



Understanding the teenage brain



If you've ever felt that your teenager is sometimes from another planet, you're not alone. During the teenage years, our brains change quite quickly. This can change our behaviour, the way we deal with emotions, and our relationships.

In a nutshell

The human brain is constantly developing. Simply put, in the teenage years, the part of the brain that controls emotions develops faster than the section that controls impulses. Here's where the typical teenage behaviour kicks in. The interaction between these two areas of the brain interact during teen years tends to encourage risk taking and peer-to-peer social behaviour.

What else is going on

There are a lot of other changes too. Teenagers are going through a change in the way they see themselves too, from being treated as a child to a young adult making important decisions (study, friendships and work).

Remembering their spark

With the ups and downs of teenage life, remembering their unique talents and interests can make a huge difference in helping them find a positive look on life and see their place in the world. By reminding your child of the things they do and say that amaze you, you can help them see their own worth and help them understand their own identity. Remember, to them it might seem normal and just like everyone else, but by pointing out the skills, personality traits and abilities you can see, you can help them see it too.

The growing teen brain

During the teenage years, the part of the brain that drives emotion develops faster than the part that controls impulses. This allows for the social, emotional and cognitive changes as well as taking on new responsibilities from childhood to adulthood.



Age 10-18



Limbic system (drives emotions) intensifies during puberty along with hormones



Rapid cognitive, emotional, social and rational growth from childhood to adulthood



Greater risk-taking behaviours



Age 18-25



Prefrontal cortex (controls impulses) further develops and matures in early 20s



Greater control over impulsive actions



Less risk-taking behaviours, more sound judgement

Teen brain development

Last Updated: 22 June 2022