

# What to Do



## What the public thinks and what to do about it.

The public thinks ...	So communicators should ...	Because ...
<b>Adolescence is solely a period of risk, danger, and heightened vulnerability to threats. Furthermore, they understand adolescents as incapable of making good decisions and frequently draw on negative stereotypes of young people.</b>	Advance a positive vision of young people and their development by emphasizing community engagement.	Advancing alternative and positive stories about adolescent engagement can start to shift the predominantly negative views of adolescents towards the potential of this developmental period.
<b>Disparities and inequities faced by adolescents of a particular race or class may be the result of poor decision-making, or deficient values or work ethic.</b>	Explain how structural factors like racism lead to disparities and inequities among adolescents.	When we highlight the way our social setup creates inequity, we lead people to see that systems change makes sense and is necessary.
<b>Young people are defined by largely negative stereotypes and misperceptions.</b>	Advance stories of youth service and activism without acknowledging myths about adolescents.	Featuring youth's civic engagement, service, and activism are especially powerful. Restating misperceptions—even to refute them—only reinforces them in people's thinking.
<b>“Brain” development during adolescence is solely associated with a narrow set of cognitive and intelligence-related aptitudes, such as IQ.</b>	Focus on social, emotional, and identity development, and then, if it's necessary to talk about brain development connect these skills to changes in the brain.	This keeps development of a wider set of competencies in the picture, such as social and emotional skills and forging lifelong identities, interests, and ambitions. It inspires support for solutions that enable adolescents' healthy transition to adulthood.



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<p><b>Adolescents need, above all else, to be protected and shielded from the dangerous world that surrounds them.</b></p>	<p>Use “discovery” metaphors to explain how adolescents benefit from opportunities to try things out and learn.</p>	<p>These metaphors help people see and appreciate young people’s need to try things out, take risks, make mistakes, and learn from this process. They also help people understand that adolescents need to explore and act within the world to effectively develop their identities, interests, and ambitions.</p>
<p><b>Adolescent outcomes mean personal accomplishments, so supporting adolescents is neither a matter of collective concern nor a social and public policy issue.</b></p>	<p>Use the value of <i>Community Connections</i>—the idea that supporting adolescents enables them to serve their communities and create a stronger social fabric.</p>	<p>It builds support for collective action and policies that empower youth and give them opportunities to contribute and thrive.</p>
<p><b>Successful adolescent development is related to mostly immediate and personal impacts, without much connection to the future.</b></p>	<p>Emphasize the future collective impacts of adolescent development.</p>	<p>Broadening the timescale for the benefits that result from supporting young people makes people aware that supporting young people creates a better future for all of us.</p>