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## Identity distress and dysfunction in modern society

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For many adolescents, identity development is a relatively smooth and rewarding activity of exploring and committing to the roles, goals and values that give one's life direction and purpose. For others, it can be a tumultuous time of existential anxiety and depression, leading to a condition that has been labeled identity distress. Erik Erikson suggested that the adolescent struggle to achieve a committed sense of identity was a normative psychosocial milestone; however, he acknowledged that resolution of this developmental task was easier for some than others, and it has been noted that for a few, it can be psychologically debilitating. It has also been observed that identity distress and dysfunction may be on the rise, perhaps due to globalization and the complexity of modern society. Identity distress has been studied in a number of different countries including Canada, China, Colombia, India, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Sweden. There has also been some work on the development of interventions aimed at lowering identity distress and increasing positive identity development. More light needs to be shined on this important, yet under-studied modern phenomenon, in order to expand and enhance efforts to foster positive development in adolescents and young adults.

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## Working with the bullying adaptation: Pro-social alternatives to achieving resources, reputations and reproductive opportunities

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Although adolescent bullying and psychopathic personality traits are often viewed in a purely negative light, they are likely to be an evolutionary adaptation. In the context of a high school, bullying and psychopathy may increase adolescents' access to sexual partners, social dominance, and non-social resources. Common anti-bullying intervention practices, such as the "zero-tolerance" policy (e.g., suspending students) are ineffective, for their purpose is to stop adolescents' predispositions to pursue resources. If adolescents are provided with more effective, pro-social alternatives to bullying, such as helping or cooperating with others, will they be more likely to use pro-social over antisocial strategies to obtain resources? This study hypothesizes that adolescents higher in psychopathy and bullying will be more likely to capitalize on effective, pro-social opportunities to achieve resources and mates. The main objective of this research is to increase the success of bullying prevention programs within secondary schools. With approximately 160 adolescents between grades 7 and 12 in Southern Ontario, this study will explore adolescents' cognitive and behavioral predispositions and whether they can be changed. Participants will complete a self-report questionnaire package and will read short vignettes that depict individuals obtaining adaptive goals with the use of pro-social or antisocial strategies. Data analysis will include correlations and multiple regressions. Being victimized by a bully or psychopath has been linked to severe emotional trauma, adolescent suicide and school shootings. Providing bullies with an effective and pro-social alternative to achieving adaptive goals is imperative, for it may minimize the probability of harm to future victims.

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