

The Saddest Song: *Teens, Suicide and the Developing Brain*

Risky Business Conference
June 24, 2014

Tracy Driscoll LCSW-C
Trainer, UDO



©The Upside Down Organization

What's The Upside Down Organization?



- A unique learning organization to “Help Adults Help Kids.”
- Nonprofit. Benefits go to kids at The Children’s Guild.
- Applied Research. We are operating schools, group homes, foster care, mental health and autism programs!
- Word of Mouth Marketing. Our participants “spread the word.” If you benefit today, please tell someone about us!

www.upsidedownorganization.org



THE UPSIDE NMOD
organization

The Children's Guild



- 5 Schools
- 2 Non public
- 3 Charter Schools
- 3 Group Homes
- Foster Care
- OMHC
- Autism Center





The Children's Guild

- *Located in Baltimore, Glen Burnie, Chillum, Laurel, Washington DC*
 - *Urban*
 - *African American 80%, Hispanic 10%, Caucasian 5%*
- *Majority of Students Live at or below poverty level.*
- *Majority of Students have had 2+ failed school placements.*



The Upside Down Organization



helping adults help kids

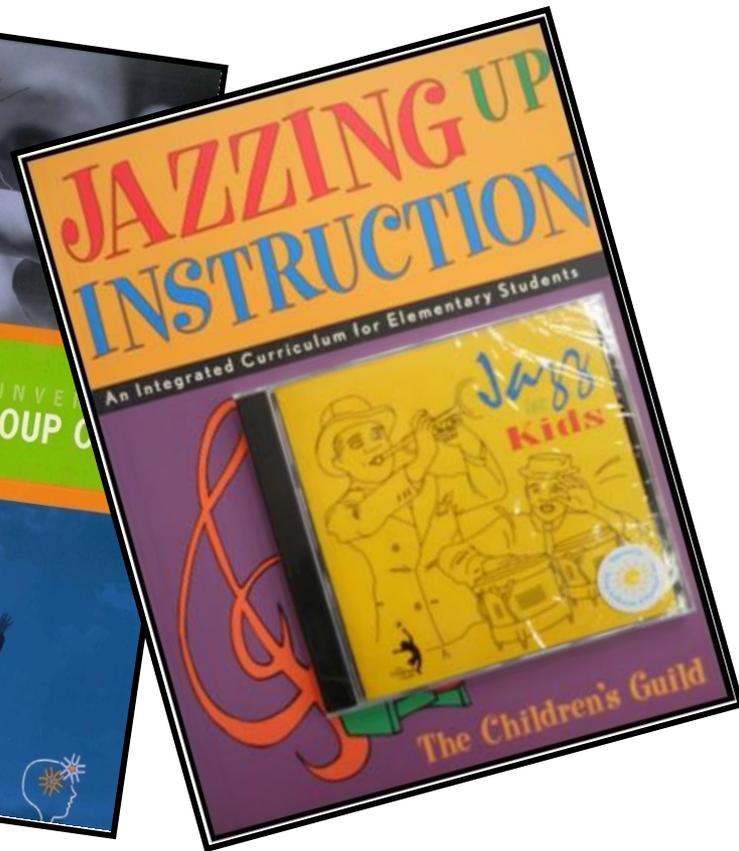
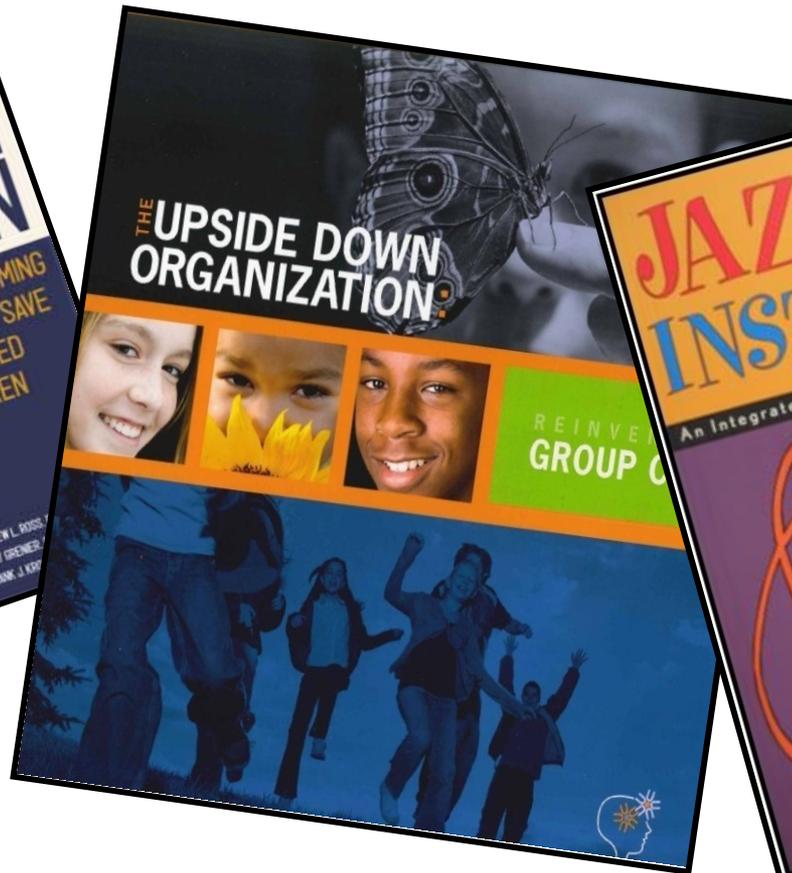
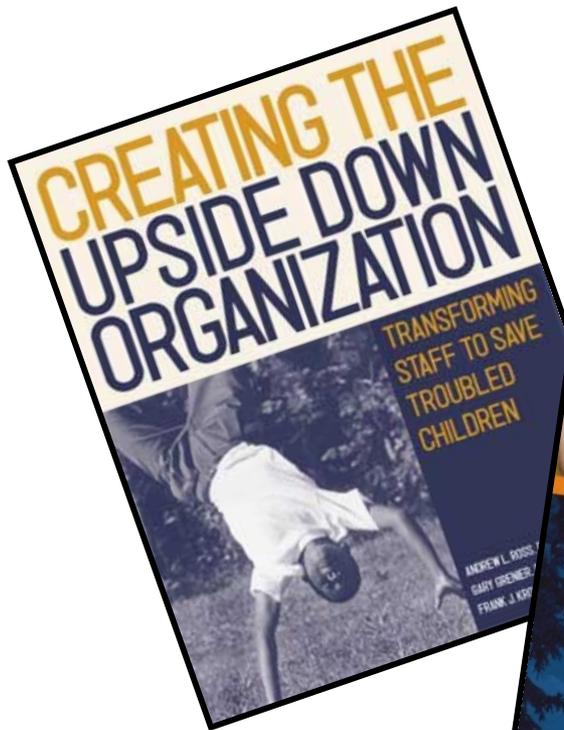
THE UPSIDE NMOD
organization

- 25 Learning Experiences on topics such as ADHD, Poverty, Executive Function, Adolescent Brain, Gender Differences and More!
- Presented in 43 states and **4 foreign countries.**
- Award-Winning!



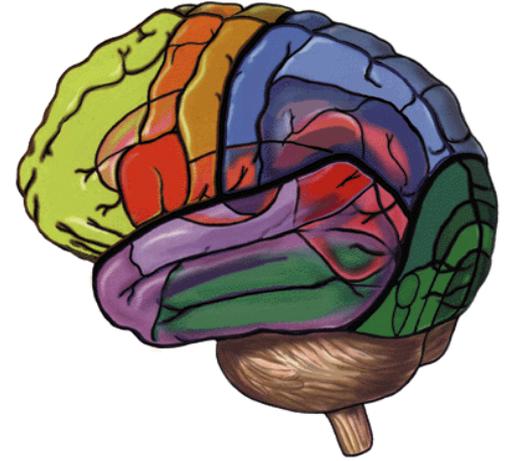
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We've Published Books and CD's



THE UPSIDE DOWN
organization

E-Newsletter



- ✓ *Monthly*
- ✓ *FREE!*
- ✓ *“Brain Waves” Better Brain Tip*
- ✓ *Workshops, Seminars, Downloads!*
- ✓ *Cool Tools!*
- ✓ *Fill-Out a Contact Card TODAY!*



About Your Presenter

Tracy Driscoll, LCSW-C, has been a presenter for The Upside Down Organization for the past five years. She earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree from McDaniel College majoring in Social Work with a minor in both Sociology and Cross Cultural Studies. Tracy obtained her Master's Degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work majoring in Clinical Social Work and specializing in work with children and families. She has been practicing in the field of social work for the past ten years working with various populations. Her experiences include working with children and adolescences in the school setting, therapeutic foster care and residential treatment centers. She has served children with special needs, and worked with the elderly. Outside of her work, Tracy's real passion is for traveling and volunteering and spending time with her family.



When I'm not at work...





**Hello
Neighbor!**



THE UPSIDE NMO
organizatio

Brain Warm Up

Who Said It?

“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

Aristotle?

Albert Einstein?

Thomas Jefferson?



“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

-Aristotle

“We are shaped by our thoughts;
we become what we think. When
the mind is pure, joy follows like a
shadow that never leaves.”

Ghandi?

Mother Teresa?

Buddha?



“We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves.”

-Buddha



“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.”

Henry Ford?

Bill Gates?

Abraham Lincoln?

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.”

-Henry Ford



“Here’s to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The trouble-makers. The round pegs in square holes. The ones who see things differently. They’re not fond of rules, and they have no respect for the status-quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. But the only thing you can’t do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.”

-Martin Luther King Jr ?

- Ronald Reagan ?

-Steve Jobs ?



"Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The trouble-makers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules, and they have no respect for the status-quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify, or vilify them. But the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do."



-Steve Jobs

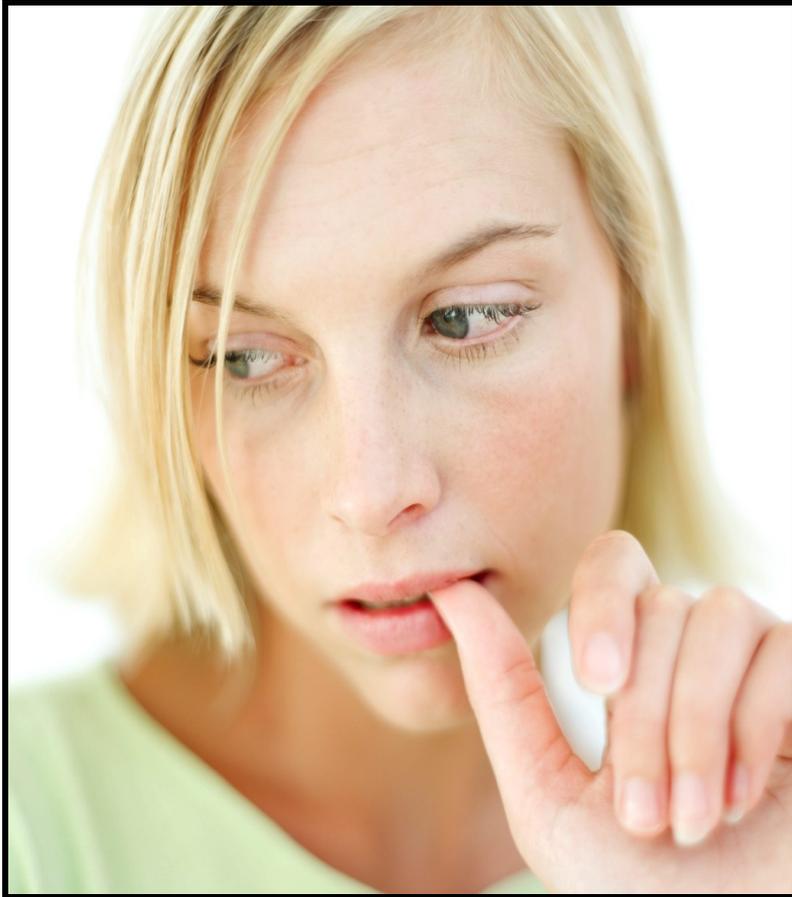
Today's Agenda

Building Understanding and Taking Action!

I. A Little Background

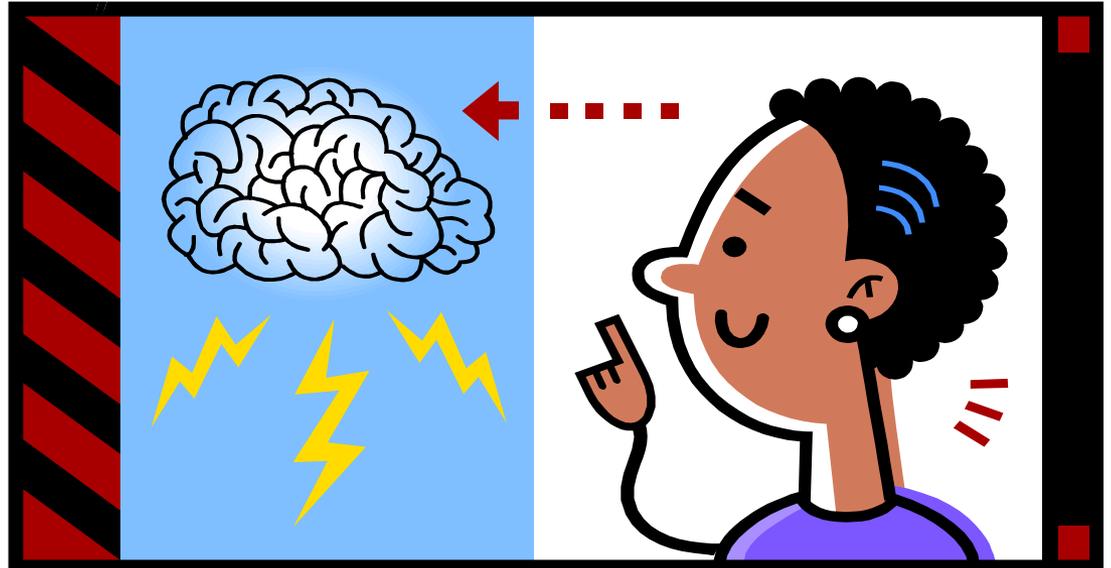
II. What Can We Do?

- Know the Facts
- Watch for Risk Factors and Warning Signs
- Implement a Prevention Program
- Act When Concerned
- Ask Questions and Get Help!



Why the Brain?

Because the brain is involved in **EVERYTHING** your child does!

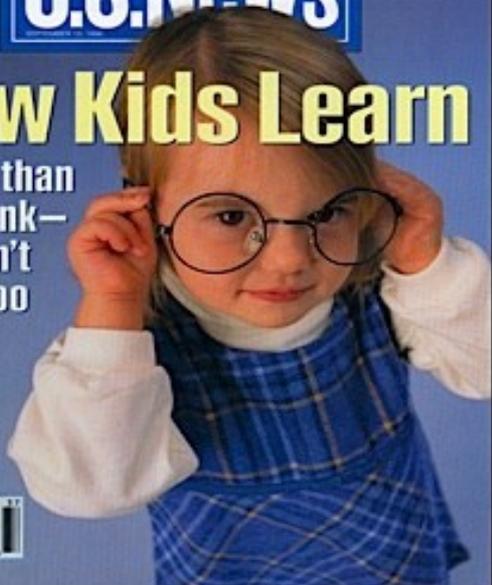


KILLER TRUCKS: THE DANGER TO MOTORISTS

A WORLD REPORT
U.S. News

How Kids Learn

Faster than you think—but don't push too hard



TIME

THE MATH MYTH

The real truth about **WOMEN'S BRAINS** and the gender gap in **SCIENCE**

DECEMBER 11, 2011 \$5.99

MONICA'S SHAKE-UP • BINGE DRINKING • WORLD CUP

Newsweek

How **Memory** Works

...And What You Can Do to Improve Yours

MIND & BODY SPECIAL ISSUE

THE MYSTERY OF CONSCIOUSNESS By Steven Pinker
HOW THE BRAIN REWIRES ITSELF By Sharon Begley
SIX WAYS TO HANDLE STRESS By Christine Gorman
THE NATURE OF MEMORY By Michael S. Jamnick

TIME

THE BRAIN
A USER'S GUIDE

The Journal of

Adventist Education

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

Brain-Based Teaching and Learning

THE BRAIN AND HOW IT WORKS: DOES BRAIN RESEARCH SUPPORT ELLEN G. WHITE'S COUNSELS TO EDUCATORS? THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION EDUCATING WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND

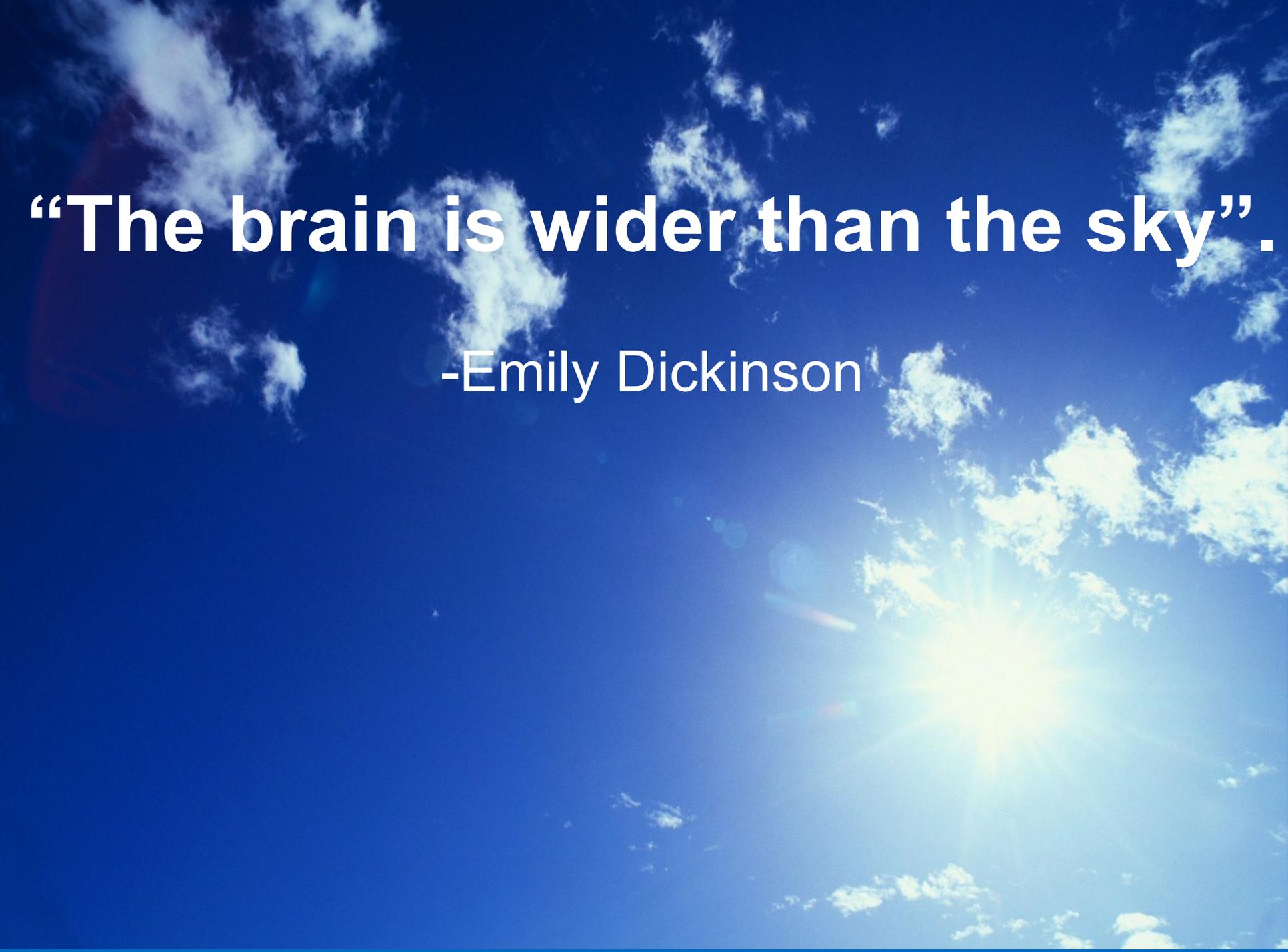
WWII'S FORGOTTEN FRONT • THE STONES OPEN UP

Newsweek

Your Baby's Brain

NEW RESEARCH
From Jealousy To Joy: How Science Is Unlocking the Inner Lives Of Infants

Eight months and South Beach were a beautiful summer. But the child's facial reactions...



“The brain is wider than the sky”.

-Emily Dickinson

**By the time this
presentation is over...
four young people under
the age of 24 will have
successfully committed
suicide.**

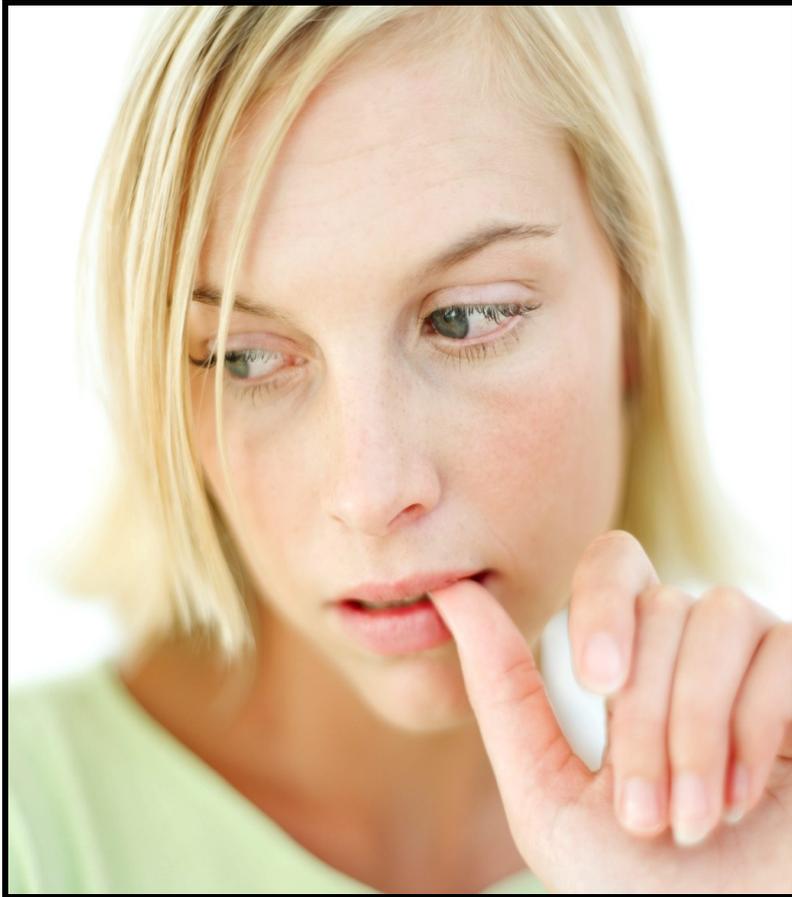
National Vital Statistics Report
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data>
(1 every 2 hours/11min)



Today's Agenda

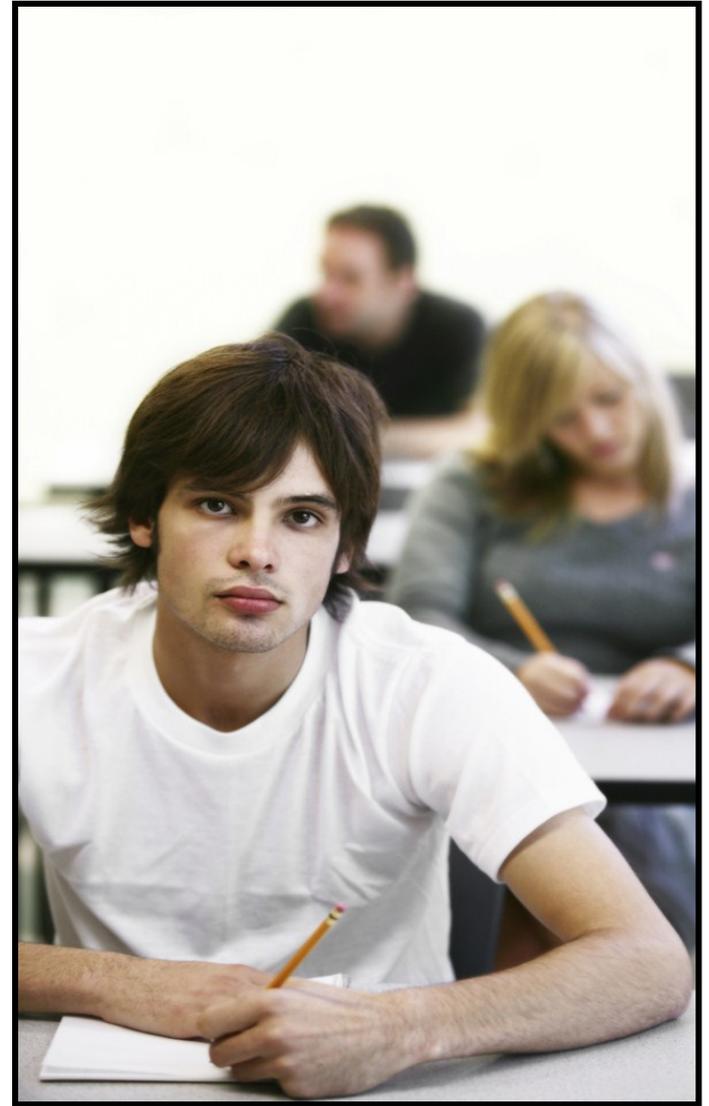
**Building Understanding
and Taking Action!**

I. A Little Background



**Suicide rates
among teens
have tripled in
the past few
decades...**

Why???



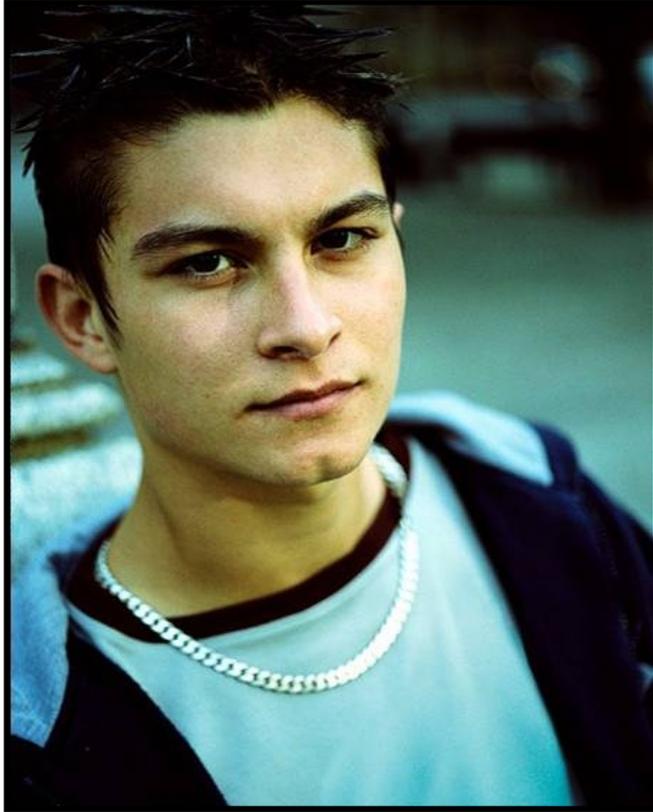
Technology and Teens: The Enduring Myth of Multi-Tasking



- Did you know the brain is remarkably fast — but cannot multi-task?
- Teens can toggle back and forth quickly but “rule activation” will prevent real focus.



Technology and Teens



Today's average college grads have spent:

- Less than **5,000** hours of their lives reading (in 1984, this number was 12,000)
- Over **10,000** hours playing video games
- Over **20,000** hours watching television



Technology and Teens



Kids and Media

A study released today analyzes how the amount of exposure to television, music, movies and other media content affects the health of children and teenagers.

Strength of evidence

Number of studies that found a statistically significant relationship between increased media exposure and an increase in:

	<i>Number of studies:</i>
Childhood obesity	
86%	73
Tobacco use	
88%	24
Sexual behavior	
93%	14
Drug use	
75%	8
Alcohol use	
80%	10
Low academic achievement	
65%	31
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	
69%	13

Note: Conclusions are drawn from 173 studies that examine this link.

Source: Common Sense Media "The Impact of Media on Child and Adolescent Health"

By Tobey — The Washington Post

Today's Youth



If the brains of today's youth are in fact wired differently because of the “digital environment” they have developed in, who or what needs to change?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmwwrGV_aiE
Did You Know 3.0 (Officially updated for 2012) HD

DID YOU
KNOW



Rapid Change in Technology

Suicidal Individuals are Killing Others Before Taking Their Own Lives



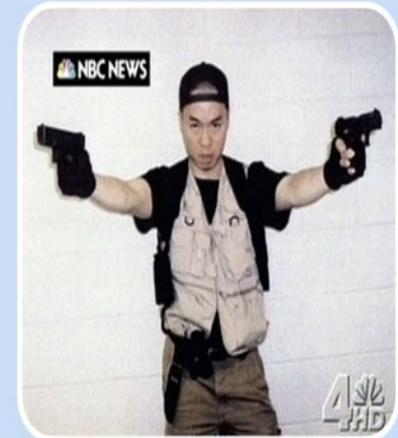
**Columbine
Littleton,
Colorado**



**Westroads
Mall
Omaha,
Nebraska**



**Northern
Illinois
University
DeKalb,
Illinois**

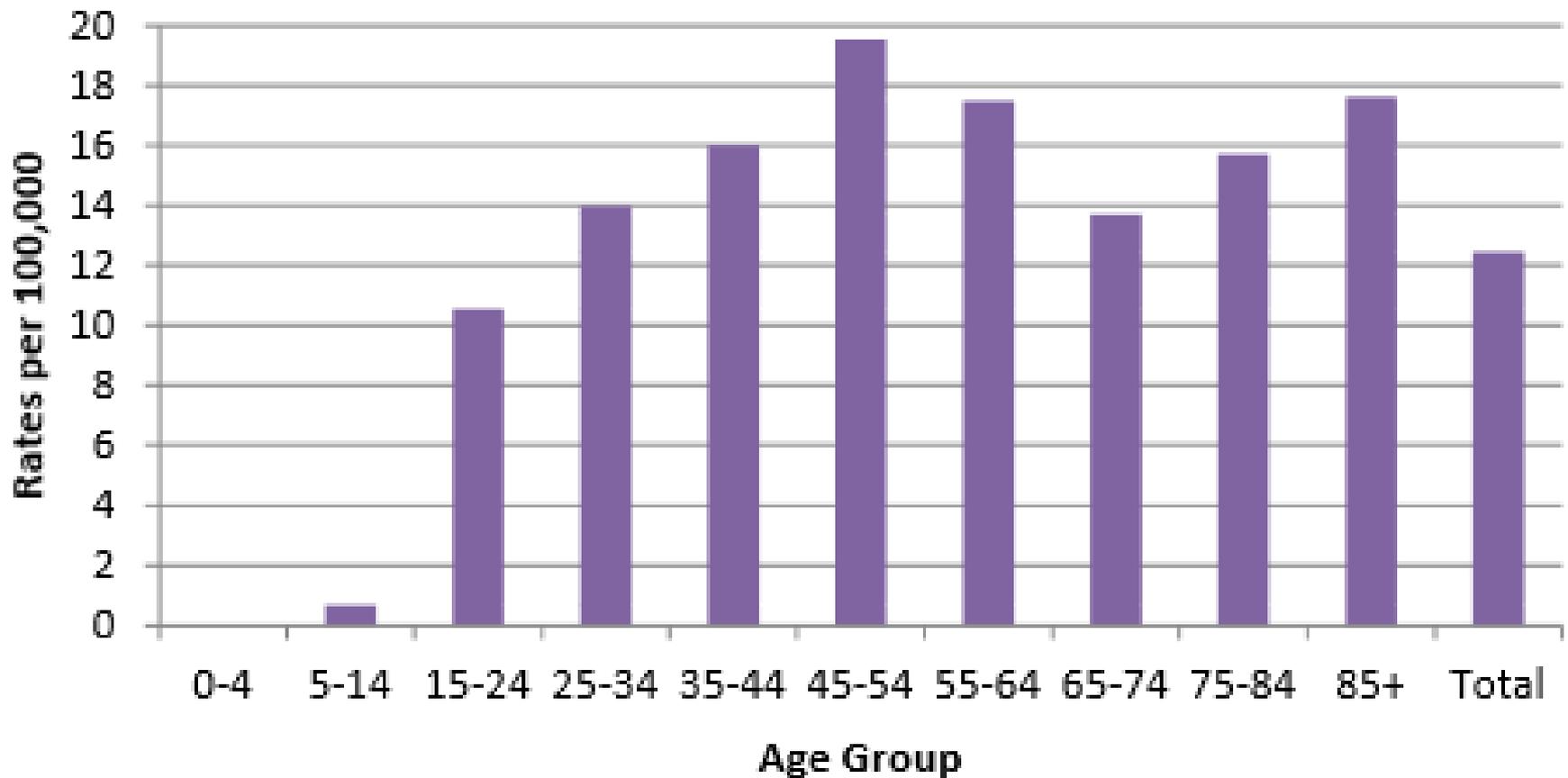


**Virginia
Tech
Blacksburg,
Virginia**

Sandy Hook School Shooting



Suicide Rates for All Ages, 2010



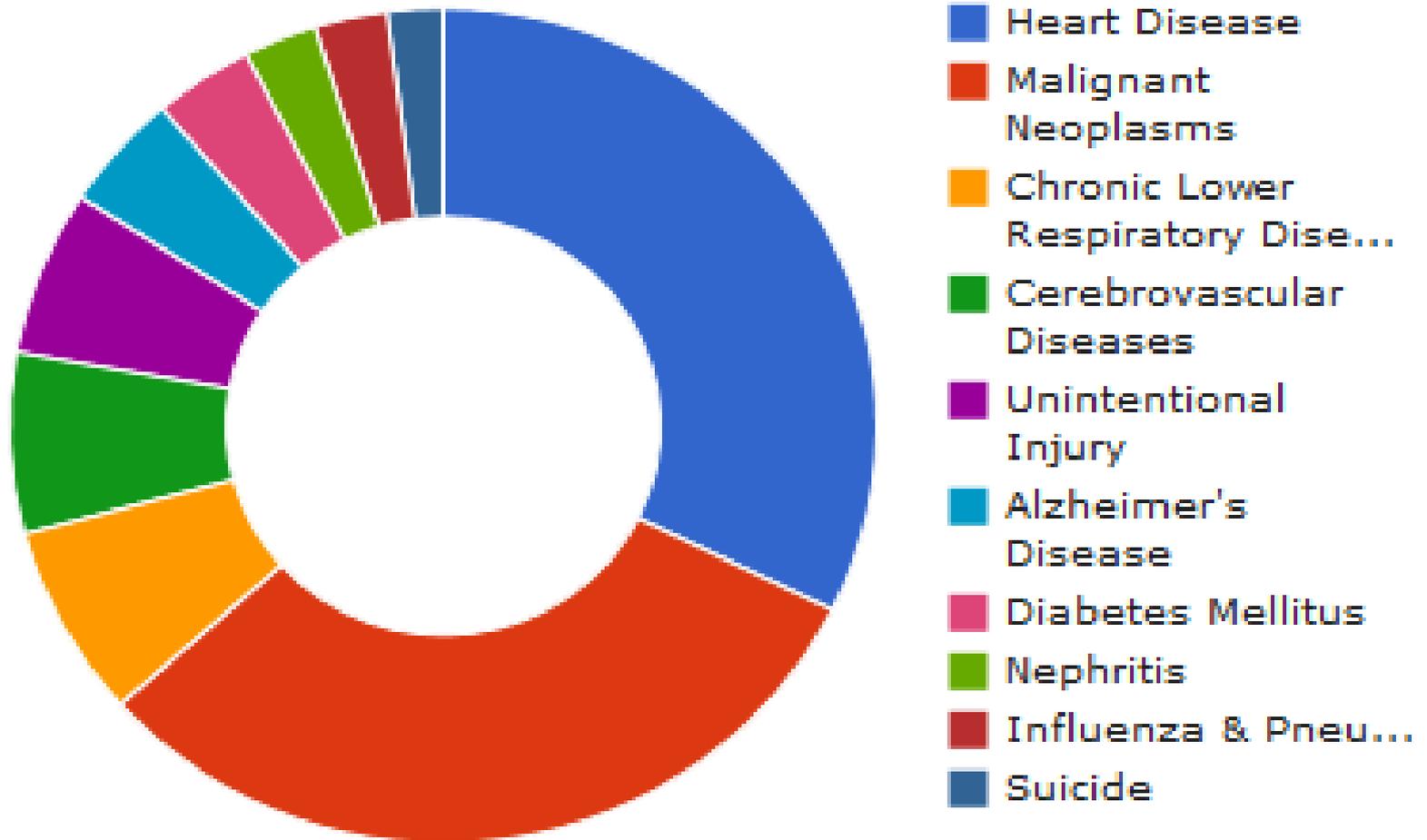
www.suicidology.org

Suicide Facts At A Glance

- In 2010 (the latest year for which we have national statistics), there were 38,364 suicides in the U.S. (105 suicides per day; 1 suicide every 13.7 minutes).
- Males complete suicide almost 4x that of females. However, females attempt suicide 3x more often than males.
- Suicide was the tenth leading cause of death for all ages in 2010.

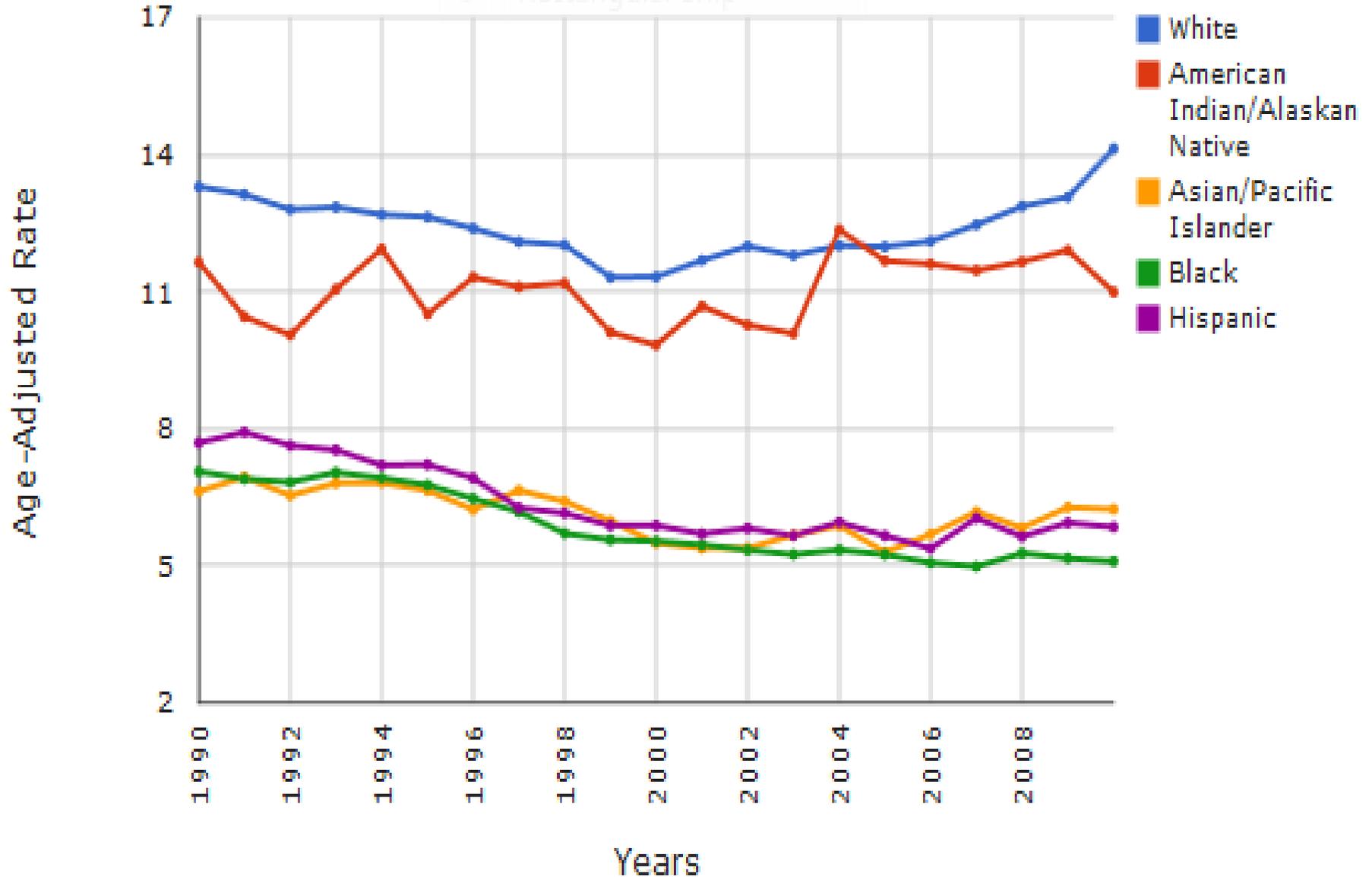


10 Leading Causes of Death, 2010

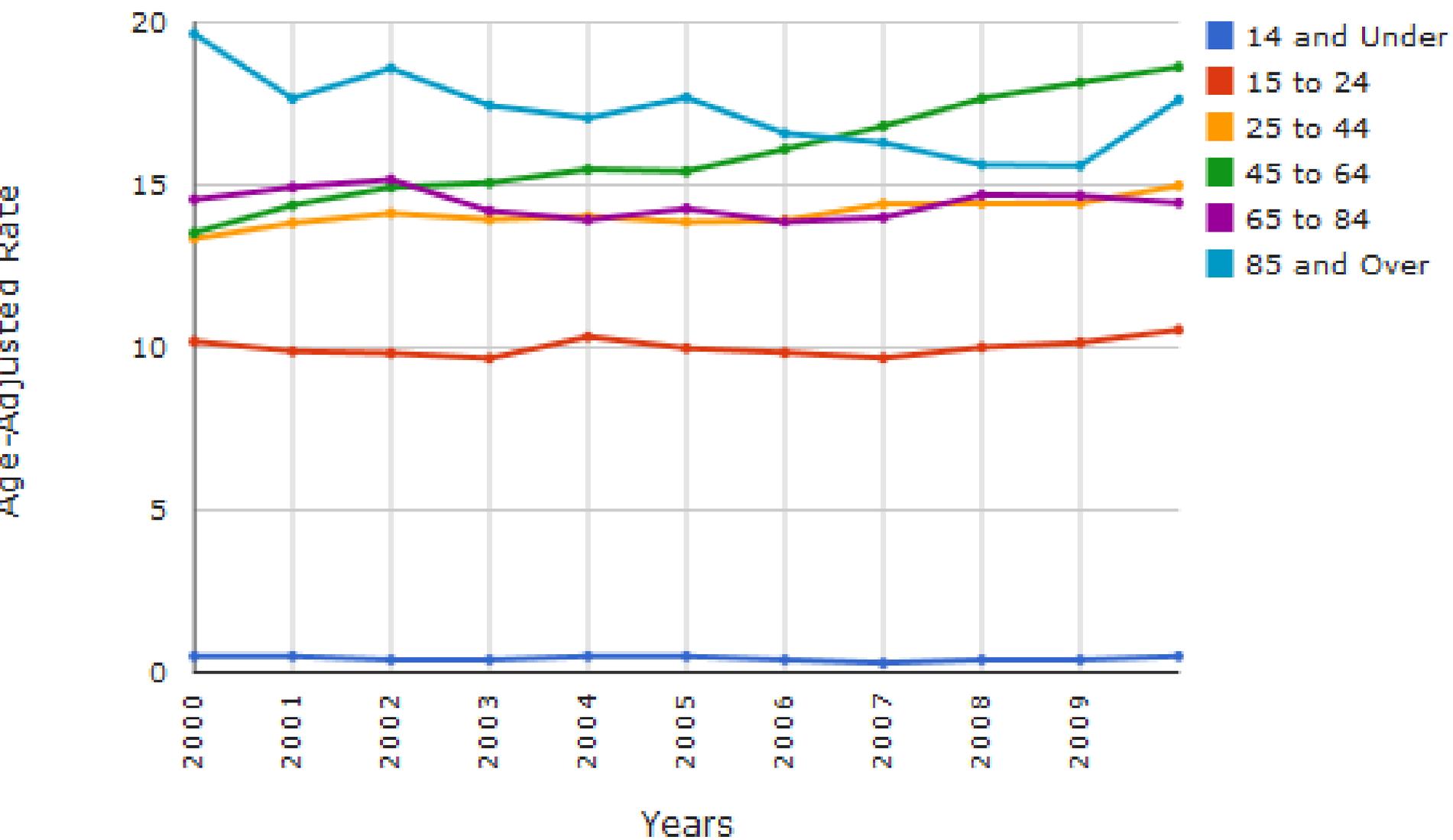


Suicide Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 1990-2010

Rectangular Snip



Suicide Rate by Age, 2000-2010



Gender Disparities

- Suicide among males represents 79% of all U.S. suicides.
- Females are more likely than males to have had suicidal thoughts.
- Firearms are the most commonly used method of suicide among males (56%).
- Poisoning is the most common method of suicide for females (37.4%).



Suicide in the USA based on 2010 Data

- Mental health diagnoses are generally associated with a higher rate of suicide.
- Psychological autopsy studies reflect that more than 90% of completed suicides had one or more mental disorders.
- Those with the following diagnoses are at particular risk: depression, schizophrenia, drug and/or chemical dependency and conduct disorders (in adolescence).
- There is a relationship between depression and suicide; the risk of suicide is increased by more than 50% in depressed individuals.



Some Statistics

- Over 50% of all kids who suffer from depression will eventually attempt suicide
- 53% of young people who commit suicide abuse substances

— American Psychiatric Association



The Leading Causes of Death

Ages 15-24

1. Accidents
2. Homicide
3. Suicide

- Each day there are approximately **12** youth suicides.
- Suicide accounts for **12.3%** of all deaths among 15-24

A few important answers

- 3
- 30,000
- 800,000
- Las Vegas
- African American Males
- Monday and Friday
- Spring
- White Males
- Washington DC / New Jersey
- Nevada / Montana

A few important answers

- 3rd leading cause of death youth
- 30,000 successful suicides/ yr.
- 80,000 attempts/yr
- Las Vegas- city with the most suicides
- AA males-fastest growing group committing suicide
- Mon/Fri- most common days
- Spring-most common season
- White males- most common group to commit suicide
- DC/ Jersey- least # of suicides
- Nevada/Montana- most # of suicides



Means of Fatal Attempts

2004 Data from National Vital Statistic Report

- Firearm 16,750
- Poisoning 5,800
- Suffocation 5,891
- Cut/Pierce 590
- Drowning 365
- Other/Unspecified 637
- Fall 6/7
- Fire/Heat 177
- Motor Vehicle 108



Young children and Suicide

Rates are very low, .02 deaths per 100,000 children 5-9 years old.

But, those numbers only account for completed suicides.

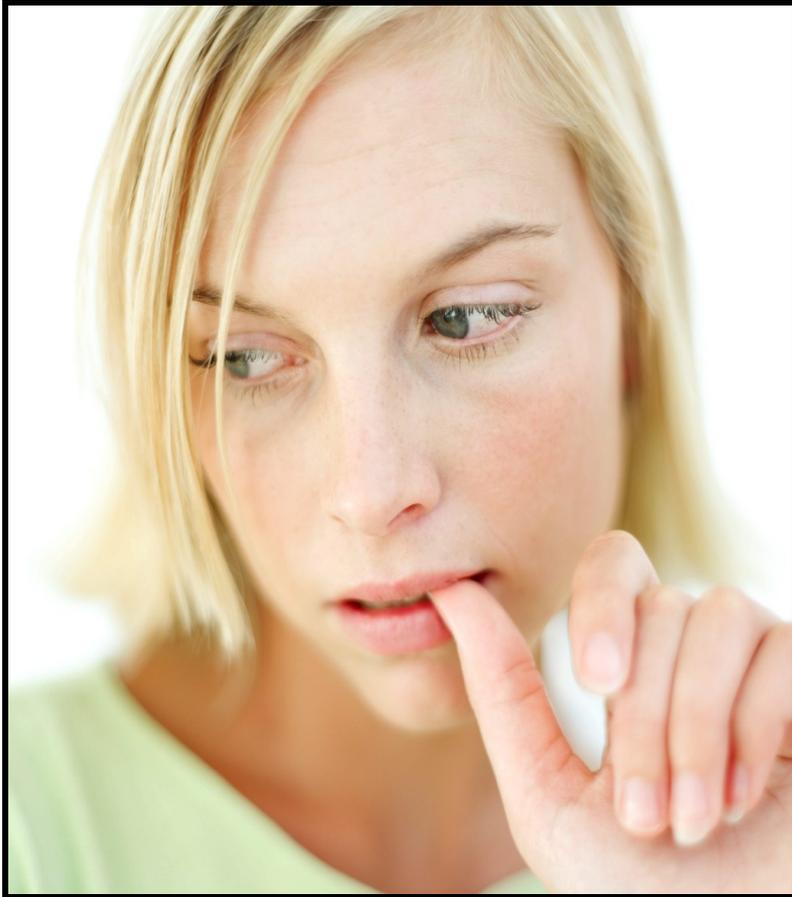
What about the attempts?

Rare but Tragic

“Staff members discover 9 year old boy hanged in Texas school bathroom”

(January, 2010)





Today's Agenda

Building Understanding and Taking Action!

I. A Little Background

II. What Can We Do?

- Know the Facts
- Watch for Risk Factors and Warning Signs
- Implement a Prevention Program
- Act When Concerned
- Ask Questions and Get Help!

1. Know the Facts (vs. the Myths)



Is it a Fact or a Myth???

Turn to page 2 of
your handouts
and circle your
answer.



Myths About Suicide

Many people in suicide crisis are really ambivalent about death — **Intervention Saves Lives!**

The San Francisco Chronicle cited one study of six persons who survived their leap from the Golden Gate bridge in 1975. Five of the six reported that they were no longer suicidal and that they now possessed a “renewed appreciation for living.”

In other research cited in the article, of 515 persons who were prevented from jumping off the Golden Gate bridge (from 1937-1971), only 6% later went on to kill themselves. These studies contradict common beliefs that the prevention of suicide in a moment of suicidal impulse will only forestall a suicide that will simply happen later; rather, they suggest that *prevention of suicide in such moments may have an everlasting, lifesaving impact.*

Intervention Saves Lives



2. Watch for Risk Factors and Warning Signs.



Adolescence Itself is Risk Factor for Suicide...

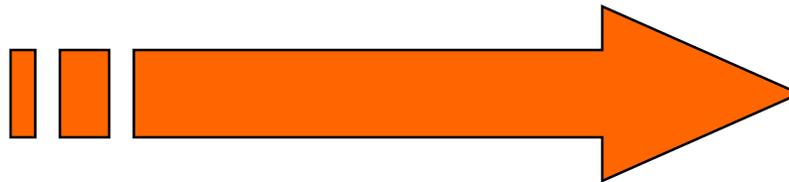


What is Adolescence?

It's not childhood.
It's not adulthood.
It's in between.
It's getting longer.



Puberty
(10-12 yrs.)



Adulthood
(24-26 yrs.)



“Nudge a Neighbor”

What are the biggest challenges facing teens today?



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Adolescent Challenges

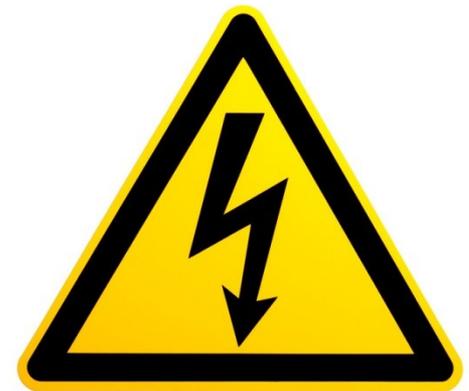
Adolescents have to...

- Handle sexually maturing bodies that give rise to strong urges.
- Try to figure-out and manage volatile and powerful emotions.
- Fit into a complex social network.
- Deal with immense peer pressure.
- Deal with wildly changing moods.
- Decide how they are going to respond to the temptation of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.
- Figure-out what their values are going to be.
- Renegotiate relationships with their parents.
- Get through school.
- Figure-out how to get enough sleep.
- Begin to plan for their future.





7 New Dangerous Teen Trends



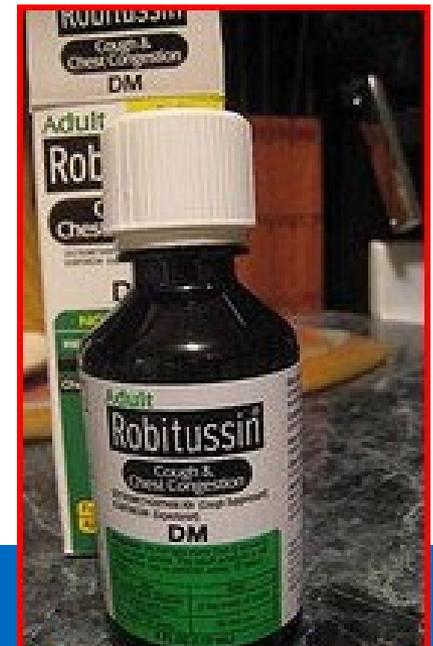
“I-dosing”

"I-dosing," – a new way to get high online which attempts to alter consciousness via sound. The Internet craze has teens plugging in their headphones to listen to downloadable MP3s that are said to have effects akin to getting high on actual drugs.



“Purple Drank”

By adding cough syrup with codeine to a soft drink and candy (usually Sprite and Jolly Ranchers), teens create what they consider a quick remedy for tension, anxiety, and aggression. The drink can be made with the over-the-counter medications like Robitussin DM, which contains dextromethorphan. In large doses this substance causes hallucinations.



“Planking”

The activity consists of lying face down like a board on any and every surface. Participants snap a photo and upload it to the internet, where planking groups have proliferated to immortalize the most daring or silly pictures.



“Vodka Eye balling”

Afraid to be caught with the smell of alcohol on their breath, many kids have taken up the vodka eyeballing trend. Instead of throwing back a shot, teens hold the bottle to their eye and pour the liquid directly into the eye, which is laden with blood vessels. Here, the alcohol is quickly absorbed and enters the bloodstream immediately through the veins at the back of the eye. Eyeballing may yield a quick buzz but because most vodkas are between 40-50% alcohol, it can scar and burn the cornea, and even cause blindness.



“Bath Salts”

The new drug sold legally as “bath salts” in liquor stores and head shops. Many states are trying to make the drug illegal, but since it takes different forms and combines different ingredients, state government officials have struggled with how to define the illicit substance. The bath salts have been found to contain drugs that cause severe hallucinations and psychosis in users who smoke, snort, or inject the substances.



Overdosing on Supplements

Studies indicate that as many as 40 percent of all young athletes take protein enhancements, which are available in forms ranging from bars to shakes to powders. While teens may take the supplement in order to improve muscle growth, muscle recovery, and overall athletic performance, there is no evidence that supplements are any more "enhancing" than a nutritious diet. In fact, such supplements can have harmful effects, such as weight gain, muscle cramping, high blood pressure, and heart problems. Creatine, which is found in many products, can actually interfere with a growing adolescent's own natural production of creatine, making the body reliant on supplements.

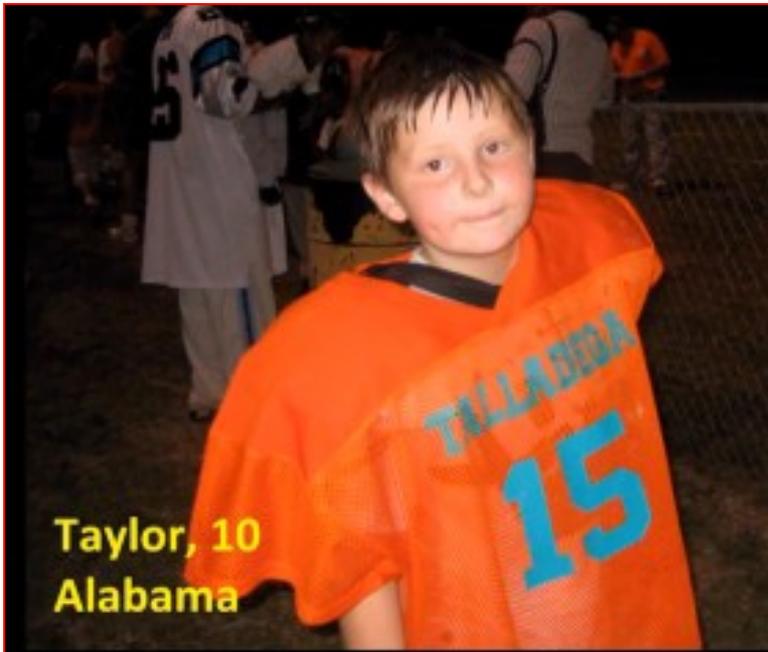


“The Choking Game”

This potentially lethal "game" involves the use of restraints or the assistance of a friend to choke the player in order to cut off the flow of blood to the brain. The purpose is to obtain the high that comes when the restraint is released and the blood rushes back into the brain. In actuality, the "high" feeling comes from thousands of brain cells dying because of lack of oxygen, causing long term brain damage, comas, strokes, and bleeding in the brain (also known as "silent stroke"). Because there is never a way to know the exact time to let go, many participants pass out and some have actually hanged themselves.



Dangerous New Trend in Middle Schools: *The Choking Game*



Taylor, 10
Alabama



Erik, 12
California





Daryl, 12
Florida



Hayley, 14
Texas



Alesa Beth, 14
Georgia



Megan, 17
Alaska



Ronnie, 15
Arizona



Spencer, 16
Tennessee



Randy, 17
Minnesota



Mack, 17
Wisconsin



Let's Explore the Brain!



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Brain Anatomy 101

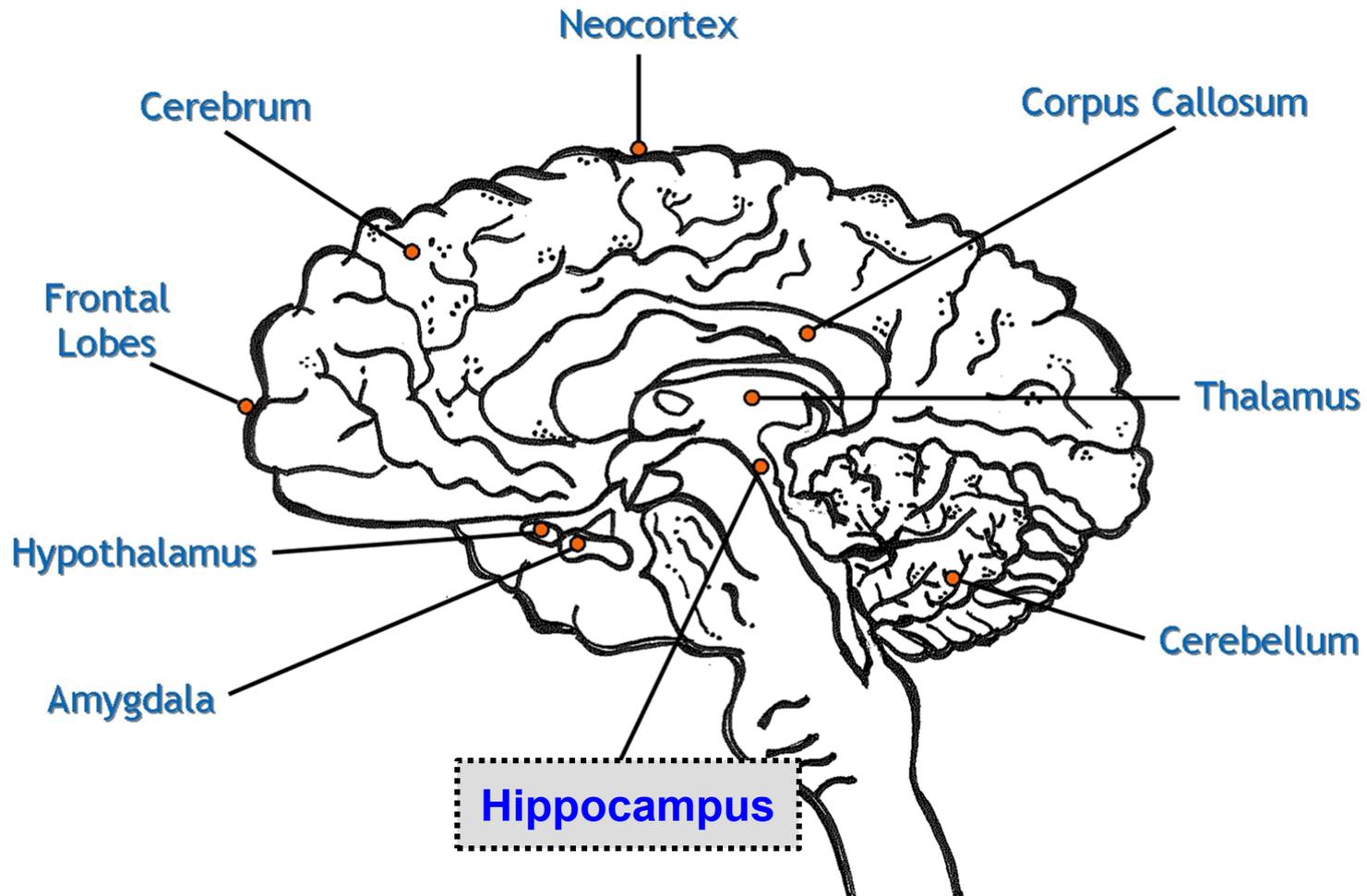
“The Brain Made Ridiculously Simple”

1. The Mail Carrier
 2. Palace Guard
 3. WIIFM?
 4. Brooklyn Bridge
 5. The Mover & Shaker
- ^ Learning to Drive

Hippocampus
Amygdala
Hypothalamus
Corpus Callosum
Cerebellum
Frontal Lobes



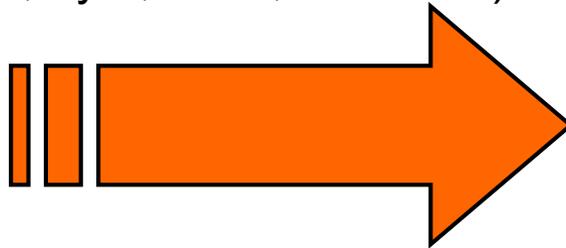
Basic Brain Anatomy

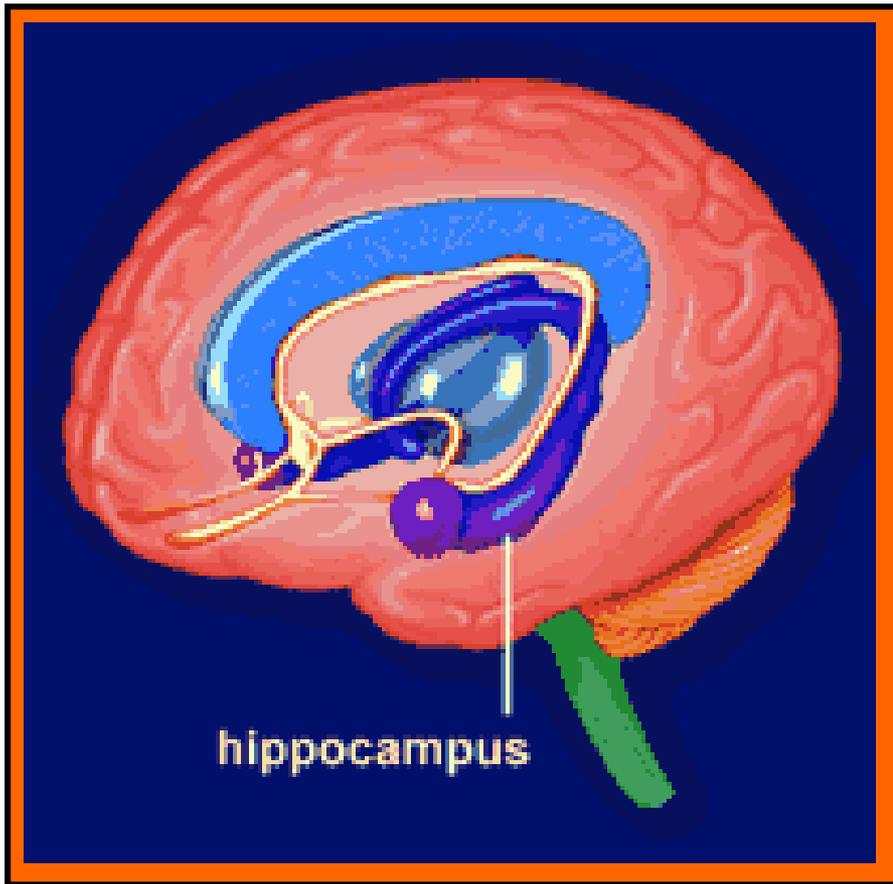


Brain Anatomy 101

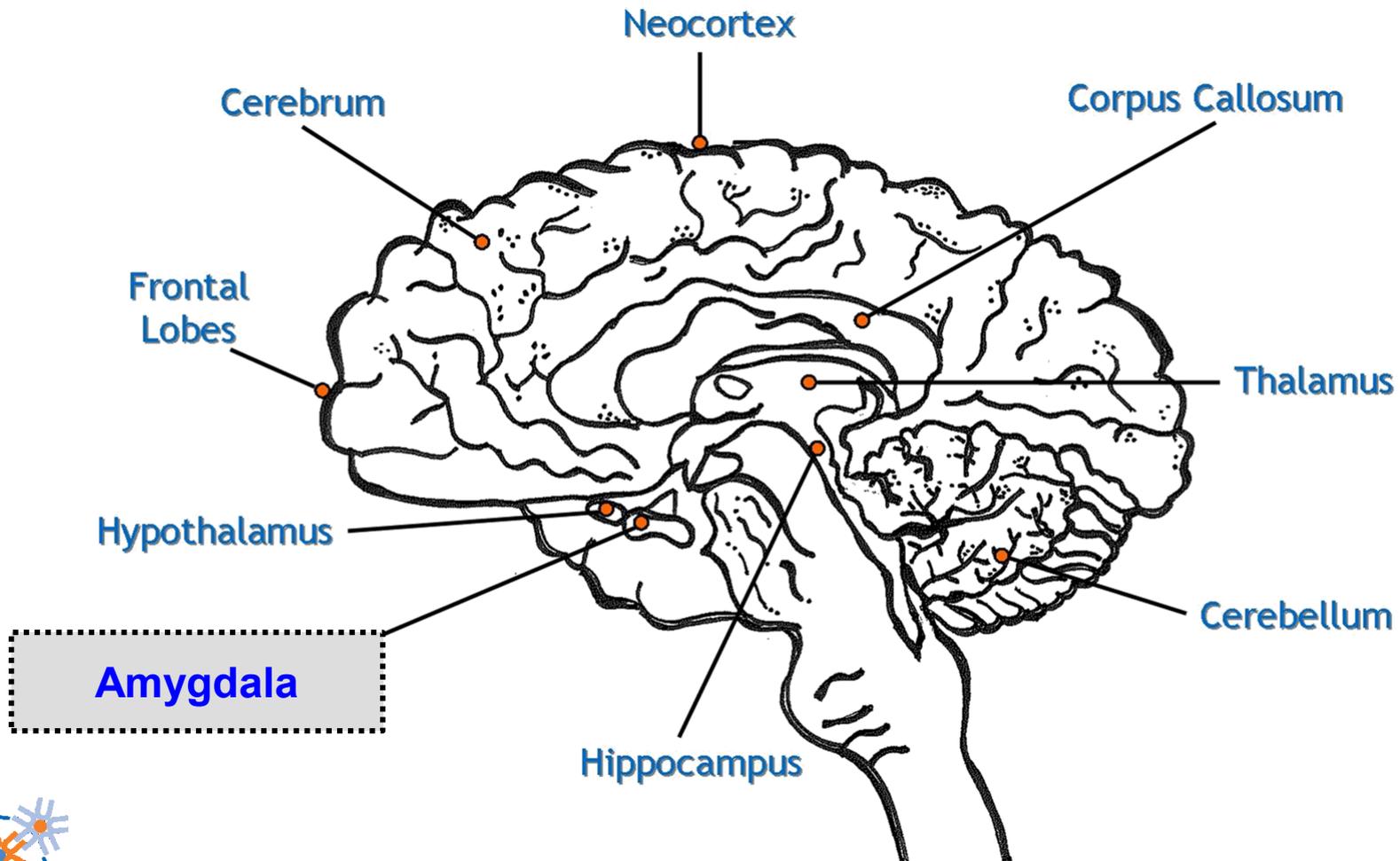
1. The UPS Guy: HIPPOCAMPUS

(STM 3; 2yrs; 51st ;Dementia)





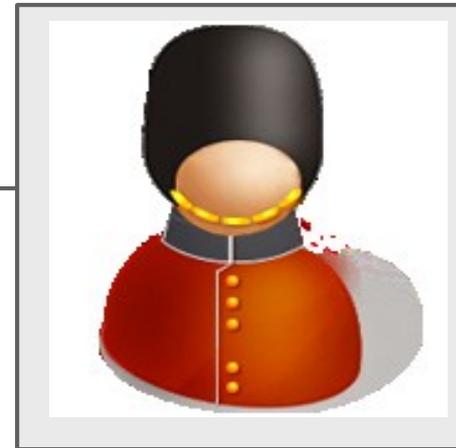
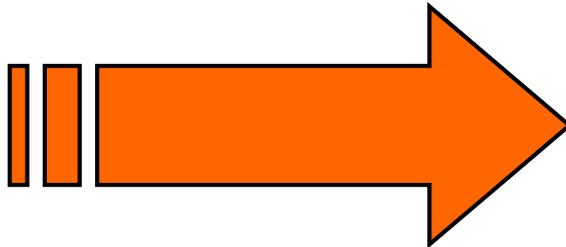
Basic Brain Anatomy



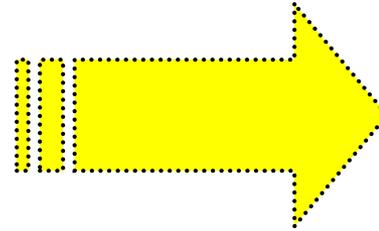
Brain Anatomy 101

2. Palace Guard: AMYGDALA

(ODD; PTSD; mature at birth)



Amygdala Creates Emotional Memories



Positive



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organization**

Or negative...



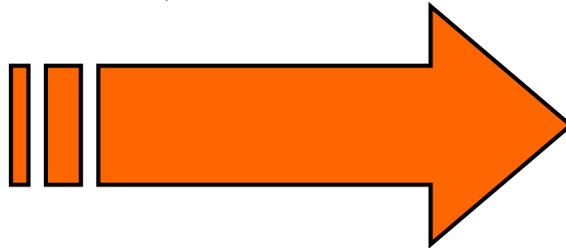


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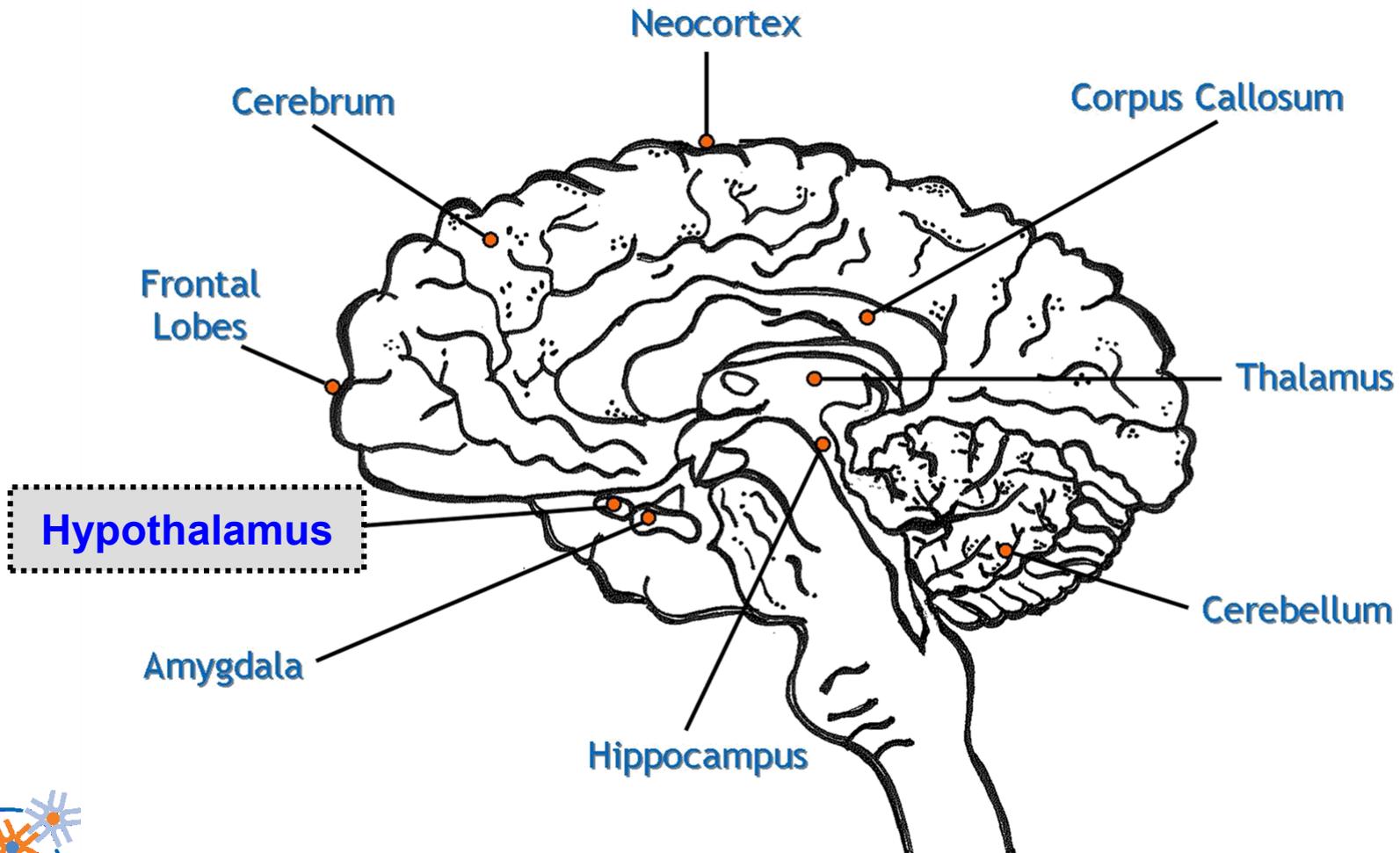
Brain Anatomy 101

3. WIIFM?: HYPOTHALAMUS

(6-8; mood dx; seasonal affect dx)



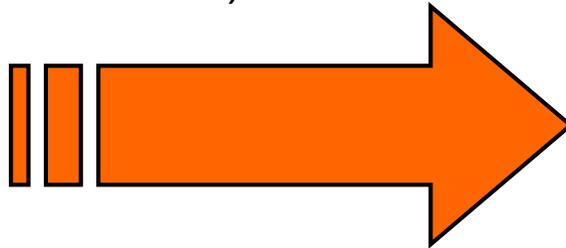
Basic Brain Anatomy



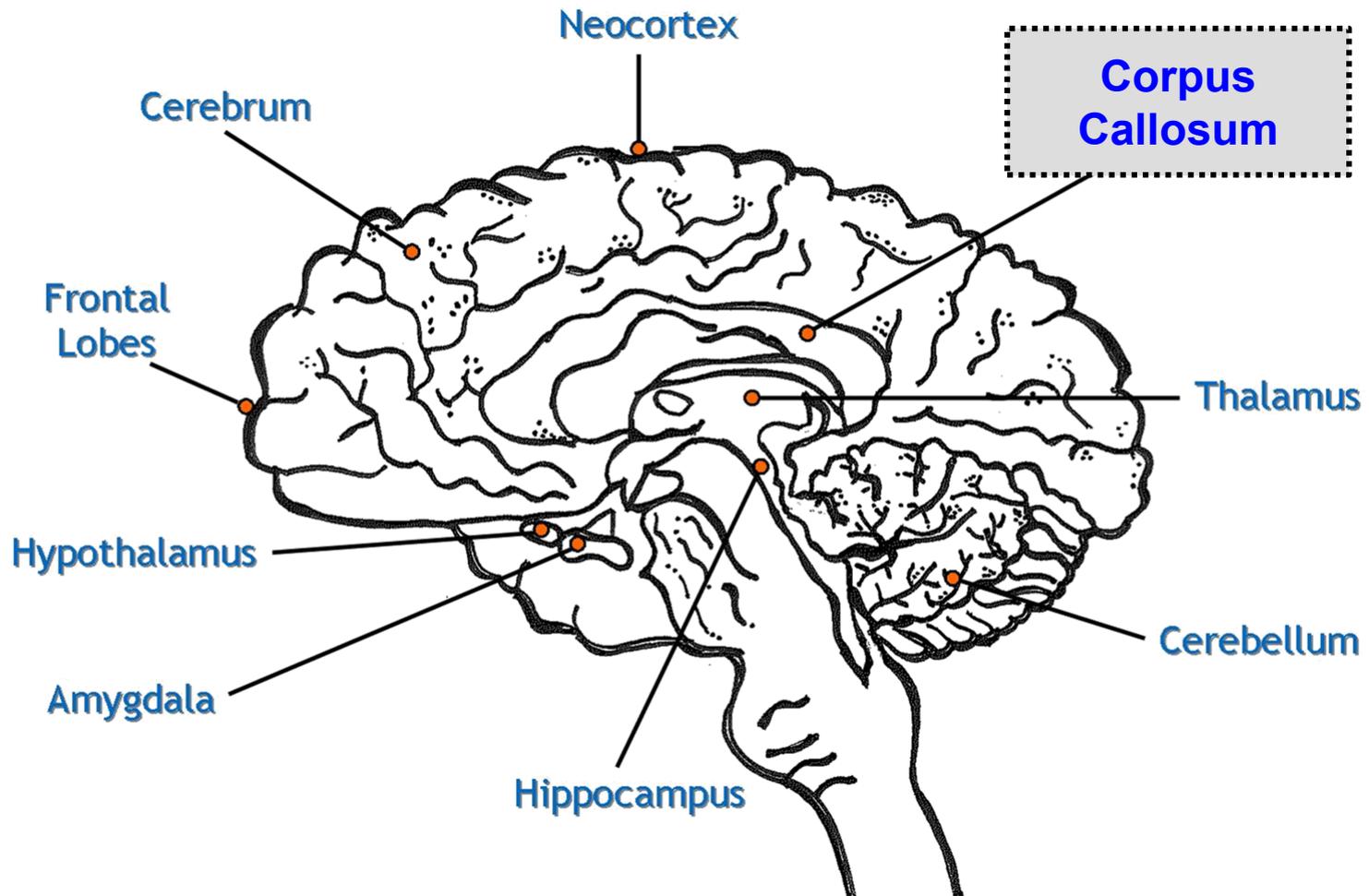
Brain Anatomy 101

4. Brooklyn Bridge: CORPUS CALLOSUM

(20%; teens/tech)



Basic Brain Anatomy



The Bridge in Our Brains

Corpus Callosum

- The bridge between hemispheres.
- Facilitates the integration of right hemisphere and left hemisphere functions.
- How logic and emotion meet!

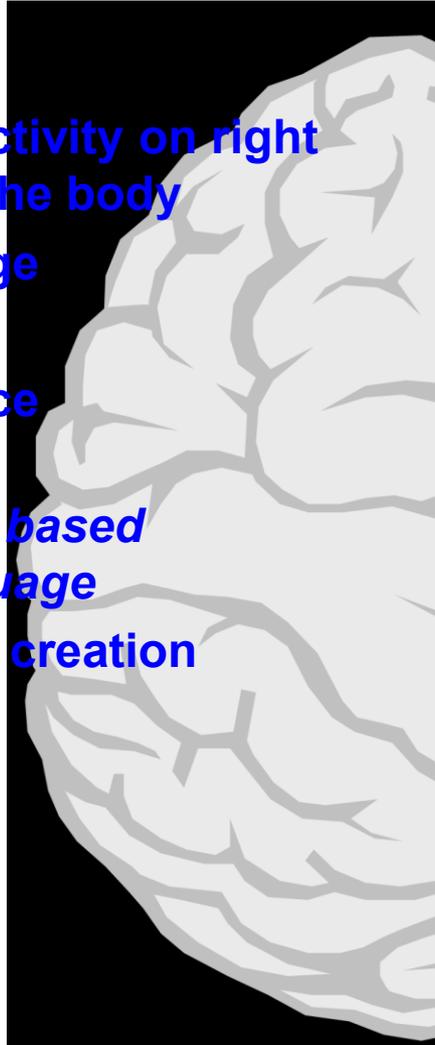




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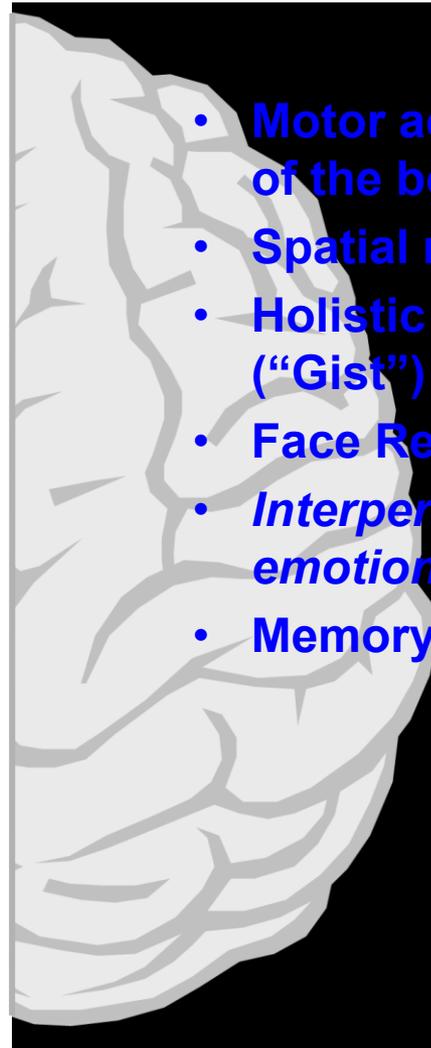
LEFT HEMISPHERE

- Motor activity on right side of the body
- Language
- Detail
- Sequence
- *Logical thought based on language*
- Memory creation



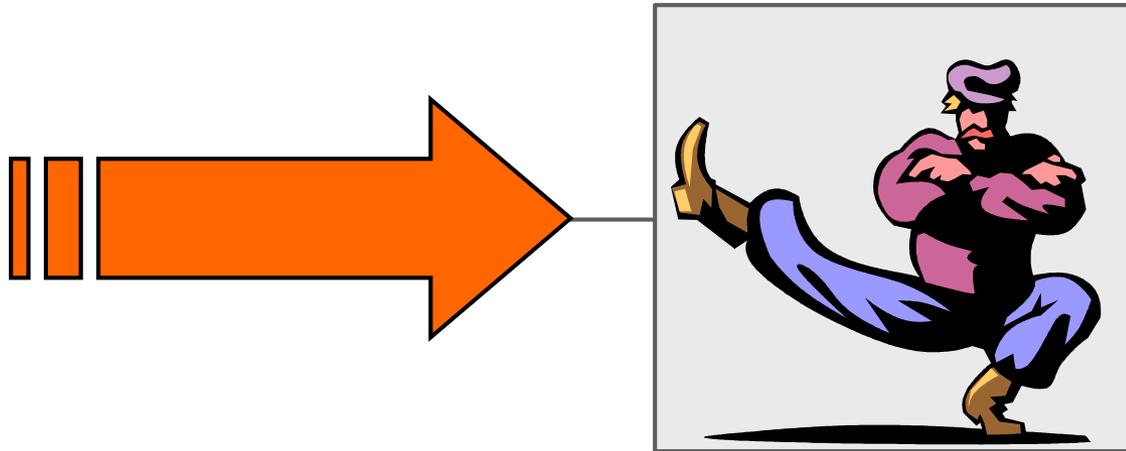
RIGHT HEMISPHERE

- Motor activity on left side of the body
- Spatial manipulations
- Holistic perception (“Gist”)
- Face Recognition
- *Interpersonal and emotional processing*
- Memory retrieval

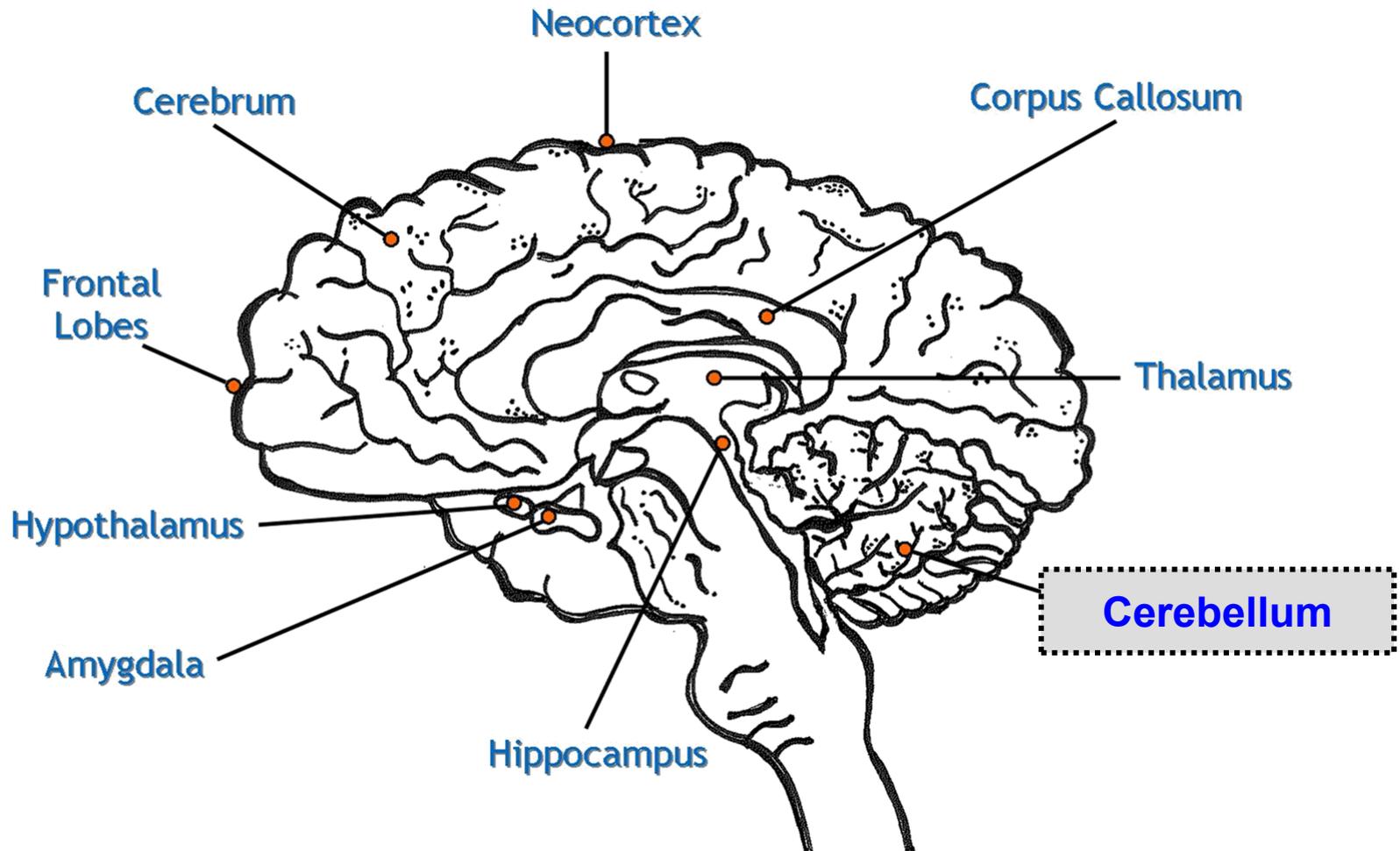


Brain Anatomy 101

5. The Mover & Shaker: CEREBELLUM

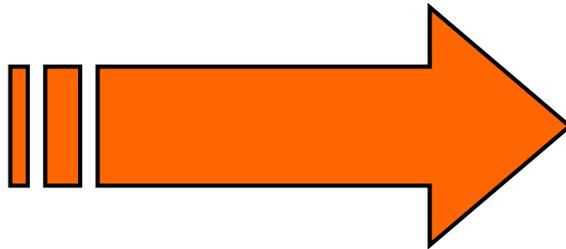


Basic Brain Anatomy



Brain Anatomy 101

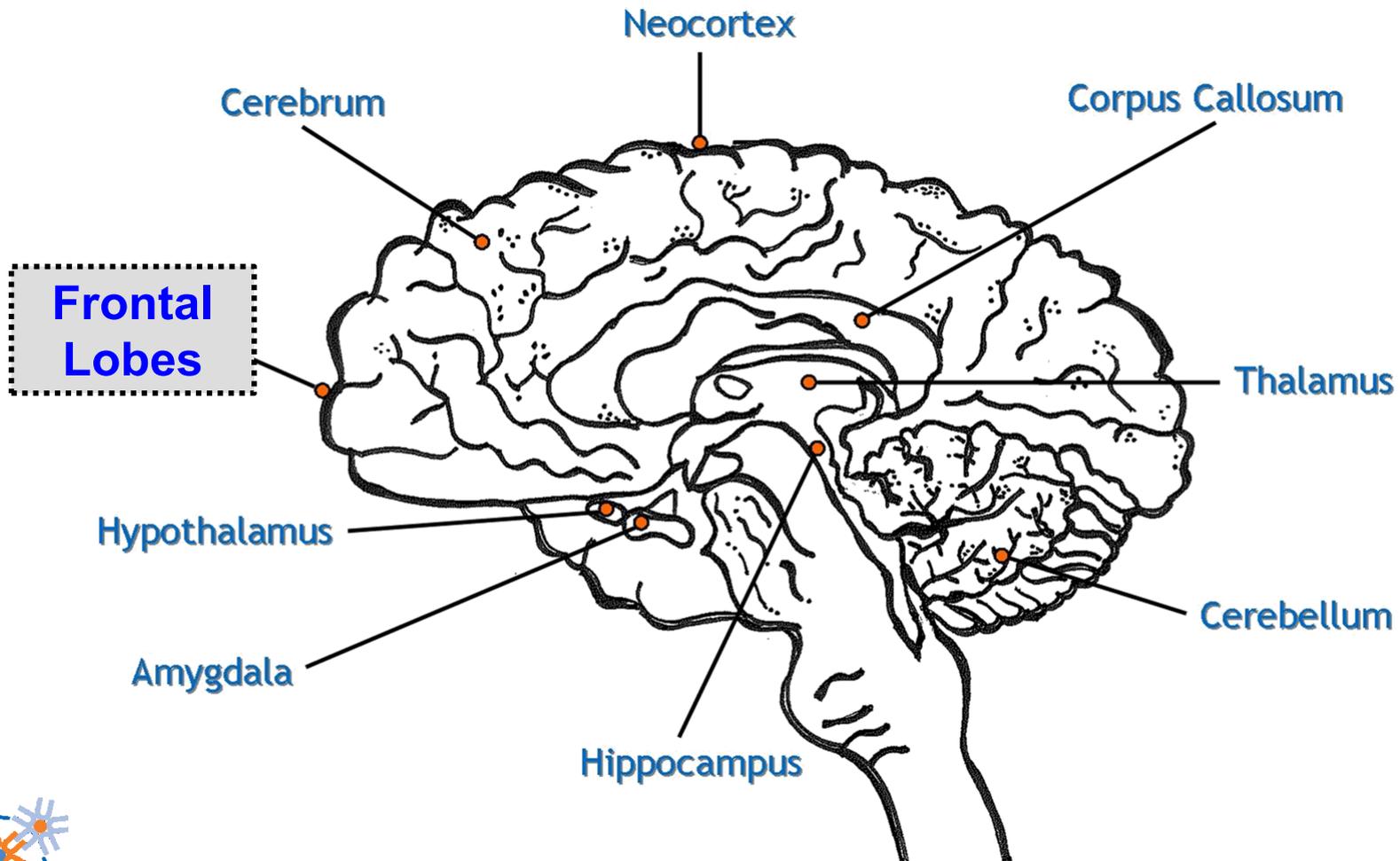
6. Learning to Drive: FRONTAL LOBES



It's like learning to drive a "stick!"
(present at birth but a work in progress)



Basic Brain Anatomy



Frontal Lobe Functions:

(Partial List)

- Impulse Control
- Organization (Thought and Action)
- Time Orientation
- Reading Social Cues
- Predicting Behavioral Consequences
- Goal Achievement



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Frontal Lobes

- ✓ Since the frontal lobes are not fully mature, adolescents rely upon their fully-functional emotional centers (limbic system) more heavily than most adults must.
- ✓ Most adults are able to "temper" their brain's emotional center- exhibiting the more complex thinking and reasoning behaviors that are governed by their fully-functional frontal lobes.
- ✓ Adolescents often find this difficult, reacting emotionally to experiences and events, rather than rationally and thoughtfully.



Brain Chemistry

- Cortisol – “UH-OH”
- Adrenaline - “YIKES!”

VS.

- Serotonin – “AHH..”
- Dopamine – “YAHOO!”

These pairs do not
play well together...

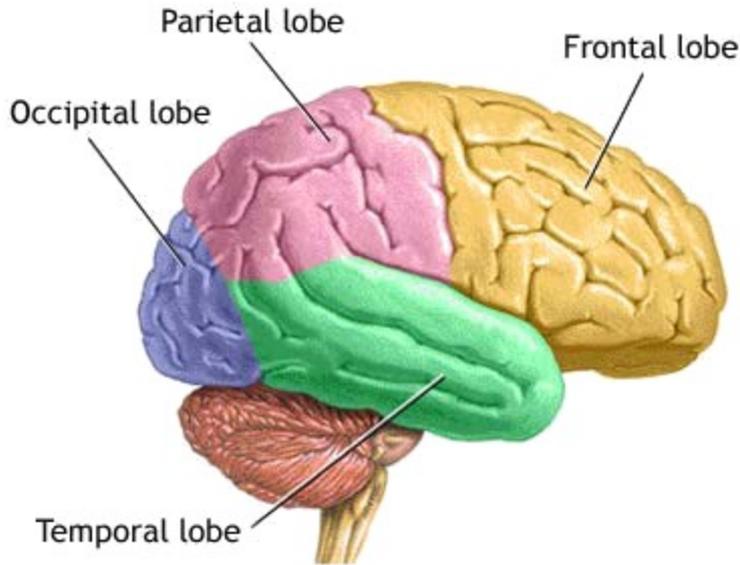


“The Perfect Storm”

Adolescence and Suicide Risk

- *Serotonin Depletion*
- *Social Pressures*
- *Impulse Controls*





Effective frontal lobe function is critical to social, academic and vocational success. A mature executive system keeps the impulsive amygdala in check.

Impulse Control

The frontal lobes, along with the prefrontal cortex, are referred to as the brain's "executive system." They are responsible for such critical functions as *impulse control, problem solving, judgment, organization, planning and time orientation.* The last brain area to mature in humans, the frontal lobes are learning to control the more impulsive amygdala.

“The Perfect Storm”



“The Perfect Storm”

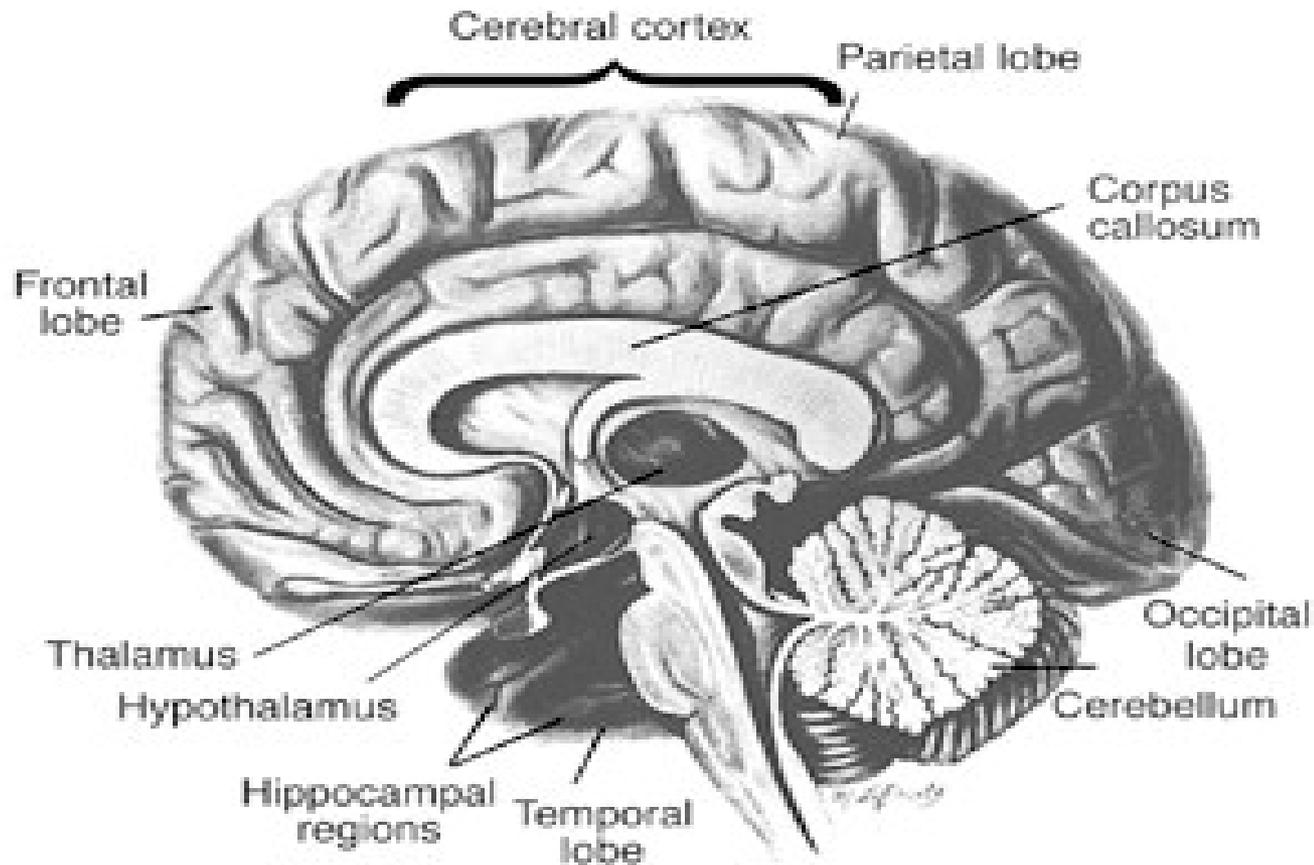
- *Serotonin Depletion*
- *Social Pressures*
- *Impulse Controls*

Serotonin Depletion

- Serotonin is a neurotransmitter responsible for mood regulation, the brain’s “**Serenity Chemical.**”
- In adolescence, the brain produces less serotonin. Abuse of alcohol and drugs will also **deplete serotonin levels** and diminish impulse control.
- Lower serotonin levels are correlated with **depression**, aggression, and oppositional behavior.
- Lowered serotonin levels have also been linked to **OCD** (repetitive, compulsive thinking) and **impulsiveness.**



Teen Brain Anatomy





Fundamentals of the Teenage Brain

**But, isn't it all about the
hormones?**



Hormones

<i><u>BOYS and Hormones</u></i>	<i><u>GIRLS and Hormones</u></i>
Testosterone	Estrogen Progesterone
Over-stimulates the Amygdala (Emotional Centers)	Destabilizes the Amygdala (Emotional Centers)
Lower Serotonin Levels	Lower Serotonin Levels
Aggression	Amplification of Emotions
Territoriality, Dominance, Poor Impulse Control	Increased Stress (Anxiety) and Appetite
Increased Sex Drive	Increased Sex Drive



Don't forget the fundamentals:

Sleep

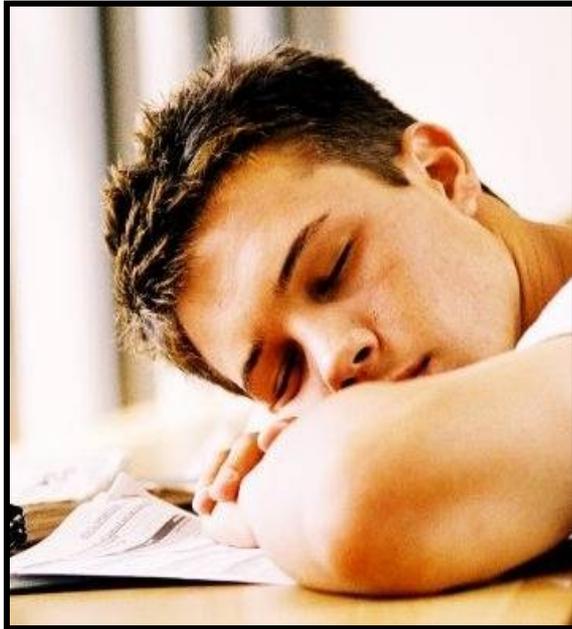
- Sleep is enormously important to healthy brain development and learning.
- Adolescents need 9.25 hours of sleep per night.



Sleep



Sleep Deprivation in Adolescence



- Typically, teens have significant sleep deprivation and daytime sleepiness. (Carskadon et al. 1998)
- The result is typically drowsy teens in class and academic underperformance. (Maquet, 2001)
- Less sleep contributes to poor emotional regulation.
(Dahl, 1999)

Why So Little Sleep?



- The neurological changes in adolescence are dramatic and teens need more sleep time to learn, organize, and store new learning.
(Wolfson & Carskadon, 1998)
- But the teen brain releases melatonin (a sleep inducer) later at night. This means teens will naturally want to stay up later and sleep in later.

Amygdala Triggers

1. School Pressures
2. Social Pressures
3. Appearance
4. Home Life



Causes of Stress and Excess Cortisol Production

- _____ logical
- _____ stability
- _____ ma
- Ab _____
- Neigh _____
- Home _____
- Cha _____
- Drugs/AI _____
- Aban _____



Causes of Stress and Excess Cortisol Production

- Biological
- Instability
- Trauma
- Abuse
- Neighborhood
- Homelessness
- Change
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Abandonment



Youth Suicide Risk Factors

- Previous suicide attempts.
- Depression and/or alcohol or substance abuse.
- Family history of mental disorders, substance abuse, or suicide.
- Easy access to guns.
- Exposure to other teenagers who have died by suicide.
- Problems with school (including learning disorders).
- Problems with the law.
- Breakup of a romance.
- Unexpected pregnancy.
- Difficulty coping with sexual orientation.



Youth Suicide Risk Factors

(cont'd)

- A stressful family life (parents who are depressed or are substance abusers, or a family history of suicide).
- Loss of security ... fear of authority, peers, group or gang members.
- History of physical and/or sexual abuse.
- Poor communication with parents.
- Incarceration.
- Lack of access or an unwillingness to seek mental health treatment.
- Stress due to new situations; college or relocating.



Youth Suicide Risk Factors

(cont'd)

- Seriously injuring another person or causing another person's death (ex: automobile accident).
- Major loss (real or anticipated) of a loved one, a home, divorce in the family, a trauma, a relationship.
- Accumulating an insurmountable debt.
- Physical illness.
- Idolization of a person who committed suicide.
- Failing in school or failing to pass an important test.
- A serious illness or injury to oneself.



Sound like some of your students?



Warning Signs for Suicide in Children and Adolescents

- Depression.
- Abrupt changes in personality.
- Giving away possessions.
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Change in eating pattern – significant weight change.
- Change in sleeping pattern – insomnia/hyper-somnia.
- Unwillingness or inability to communicate.
- Extreme or extended boredom.
- Accident prone (carelessness) and/or increased risk-taking behavior.



Warning Signs for Suicide in Children and Adolescents *(cont'd)*

- Unusual sadness, discouragement and loneliness.
- Talk of wanting to die or frequent talk of death.
- Neglect of academic work and/or personal appearance.
- Running away from home or truancy from school.
- Withdrawal from people/activities they love.
- Confusion — inability to concentrate.
- Chronic pain, panic or anxiety.
- Perfectionism.

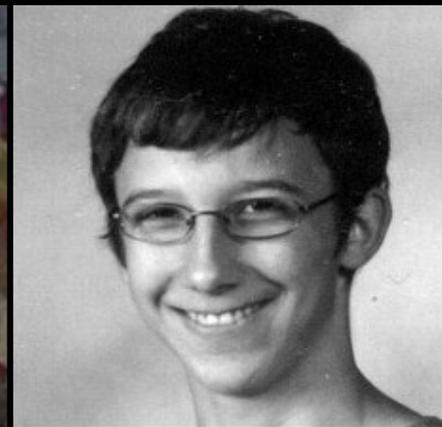


“Bullycide” Victims

MEGHAN



ERIC



CARLE



HOPPE





Phoebe



Tyler



3. Implement a Prevention Program.



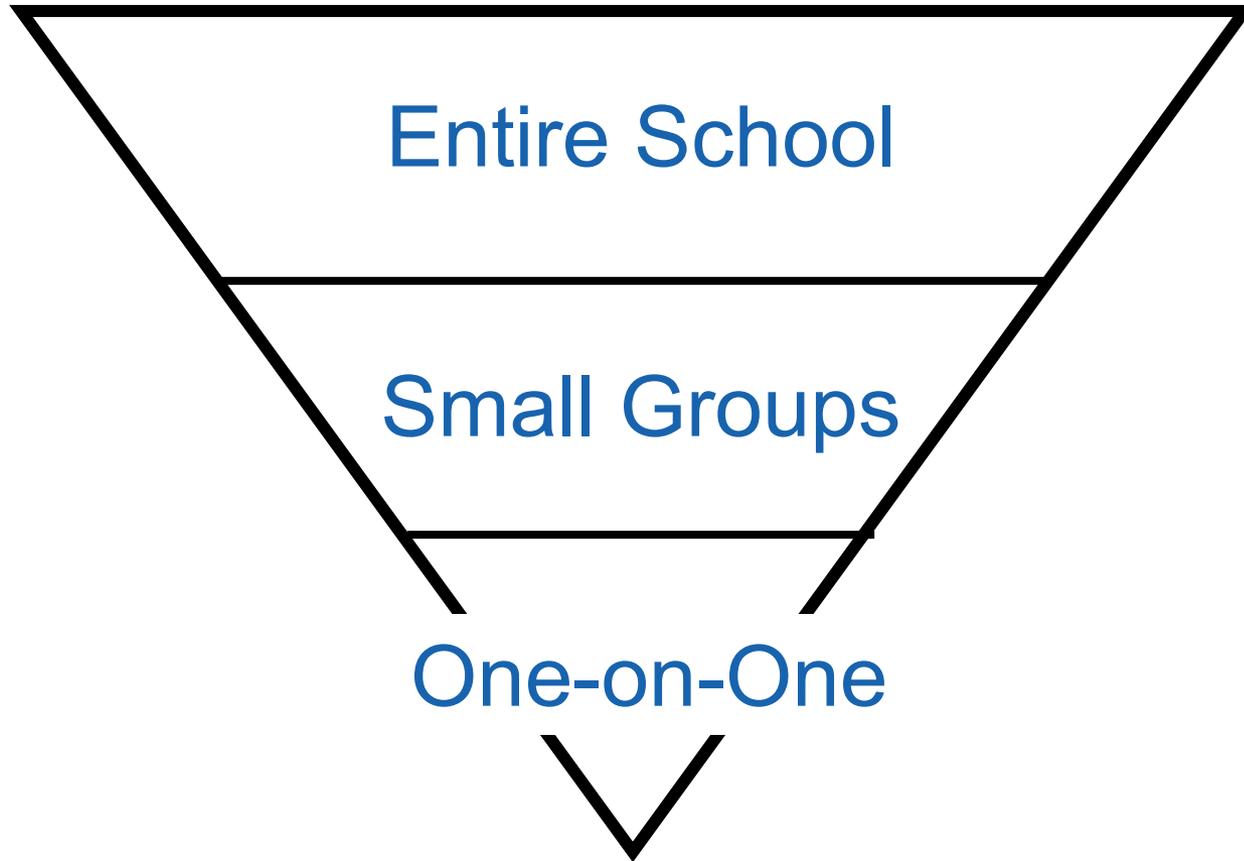
Prevention:

What can the school do?

- Children and teens are more likely to come in contact with potential rescuers *in the school* that they are in than in any other community setting.
- **Prevention is the key.**



Prevention at Three Levels



School Interventions to Prevent Youth Suicide
Download at: <http://smhp.psych.usla.edu>

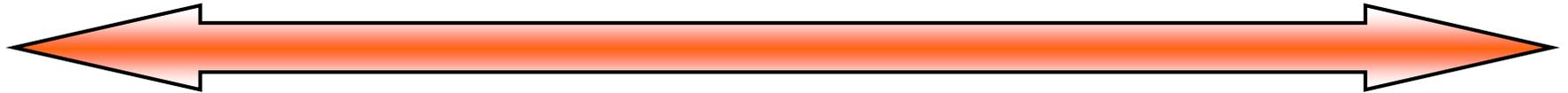


Prevention Must Start in Kindergarten and Be Ongoing

- Build self esteem.
- Develop social skills.
- Build healthy relationships with peers.
- Build healthy relationships with adults.
- Develop problem solving and coping skills.



Building Resiliency in Children and Adolescents



Talking about feelings can help children and youth feel “normal” — kids want to belong and be normal.

Minimizing feelings makes children feel abnormal, bad or wrong.

Minimizing exposure to violence.

Providing Psychological First Aid for Children exposed to violence or suicide.

Help youth feel like they are making a contribution — they are not a burden.

Build belongingness.



Best Prevention

Done on a
continuous
basis

Frequent
association
with an adult
at the school
(connection)
— eat,
w/students,
have them
help you
with a task,
staff mentor

Involve and
educate
parents

Strong
emphasis
on coping
skills,
problem
solving and
anti-
bullying
training.

Have a list
of referral
options

Imbedded into
every aspect
of the — does
not have to be
an extra
responsibility.

Procedure
for school
staff to deal
with warning
signs and
suicidal
reports



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All About Contagion

“The process by which the suicidal behavior or a suicide influences an increase in the suicidal behavior of others”

adolescents are most at risk for suicidal contagions

Suicide Clusters

- * A group of suicides or suicide attempts (or both) that occur closer together in time and space than would normally be expected in a given community.
- * No direct contact is necessary.

Suicide Pact

- A **suicide pact** describes the suicides of two or more individuals in an agreed-upon plan. The plan may be to die together, or separately and closely timed.

Suicide Cluster in Bridgend, Wales sees 17 suicides in just over a year.

- **Jan. 5, 2007:** Dale Crole, 18, found hung in a vacant warehouse at Coney Beach funfair, Porthcawl, South Wales.
- **Feb. 18:** David Dilling, 19, Dale's friend, found hung near his home in Pyle, near Bridgend.
- **Feb. 25:** Thomas Davies, 20, of Cornelly (near Bridgend), a friend of the first two victims, found hung from a tree in Pyle.
- **April:** Allyn Price, 21, from Maesteg, South Wales, found hung in his bedroom.



Suicides (cont'd)

- **May 17:** James Knight, 26, found hung at his home in Cefn Cribwr, near Bridgend.
- **June:** Allyn Pryce's best friend, Leigh Jenkins, 22, dies in the same way.
- **Aug. 11:** Zachery Barnes, 17, of Wildmill, Bridgend, found hung from a washing line. He was a friend of Thomas Davies' family.
- **Aug. 23:** Jason Williams, 21, found hung at home in North Cornelly, near Bridgend.
- **Sept.:** Andrew O'Neill, 19, found hung at his home in Bridgend
- **Nov.:** Luke Goodridge, 20, found by his mother hanging in his bedroom in Bridgend.
- **Dec. 27:** Liam Clarke, 20, a friend of Dale Crole, found hung in a Bridgend park.

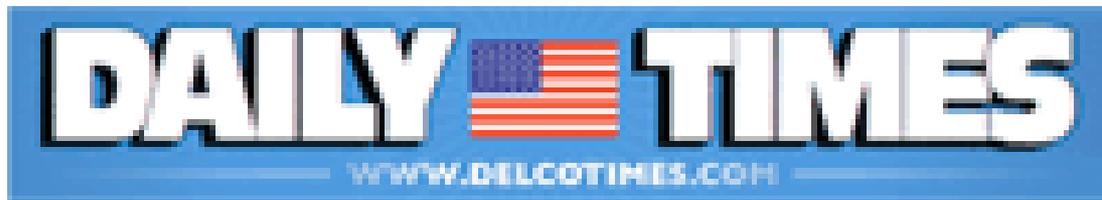
Suicides (cont'd)

- **Jan. 2008:** Gareth Morgan, 27, found hung in his Bridgend home. He knew Liam Clarke.
- **Jan. 17:** Natasha Randall, 17, of Blaengarw, near Bridgend, found hung in her bedroom.
- **Feb. 4:** Angie Fuller, 18, found hung from a banister in Nant-y-Moel, near Bridgend.
- **Feb. 14:** Kelly Stephenson, 20, who lived in Bridgend, hangs herself while on holiday with her family in Folkestone.
- **Feb. 15:** Nathaniel Pritchard, 15, Kelly's cousin, has his life-support machine turned off after he hung himself.
- **Feb. 19:** Jenna Parry's body, was found just before 8 a.m. by a dog-walker. She was 16 years old.



Los Angeles Times

**“4th Teen from Same Palo Alto High school
commits suicide”**



**“Rare Teen Suicide Pact Leaves lots of
Questions in Interboro Town”**

facebook

R.I.P Gina Gentile & Vanessa Dorwart



5,306 People Like This

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kC8APqOyLic>



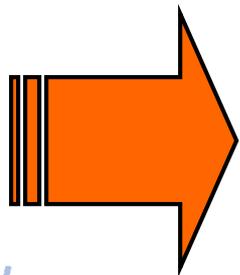
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4. Act When Concerned.



What to do when a youth shows warning signs or expresses intent...

- Take it seriously and deal with it immediately.
- Talk with them — ask about their thoughts, plans and actions.
- Assist with appropriate referrals — give options and let parents decide.



**Involve
Parents**

**Remain
Calm**

**Let Them
Talk and
You Listen**



Make Sure To AVOID...

- Turning anyone away.
- Leaving the student alone.
- Minimizing the threat.
- Promising confidentiality.
- Worrying about silence.
- Falling into the trap that all the student needs is assurance.
- Arguing whether suicide is right or wrong.



If you have students receiving support services that exhibit **warning signs** or have past suicide attempts, have a clear behavior plan as part of their IEP.



Death and Suicidal Themes

Death and suicidal themes, along with the uselessness of life, often become evident in reading selections writings, *choices of music*, television, movies etc.

- What kind of music do you like; what have you been listening to?
- Would it bother you if you went to sleep tonight and never woke up?
- What have you been reading or writing about at school, in a journal, etc.?
- What are you watching on television?





Hold On

— Good Charlotte

<http://vimeo.com/17466288>

Powerful Lyrics To Use

www.youtube.com



- *How to Save a Life* — The Fray
- *Hate Me* — Blue October
- *Hold On* — Good Charlotte



What Not to Say If a Child or Adolescent Is Suicidal

- Giving advice such as “you should appreciate how lucky you are.”
- Telling the person he/she doesn’t mean it.
- Explaining away the symptoms or feelings.
- Criticizing the person or making them feel guilty.
- Using self disclosure as a means to make the person feel better.



Don't Rely on Safety Contracts

- Better approach: Encourage students to **commit to treatment** rather than merely promising “safety.” (*unwillingness to commit is significant*)
- There is **no evidence** that safety contracts prevent suicide.
- They **will not protect you** in a court of law.
- There is **no substitution** for thorough risk assessment.

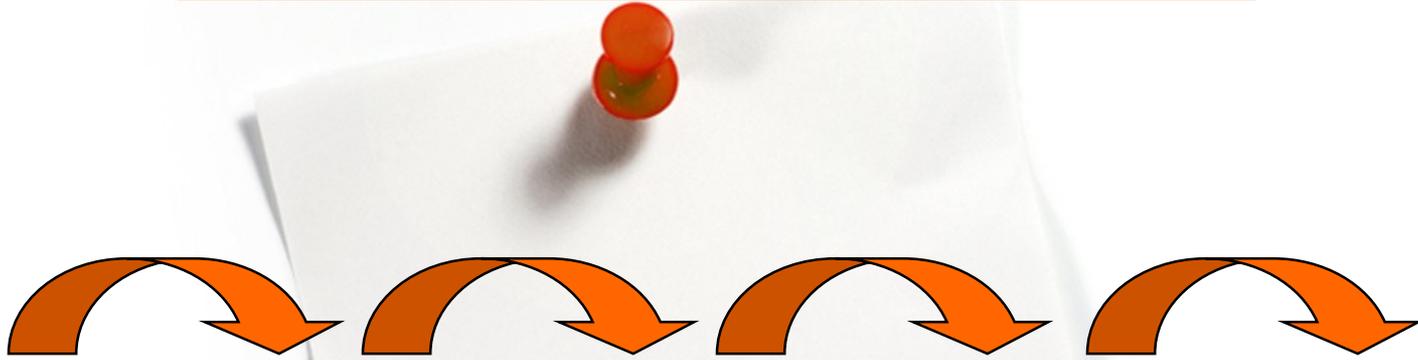


Safety/Crisis Plan

- A Safety/Crisis Plan is only effective when both the youth and the family have input. Focus on what a youth will do, not on what the youth will not do.
- Make a plan of what the youth will do when they become sad or angry.
 - Identify healthy activities and coping mechanisms the youth will use to prevent boredom and deal with stress.
- List things such as who will the youth talk to when they begin to feel suicidal 卐 include phone numbers of Adults and professionals who can help.



Things to Remember



Many have killed themselves when others thought they were just being manipulative or melodramatic.

At the moment, the pain of living is more distressing than the pain of dying.

Look at what the young person hopes to accomplish by suicide and generate alternative ways to reaching the same goals.

Do not be misled — the person may feel initial relief, but the same can reoccur later.

The risk of suicide may be greater as the depression lifts, giving the energy to commit the act.



Why Families Don't Get Involved

- Warning Signs are not known nor recognized
- Belief that their child is experiencing “normal” adolescent mood changes
- Thinking that a child has a reason to be depressed
- Concern of being perceived as “crazy”
- Family does not have insurance



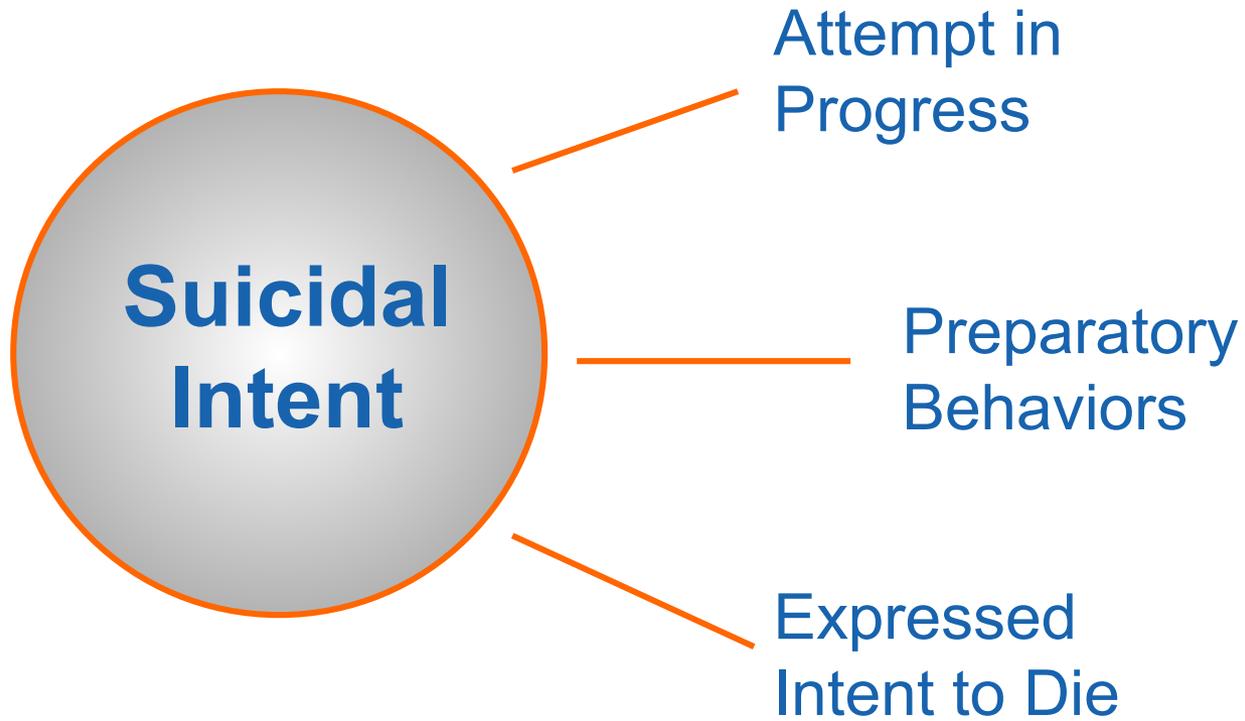
Why Families Don't Get Involved

(cont'd)

- Hope that the child will “get over it” or “grow out of it”
- The youth refuses treatment and parents don't want to “make them” get help
- Depression is viewed as a sin or family disgrace







5. Ask Questions, Get Help, and Remember the Basics.



Recommended Questions for Assessing Suicidal Ideation

1. Are you thinking of suicide?
2. Have you thought about suicide in the last two months?
3. Have you ever attempted to kill yourself?

National Hotlines

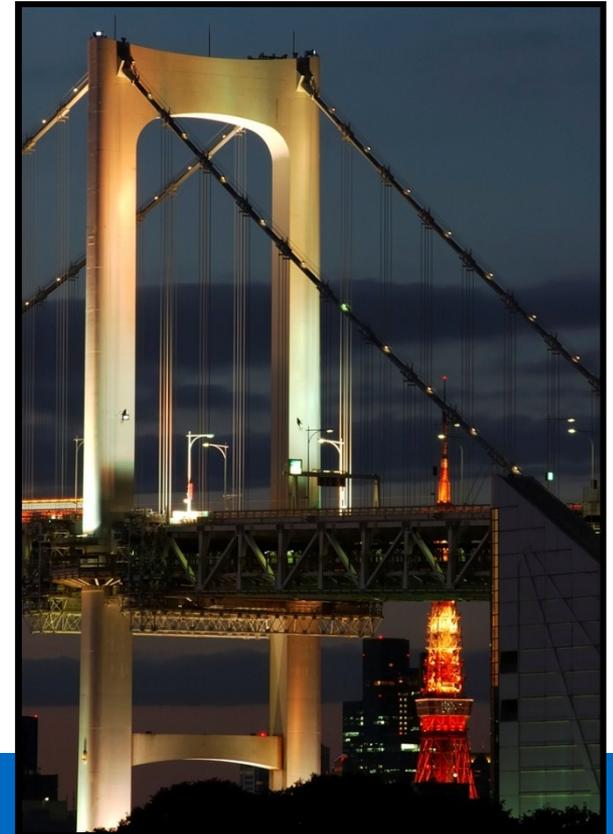
- 1-800-SUICIDE
- 1-800-273-TALK



One To Think About ...

“I’m going to walk to the bridge. If ONE person smiles at me on the way, I will not jump.”

— Note of suicide victim from article in The New Yorker, “Jumpers”



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Resources

- www.behavioralhealthlink.com
 - www.mygcal.com
 - www.suicidology.org
- www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
 - www.spanusa.org

References

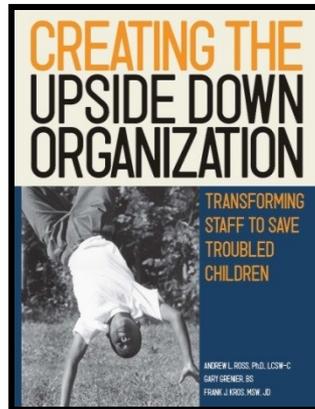
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- Night Falls Fast Kay Jamison 1999 Random House
- Crews, F.T., and Nixon, K. Alcohol, neural stem cells, and adult Neurogenesis. *Alcohol Research and Health* 27 (2) 197-2004, 2003.
- Wong, D.F. Positron Emission tomography – A tool for identifying the effects of alcohol dependence on the brain. *Alcohol Research and Health* 27 (2) 161-173, 2003.
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Alcohol's damaging effects on the brain, *Alcohol Alert*, No. 63, 2004.



Resources

Websites:

www.yellowribbon.org
www.brainplace.com
www.suicidology.org
www.cdc.gov/ncipc
www.ninds.nih.gov
www.eurakalert.org
www.dana.org
www.ajcn.org
www.aacp.org
www.kidshealth.org
www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/10



Some Excellent Books:

- **Secrets of the Teenage Brain**
by Sheryl Feinstein
- **The Suicidal Mind**
by Edwin S. Schneidman
- **Why Do They Act That Way?**
by David Walsh
- **The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness**
by Edward M. Hallowell
- **Why Suicide?** *by Eric Marcus*
- **Night Falls Fast**
by Kay Redfield Jamison

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