

## LESSON 3-2

# Obstacles and Detours: The Media

### Overview

You fill in the information gaps and correct misconceptions that came up in the previous lesson with a minilecture on physical changes in puberty. Students explore messages and metamessages of magazine ads.

### Cognitive Objectives

Students will expand their knowledge and awareness of the reasons for changes at puberty, and they will examine media messages that reflect our view of normal

### Affective Objectives

Students will increase their understanding and acceptance of personal changes and develop awareness of the personal effect of media manipulation.

### Interactive Objectives

Students will work together to analyze ads and to challenge the manipulative aspects of the advertising media.

### Preparation

- Analyze any misinformation on yesterday's chart so you can correct it in a minilecture that will also expand the students' information.

- Find examples of ads in magazines or TV that target teens or young adults with questionable images of "normal" (Calvin Klein, Joe Camel, beer commercials, cars, soft drinks, sports). Bring extras for any students who didn't bring them in. Look especially for ads using sexuality to sell products. Videotape TV commercials and MTV ads to show in class.

### TEACHING THE LESSON

#### Introduction

Brief follow-up on community service commitments

- Check on journeywork. Have students keep their magazines for a later activity.
- **Ally Group Presentations**  
Have ally groups demonstrate their identity markers in a brief presentation, if they were not ready to do so in lesson 2-6.
- Refer to the lists from the previous lesson and acknowledge that students already know quite a bit about adolescent development.

#### Metaphor for the change process

Have one student go from one side of the room to the other. Have students notice that it isn't possible to get to "there" from "here"

without going through the space in between. Make the point that developmental stages are necessary and that everyone everywhere goes through virtually the same changes (allowing for gender differences).

## Minilecture

Give a minilecture on physical changes during puberty to fill gaps and correct misinformation. Add, delete, or change information to make it appropriate for your group.

*During adolescence your body changes more dramatically and more rapidly than at any other time except when you were an infant. It's almost like you're becoming a different person. That can be a little scary. You might even be grossed out about some of the changes that are happening in you or your friends. The whole thing can be pretty embarrassing. All I can say is that everyone goes through it. Many of us have been scared or distracted or embarrassed sometimes.*

*You may have spurts of growth in height or weight. Do you know that it's even normal for you to have one arm or leg a little longer than the other for a while? Sometimes one of your feet may be bigger than the other. Eventually the other one will catch up. Some young people don't get their full growth until they're in their twenties; others are fully grown by fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen. It's all normal.*

*You start growing body hair—under your arms and in the pubic area. The hair on your legs and arms may start getting thicker. Boys begin to grow facial hair and sometimes chest and back hair. Way back in the history of human beings, body hair probably provided an extra bit of protection.*

*Your sweat glands start getting more active, and so do the oil-producing glands in your facial skin.*

*Your voice matures, usually more dramatically for boys, but girls' voices mature, too.*

*Male and female characteristics are more apparent as reproductive organs develop and start preparing you to be a parent. Along with the more obvious physical changes, there are also changes in moods, emotions, and interest in relationships.*

*All these changes are normal. You'll go through them at your own rate. Sometimes you may feel like it's the worst time of your life, but it can be pretty exciting, too. You're starting to turn into an adult right in front of your own eyes. It can't be all that bad. Just think—if you were a tadpole, you'd be losing your tail and gills, sprouting legs and lungs, and you'd end up as a frog. Human physical changes are dramatic, but not as radical as a frog's changes.*

## Introduce the concept of media manipulation

*I mentioned in the last class that U.S. teenagers tend to be embarrassed about the changes they go through in puberty. Young people in traditional cultures don't seem to have so much embarrassment about it. Does anyone have a guess about why this is? . . . Well, there's evidence that it's mostly because of the media. Writers of ads in magazines and on radio and TV want you to think you need to buy their products, so they try to manipulate you. That is, they use sneaky ways to get you to do something that you wouldn't do otherwise, something that might benefit them more than you. Most ads have two sides. There's the **message**, which is straightforward information, like the name of an acne medication and what it does. In the same ad, there's usually a **meta-message**, which is the sneaky part. For example, the ad may show a picture of all the girls flocking around a guy who uses that particular acne medication. It tries to make you think all the guys or girls will find you irresistible if you use it.*