

Unlocking the Teenage Brain

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Today's Agenda

- ✓ Identifying teen behaviors
- ✓ Understanding the teen brain
- ✓ Tools to support teens

Teen Behaviors

Increased Risk-Taking

Power of the Peer Group

Big Emotions





<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/building-inclusive-workplace-strategies-fostering-rosa-ogunpelu-7>

What's happening in the brains of our teens?

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

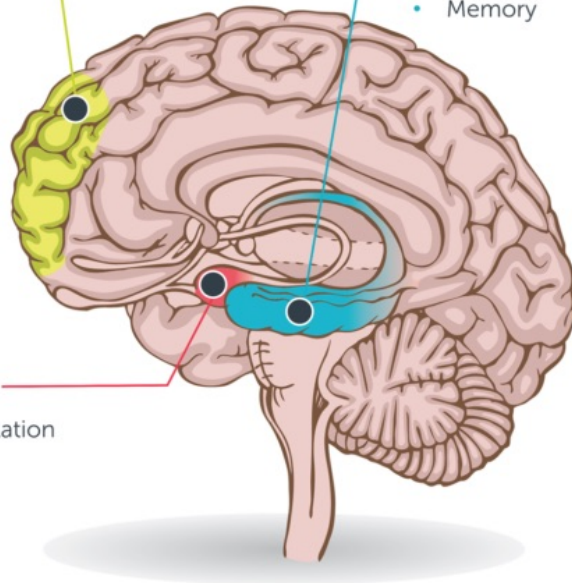
- Attention
- Concentration
- Focus

HIPPOCAMPUS

- Learning
- Memory

AMYGDALA

- Emotional Regulation
- Reactivity

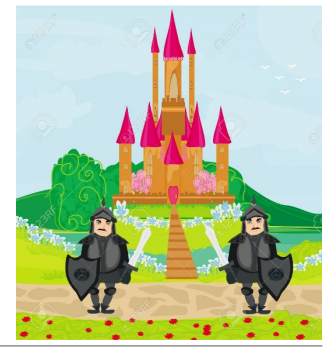


LIMBIC SYSTEM

Brain

g adolescence.

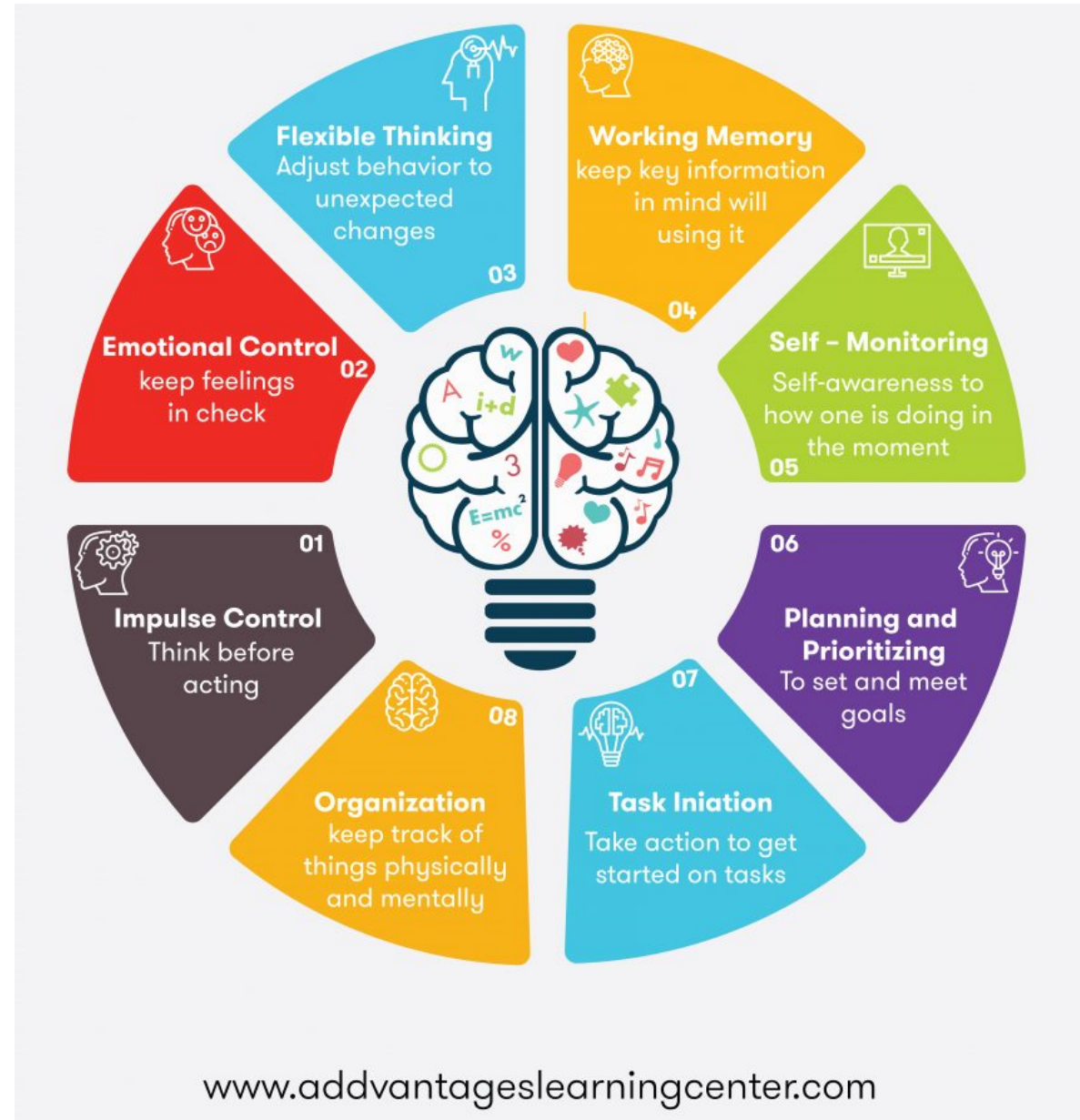
Introducing... The Limbic System



- Home of our threat response & the emotional center of the brain
- Plays a significant role in how our body manages and responds to stress
- Moves *very* quickly



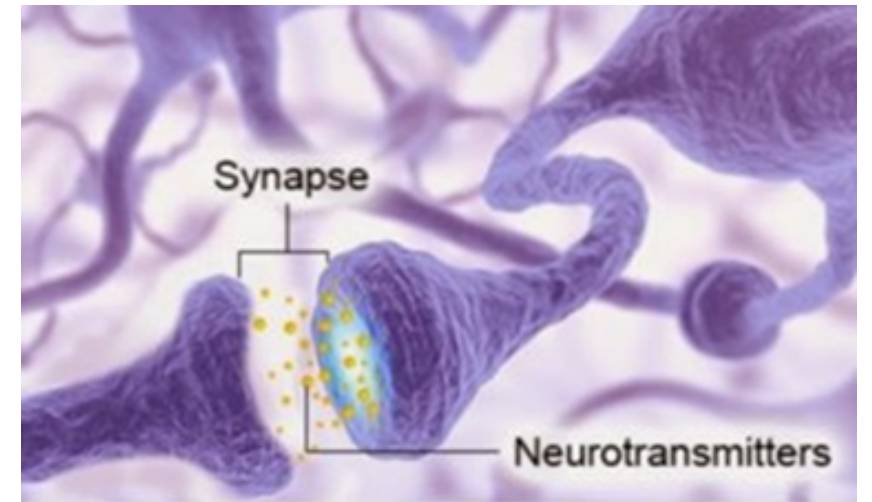
Pre-Frontal Cortex



Wait... there's more

“Neurotransmitters are chemicals that carry messages from one part of the brain to another. They affect how we think, feel, and act.”

- Melatonin
- Serotonin
- Dopamine



<https://youthopportunities.com.au/understanding-the-teenage-brain/>

Peak social brain

The brain is a social organ and we are hardwired for connection with others.

Changing relationship with parents/guardians

Social exclusion feels intense



<https://truestar.life/is-social-media-training-your-brain/>



The Brain's Toolbox

<https://www.thebrainstoolbox.org/>

Tools to Support Teens

Emotional Regulation

“Emotional regulation refers to our ability to manage our emotional responses to things by bringing ourselves down from a “high” or back from a “low.”

~Dr. Lara Honos-Webb, Brain Hacks

Identify and name emotions

Create space between emotion and reaction

Teach and support healthy coping skills

SCARF: Activating our Reward Response

SCARF is a framework that captures the common factors that can activate a reward or threat response in social situations.

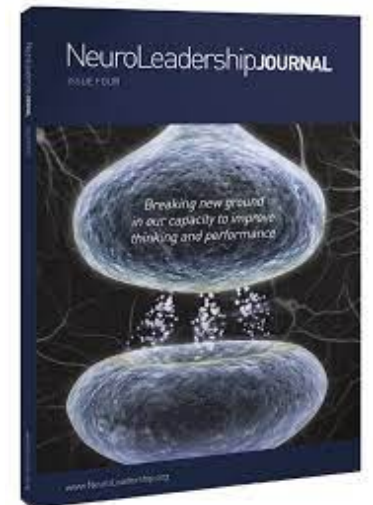
Status

Certainty

Autonomy

Relatedness

Fairness



The SCARF model

S

STATUS

Looks at the relative importance of people

'I am valuable'

C

CERTAINTY

Looks at our ability to predict the future. How certain are we?

'I know where I stand or what will happen'

A

AUTONOMY

Looks at our perception of having control over our environment

'I have a choice'

R

RELATEDNESS

Looks at our relationships and sense of fitting in

'I belong'

F

FAIRNESS

Looks at our perception of being treated fairly; for you and for others

'I am treated fairly and others are treated fairly'

What I should consider

How can I ensure that they know they are valued?

How can I clarify where they stand, and what will happen?

How can I provide them with some degree of input and choice?

How can I make them feel part of the team?

Taking everything together, am I treating them and others fairly?

SCARF: Activating our Reward Response

Status. About relative importance to others. Do I have the perception that my contribution is valued?

Certainty. Concerns being able to predict the future. Do I know what happens next?

Autonomy. Provides a sense of control over events. Do I have a say?

Relatedness. A sense of safety with others, of friend rather than foe. Are we in this together?

Fairness. A a perception of fair exchanges between people. Do I perceive this exchange as fair?

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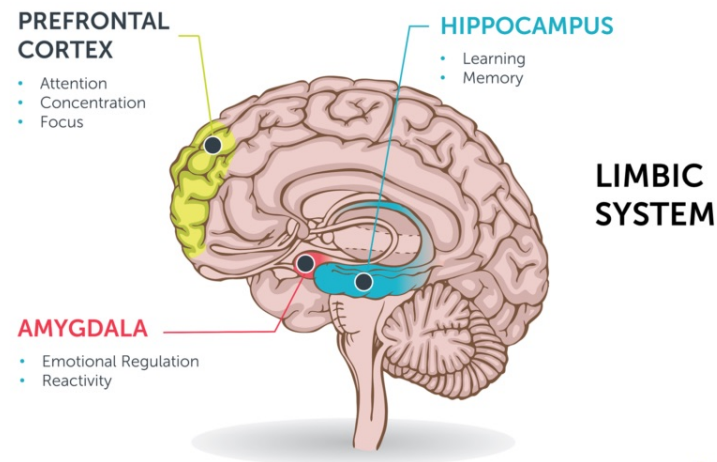
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Review

The teen brain is going through rapid growth and development,
Supporting teen brain development includes supporting their ability to regulate their emotions.

Helping teens to feel safe helps support their development & success.



Closing

How will you use this training to engage differently with your teens in the future?



References & Resources

Websites

- Anger, Impulsivity, Sleep & Teens: The Serotonin Connection. <https://evolvreatment.com/blog/anger-impulsivity-sleep-serotonin/>
- Fostering Positive Social Interactions (SCARF for young people). <https://thrivingwithadhd.com.au/fostering-positive-social-interactions/>
- Coaching Teens to Recognize and Manage Emotions. <https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/teens/coaching-emotions.html> (*this website has a great video as well as worksheet*)
- The Teen Brain: 7 things to know. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know#:~:text=Research%20shows%20that%20the%20sleep,struggle%20with%20waking%20up%20early.>
- What neuroscience tells us about the teenage brain. [https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/07/feature-neuroscience-teen-brain.](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/07/feature-neuroscience-teen-brain)
- SCARF: A brain-based model for collaborating with and influencing others. [https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/SCARF-NeuroleadershipArticle.pdf.](https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/SCARF-NeuroleadershipArticle.pdf)

Books

- Brain Hacks: Life-Changing Strategies to Improve Executive Functioning by Lara Honos-Webb, PhD
- Atlas of the Heart by Brene Brown

Movies to Watch

- Inside Out (Pixar) *the sequel will be released this summer*
- Turning Red (Pixar)

Ways to get in touch with me

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www.sharpbrainconsulting.com