

A new way of looking at teenage temperament

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Ask any 21st century parent and they will admit raising teenagers in today's complicated world is often a daunting challenge. Queen's University professor Tom Hollenstein (Psychology) is proposing new ways to better understand the period of adolescence and help parents cope with the teenage years.

"For over a century, adolescence has been considered a time of storm and [stress](#) – a period of greater interpersonal conflict, moodiness and risk-taking," says Dr. Hollenstein. "There has been an emphasis in research on the problems of adolescence, rather than on understanding how children typically develop through adolescence. This storm and stress approach is outdated and should be abandoned for a [21st century](#) perspective."

Dr. Hollenstein and co-researcher Jessica Lougheed (Psychology) are proposing an approach they call the 4Ts – Typicality, what is normal for this age; Transactions, interactions between biological changes and their environment; Temperament, emotional reactions and level of self-control; and Timing, the different rates of social, emotional and cognitive maturation.

"The 4T approach will help researchers develop a greater understanding of adolescence that is needed for the 21st century," says Dr. Hollenstein. "The fundamental question is not whether storm and stress occurs, but when do these changes occur and how do they manifest themselves in teenagers. Research using the 4Ts should help reveal this."

The research was recently [published](#) in *American Psychologist*.

Provided by Queen's University

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