

Early Adulthood (17–25 years)



Emotional development

What is happening?	How can I tell?	How can I help?
CHANGES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF EMOTIONS		
Emotional responses are maturing and sensitivity to reward begins to decrease	Experiencing a decrease in mood fluctuations and becoming less emotionally reactive to situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and support youth when they demonstrate greater ability to control, redirect or address their emotions in healthy ways (for example, staying calm, communicating effectively, meditating or exercising to reduce stress) Provide youth with the opportunity for their own time and space to reflect and relax in a way they choose (for example, music, reading, drawing, writing) Provide motivation, support and encouragement through difficult times Encourage openness about mental health issues. If you are concerned about a young person's emotional stability, connect them with available supports and information (for example, Kids Help Phone, family physician, websites, an appropriate mentor or counsellor)—the negative stigma around mental health often discourages people from seeking support. Provide opportunities for independence and leadership
DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATION		
Emotional self-regulation matures	<p>Able to self-regulate emotions using thinking strategies</p> <p>Able to override emotional responses and make reasoned choices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide youth with opportunities for own time and space to reflect and relax in a way they choose (for example, music, reading, drawing, writing) Reinforce strategies for effective self-regulation (for example, encourage youth to stop and think before making decisions and engaging in risky behaviours)
Motivation is further internalized	Demonstrates ability to set their own goals and stay on task with less prompting from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide encouragement. Youth of this age want to know that parents, teachers and other role models are interested in their activities and ambitions but ask for the freedom to set and achieve goals independently
DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY		
Empathy reaches maturity	<p>Can detect subtle signs of emotional distress in others</p> <p>Is able to respond appropriately to the needs of others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce empathetic behaviour (for example, giving up one's seat on the bus) Promote perspective-taking to encourage the development of empathy and to recognize the difference between own experience and that of others (for example, someone from a different cultural background) Encourage youth to spend time focusing on other people and topics (for example, volunteering with a community organization)