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## *Section B*

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A Generation of Firsts

## *Today's Youth: A Generation of Firsts*

- The first generation to understand terrorism as a domestic issue
- The first generation to fully compete in a global economy
- The first generation to experience instantaneous communication with the world

## *Today's Youth: A Generation of Firsts*

- The first generation to grow up with the majority living a portion of childhood in a single-parent household
- The first generation to live its entire life in the shadow of AIDS
- The first generation to witness and experience the translocation of an entire American city

## *Social Learning vs. Gender Differences*

- In 1990, we believed gender-specific behaviors were predominantly the result of social learning
- Today, we know that neuroendocrine differences have a significant impact on gender differences related to processing, learning, and behavior

## *A Shift of Frameworks*

- In 1990, we had a risk or deficit model as the predominant framework for youth programs
- Today, we have a positive youth development model that incorporates protective as well as risk factors

## *A Shift in Understanding Development*

- In 1990, we had an invariate, stage-based conceptualization of adolescent development
- Today, we have an ecological model that grounds development within the contexts of a young person's life

## *A Shift in Understanding Parental Roles*

- In 1990, we believed that parental influence diminished as peer influence increased in adolescence
- Today, we understand that parents are as critical during adolescence as they were in childhood, even as peer influence increases



## *Adolescence is an Age of Opportunity*

- **Pubertal development** brings new capacities, a new body image, and a new sense of self
- **Cognitive development** brings with it the capacity to look at a problem from multiple perspectives and to explore competing options to its solution

## *Adolescence is an Age of Opportunity*

- **Social development** brings with it a broader set of influences than just family: peers, teachers, religious leaders
- **Moral development** brings with it idealism, social engagement, and volunteerism

## *Viewing Adolescents in a Social Context*

- To tap the potential as well as to address the problems of youth, we need to view the adolescent nested in a wide set of social contexts and we need to understand how they influence both health and morbidity