

# Social work strategies for puberty rebellion

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**Abstract:** Puberty is an important and inevitable stage for adolescents' physical and psychological development and the establishment of their ideological concepts. As adolescents' self-awareness strengthens during puberty, they tend to exhibit rebellious behaviors, with their actions and attitudes becoming confrontational and critical. This is a highly prominent psychological phenomenon of rebellion among adolescents in puberty. However, when adolescents experience rebellious issues, they often fail to be understood by their parents and teachers and do not receive proper guidance from the outside world. This ultimately leads to the further development of their rebellious problems, which may transform into pathological or criminal mindsets, causing serious consequences. In response to this situation, this paper analyzes the emergence of rebellious issues among adolescents in puberty, which is influenced by various factors from multiple aspects, including their own physiological and psychological conditions as well as influences from society, family, or school. By combining case studies in practice, the research has identified effective strategies for social work intervention in addressing adolescents' rebellious issues.

**Keywords:** Social Work, Puberty, Rebellious Issues

## 1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the rebellious issues of adolescents in puberty and explores the strategies and methods of social work intervention. Puberty is an important stage in the physical and mental development of adolescents. The enhancement of self-awareness often leads to rebellious behaviors. If not properly guided, these behaviors may lead to serious consequences. Through literature research and survey analysis, this paper reveals the impact of personal, family, school, and social factors on adolescents' rebellious issues. Combining case studies, the paper proposes several social work intervention models, such as behavioral therapy, conjoint family therapy, and rational emotive therapy, to provide effective solutions for addressing adolescents' rebellious issues. The study emphasizes that the key to promoting the healthy growth of adolescents is to integrate various therapeutic models and choose appropriate intervention strategies based on the characteristics of different cases.

## 2. Definition of related concepts

### 2.1. Puberty

Regarding the age range of puberty, the World Health Organization defines it as between 10 and 20 years old, but there are certain differences among countries. In general, in China, boys are considered to be in puberty from 14 to 20 years old, while girls start two years earlier. During this period, adolescents' physiological systems develop rapidly, and they begin to transition towards adulthood. The most noticeable change is in the reproductive system, where the sexual characteristics of females and males emerge. At the same time, psychological changes also occur. For example, adolescents realize that they are becoming adults and are no longer children. They tend to solve problems independently without relying on their parents and gradually become interested in and curious about the opposite sex, with the emergence of sexual awareness. However, their psychological development is still in a semi-immature stage, not fully mature, with low emotional stability and a tendency to be sensitive and unbalanced. Although they yearn for new

life experiences, there is often a conflict between the external social environment and their inner world, leading to many life puzzles and questions, which in turn cause rebellious psychological issues.

Puberty is not only an important turning point in human development but also a stage of physical development and growth. Psychologically, individuals undergo significant changes, and this is a period for character formation and knowledge accumulation. Puberty is a critical period for human maturation and growth, and almost all aspects, including ideals, moral sentiments, ideological qualities, and physical fitness, are basically formed during this period. For the growth of adolescents, puberty education plays a key guiding role.

## **2.2. Rebellious issues**

Regarding rebellious psychology, the "Psychology Dictionary" explains it as follows: Rebellious psychology is a strong resistance emotion and a psychological activity that occurs when the subject's needs do not match the objective environment. In the 1960s, American psychologist Jack Brehm proposed the concept and theory of psychological reactance. The "reactance theory" assumes that everyone believes they have a set of free behaviors that they can exercise, both now and in the future. If this set of free behaviors is threatened or canceled, it will generate a motivational state to prevent the loss of other freedoms or to restore the threatened freedom, and this motivational state is called "psychological reactance." After an individual develops rebellious psychology, they will engage in various behaviors that go against the rules, attacking those who punish them. Initially, it was widely believed that psychological reactance was triggered by situational factors. However, subsequent surveys and research found that there are certain differences in psychological reactance among different individuals, and it is also a personality trait. In terms of characteristics, rebellious issues are the organic unity of relative independence and social conformity; in terms of structure, rebellious issues are the organic unity of behavioral tendencies, emotions, and cognition; in terms of function, rebellious issues have both negative and positive distinctions. The manifestations of rebellious issues in adolescents during puberty include indifference to family and society, contradictory attitudes towards social demands, blind closeness and trust towards the opposite sex, and resistance to parents and adults.

## **2.3. Social work**

Social work is a profession dedicated to helping others and is also known as social work. There is an essential difference between the focus of social work and that of psychology and medicine. The interaction between humans and their environment is the focus of social work, which aims to help communities, families, individuals, and groups better adapt to the social environment in which they find themselves. This involves restoring and enhancing their social functioning and creating social conditions conducive to achieving goals, thereby effectively alleviating and preventing social problems. As an applied social science based on modern science, social work is a series of organized actions to assist people in accomplishing tasks that are difficult to achieve on their own. For those being helped, it views them as active and positive subjects rather than passive and negative objects. By employing professional methods and providing necessary conditions, it enables those being helped to tap into their own energy to solve and deal with problems. Relevant departments have shown through the combination of domestic and international experience that social work is an important component of social construction. It follows professional ethical standards and is a manifestation of the core socialist values. In the fields of social management and social services, it uses professional methods, knowledge, and skills to assist communities, organizations, families, and individuals in need. By integrating social resources and coordinating social relationships, it effectively prevents and addresses social problems, promoting harmonious social development.

## **3. Causes of rebellious issues in adolescents during puberty**

Regarding the causes of rebellious issues faced by adolescents during puberty, this paper has collected a large amount of data and research findings from relevant scholars. A holistic random sampling method was adopted, selecting adolescents aged 10–20 as research subjects and randomly drawing classes from different grades in schools for group testing. The survey was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire,

yielding 1,367 responses, of which 1,251 were valid, with an effective response rate of 91.51%, indicating that the questionnaire results are valid.

### 3.1. Personal characteristics

In the survey on the impact of personal characteristics on adolescents' rebellious issues, personal characteristics were mainly divided into four aspects: personality, academic performance, age, and cognition, awareness, and ability. The largest proportion(44.74%)believed that the impact of a stubborn personality on adolescents' rebellious issues was average, followed by those who thought it was high(32.89%), very high(14.91%),low(5.26%),and very low(2.19%).The largest proportion(42.11%) believed that poor academic performance had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was high(35.79%),very high(15.79%),low(3.16%),and very low(3.16%).The largest proportion(35.09%)believed that age had a high impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was average(33.33%),very high(22.81%),low(5.26%),and very low(3.51%).The largest proportion(44.36%)believed that the asynchronous development of cognition, awareness, and ability had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was high(33.08%),very high(15.04%),low(4.51%),and very low(3.01%).

### 3.2. Family indicators

In the survey on the impact of family indicators on adolescents' rebellious issues, family indicators were mainly divided into four aspects: improper family education methods, unstable family structure, lack of effective communication, and educational imbalance among family members. The largest proportion(48.03%)believed that improper family education methods had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was high(31.58%),very high(11.84%),low(7.89%),and very low(0.66%).The largest proportion(51.75%)believed that an unstable family structure had an average impact on adolescents' psychological issues, followed by those who thought it was very low(18.42%),very high(14.91%),high(14.04%),and low(0.88%).The largest proportion(34.74%)believed that a lack of effective communication had a high impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was average(33.68%),very high(24.21%),low(4.21%),and very low(3.16%).The largest proportion(63.91%)believed that educational imbalance among family members had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was very high(16.54%),high(14.29%),very low(3.01%),and low(2.26%).

### 3.3. School indicators

In the survey on the impact of school indicators on adolescents' rebellious issues, school indicators were mainly divided into four aspects: improper school management methods, oppressive classroom atmosphere, Imbalance in home-school education, and tense peer relationships. The largest proportion(65.79%)believed that improper school management methods had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was low(13.16%),high(12.28%),very high(6.14%),and very low(2.63%).The largest proportion(53.95%)believed that an oppressive classroom atmosphere had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was high(18.42%), low(14.47%), very high(10.53%),and very low(2.63%).The largest proportion(56.14%)believed that an imbalance in home-school education had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was high(22.81%),very high(11.40%),low(7.89%),and very low(1.75%).The largest proportion(60.82%)believed that tense peer relationships had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was high(12.87%),low(12.28%),very high(10.53%),and very low(3.51%).

### 3.4. Social indicators

In the survey on the impact of social indicators on adolescents' rebellious issues, social indicators were mainly divided into three aspects: social pressure, negative social habits, and unethical mass media. The largest proportion(47.37%)believed that social pressure had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was high(34.21%),very high(14.47%),low(2.63%),and very

low(1.32%).The largest proportion(53.95%)believed that negative social habits had an average impact on adolescents' rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was very low(17.11%), high(11.84%), low(9.21%), and very high(7.89%).The largest proportion(38.60%)believed that unethical mass media had an average impact on adolescents 'rebellious issues, followed by those who thought it was very low(26.32%),low(22.81%),high(7.02%),and very high(5.26%).

## **4. Social work strategies for puberty rebellion**

### **4.1. Selecting the intervention model based on case-by-case situations**

Puberty is the most critical period for adolescent development and is a time when individuals' personalities stabilize and form. During this stage, both emotions and thoughts are highly sensitive and can easily influence behavior in extreme ways. Therefore, when intervening, social workers must be cautious and base their decisions on a thorough understanding of each case. When establishing service models, it is important to avoid subjective assumptions and preconceived notions. Sometimes, some social workers choose intervention models based primarily on their own preferences and judgments, which fails to take into account the specific requirements of the case. In practice, this mistake should be avoided. Before selecting a theoretical model for intervention, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the model's content. At the same time, based on research by predecessors, the model should be summarized and then intervention strategies should be chosen in a targeted manner according to the situation of the service recipient.

### **4.2. Adjusting the intervention process according to specific situations**

The entry points for intervention work include trust and communication. Intervening in the rebellious issues of adolescents during puberty through social work, and establishing good communication with them, is one of the most difficult and primary tasks in addressing these issues. Adolescents with rebellious problems have many characteristics, including being contradictory, sensitive, and vulnerable. At the same time, they have strong self-esteem and heavy defensiveness, making it difficult to enter their inner world. Therefore, in the initial stage, when social workers establish relationships with cases, it is necessary to use a variety of methods. This requires social workers to not only have a certain degree of sensitivity but also strong insight. In addition, when describing problems, social workers must always remain calm and not be affected by the emotions of the adolescents.

### **4.3. Prioritizing multiple social work intervention strategies**

Through reviewing literature, conducting surveys, and intervening in cases, effective strategies for social work intervention in addressing adolescents' rebellious issues have been identified. Three representative cases, A, B, and C, were selected to apply different social work models for intervention.

#### **4.3.1. Behavioral therapy model**

Among the three major case work models in social work, behavioral therapy is one of them, also known as "training psychotherapy," which was proposed in 1953 by an American behaviorist psychologist, B. F. Skinner. Cognitive-behavioral theory emphasizes that emotions are the source of personal behavior, and individual thoughts determine emotions. Cognition and behavior influence and interact with each other. Both cognition without behavior and behavior without cognition are incomplete. Emotions linked to cognition and behavior directly affect the individual, and negative emotions can trigger more pessimistic thoughts and actions. Therefore, during practice, it is important to focus on intervening in adolescents' negative behaviors and emotions, reducing the likelihood of adverse reactions, and providing positive encouragement and support for their good behaviors.

In Case A, the rebellious issues are mainly divided into four aspects: behavioral difficulties, family difficulties, academic difficulties, and interpersonal difficulties. Behavioral therapy was chosen to address the problems in Case A. Although some positive outcomes were achieved, this model is prone to relapse among adolescents with rebellious behaviors during puberty. This is because they are in a special developmental stage with poor self-control and are easily influenced by external temptations. How to consolidate the achieved results is a thought-provoking question for this model.

#### 4.3.2. *Conjoint family therapy model*

The conjoint family therapy model was proposed by Virginia Satir in the 1950s. Family therapy plays an indispensable key role in an individual's growth, especially in the formation of behavior patterns and self-concepts. This model suggests a comprehensive analysis of the case's family situation to identify problems among family members. Various family restructuring tools, such as family maps and life status, are used to reshape the family and address adolescents' rebellious issues.

In Case B, the root of the rebellious issue lies in the lack of sufficient external support, whether from the family or other aspects. The conjoint family therapy model was applied to Case B. The advantage of this model is that it changes the overall environment in which the case grows and improves parent-child interactions, which helps to sustain and consolidate the therapeutic effects.

#### 4.3.3. *Rational emotive therapy model*

Humanistic and cognitive theories form the theoretical basis of rational emotive therapy. Cognitive theory generally holds that ideal thoughts, rather than subconscious instincts, govern human behavior. Due to a lack of rational thinking and cognitive errors, people often exhibit negative behaviors. Humanism emphasizes that every individual has the potential and need for self-actualization. The inability to accept oneself is the root cause of problems. Therefore, it is important to help adolescents establish self-concepts and self-awareness. At the same time, the subjective initiative of adolescents should be fully utilized, as they have the responsibility and capability to change their irrational beliefs.

In Case C, the rebellious issue stems from some irrational cognitions formed during the growth process. Rational emotive therapy was applied to Case C. Although this method focuses on improving the cognitive level, it does not place sufficient emphasis on behavior. How to unify human behavior and cognition to simultaneously change the case's behavior is a challenging question for the effectiveness of the intervention theory.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, to address the rebellious issues of adolescents during puberty, targeted social work intervention is essential. Moreover, it is necessary to integrate various therapeutic models. A single theoretical model is insufficient to completely resolve the rebellious issues faced by adolescents in puberty. It is important to actively utilize the strengths of diverse social intervention models to effectively deal with students' rebellious issues and promote the healthy growth of adolescents.

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