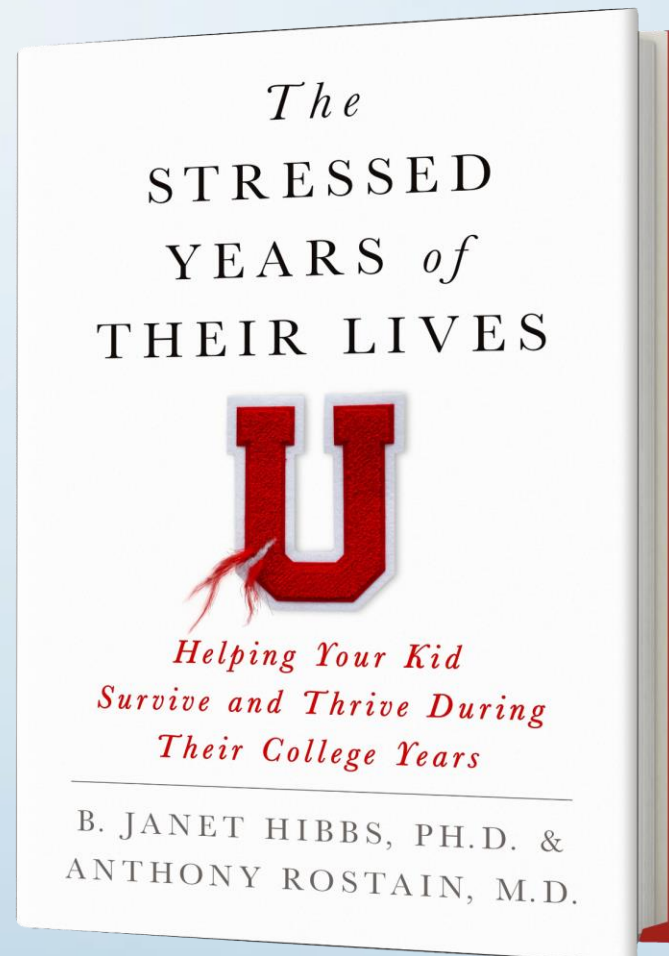




PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUTH AND FAMILIES:

Lessons for Educators and Schools

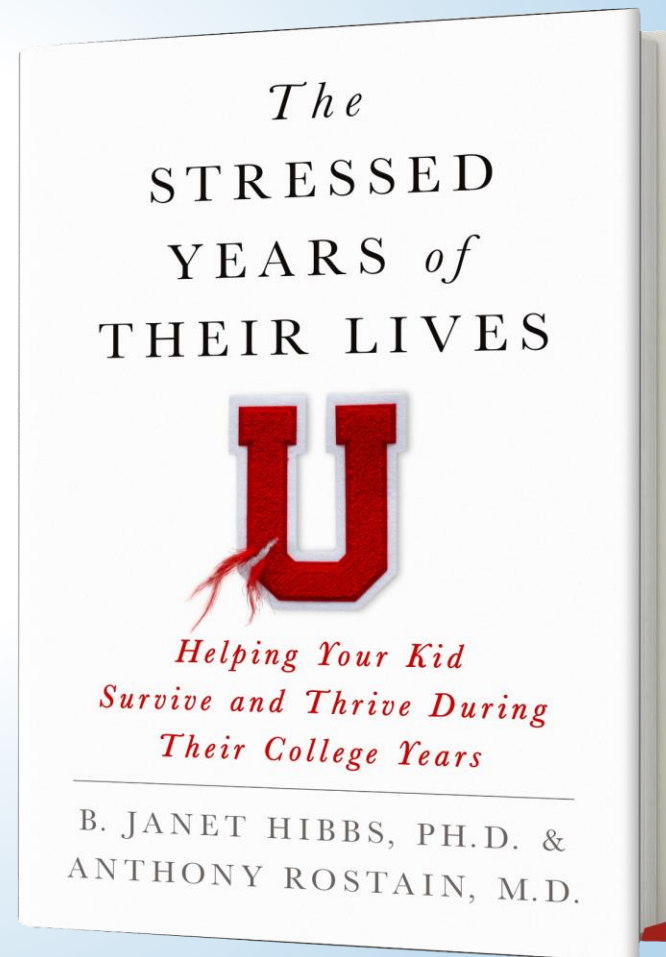
B. Janet Hibbs, Ph.D.
Anthony L. Rostain, M.D., M.A.



Heads Network
February 26, 2019
San Diego, CA

INTRODUCTION

- Who we are
- How we got together
- Why we wrote this book
- What we plan to discuss with you



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Stress & anxiety in today's youth and their families
2. “Social-emotional readiness” – 8 key elements
3. Stress, stigma and coping difficulties – barriers to mental health
4. Family dynamics / Intensive parenting – consequences for youth & educators
5. Executive functioning – how to plan and follow through
6. Risk taking and the adolescent brain

GROUP DISCUSSION: “CHANGING THE PARADIGM”

SUMMARY COMMENTS / Q & A

FAULT LINES IN THE WORLD OF TODAY'S YOUTH

MENTAL HEALTH OF GEN Z

LEAST LIKELY TO SAY THEIR MENTAL HEALTH IS EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD

STRESS IN AMERICA™
GENERATION Z

OCTOBER 2018

Gen Z

45%

Millennials

56%

Gen Xers

51%

Boomers

70%

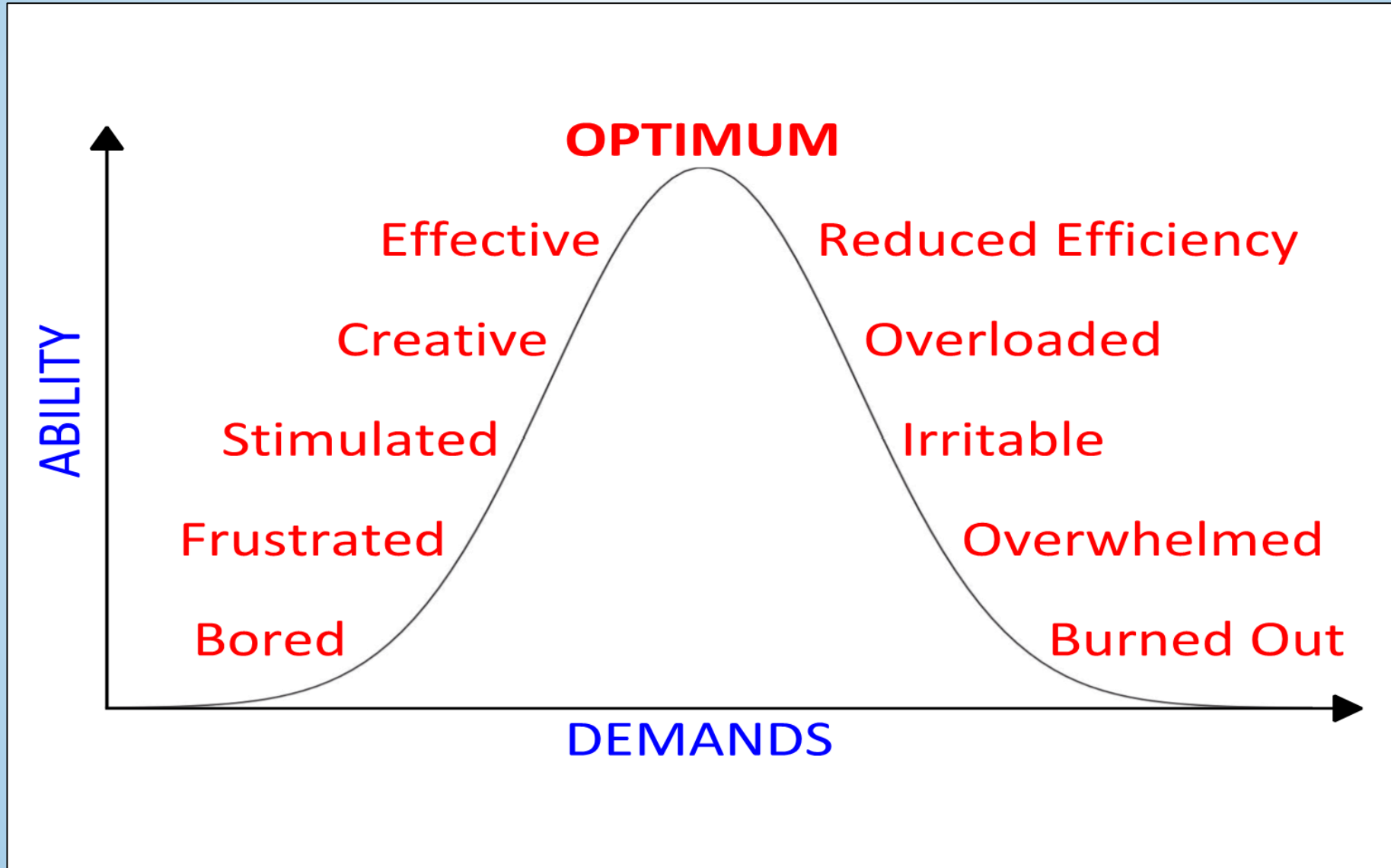
Older Adults

74%

% REPORTING EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

© American Psychological Association

THE STRESS RESPONSE





A CIVIC CULTURE
WHOSE PROMINENT
AFFECT IS

FEAR

CREATES
COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS
AND PROMOTES
EXCESSIVE ANXIETY



**PARENTING SEESAWS BETWEEN
PROMOTING
CHILDHOOD AUTONOMY
AND
PARENTAL CONTROL**

BALANCING THE SEESAW REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING

Social-emotional readiness

Mental health literacy

Executive functioning skills

Adolescent risk taking

Social safety nets

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL READINESS

8 Key components:

- Conscientiousness
- Self Management
- Interpersonal Skills
- Self-control
- “Grit”
- Risk Management
- Self-acceptance
- Open mindset/Help-seeking

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL READINESS

Conscientiousness = Owing one's actions

- Saying what you mean – doing what you say – owning up to your mistakes
- Case example - Alan

Self Management = Ability to take care of day-to-day activities on one's own

- Waking up on time – preparing for the day – remembering tasks and following through on them – developing a routine – making adjustments as needed – falling asleep at a reasonable time
- Case example - Anne

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL READINESS

Interpersonal Skills = Making & keeping friends - getting along with others – handling conflicts appropriately

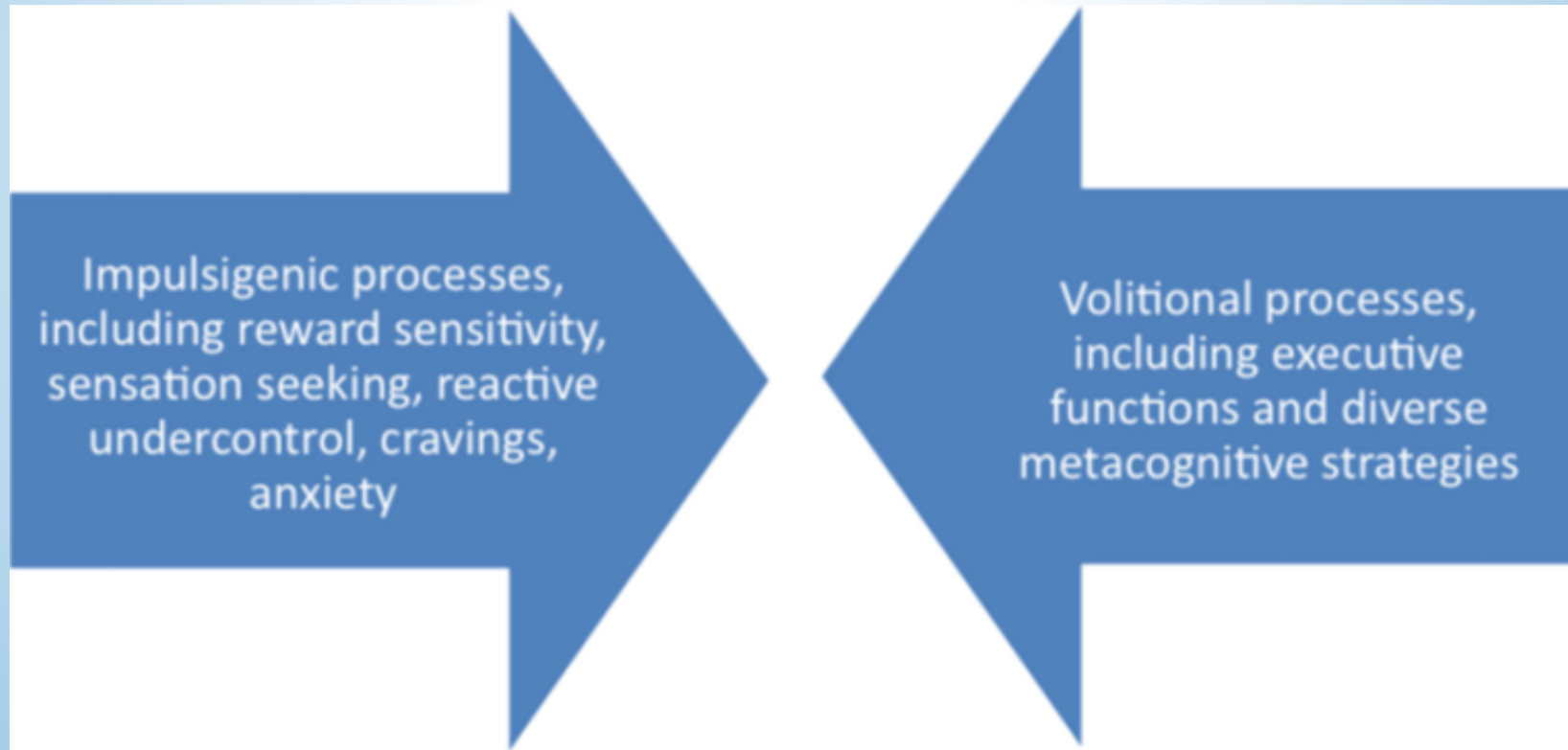
- Social skills inventory: friendship circle (clique), social strengths vs vulnerabilities, level of trust and intimacy, ability to handle disagreements, romantic involvements, etc.
- Internet/social media: usage, profile, problems

Self-control = Ability to set limits and resist urges/desires

- Marshmallow test
- Graded, practical experiences in exercising autonomy
 - Self-limiting time spent on social media/internet
 - Maintaining healthy eating habits
 - Managing sleep-wake cycle

SELF CONTROL RESULTS FROM INTERACTION OF TWO PROCESSES

“Will power is trying hard *not* to do something that you really want to do”
Frog and Toad Together, A. Lobel, 1979



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL READINESS

“Grit” = Ability to cope with frustration, disappointment and failure and to persist in the face of setbacks & obstacles

- Persistence toward goal attainment – motivation in the face of delayed gratification or hardships – key component of resilience – can be fostered via experiential learning
- Distress tolerance skills can be taught (I.M.P.R.O.V.E.)

Risk Management = Ability to have fun without taking too many risks – acceptable versus dangerous experimentation

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL READINESS

- **Self-acceptance** = Ability to accept one's faults, tolerate one's mistakes and deal with problems without guilt/shame
 - Destructive perfectionism
 - Myth of infinite perfectability
- **Open mindset/Help-seeking** = Readiness to ask for help when things aren't going well – overcoming “denial” that anything could be wrong – accepting the notion that self-help or “tincture of time” isn't sufficient
 - Case example: Jennifer

FROM STRESS TO DEPRESSION: OVERCOMING DENIAL

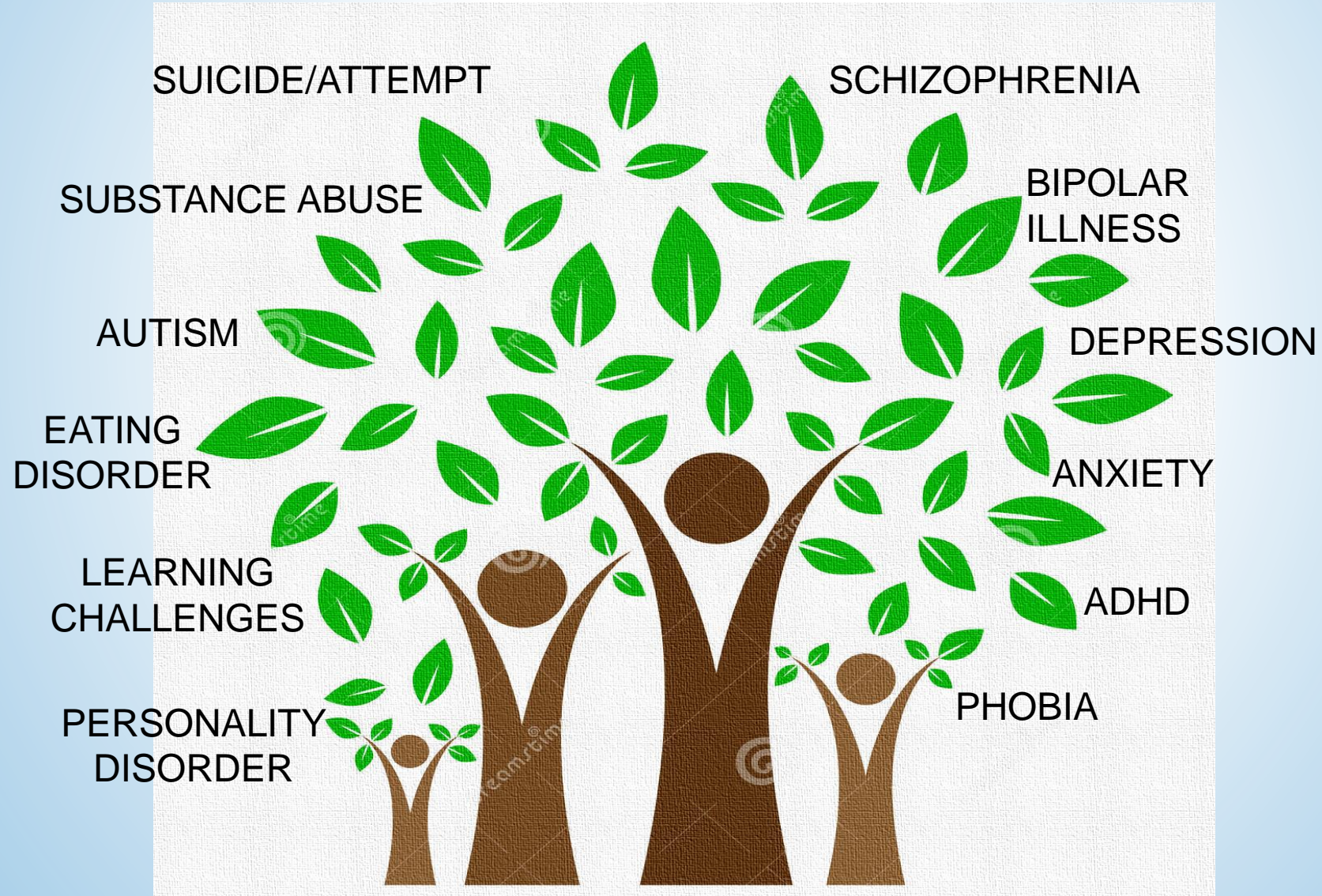
- BACKGROUND TO JENNIFER'S STORY
 - PARENTAL DIVORCE
 - FEAR OF GROWING UP
- LISTEN AHEAD FOR THESE THEMES:
 - POOR COPING WITH STRESS
 - DESTRUCTIVE PERFECTIONISM
 - MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA & DENIAL



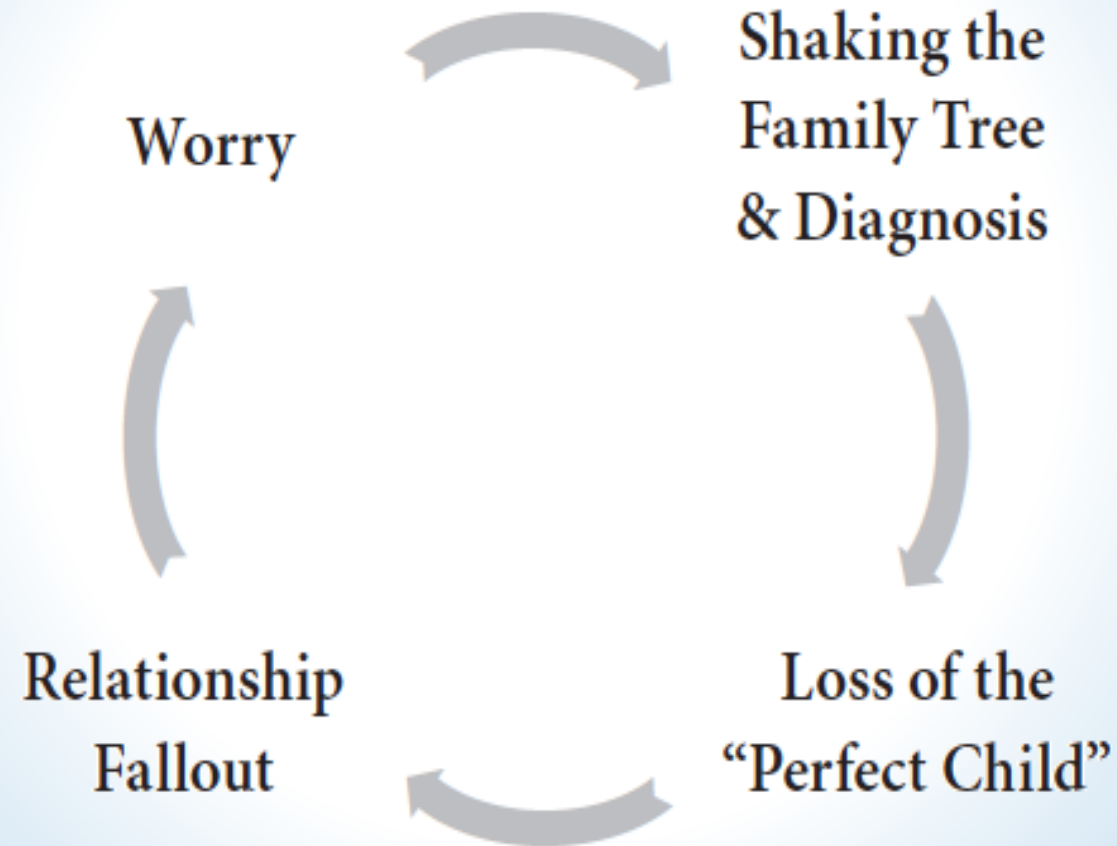
PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- Shaking the Family Tree
- Worry, Diagnosis, Fallout
- Familial Emotional Expression
- Intensive Parenting Mistakes

SHAKING THE FAMILY TREE



WORRY, DIAGNOSIS, FALLOUT



FAMILIAL EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION



Hostility
Emotional
Overinvolvement
Critical Comments



Warmth
Positive remarks
and regards

INTENSIVE PARENTING MISTAKES

- OVER-PREPARATION
- OVER-PARENTING
- OVER-INVESTMENT

INTENSIVE PARENTING MISTAKES

IMPACT ON CHILDREN:

- DESTRUCTIVE PERFECTIONISM
- ABJECT FEAR OF FAILURE
- SELF-BRANDING
- ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

IMPACT ON EDUCATORS

OVERLAPPING ASPECTS OF SELF-REGULATION



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

- Definition
- How schools can bolster EF
- Procrastination
- Cognitive distortions
- Planning to Act

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Definition:

EF usually emerges as a single factor (“how efficiently do you do what you set out to do”), but there are five semi-distinct domains that emerge in ratings of daily functioning:

- Self-management to time
- Self-organization and problem solving
- Self-restraint (inhibition)
- Self-motivation
- Emotional regulation

Barkley, R.A. (2011). *Barkley Deficits of Executive Functioning Scale*. New York: Guilford.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

- How schools can bolster EF
 - Instructional adjustments
 - Optimized seating arrangements
 - Academic scaffolding
 - Organizational skills classes
- EF coaching

PROCRASTINATION

- Definition: “to voluntarily delay an intended course of action *despite expecting to be worse off for the delay.*”
- Deferring a challenging or anxiety-provoking task is *highly* reinforcing as it provides an immediate surge of relief (negative reinforcement)

FORMS OF PROCRASTINATION

- Losing track of important tasks due to poor time management, forgetfulness or disorganization (“EF deficits”)
- Engaging in more immediately rewarding activities (“escapism”)
- Hyper-focusing on less important tasks (“procrastivity”)
- Waiting until the very last minute (“brinksmanship”)
- Waiting to be in just the right mood (“front end perfectionism”)

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS UNDERLYING PROCRASTINATION

- Magical thinking
- Magnification/minimization
- Invidious comparisons
- Emotional reasoning
- Perfectionism

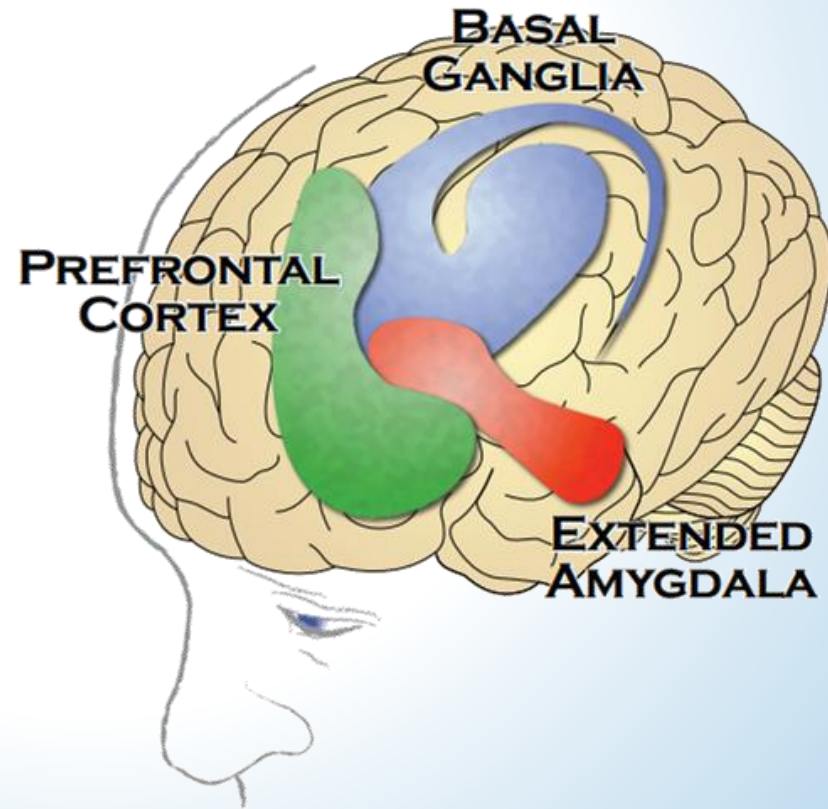
FOLLOWING THROUGH

- *Planning to Act*
 - *Intention implementation strategies* - planning out, in advance, when, where, and how a goal is to be translated into action
 - Shifts focus from goal to implementation strategy
 - *Goal* – e.g. read a chapter from assigned book
 - *Implementation strategy* – sit down and read for 10 minutes
 - Behavioral scripts (“If X happens, I will do Y...”)

RISKY BUSINESS: THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

Key brain areas

- Case example – Joey
- Adolescent brain
- Substance use and abuse
- Social media and brain development



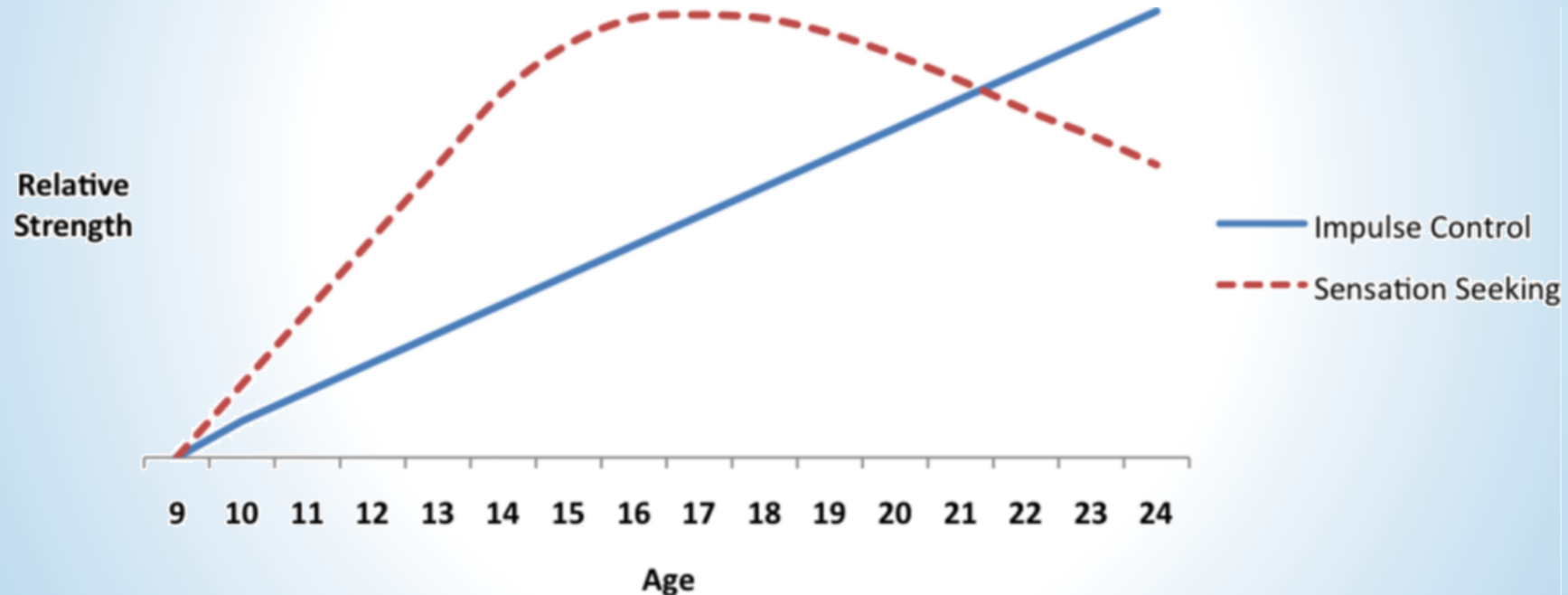
ADOLESCENT EXPERIENCES HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Adolescent risk behaviors are mediated by brain mechanisms that are still immature

- Relative immaturity of frontal lobes implies less executive functional capacity (e.g. inhibition, restraint, thinking out consequences, planning ahead, judgment) in face of increased drives
- Behavioral risk factors such as EtOH/substance use, sleep deprivation, excessive inactivity, etc. may all cause lasting brain injury or dysfunction

DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATION

Developmental Changes in Self Regulation

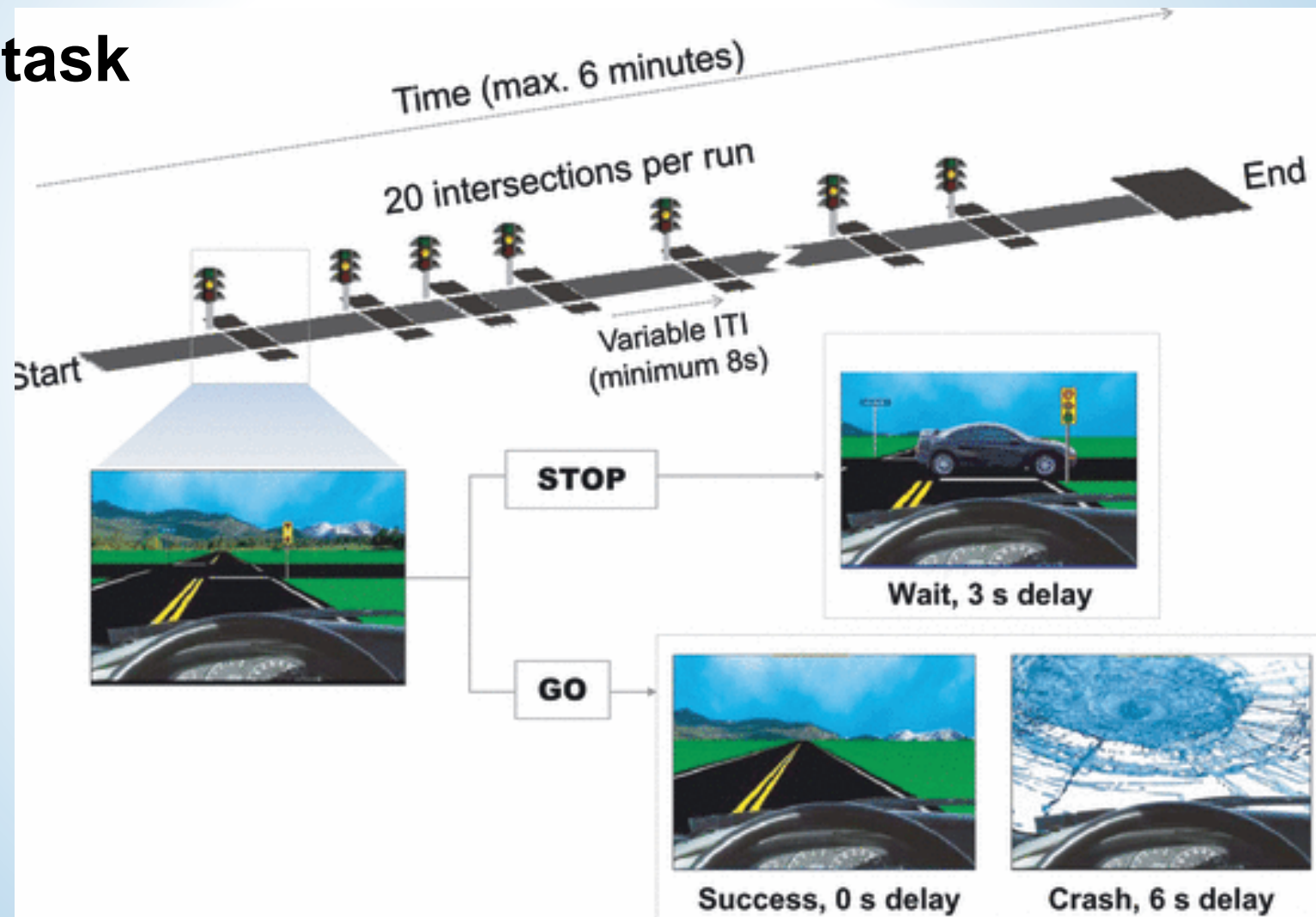


Different developmental trajectories characterize the growth of sensation-seeking and impulse control during adolescence.

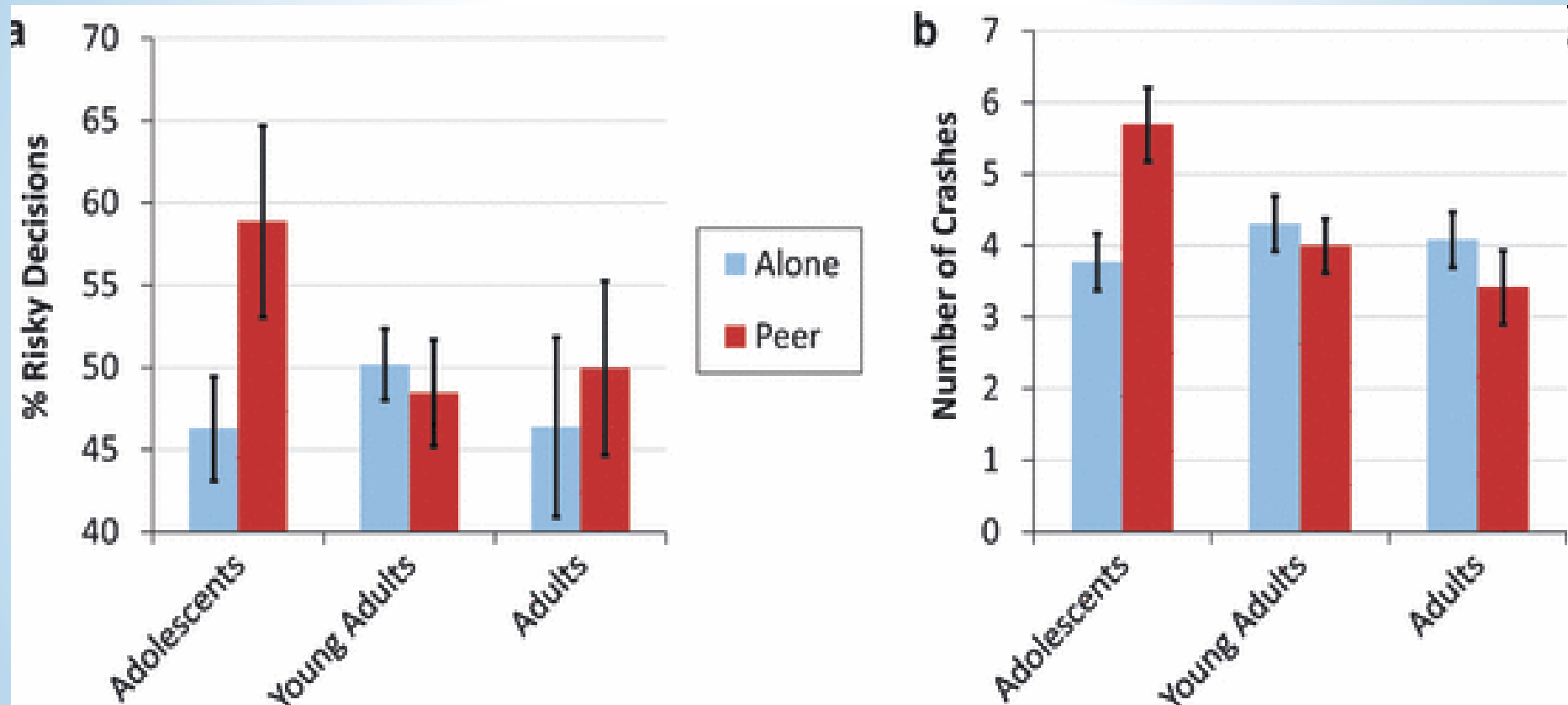
Duckworth and Steinberg (2015) *Child Dev Perspect*

PEERS INCREASE ADOLESCENT RISK TAKING

Stop light task



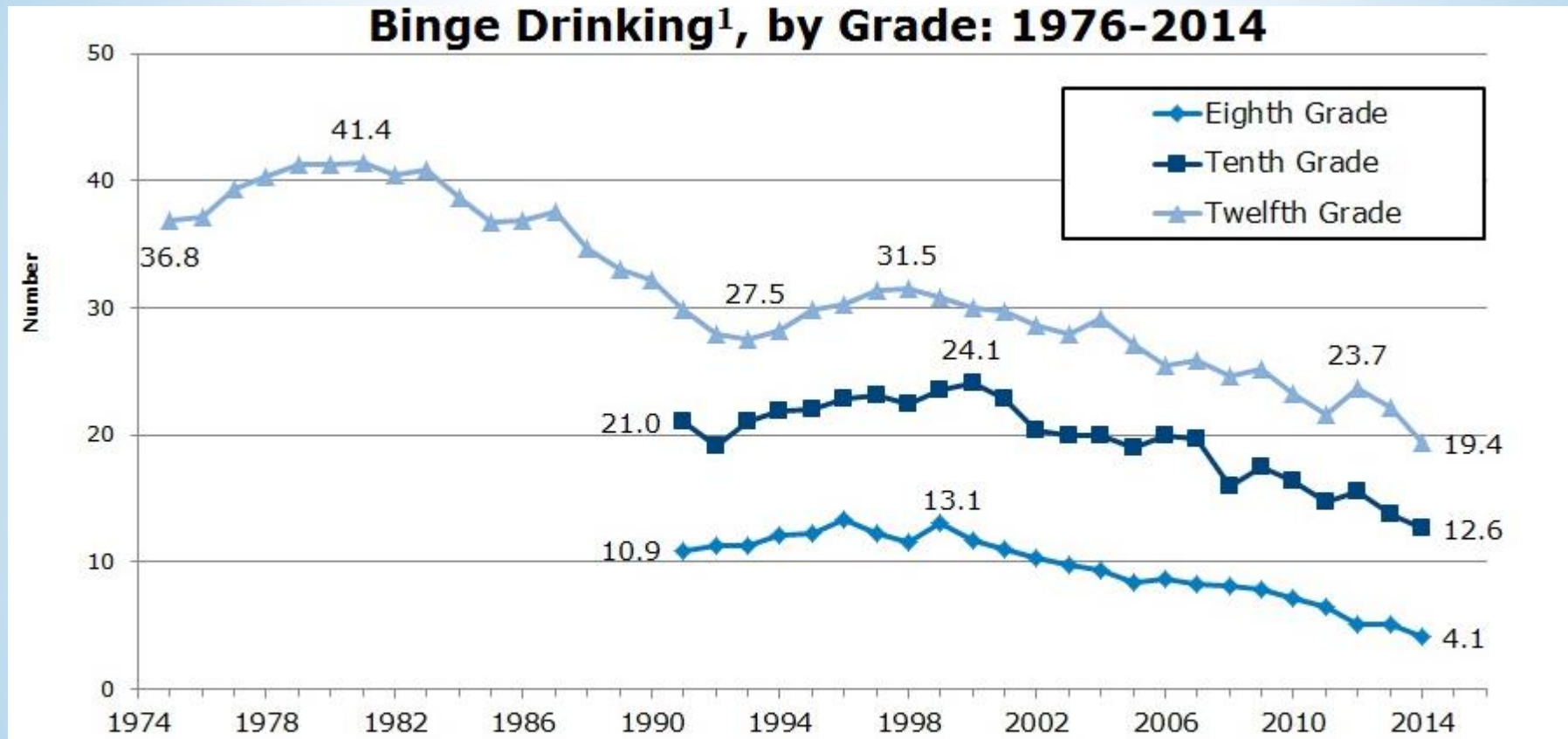
PEERS INCREASE ADOLESCENT RISK TAKING



Stoplight task performance. Mean (a) percentage of risky decisions and (b) number of crashes for adolescent, young adult, and adult participants when playing the Stoplight task alone and with a peer audience.

ALCOHOL BINGE DRINKING

Use
% who had 5+ drinks in a row
at least once in past two weeks



Note: There is reason to believe that eighth graders overreport binge drinking. For more information please see *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2000. Volume 1: Secondary school students* (NIH Publication No. 01-4924) Chapter 4 footnote 27.

¹ Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks in a row at least once in the prior two-week period.

Source: *Monitoring the Future*, 2015

THE INSIDIOUS IMPACT OF SHINY SCREENS

“The complete dominance of the smartphone among teens has had a ripple effect across every are of iGen’ers lives from the social interactions to their mental health. They are the first generation for whom the Internet access has been constantly available, right there in their hands.”

-- Jean Twenge, *iGen*



CAN THE INTERNET AFFECT NEUROPLASTICITY? FIVE WAYS SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGES YOUR BRAIN

This is your brain on **SCREEN TIME**

3x
People consume three times as much information daily as they did in 1960.

61%
of people can't ignore their electronic devices. They check them within the hour after getting an email, text, or alert.

50%
of people check their work email outside of work hours, including weekends and vacations.

61%
of people have felt jealous, depressed, sad, or annoyed after checking updates on their social media account.

Sorry, what did you say?

81%
of people admit to interrupting conversation, mealtime, or playtime with family or friends to check their social media, text messages, or email.

3 out of 5
people spend more free time on their computer than they do with their significant other.

73%
of people believe their use of electronic devices has contributed to **stress in their life.**

me**Quilibrium**.com Interactive Stress Management
Statistics according to research conducted by the University of California, San Diego; Kelton Research; and meQuilibrium.com. Created by DiabeticLivingOnline.com

RECHARGE YOURSELF Once A Week: Pledge to Unplug!

GOING SOCIAL HAS AN ACTUAL CHEMICAL EFFECT ON OUR BRAINS...

YOUR BRAIN On Social

..... Tweeting for 10 minutes can raise **OXYTOCIN** levels in the blood as much as 13%.

OXYTOCIN

- Creates feelings of trust and security
- Reduces anxiety levels

CONSTANT NOTIFICATIONS FROM OUR SOCIAL PROFILES AND MOBILE DEVICES ACT LIKE "REWARD CUES."

We are trained to expect information, and receiving that information activates a region of our brain called the **nucleus accumbens**.

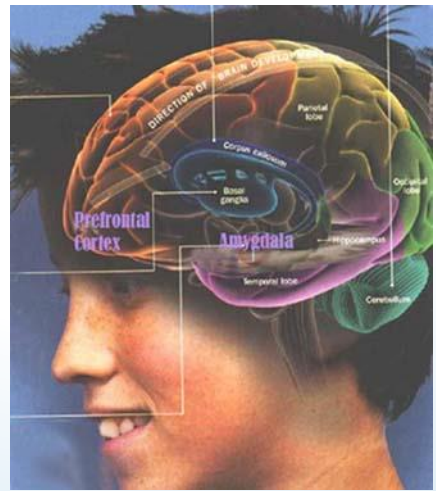
Our bodies also receive adrenaline from checking in on social media...

Making it addictive!

This is the same area that is activated when the brain processes feelings about food, sex, and money!

A SURVEY OF 18-85 YEAR OLDS FOUND
A majority of people found social media harder to resist than

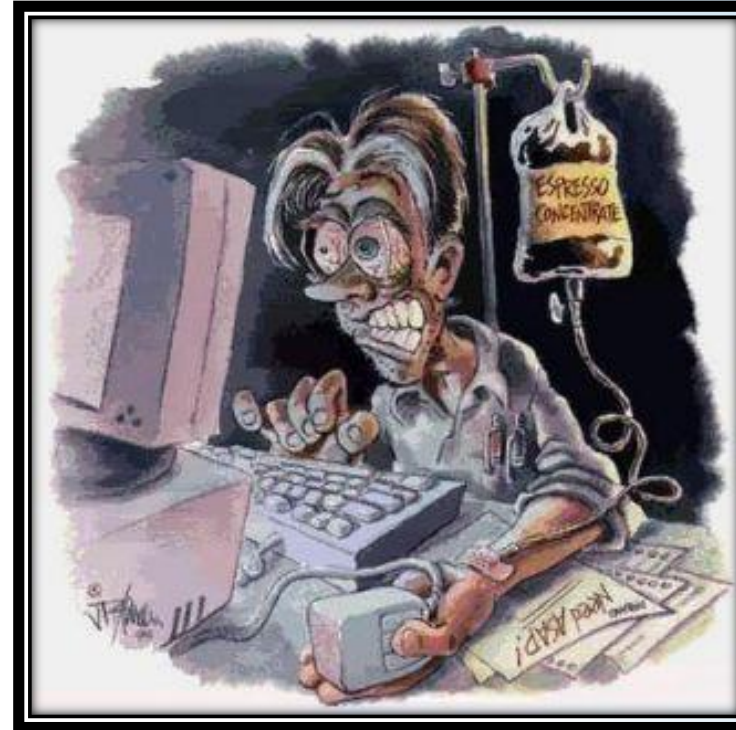
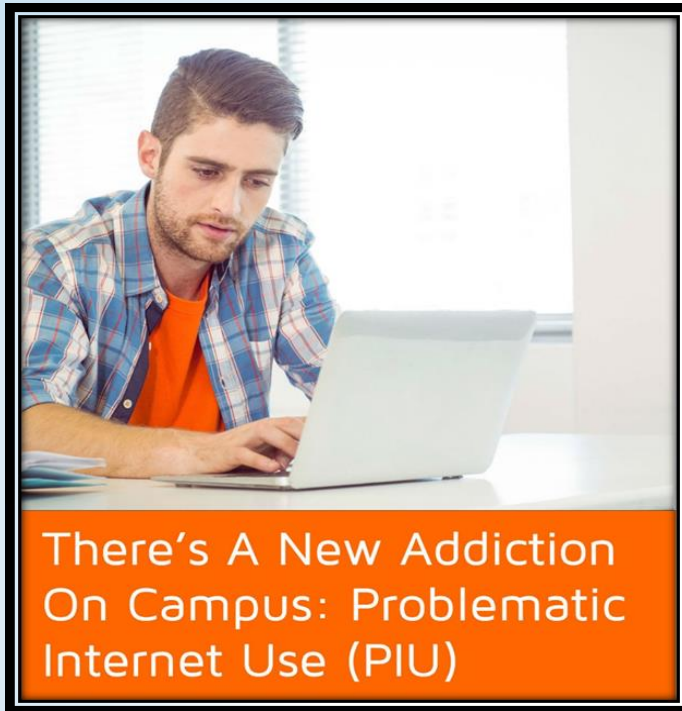
- Smoking
- Drinking
- Spending Money
- Sleeping
- Sex



www.academia.edu

Digital media, the developing brain and the interpretive plasticity of neuroplasticity | Suparna Choudhury

PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE



- Maladaptive preoccupation with internet use, experienced as irresistible, for periods of time longer than intended
- Significant distress or impairment resulting from internet use
- Absence of other psychiatric pathology that might explain the excessive Internet use.

THE CHALLENGE FOR ALL OF US - CHANGING THE PARADIGM

**CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE &
REFLECTIVE DISCUSSIONS**

**PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN
YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN THE FACE OF A CULTURE THAT
EMPHASIZES FEAR/ANXIETY/OVER-CONTROL**

SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT

- At your table, go around in a circle and identify:
 - Your greatest challenges in addressing student and family mental health issues
 - Your most promising strategies for promoting mental wellness
 - Your thoughts about “changing the game”
- Choose a spokesperson who will summarize your discussion for the large group

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Report from small groups
 - Challenges
 - Strategies
 - Changing the game

THEMES FROM DISCUSSION

PODCAST SELECTION

What educators can do to help kids who are stressing out...



PARADIGM SHIFT: CHANGING THE CULTURE FROM INTENSIVE TO BALANCED

- EDUCATORS AS SOCIALIZERS
- PARENTS AS EDUCATORS OF MENTAL HEALTH
- TEACHING STUDENTS TO CATCH COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS AND NEGATIVE MINDSET BARRIERS
- ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO HELP EACH OTHER
- ACCEPTING THAT LIFE ISN'T LINEAR, BUT CURVY AND MORE BALANCED

OVERCOMING MINDSET BARRIERS

Kids' Mindset Barriers

- Not Belonging (“social rejection”)
- Not Making It (“perfectionism”)
- Disappointing Parents (“family pressures”)
- Being Different (“mental health issues”)

Parents' Mindset Barriers

- Falling Behind other parents (“keeping up with the Joneses”)
- Kid not getting into an Ivy League/Brand-name school
- Loss of the “Perfect Child”

Educators' Mindset Barriers

SCHOOL SAFETY NETS

- Cultural Issues – over-achievement (AP classes, too much homework), perfectionism, competition, unrealistic expectations of students
- Social pressures – media, cliques, bullying, substance use
- Teaching resilience – curricula to teach mindfulness, stress reduction
- Accommodations / interventions – learning problems, anxiety, etc.

FAMILY SAFETY NETS

- Supporting Positive Family Functioning
 - Ideas: talks, podcasts, support groups, early intervention
- Promoting Family-School Partnerships
 - Communication, problem-solving, referrals, crisis management

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS