

body at specific times. During infancy, children identify themselves as being separate from the mother; during early childhood, they establish gender role identification with the appropriate-sex parent; and in later childhood, they establish who they are in relation to others. In adolescence, they come to see themselves as distinct individuals, somehow unique and separate from every other individual.

Adolescence begins with the onset of puberty and extends to relative physical and emotional stability at or near graduation from high school. During this time, adolescents are faced with the crisis of **group identity versus alienation**. In the period that follows, individuals strive to attain autonomy from the family and develop a sense of **personal identity** as opposed to **role diffusion**. A sense of group identity appears to be essential to the development of a personal identity. Young adolescents must resolve questions concerning relationships with a peer group before they are able to resolve questions about who they are in relation to family and society.

### Group Identity

During the early stage of adolescence, pressure to belong to a group is intensified. Teenagers find it essential to belong to a group from which they can derive status. Belonging to a crowd helps adolescents establish the differences between themselves and their parents. They dress as the group dresses and wear makeup and hairstyles according to group criteria, all of which are different from those of the parental generation. Language, music, and dancing reflect a culture that is exclusive to adolescents. If adults begin to emulate these fashions and interests, the style changes immediately. The evidence of adolescent conformity to the peer group and nonconformity to the adult group provides teenagers with a frame of reference for self-assertion and rejection of the identity of their parents' generation. To be different is to be unaccepted and alienated from the group.

### Individual Identity

The quest for personal identity is part of the ongoing identification process. As adolescents establish identity within a group, they also attempt to incorporate multiple body changes into a concept of the