

## H-5- "How 'old' is the child?"

### What is the Child's Developmental Age or Mental Age (MA)?

1. Infant (0-1 years)
2. Toddler (1-3)
3. Preschool (3-6)
4. School age (6-12)
5. Early Adolescent (13-15)
6. Late Adolescent (16-20)

#### **Chronological Age (CA) versus Mental Age (MA):**

Often children present as less mature or more mature than their chronological age (CA) would indicate. This can present a problem when considering symptoms; for example, attention problems in a 2 year old are not uncommon at all, but in a 10 year old are very uncommon. So, for those children whose CA is different than their MA, symptoms must be considered according to the MA.

#### **Puberty and its Changes:**

With puberty comes hormonal impact. This impact interacts with normal cognitive development. The observable changes at puberty include changes in social relationships and family relationships, growth and development of the body, increases in emotional intensity and valiance of emotional experience, great leaps in cognitive understanding (abstract thought, creativity), increase interest in novelty and thrill, and a relative mismatch between emotional intensity, drives, and ability to self-inhibit.

#### **Experience and Symptoms:**

We are thinking, learning, and threat avoiding creatures. Certain experiences teach us valuable lessons. They can also teach us unhelpful lessons. Most people do not "unlearn" a lesson once it is learned. Those who have been in extreme circumstance will be profoundly impacted by that experience. Symptoms may look different with them because of this.