

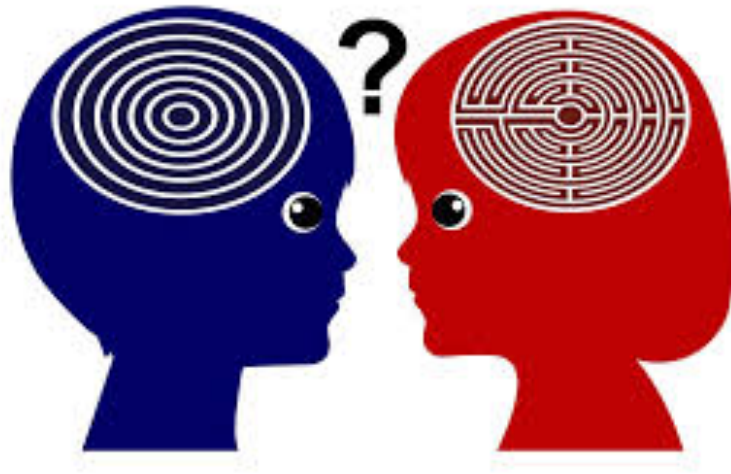
Young people's mental health

Presentation by Paula Forrester

The Teenage Brain - 7 Things to Know

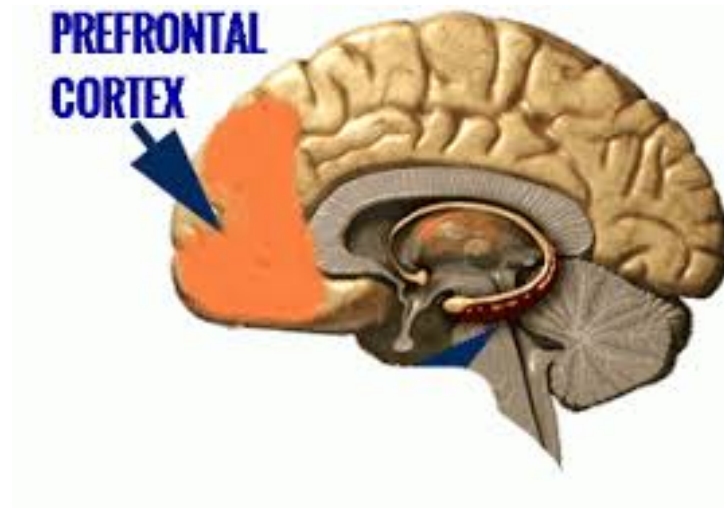


- ▶ 1- A girls brain reaches its biggest size around 11 years old, boys around 14 year old



- ▶ 2- The brain continues to mature even after it has finished growing - the brain does not finish developing and maturing until the mid to late 20s.

The front part of the brain, prefrontal cortex, is one of the last brain regions to mature - this area is responsible for planning, prioritising and controlling impulses.



- ▶ 3- The teen brain has lots of plasticity, meaning it can change, adapt and respond.



- ▶ 4- Many mental disorders may begin to appear during adolescence.



- ▶ This is because of changes in the brain and changes in physical, emotional and social changes happening at the same time

- ▶ 5- Teenagers brains can be more susceptible to stress because their brain is still developing



- ▶ 6- Teenagers need more sleep than children and adults - teenagers require between 9 - 10 hours' sleep a night.



- ▶ Melatonin (sleep hormone in the blood) is higher at night and drops later in the morning in teenagers compared to adults and children - stay awake later, sleep longer in the morning.

► 7- The teen brain is very resilient



The impact of Social Media on the Brain



- ▶ According to a study in 2018, what percentage of teenagers do you think go on social media at least several times per day

Take part in the poll.

A- 60%

B- 70%

C- 80%

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This was in 2018, the figure was probably lower then and now with the current lockdown it is likely to be much higher!

FACT

90% of teenagers use social media

Increased time, increased risk.

- ▶ The more time adolescents are engaged with social media, the higher the risk there is for poor sleep, low self-esteem, and increases in depression or anxiety.
- ▶ The more emotionally invested they are in one site in particular, the more pressure and anxiety they may experience to be available and up-to-date at all times.

Poorly advised

- ▶ It's nothing new; teens have always been wary of asking parents or other adults for advice.
- ▶ With hundreds of friends on social media in the palm of their hands, teenagers often turn to social networks to seek advice that is often misguided.

Instigated fights

- ▶ Cyber bullying has become a concern for parents of adolescents. Strangers, even friends, are able to hide behind the screen and say things they often wouldn't be able to face-to-face.
- ▶ Teens often encounter fights on Facebook, tweeting on Twitter and hurtful comments on Instagram - tactics often used just for the purpose of putting down others.

Skewed perceptions and social comparison

- ▶ It is common for teens, especially girls, to experience pressure to appear “perfect” online. The need to appear to have perfect hair, to look skinny or fit, to have the perfect group of friends or the need to get the right amount of likes can consume teens.
- ▶ Not meeting these invisible standards can cause self-loathing and self-doubt. Social comparison, loneliness and jealousy can result when friends on social media “appear” more popular and attractive or on a glamorous vacation, which can trigger depressive feelings.

Some of the pitfalls of social media

Body image

Sleep
Deprivation

Anxiety

Communication
Issues

Sexual
Exploitation

Depression

Envy

How can we help?



Education

- ▶ It helps to understand what social media is being used for by the teen we are supporting and how.
- ▶ Being educated in how they use it will help us understand the risks involved.

Communication

- ▶ It's good to have conversations about the safety of social media, how much personal information should and shouldn't be shared and about cyber bullying.
- ▶ Studies show that teenagers who had their parents talk to them often, engaged in less risky behaviours

Observe to see if there are any concerns

- ▶ Is there any change in the young person's behaviour?
 - ▶ Have they said anything which could concern you about people that they have been talking to?
 - ▶ Speak to the project worker or Nightstop Assistant if you have any concerns.
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- ▶ If a young person is not sleeping at night, there have been times where YMCA have advised the Host, that it may be an idea to turn the wi-fi off in the night time.

Healthy attitudes

- ▶ To minimise social comparison and envy, parents and teens should talk about the distorted views of friends' lives that are presented on social media.
- ▶ Teens should feel confident, not more depressed, after viewing social media. Encourage using social media not only to post about our best moments but our quieter ones