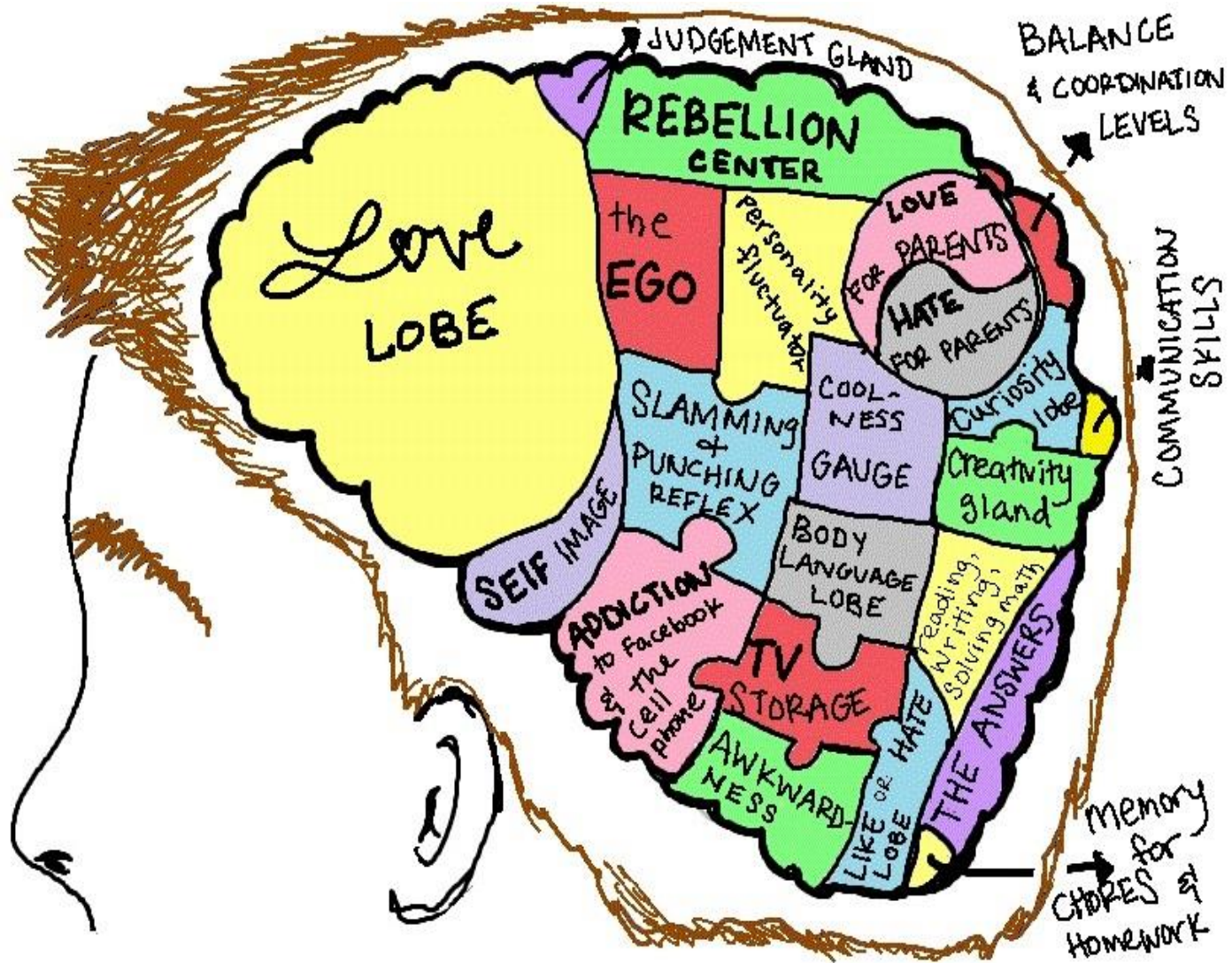


The Adolescent Brain

Sara Rosenthal
Merton Education Wellbeing Service
January 20, 2020

Teen Brain







Agenda

- Puberty vs Adolescence
- Brain Basics- the development of the brain during adolescence
- Stages of development in adolescence
- Social and Emotional Development
- Communication-Talking with your teen
- Sleep
- Questions??



Puberty vs Adolescence

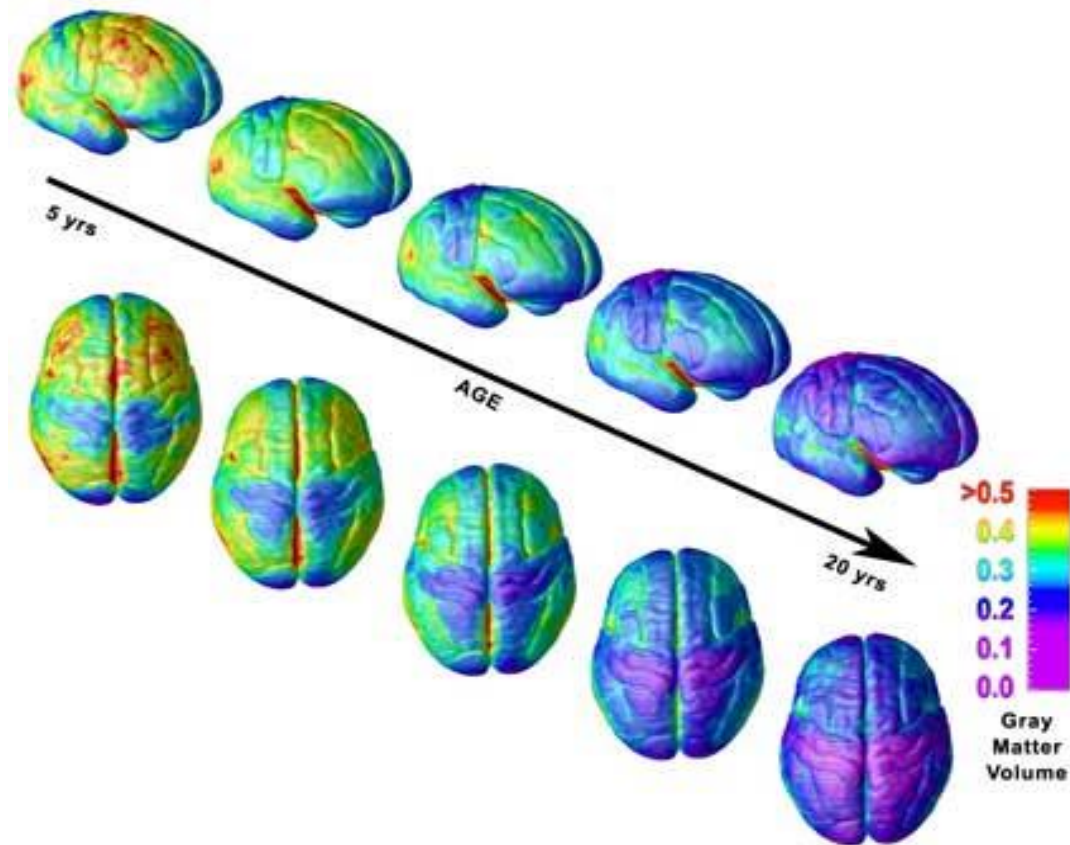
Puberty:

Physical maturation and
changes in the body

Adolescence:

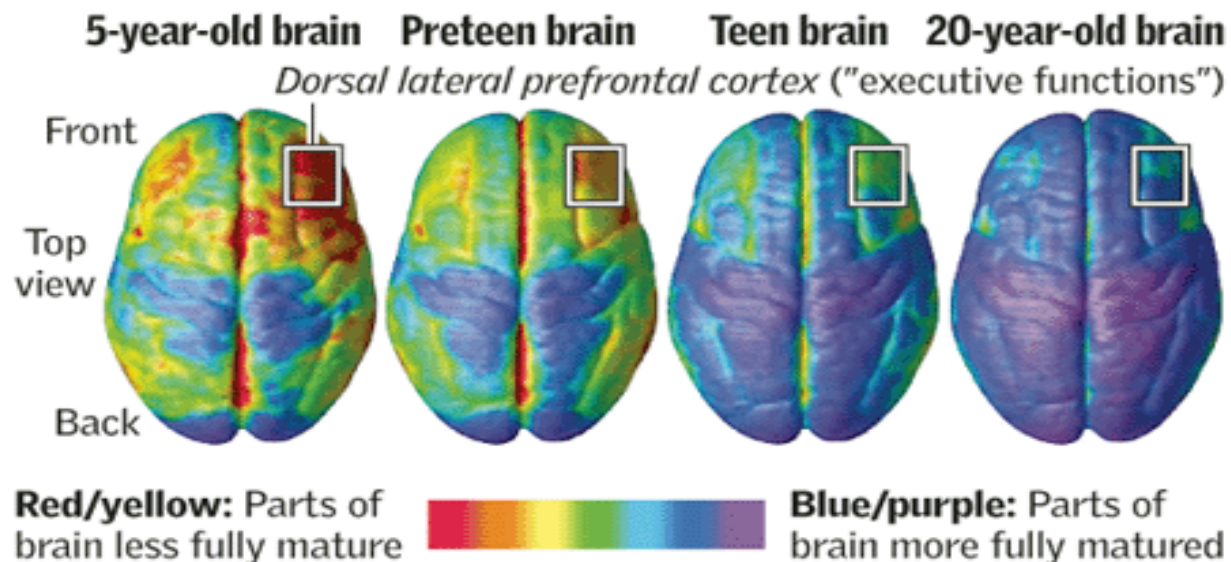
Psychological and social
maturation

Under Development



Judgment last to develop

The area of the brain that controls "executive functions" — including weighing long-term consequences and controlling impulses — is among the last to fully mature. Brain development from childhood to adulthood:



Teens and Decision Making

Brain development has an impact on how teens make decisions (not just the decisions they make).

Adult Vs. Teen Brain



- Most of the activity in the adult brain is in the frontal lobe
 - Thinking, reasoning, planning
- Most of the activity in the teen brain is focused in the center
 - Pleasure reward center

Neuroplasticity- Pruning and Remodelling

Dr Dan Siegel



Role of Parenting in Adolescence

Hopes



Fears



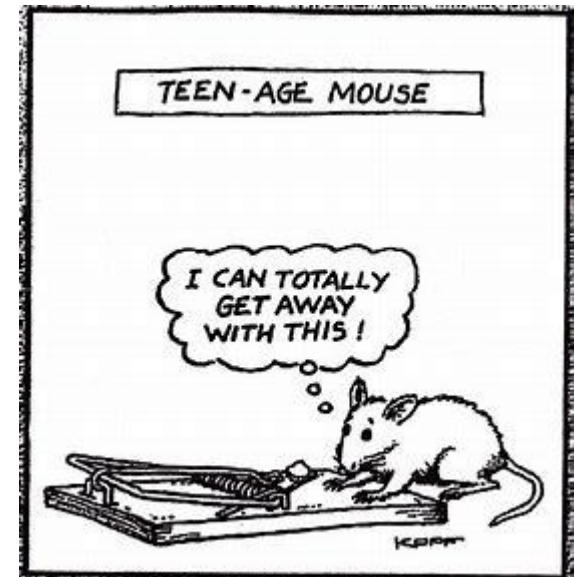


Stages of Adolescence

- Early adolescence- ages 9-13
- Increased “negative attitude”
- Increased dissatisfaction in being treated as a “child”
- More “bored” and restless—may be less interested in activities they may have been interested when younger
- May feel things are “unfair” regarding demands and limit setting
- May resist authority – questioning, arguing, non-compliance
- Experimentation- which may include some risky behaviors

Stages of Adolescence

- Middle adolescence- ages 13-15
- Increased conflicts about social independence and freedom
- May lie more often (omission or commission) either to do something (which they may not be allowed to do), or to get out of trouble
- May feel more peer pressure including to engage in risky behaviors i.e. alcohol or substance or social media



Stages of Adolescence

- Late adolescence- ages 15-18
- Increased independence overall- may have part time job, more social freedom. . .
- More significant emotional involvement in relationships including romantic ones
- May have sadness and worry about next steps- separating from friends and family or being worried about if they are ready for more independence i.e. work/uni...





Social Emotional Development of Teens

Adolescents are in transition- not children and not adults



Communication and Conflict

Conflict is normal and often linked to the demands and requirements for adolescents to find their wings and for parents to let them fly.



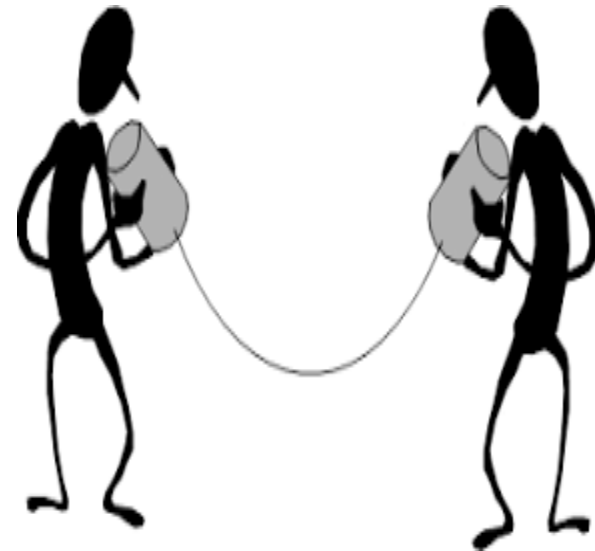
I SLEEP TOO MUCH
PARENTS COMPLAIN
DONT GET ENOUGH SLEEP
PARENTS COMPLAIN
I EAT TOO MUCH
PARENTS COMPLAIN
I DONT EAT ENOUGH
PARENTS COMPLAIN
IM ALWAYS IN MY ROOM
PARENTS COMPLAIN
I GO OUT TOO MUCH
PARENTS COMPLAIN
I CANT WIN

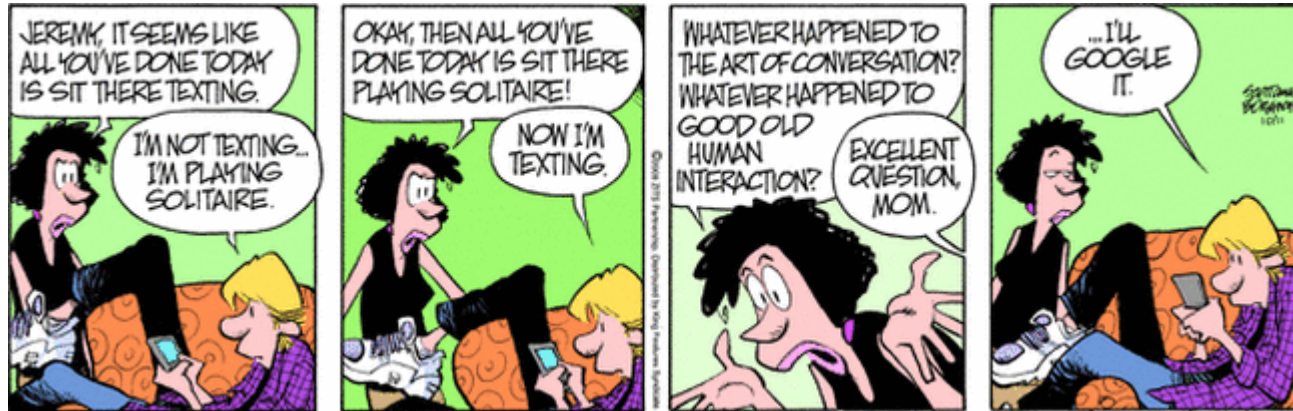
What you say?What they hear?

No you cannot go to that party!
You don't trust me.

Do you have your keys
(phone/oystercard)?
You think I am a child

Have you done your homework?
You are not responsible









Communication

- Ask open ended questions- how are you? You seem a bit upset do you want to talk?
- Be curious- avoid assuming or pre-judging
- If they have made a “bad” decision- ask them how they felt about the outcome? And LISTEN. Everyone learns from the decisions they make throughout life and teens are not different. Even negative decisions can be learning moments.
- Pick your battles

Connection: Empathy vs Sympathy

Empathy leads to connection

- Perspective taking
- Not judging
- Recognizing emotions in others and communicating this recognition

Sympathy

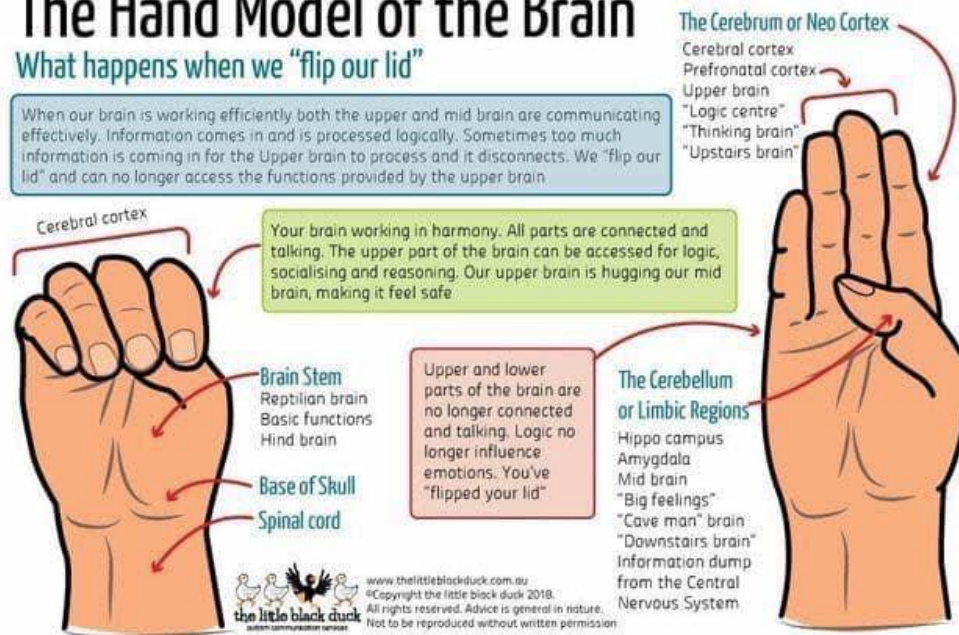
- Feeling care and concern for someone
- Wanting them to feel better or happier.
- Does not involve a **shared** perspective or **shared** emotions.



The Hand Model of the Brain

What happens when we "flip our lid"

When our brain is working efficiently both the upper and mid brain are communicating effectively. Information comes in and is processed logically. Sometimes too much information is coming in for the Upper brain to process and it disconnects. We "flip our lid" and can no longer access the functions provided by the upper brain.



STOP

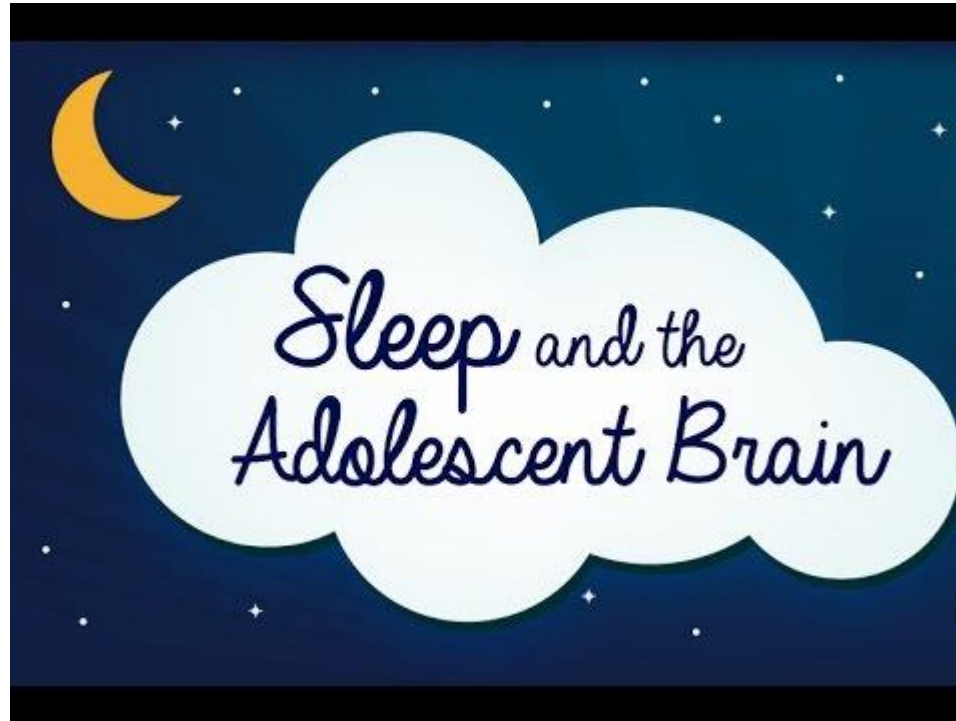
Stop-- Your emotions may try to make you act without thinking. Stay in control!

Take a step back

Observe -What are your thoughts and feelings?

Proceed thoughtfully, think about how you are reacting and your goal.







Biology of Sleep for Teens

- During adolescence the body's internal biological clock changes.
- It is believed to be attributed to the brain hormone melatonin is released later at night in adolescents (compared to in children or adults). This is the hormone which makes people feel sleepy.
- Simultaneously the lives of the teenager becomes busier--school, activities, friends, family etc.



What happens when teens do not get enough sleep ?

- Decreased ability to self-regulate which can include: emotions, impulses and overall mood.
- Increased risky behaviour
- Maybe increased risk of use of cigarettes, nicotine, drugs/alcohol
- Decreased concentration and focus may be more physically restless.



Sleep Tips

Regular bedtime and wake up times. (even on weekends, even with an hour or two of your regular schedule is good)

Exercise regularly but not right before bed..

Avoid caffeine. Also nicotine ([smoking](#) and [vaping](#)) can make a person restless and interrupt sleep.

Dim the lights-light tells your brain to wake up (circadian rhythm).

Turn off electronics. Don't use your phone (including texting), tablets, computer, or TV at least 1 hour before you go to bed.

Don't nap. Naps of more than 30 minutes during the day or too close to bedtime may keep you from falling asleep later.

Create the right sleeping environment. Dark room and temperature should be slightly cool.



Adjusting (and readjusting) expectations

If parenthood came
with a GPS it would
mostly just say:
RECALCULATING

@simoncholland





Resources

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/talking-to-your-teenager/>

https://www.drdansiegel.com/uploads/Mindful.org_article.pdf

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Books: Dr Dan Siegel-- Brainstorm



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Dr. Dan Siegel- <https://youtu.be/0O1u5OEc5eY> Neuroplasticity in the Brain

<https://youtu.be/0O1u5OEc5eY>

Dr. Brene Brown Empathy vs Sympathy

<https://vimeo.com/315970767>

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