones. Real friendships take time to grow, so be patient and continue being the caring person you already are.

"Good friends don't make you feel small—they help you become your best self."

Check out this link:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/your-mind/problems/>

Question 7: Everyone says I need "life skills" ... but what are they actually, and how do I learn them without feeling lost?

Expert Answer

Think of life skills as the "operating system" for real life. They are the abilities that help you handle everyday challenges, build healthy relationships, make good decisions, and take care of yourself—both online and offline.

Life skills include understanding and managing your emotions, communicating clearly, solving problems, making responsible decisions, thinking critically instead of believing everything you see on social media, managing stress, working with others, handling disagreements respectfully, showing empathy, and adapting when things don't go as planned.

The best part is that life skills are practised, not memorised. You don't learn them from a single lecture or book—you develop them by living, reflecting, and trying again.

Start small:

- Make age-appropriate decisions instead of depending on others for every choice.
- Take responsibility for simple tasks at home or school.
- Join sports, clubs, volunteering, or group activities where you learn teamwork and leadership.
- Learn to express your opinions respectfully, even when others disagree.
- When you make a mistake, ask yourself, "What can I learn from this?" instead of "Why did I fail?"
- Spend time with people who inspire positive habits and values.

Remember, every new experience—whether it goes well or not—is helping you build life skills. You don't have to have life figured out today. You just need to keep learning, one experience at a time.

Check out this link:

https://aif.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Lifeskills-2018a_MAST.pdf

Question 8: Screen time, & digital addiction

Expert Answer

Your question reflects the challenges many teenagers face today—balancing studies, friendships, health, and technology. Rather than trying to change everything at once, choose one small habit each week.

Create daily "phone-free" periods during study time, meals, and before bedtime. Stay physically active, eat balanced meals, and ensure adequate sleep. Build meaningful friendships based on trust rather than social media approval. Continue developing hobbies and life skills alongside academics.

Remember that success is not measured only by marks but also by your physical health, emotional well-being, relationships, and ability to adapt to life's challenges.

Take one small step every day. Small improvements become big changes over time.

Check out this link:

<https://iapindia.org/pdf/Guidelines-for-Normal-Sleep-and-Physical-Activity.pdf>

<https://iapindia.org/pdf/Screentime-Guidelines-for-Parents-Ch-005.pdf>

Question 8 (no specific question submitted): "Yes."

Expert Answer

Thank you for participating in the Ask the Expert programme. Even though you did not write a specific question, your willingness to participate reflects curiosity and a desire to learn.

Adolescence is a wonderful opportunity to discover your strengths, develop healthy habits, and build confidence. Eat nutritious food, stay physically active, sleep well, develop meaningful friendships, and remember that asking questions is always encouraged.

Never hesitate to seek guidance from your parents, teachers, or doctors whenever you need support.

"Curiosity is the first step towards lifelong learning."

Question 9: Growing up problems. Friends make fun of me.

Expert Answer

Growing up is not always easy, and many adolescents experience teasing or feel left out at some point. Remember that being teased does not define who you are or your worth.

Focus on your strengths, develop hobbies and sports, and spend time with friends who respect and encourage you. If teasing becomes frequent, hurtful, or turns into bullying, speak with your parents, teachers, or school counsellor. No child should have to face bullying alone.

Confidence grows through self-belief, kindness, and perseverance—not through the opinions of others.

"Never allow someone else's words to decide your self-worth."

Question 10: School stress.

Expert Answer

School stress is common, but it can be managed successfully. Prepare a realistic study schedule, revise regularly, avoid last-minute studying, and ensure adequate sleep and physical activity. Take short breaks during study sessions and maintain hobbies that help you relax.

Remember that examinations measure learning—not your value as a person. If stress becomes overwhelming, speak openly with your parents, teachers, or a trusted adult.

Expert Pearl: "Confidence grows through preparation, not pressure."

Check out this link:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/children/stress>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/help-for-teenagers-young-adults-and-students/student-stress-self->

Question 11: Let parents allow children to follow their dreams.

Expert Answer

That is a thoughtful message. Every adolescent has unique interests and talents. Parents should encourage children to explore their dreams while also helping them understand the importance of education, discipline, and realistic planning.

The best decisions are made through open conversations where both parents and children listen to each other's perspectives. Dreams grow stronger when supported by hard work and family encouragement.

"Dreams flourish where trust and guidance grow together."

Question 12: As a child who has been very emotional, with poor mental health, stress, loneliness, and lack of care, support and communication from parents... Nowadays there is poor communication between parents and children. Many children who lack love develop suicidal thoughts. How can we solve this and create awareness?

Expert Answer

First of all, thank you for writing so honestly and courageously. Your question reflects the feelings of many adolescents who struggle silently but hesitate to express themselves.

Every child deserves to feel loved, heard, and valued. When communication between parents and children breaks down, feelings of loneliness, helplessness, and low self-esteem can develop. The first step is to remember that you are important, and your life has immense value.

If you ever feel overwhelmed, don't keep your feelings to yourself. Talk to a trusted adult—a parent, teacher, relative, school counsellor, or pediatrician. Asking for help is a sign of courage, not weakness.

For parents, the message is equally important: children need emotional connection more than material gifts. Spending even 15–20 minutes each day listening without judgment can transform a child's confidence and emotional health.

Together, as families, schools, and healthcare professionals, we must create an environment where every child feels accepted, supported, and safe.

"Every child needs someone who says, 'I'm here for you, no matter what.'"

Question 13: No question submitted

Expert Answer

Thank you for participating in the AHA "Ask the Expert" programme.

Even though you did not have a specific question today, remember that adolescence is a wonderful time to develop healthy habits, build confidence, learn new skills, and discover your interests.

Take care of your physical and mental health, stay active, eat healthy food, respect your parents and teachers, choose good friends, and never hesitate to ask questions whenever you need guidance.

"The best investment you can make today is in your own health, character, and education."

Question 14: How to reduce the screen time? And how to manage studies? And how to maintain the time?

Expert Answer

Good time management is about balancing your studies, health, and leisure. Start by making a simple daily timetable that includes study time, physical activity, meals, hobbies, relaxation, and 8–10 hours of sleep. Study in focused sessions of 30–45 minutes with short breaks, and complete your most important tasks first.

To reduce screen time, keep your phone away while studying, turn off unnecessary notifications, and avoid checking social media repeatedly. Set fixed times each day for entertainment or gaming instead of using your phone throughout the day. Replace some screen time with sports, reading, music, creative hobbies, or spending time with family and friends.

"Strong habits create a strong future."

Follow the 5S Rule for Better Time Management

- Schedule: Plan your day and make a realistic to-do list.
- Study: Focus on one task at a time without multitasking.
- Switch Off: Keep your phone away during study time and limit recreational screen use.
- Stay Active: Be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day.
- Sleep: Get 8–10 hours of sleep every night to improve concentration, memory, and mood.

Remember, success comes from small, consistent habits, not from studying for long hours. If you find yourself struggling to stay focused, talk to your parents, teachers, or a trusted adult—they can help you develop a routine that works for you.

Check out this link:

<https://iapindia.org/pdf/Screentime-Guidelines-for-Parents-Ch-005.pdf>

Question 15: Life Skills Development. "How is your health?"

Expert Answer

I am in good health, Deeksha. Thank you for asking about my health.

Life skills help young people become independent, confident, and responsible. Learn to communicate respectfully, solve problems calmly, make thoughtful decisions, manage emotions, and work effectively with others.

Start by taking responsibility at home, participate in extracurricular activities, study regularly, and be willing to learn from both success and failure. Every experience contributes to your personal growth.

"Confidence grows each time you learn, try, and improve."

Question 16: Nowadays children are very emotional and spend more time on screens.

Expert Answer

You have highlighted one of the most important concerns of today's parents and teachers. Adolescents often use screens not only for entertainment but also to cope with boredom, loneliness, academic stress, or social pressures. Excessive screen time may affect sleep, concentration, emotional regulation, physical activity, and family relationships.

Rather than simply restricting devices, encourage families to build healthy digital habits. Create screen-free times during meals and before bedtime, encourage outdoor play, sports, reading, hobbies, and meaningful family conversations. Parents should also model healthy digital behaviour.

Technology is a wonderful tool when used wisely, but it should never replace real-life relationships and experiences.

"Children need more face-to-face conversations than screen-to-screen connections."

Check out this link:

<https://iapindia.org/pdf/Screentime-Guidelines-for-Parents-Ch-005.pdf>

Question 17: School stress.

Expert Answer

School is meant to help you learn and grow, not to become a source of constant worry. If you are feeling stressed, begin by organizing your studies into small daily goals rather than trying to complete everything at once. Learn time management skills.

Take regular breaks, sleep for 8–10 hours, stay physically active, and avoid comparing yourself with classmates. Remember that every student learns at a different pace. If stress continues, speak openly with your parents or teachers—they are there to help you.

"Progress is made one chapter, one day, and one step at a time."

Question 18: School or academic stress.

Expert Answer

Feeling stressed about school or studies is common, especially during exams or when you have many responsibilities. A little stress can motivate you, but too much stress can affect your concentration, sleep, mood, and confidence.

Manage academic stress by planning your day, breaking large tasks into smaller goals, and studying regularly instead of leaving everything until the last minute. Take short breaks while studying, stay physically active, eat healthy meals, and get 8–10 hours of sleep every night. Avoid comparing yourself with others and focus on doing your best.

Make time for activities you enjoy, such as sports, music, reading, or spending time with friends and family. If you feel overwhelmed, anxious, or unable to cope, talk to your parents, teachers, school counselor, or another trusted adult. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Remember, your marks do not define your worth. Learning, growing, and taking care of your physical and mental well-being are just as important as academic success.

Question 19: School and Exam Stress (Recommended). "I am a Class 7 student. Sometimes the pressure of exams, homework, and getting good grades feels very overwhelming and makes me feel anxious. What are some simple, practical ways I can manage my study time and handle academic stress without feeling burned out?"

Expert Answer

Feeling stressed before exams or when you have a lot of schoolwork is normal. A little stress can motivate you to study, but too much stress can affect your concentration, sleep, and confidence. The key is to study smart, not just study longer.

Plan your day by making a realistic timetable. Break large tasks into smaller, manageable goals and study in focused sessions of 30–45 minutes, followed by a 5–10-minute break. Complete difficult subjects when you are most alert and avoid leaving revision until the last minute.

Take care of your health by eating balanced meals, drinking enough water, being physically active for at least 60 minutes every day, and getting 8–10 hours of sleep every night. Good sleep improves memory and concentration.

Avoid studying with your phone beside you. Turn off unnecessary notifications and keep recreational screen time separate from study time. Spend some time each day doing something you enjoy, such as sports, music, drawing, reading, or talking with family and friends.

Most importantly, remember that your marks do not define your worth. Every student learns at a different pace. Focus on improving each day rather than comparing yourself with others. If you continue to feel overwhelmed, anxious, or unable to cope, speak to your parents, a teacher, or your school counsellor. Asking for help is a sign of maturity and strength.

Check out this link:

<https://iapindia.org/pdf/Screentime-Guidelines-for-Parents-Ch-005.pdf>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>

Question 20: As I am growing up, I find that friendships and peer dynamics can sometimes be complicated and stressful to handle. How can I build healthy boundaries with friends, handle peer pressure, and communicate better with my parents when I feel overwhelmed?

Expert Answer

Friendships are an important part of growing up, but they should make you feel respected, supported, and accepted—not pressured or uncomfortable. A good friend respects your opinions, values, and personal boundaries.

It is okay to say "No" if someone encourages you to do something that feels wrong or unsafe. You do not have to change yourself or follow the crowd to fit in. Choose friends who encourage positive habits and make you feel good about yourself.

If you are upset or stressed, talk to your parents or another trusted adult. Choose a calm time to share your thoughts honestly and explain how you are feeling. Parents may not always have immediate solutions, but listening and understanding can make a big difference. Good communication grows when both children and parents listen to each other with patience and respect.

Remember that disagreements and misunderstandings are a normal part of relationships. Try to listen carefully, express your feelings respectfully, and be willing to understand another person's point of view. If a friendship repeatedly makes you feel anxious, bullied, or unhappy, it is okay to step back and seek support.

Most importantly, be yourself. Real friends value you for who you are—not for your appearance, popularity, or possessions. Building healthy friendships takes time, honesty, kindness, and mutual respect.

Learn More:

World Health Organization (WHO): Adolescent Health

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/adolescent-health>

UNICEF: Parenting and Adolescent Development

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting>

Question 21: Screen Time and Daily Routine. "I find myself spending a lot of time on digital devices for both schoolwork and entertainment, which sometimes affects my sleep and routine. How can I create a better balance between screen time, studies, and physical health activities?"

Expert Answer

Technology is useful, but too much screen time can affect sleep, mood, concentration, eyesight, and physical fitness.

Instead of suddenly stopping, gradually reduce your daily screen time. Keep your phone away during meals, homework, and one hour before bedtime. Replace scrolling with sports, music, reading, or spending time with friends and family.

Concentration improves with practice, not luck.

Study for 25–30 minutes, then take a short break. Keep your phone away and study in a quiet place.

Follow the FOCUS Formula:

- F – Find a quiet place
- O – One task at a time
- C – Create a timetable
- U – Use short breaks wisely
- S – Sleep well every night

A focused hour is better than four distracted hours.

Check out this link:

<https://iapindia.org/pdf/guideline-Mental-Health-Issues-in-Adolescents.pdf>

<https://iapindia.org/pdf/Guideline-for-Nutrition-of-Adolescents-10-19-Years-17112021.pdf>