2011 North Central Region 4-H Volunteer e-Forum

Positive Youth Development

Session #1
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The Teen Brain:
A Work in Progress

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Objectives

➢ Increase awareness of the developing brain

➢ Increase understanding of how the developing brain affects behavior in teens

➢ Increase understanding of the implications for adults who work with teens

A Pop Quiz   True or False

➢ Most behavior changes in adolescence are due to hormones.
➢ The brain is fully developed in the first three years of life.
➢ The average teen needs 9.25 hours of sleep each night.
➢ After age 12, adults don't have much influence on a child's development.

Timeline of Brain Development

➢ Birth to 3 – Time of rapid intellectual, emotional and physical growth of brain and brain "wiring"
➢ By age 6 – 95% of brain development completed
➢ Preteens (10–12 years) – 2nd major brain growth spurt
➢ Adolescence (13–20s) – Pruning and organizing, especially in frontal cortex

Defining Adolescence

➢ The period between puberty and the attainment of adult roles and responsibilities
➢ Involves psychological, social, legal, and biological changes

"Storm & Stress"

➢ Many adolescents navigate this interval with minimal difficulties

➢ Increased conflicts with parents

➢ Greater mood volatility

➢ Increased sexual interest

➢ Increased risk behavior, recklessness & sensation-seeking

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Significant Parts of aTeen's Brain

Frontal Cortex

Cerebellum

Amygdala

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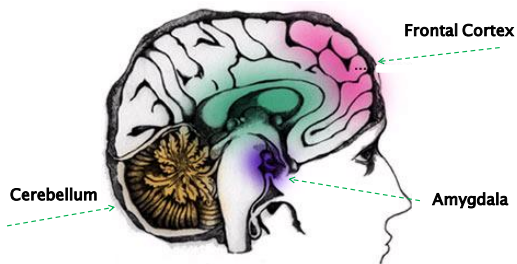
Emotional Brain: Amygdala

➢ Used more by teens

➢ Emotional brain dominates

➢ Quick emotional responses

➢ Emotional brain seeks pleasure, in the form of novelty, excitement, and risk

➢ Prefrontal cortex is not ready to take charge

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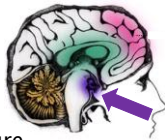
What emotion do you see?

Communication Gap

- ➤ Teens are more likely to misinterpret facial expressions of emotion
- ➤ See anger when there isn't anger
- ➤ Process in the amygdala
- ➤ May react quickly

What Does This Mean in Terms of Behavior?

- ➤ Impulsiveness
- ➤ Mood changes
- ➤ Inadequate emotional control
- ➤ Seeks out risks

Encourage Healthy Risks During the Teen Years

- ➢ Clubs & Organizations
- ➢ Sports
- ➢ Creativity
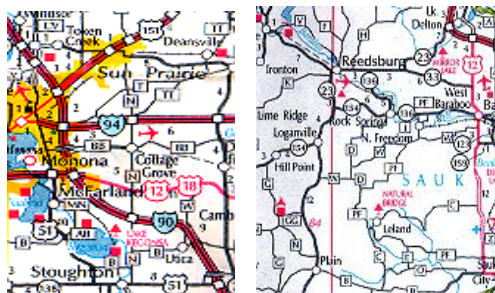- ➢ Challenging studies
- ➢ Jobs
- ➢ Community Service

Decision-Making: Frontal Cortex

- ➢ "CEO" of the brain
- ➢ Responsible for planning, strategizing and judgment
- ➢ Growth spurt – ages 11-12
- ➢ Approaching adult levels of reasoning ability by 15
- ➢ But, high rates of "poor" decision-making
- ➢ Pruning and organizing occurs
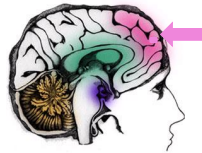
Pruning and Organizing

What Does This Mean in Terms of Behavior?

- ➢ Lack of "common sense"
- ➢ Thinking that seems rigid
- ➢ Decisions that seem irrational
- ➢ Disorganization everywhere

Keep Communicating

- ➢ Listen
- ➢ Encourage
- ➢ Support
- ➢ Identify feelings

Provide Guidance and Opportunities

- ➢ Teens need to use their "thinking brains" for planning, analyzing, organizing, problem solving, and making decisions

Brain Coordination: Cerebellum

- Coordination of muscles and physical movement AND thinking processes
- Can be physically AND mentally clumsy
- Not finished growing until early 20's
- Cerebellum influenced by experiences
- Needs "exercise" & practice

What does this mean for behavior?

- Feeling awkward about one's body
- Strong romantic/sexual drive, without the mature ability to regulate
- Alternating between high expectations and poor self-confidence
- Greater ability to do work
- Tendency to return to childish behavior

Provide Opportunities for Enriching Experiences

- Limit use of TV and video games if they interfere with activities that allow for healthy socialization, physical activity, or real-life problem solving

WOW.

I KNOW! I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE I GAVE BIRTH TO SOMETHING THIS BIG!

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Adolescents and Sleep

➢ Shift in Circadian (Biological Clock) to *preferring* later bedtimes and rise-times

➢ Need for sleep increases at puberty

➢ Societal influences push teens toward sleep delay

➢ Sleep deprivation common

The Teen Brain and the Essential Elements of Youth Development

➢ Belonging
➢ Independence
➢ Mastery
➢ Generosity

BELONGING

MASTERY

INDEPENDENCE

GENEROSITY
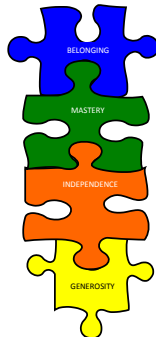
What Teens Need From Adults

➢ Respect
➢ Take responsibility for themselves
➢ To share beliefs and opinions
➢ To experiment and take healthy risks

What Teens Need From Adults

➢ Belonging and interaction with peers
➢ Responsibility for and accountability to others
➢ Positive adult role models

Designing Learning for Teens

➢ Novelty
➢ Physical activity
➢ Hands-on activities
➢ Feedback
➢ Structure and organization

Reflect on the Teen Brain

- How did you feel when you were learning about this topic?
- What kinds of questions did this topic raise for you?
- How did this topic relate to your own experiences working with youth?

Now What?

- What will you do differently as you work with youth?
- What other ways will you use or share this information?

References

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Quality Matters

In Chocolate and Youth Programs
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We hear a lot about "Quality"

- "Quality remembered long after the price is forgotten" Gucci
- "Come home to quality, come home to…" Anderson
- "The quality goes in before the name goes on" Zenith
- "You'll find quality in our corner" Nabisco
- "Our quality shines through" Reynolds Wrap
- "Quality is job 1" Ford
- "The big Q stands for quality" Quaker State

What do You Associate with Quality?

Quality Chocolate

Godiva G Collection
- $117 per pound

- Made in New York City with Tasmanian Honey, Palet d' Or, and Mexican Hot Chocolate

Quality Chocolate

Delafee
$504 per pound

- Made in Switzerland with real 24K edible flakes of gold

Quality Chocolate

Chocopologie
$2,600 per pound

Made in Connecticut by Chocolatier Fritz Knipschildt

One dark chocolate truffle sells for $250

Pre order a must

How to Judge Chocolate Quality

1. Room Temperature
2. Be Still
3. Clear Your Palate
4. Look at the Chocolate
5. Break Off a Piece
6. Rub It
7. Smell the Chocolate
8. Feel the Chocolate in Your Mouth
9. Taste It
10. The Finish

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What do Chocolate and Youth Programs have in common?

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Why is Quality Important in Youth Programs?

Because it Matters

Quality Matters in Youth Programs

▸ Empirical evidence linking quality with positive social and academic impact (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Brooks-Gun, Murray & Foster, 1998; Vandell, 1999)

- ◦ Greater social competence
- ◦ More likely to avoid risky behaviors
- ◦ Better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations

Youth in Poor Quality Programs

▸ Experience more negative outcomes than youth in self-care (Belle, 1999)

▸ Poor quality programs
- ◦ Poor relationships with adults
- ◦ Bullied by other children
- ◦ Poor activity choices

Quality Programs: Research

‣ Something good will happen for youth and their development if they participate in high quality programs

‣ But…participation in poor quality programs can be harmful and have negative effects.

Quality Programs: Your Experience

1. Think about a quality youth program or experience you were involved with that made a difference for you or changed you in some positive way or had an impact on you. Share in pairs.

2. Think about a youth program that wasn't so positive and the effect that had on you. Share in pairs if you are comfortable.
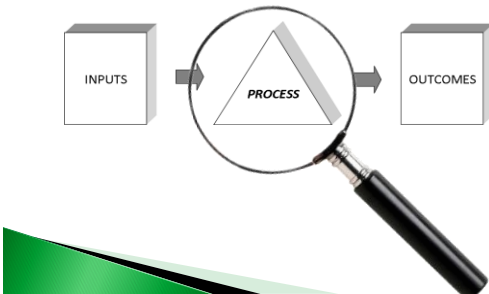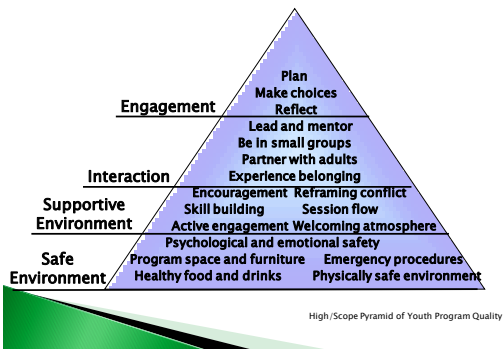
Assessing Youth Program Quality

‣ Best measured at the Point of Service
  ◦ The place where youth are
‣ Focus primarily on 4 large areas of POS quality
  ◦ Safe environment
  ◦ Supportive environment
  ◦ Interaction
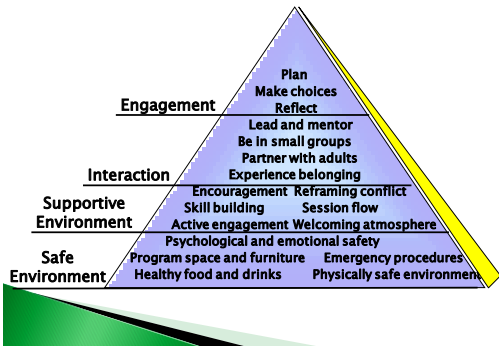 ◦ Engagement

Point of Service Focus

Youth Program Quality at POS

Engagement
Plan
Make choices
Reflect

Interaction
Lead and mentor
Be in small groups
Partner with adults
Experience belonging

Supportive Environment
Encouragement Reframing conflict
Skill building   Session flow
Active engagement Welcoming atmosphere

Safe Environment
Psychological and emotional safety
Program space and furniture   Emergency procedures
Healthy food and drinks   Physically safe environment

High/Scope Pyramid of Youth Program Quality

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Youth PQA SCORING

Engagement
Plan
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Emotional Safety

▸ Leaders show respect for & inclusion of others regardless of religion, race, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation
▸ Any evidence of exclusion or bias among youth is addressed by program leaders

Safe Environment

Physical Safety

▸ Program space is free of health & safety hazards
▸ Space is clean and sanitary
▸ Ventilation & lighting are adequate
▸ Temperature is comfortable for all activities in the program space
▸ At least one or two food choices are healthy

Safe Environment

Emergency/Safety Proceedures

▸ Emergency procedures posted in plain view
▸ Accessible fire extinguisher
▸ First-aid kit accessible
▸ Youth are supervised at all times
▸ Process in place for ensuring youth are picked up/checked out when program ends

Supportive Environment

- Leaders provide welcoming atmosphere
  - All youth are greeted by leader within first 15 minutes
  - Leaders use warm tone of voice, friendly gestures
  - Emotional climate is respectful, positive, characterized by teamwork
  - Negative behaviors are mediated or curtailed by leaders or youth

Supportive Environment

Supportive Environment

- Activities support active engagement
  - Most activities involve youth creating, developing, or improving skill
  - Program activities lead, or will lead to tangible products or performances
- Session flow planned, presented and paced for youth
  - Start & end on time
  - Supplies are ready and ample
  - Explanations clear & youth given time to complete

Supportive Environment

Supportive Environment

- Leaders encourage youth
  - Leaders actively engaged with youth
  - Leaders use nonevaluative language to acknowledge what youth say and do
  - Leaders use open ended questions

- Leaders support youth building new skills
  - Try new things, attempt higher levels of performance
  - Support for imperfect results & push to keep trying
  - Activities are appropriately challenging for All youth

Supportive Environment

▸ Leaders encourage youth to manage feelings and resolve conflicts appropriately
  ◦ Strong feelings/conflicts acknowledged
  ◦ Leaders help youth respond appropriately
  ◦ Youth asked to develop and choose solutions

Supportive Environment

Interaction

▸ Youth have opportunities to develop sense of belonging
  ◦ Intentional efforts to help youth get to know each other
  ◦ Youth strongly identify with program
  ◦ Activities include opportunities to publically acknowledge contributions and achievements

Interaction

Interaction

▸ Youth have opportunities to partner with adults
  ◦ Leaders share control retain responsibility
  ◦ Leaders talk with youth about lives outside of program
▸ Youth have opportunities to practice leadership skills
  ◦ Take on leadership role in group or with activity
  ◦ Contribute to decisions and put forward ideas

Engagement

- Opportunities for voice and choice in decisions that matter
  - All Youth have chance to make content & process choices
  - All youth have opportunity to mentor or lead
- Opportunities to set goals & make plans
  - Use of multiple planning and decision making strategies
  - All youth encouraged to set project/program goals
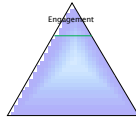
Engagement

- Youth Have Structured Opportunities to Reflect
  - Intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or what they have done
  - Youth have structured opportunities to make presentation to the whole
  - Leaders provide opportunities for youth to give feedback on program/acti

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