



Fair Weather Ahead: Coping with Adolescent Stress

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+ PYD History & Background



**NYS
Partnership:
1998 - 2012**

**New PYD Curriculum
'15
Online Courses '16**

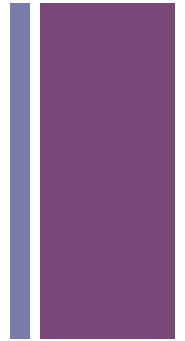


**PYD Network on
LinkedIn - NOW**

+ Agenda



- Development and adolescents in context
- Stress and Distress
 - Difference between stress and distress
 - Causes & triggers
 - Effects
- Quick tips for differentiating stress from distress
- Supporting youth in stress and distress
 - What they need to know
 - What you need to know
- Resources

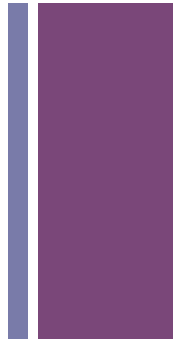


Adolescent development in context

+ Developmental Tasks



Prepare for financial autonomy and independence



Prepare for professional life



Achieve emotional independence from parents and other adults

Develop a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior

Learn to use one's body effectively

Prepare for sustained intimate relationship and/ or family life



Establish a gender identity

Identify and incorporate behaviors consistent with social expectations and personal value systems



Establish new and more mature relations with age-mates



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What will I be when I grow up?

What am I NOT?

What kind of person do I love?

What do I believe in?



Am I this?



What sort of person am I sexually attracted to?



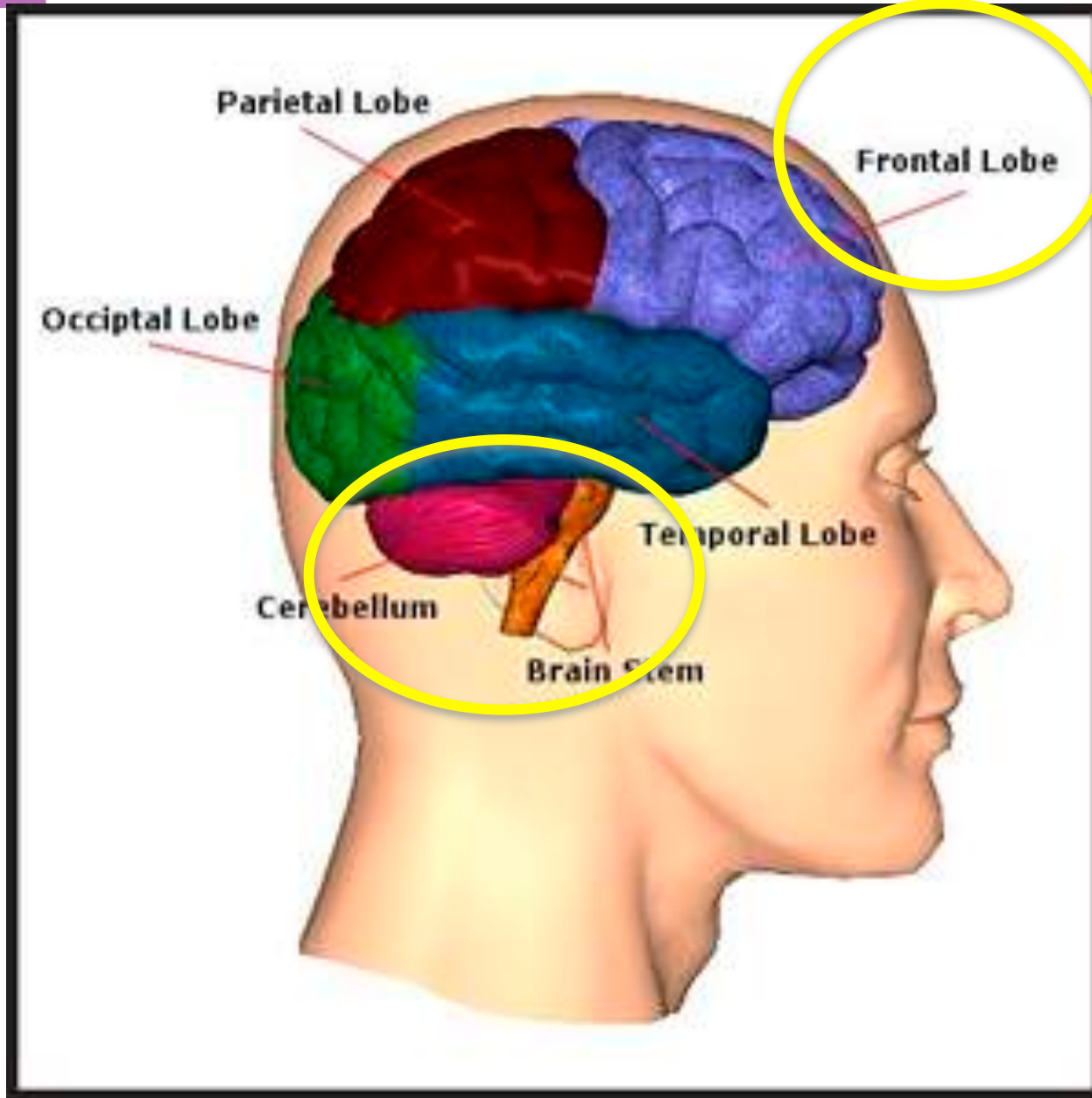
With what ideas and people do I identify?

What experiences in the world do I want and enjoy?

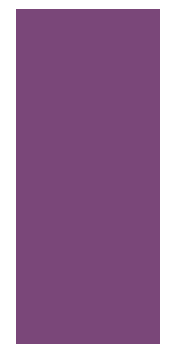
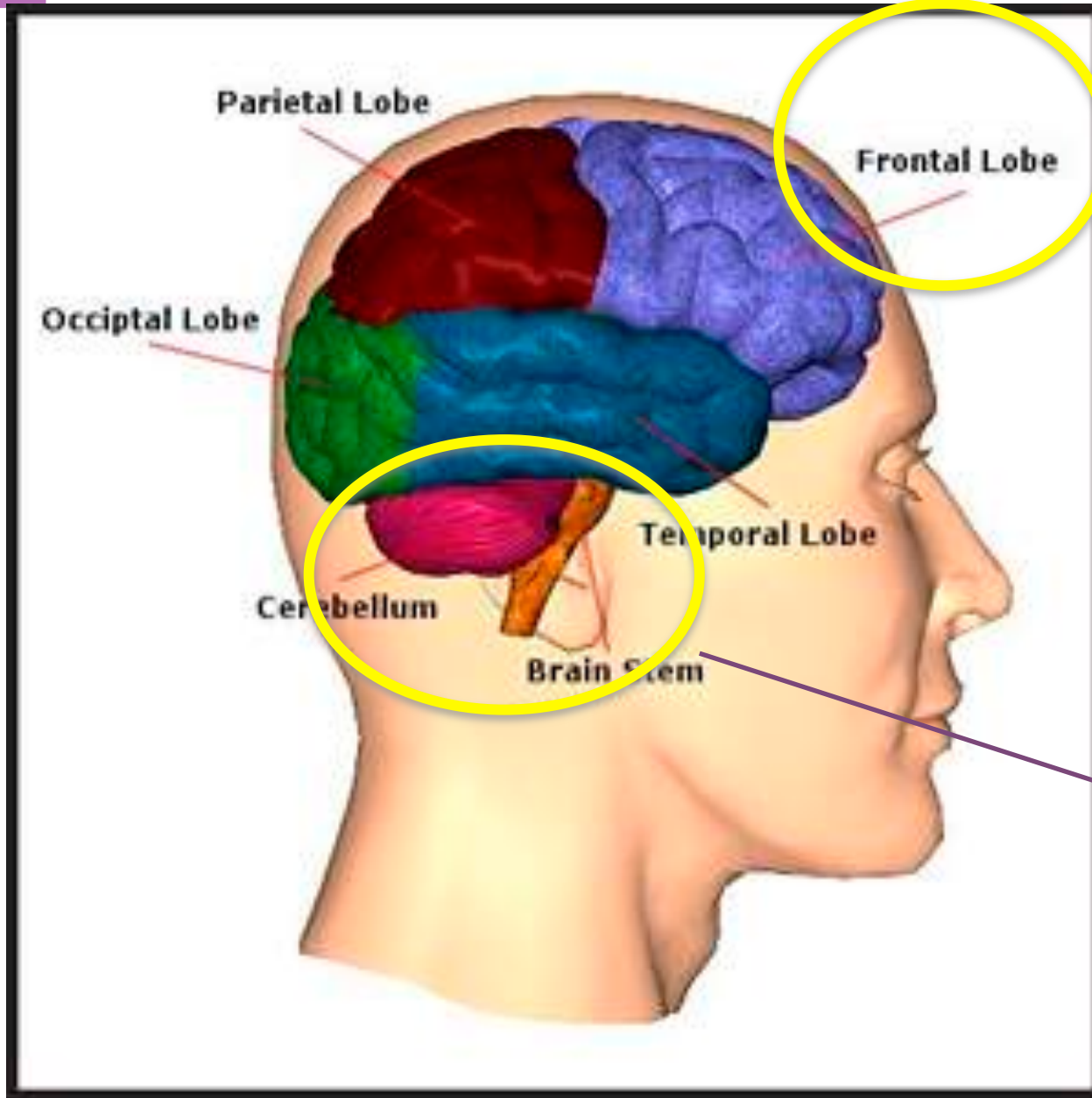
What image(s) do I want to portray? How do I do this?

What do I feel strongly about?





- **Planning**
- **Attention**
- **Judgment**
- **Reflection**
- **Impulse control**
- **Second thought**
- **Working memory**
- **Modulating mood**
- **Response flexibility**
- **Goal-directed**

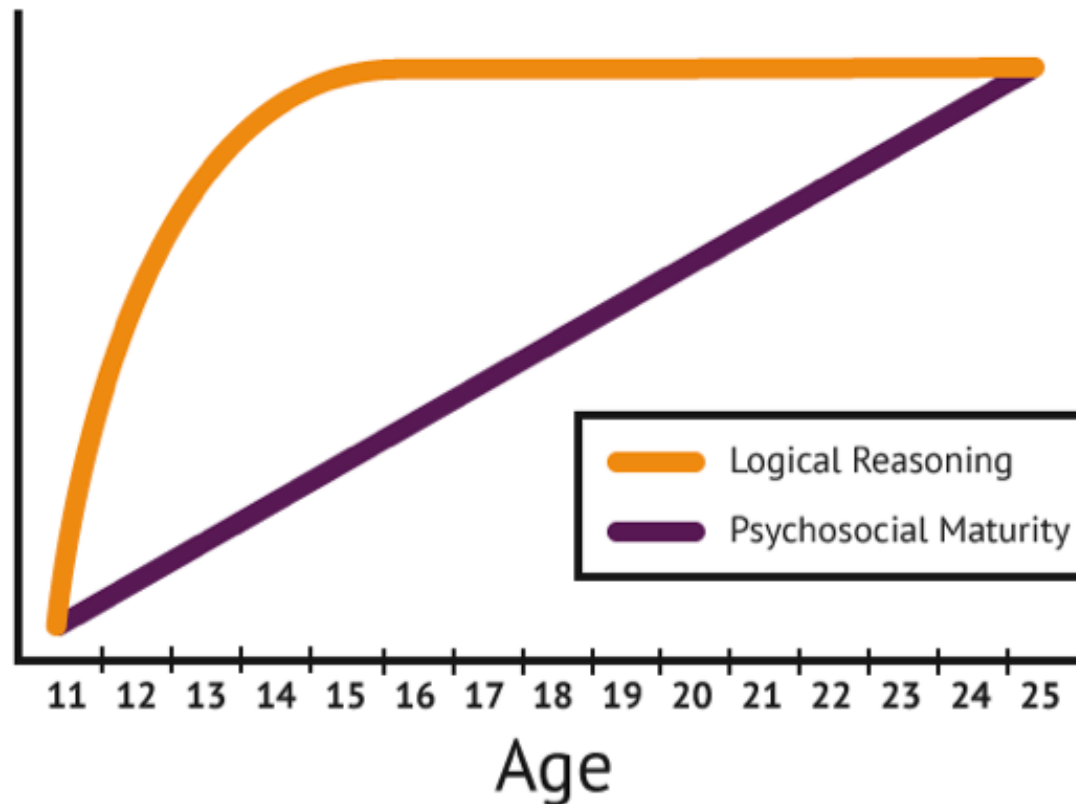
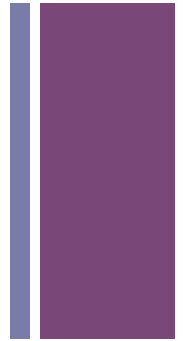


Emotion and reward circuitry

- Arousal
- Desire
- Fear
- Grief

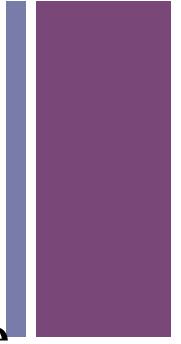
Strongly hormonally influenced

+ The highs are really high and the lows, really low..



Steinberg, L. (2007). Risk taking in adolescence new perspectives from brain and behavioral science. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(2), 55-59.

+ Mentalization

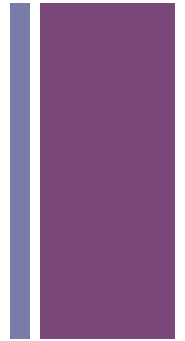


Adolescents are not very skilled at distinguishing the subtlety of facial expression (excitement, anger, fear, sadness, etc.)—results in a lot of **miscues**—leads to **lack of communication and inappropriate behavior**



+ Hot and cold cognition

- ✧ Thoughts and emotions are intertwined
- ✧ “**COLD**” cognition refers to thinking under conditions of low emotions and/or arousal
- ✧ “**HOT**” cognition refers to thinking under conditions of strong feelings or arousal
- ✧ Decisions made under conditions of strong affect are difficult to influence by cool rational thought alone





Stress and distress

+ Stress

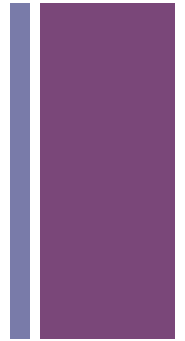
Is an internal state that elicits any number of adaptive physiological changes and psychological coping mechanisms.

- *May not be unpleasant*
- *Are stressor specific (so adaptive process may differ)*
- *Quite variable across individual and developmental stage*

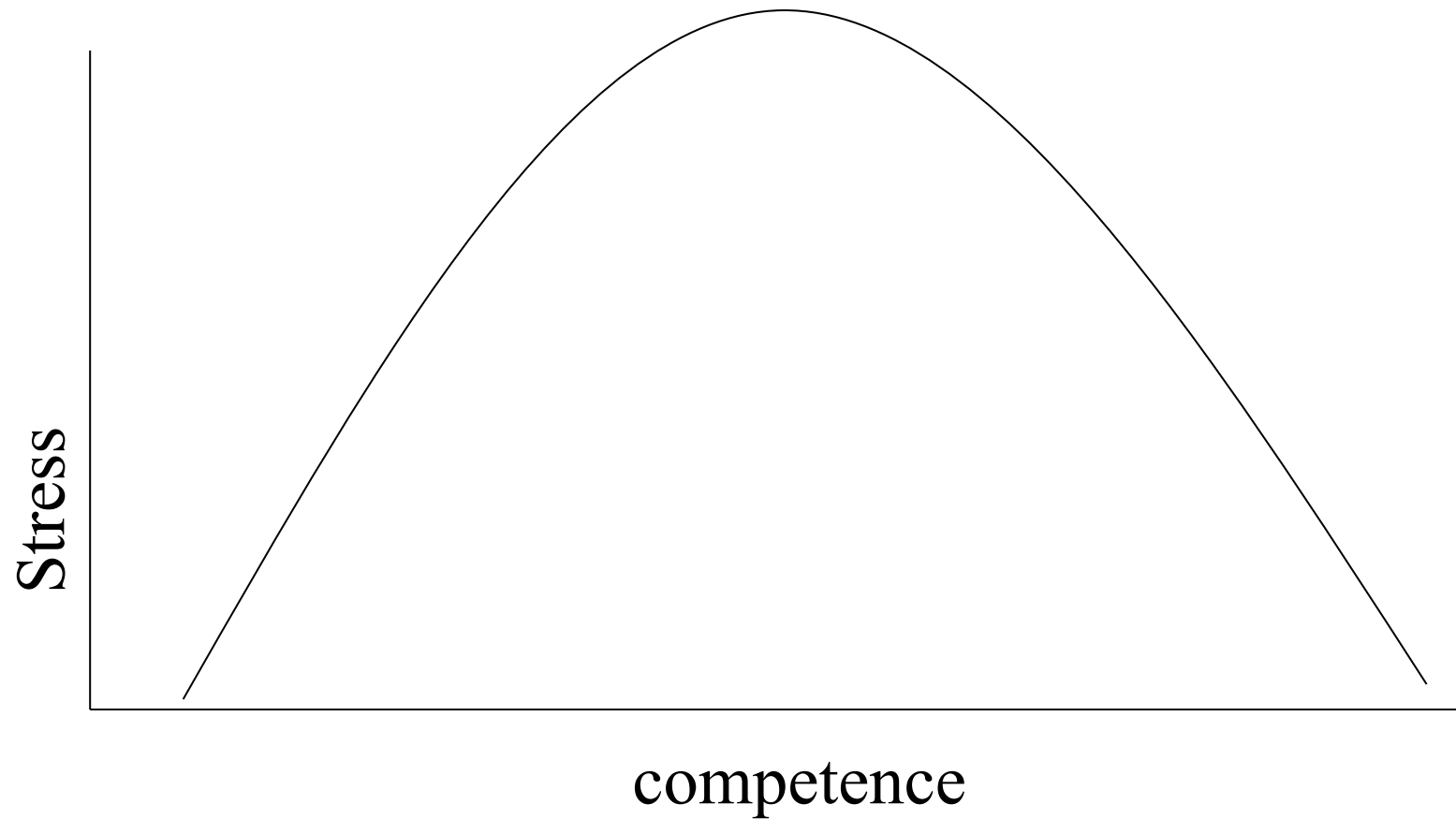
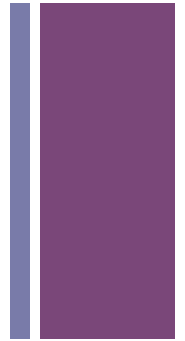
+ Distress

An aversive, negative state in which coping and adaptation processes fail to return individuals to homeostasis.

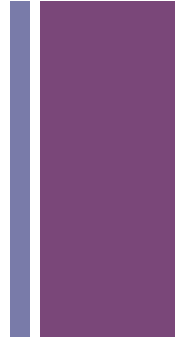
- *May be caused by prolonged or severe stress*
- *Psychological and physiological processes effective for short term stress can cause long term dysfunction*
- *Behavioral responses to distress can be markedly different than to stress*



+ The relationship between stress and competence



+ Wellbeing



A state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community

World Health Organization, 2004

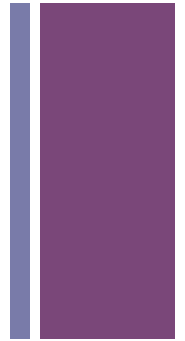
+ What is resilience?

Resilience is:

The ability to positively cope with stress and adversity; “bouncing back” to a previous state of normal functioning, or using the experience of adversity to enhance flexibility and overall functioning

And stems from:

The interaction of a person with their environment and the resulting processes that either promote well-being or protect them against the overwhelming influence of risk factors



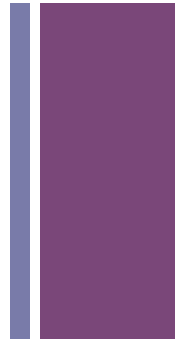
+ Causes and triggers

Most common triggers of stress in adolescence:

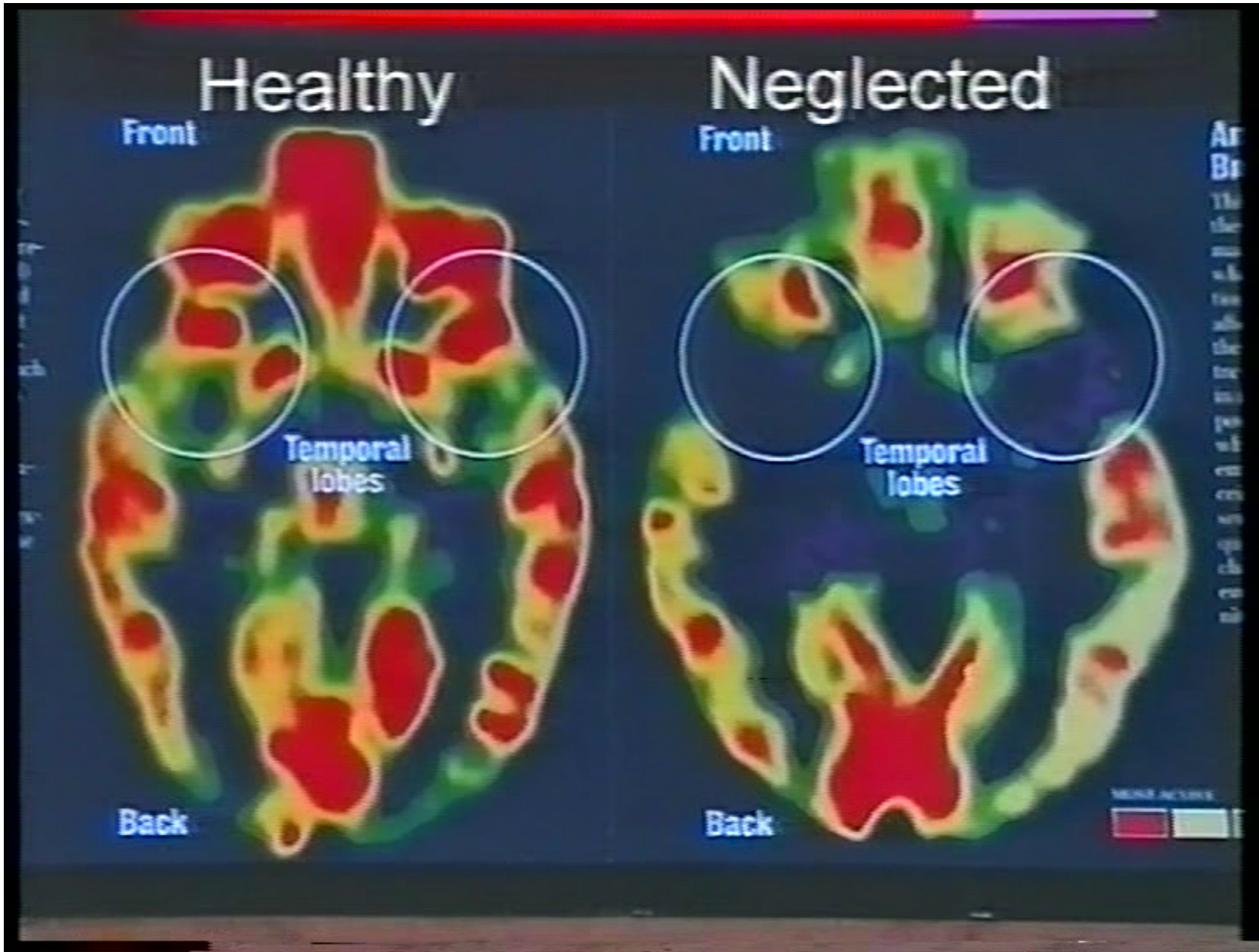
- Interpersonal conflict
- Perceived pressure to perform
- Thwarted desire or expectations
- Perceived failure
- Perceived isolation

Most common triggers of distress in adolescence:

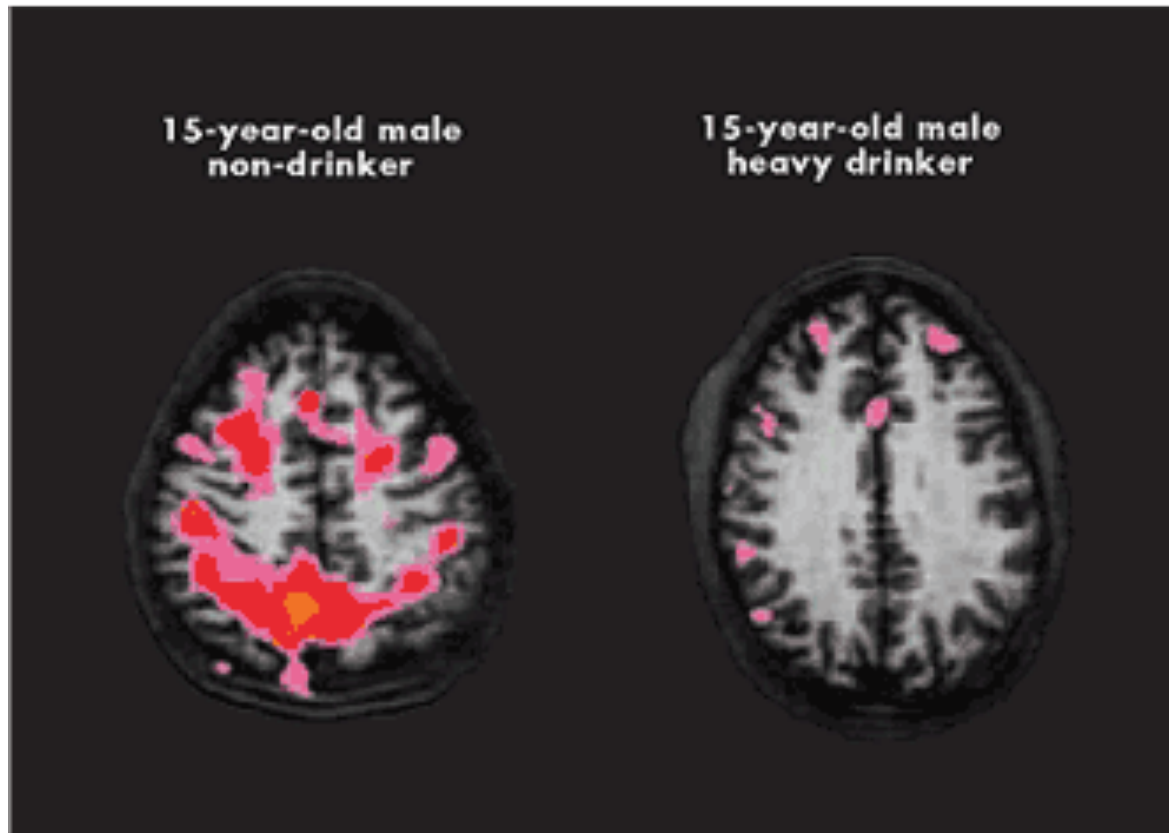
- Chronic experience of any of the above
- Acute or chronic abuse, neglect, traumatic events
- Hormonal changes linked to depression, anxiety, other physiological imbalances
- Poor self care habits (e.g. sleep deficits, poor eating, little exercise)
- Chronic exposure to negative environments (can be off or on-line)
- Abuse of substances or other toxins



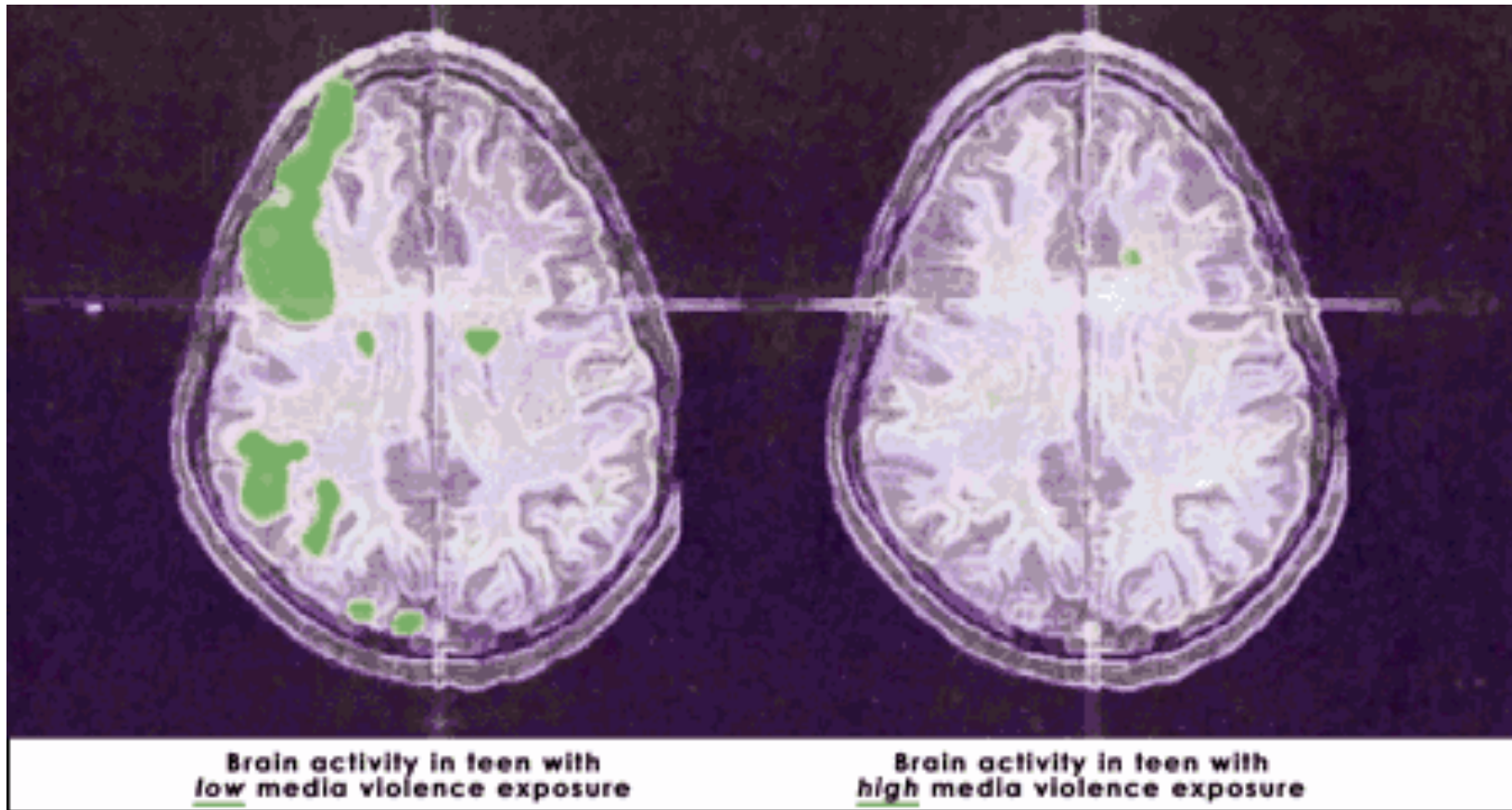
Chronic stress



Behaviors

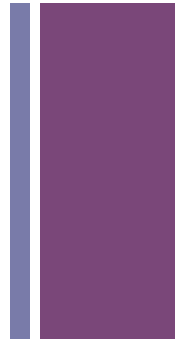


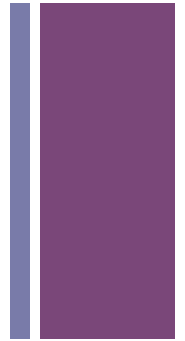
Visual exposure



+ Ghosts in the nursery and beyond

- ❑ Brain development and functioning impacted by life events and experiences *and* by transgenerational events
- ❑ These impacts can enhance or get in the way of later coping function
- ❑ Chronic stress, and neglect in childhood cause over development of certain neural pathways involved in anxiety and fear (chronic flight or fight). It also often results in under development of the parts of the brain involved in planning and organization
- ❑ The above happens because resources needed for developing social and cognitive skills are devoted to developing survival skills (including acute capacity to read emotional cues)
- ❑ Chronic activation of neurochemical pathways helpful in meeting short term stress needs can cause cascading changes in impulse control, eating, sleeping and fine motor control; this creates a negative feedback loop that reinforces stress



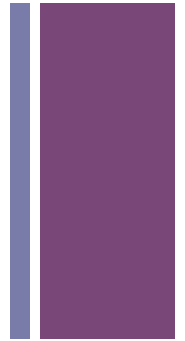


*Differentiating and stress and
distress*

+ Is it stress or distress?

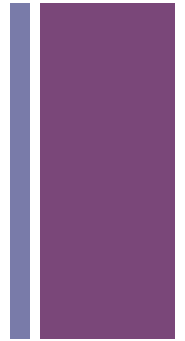
Look for and assess:

- Sustained changes in behavior, outlook, & willingness
- Depth and breadth of impact:
 - School or work (or other activities linked to independence, future planning)
 - Important relationships
 - Self care routines
 - Outlook on life – short and long term
 - Activities in which engagement and/or mastery is or was experienced
- Emotional lability
- Intensity of negative thoughts
- Nature of support system in place (people, therapeutic connections, activity outlets, areas of mastery, etc..),

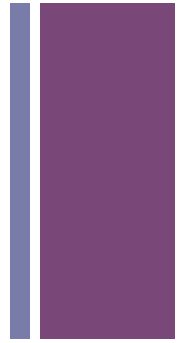


+ Quick questions for assessing depth and breadth

- Is the young person's response to stress consistent with their typical response to stress?
- Is there a self or family history of trauma or chronic stress?
- How much is the stress interfering with life (for example, going to classes, socializing, taking care of themselves)?
- How long lasting and chronic are the negative feelings?
- To what extent are they repeating the same or worsening negative thoughts and fears?
- Are they maintaining connection to other people?
 - Are there adults in the network?
 - Are there positive peers in the network?
- To what extent is the young person taking realistic and productive steps to reduce stress?



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Responding

+ What youth need to know

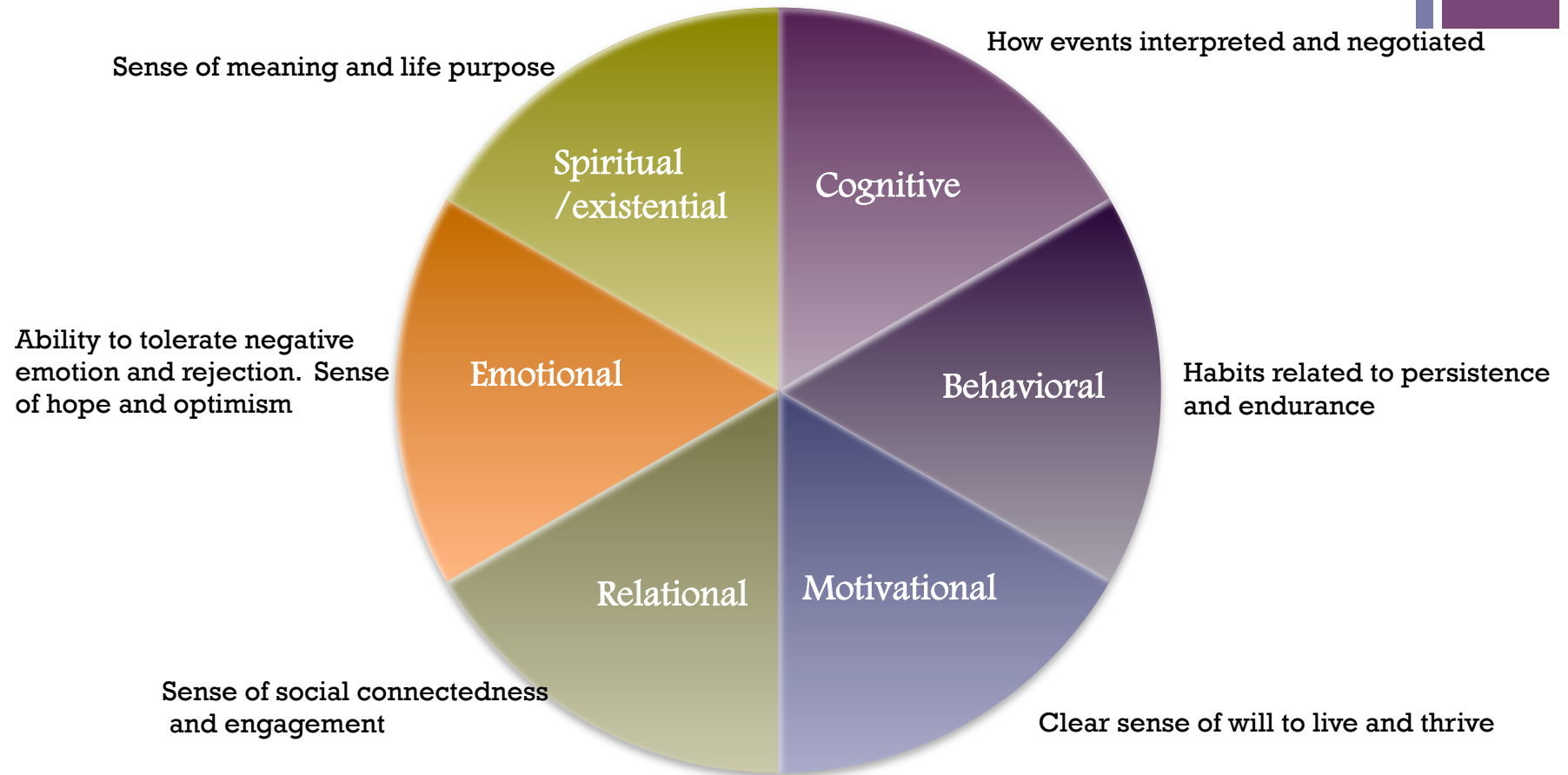


- That you and/or others are noticing and responding
- What specifically makes you/others concerned (assists in self-knowledge)
 - Details and specific examples are helpful
 - Trends over time (if you have them)
- Simple steps for reducing arousal and enhancing positive emotion
 - Understanding and navigating triggers
 - Focus on daily self-care in small ways
 - Role of structure and routine in stress reduction
 - Noticing (journal or check ins)
- Taking the long view
 - Validating the role of stress in helping us learn and grow
 - Okay to fall apart
 - Things do get better
 - Importance of seeking support (and asking yourself what you need)

+ What you need to know and do

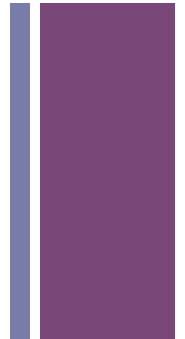
- ❑ Gauge your level of your concern
- ❑ Articulate specific causes of your concern (articulate symptoms / red flags)
 - ❑ Degree of departure from “normal”
 - ❑ Trends over time
 - ❑ Depth and breadth of signs and symptoms
 - ❑ Suicide or serious self harm risk?
- ❑ Assess youth context
 - ❑ Living conditions
 - ❑ History
 - ❑ “Flavor” of peers, parents, other adults
 - ❑ Active and latent resources
- ❑ Identify others who can be engaged as part of a response / support system if level of concern high
 - ❑ Link to crisis care support if you are concerned about suicide or serious self-harm
- ❑ Focus on reducing arousal sources and building skill or mastery experiences
 - ❑ Look for opportunities for enhancing positive emotion & cognition (e.g. being useful / service, unique experiences or opportunities for engagement, soothing activities)
 - ❑ Model positive emotional regulation by clearly articulating productive observations (focus on the possible, positive, effective) and sharing stories about self or others
 - ❑ Stay connected if you can
- ❑ Take the long view
 - ❑ Validating the role of stress in helping us learn and grow
 - ❑ Okay to fall apart
 - ❑ Things do get better
 - ❑ Importance of seeking support (and asking yourself what you need)

+ Dimensions of resilience

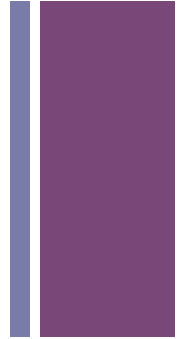


+ Resources for supporting emotional development

- <http://us.reachout.com> great web site – how to cope with difficult times - with youth stories, facts, audio and video clips
- <http://lift.nylc.org> interactive service learning web site
- The Art of Loving Well. Teacher's Guide. A character education curriculum from England – using poetry, fairy tales etc to explore relationships <http://www.famyouth.org.uk/alw/aolwhome.php>
- Guide to healthy adolescent development:
<http://www.jhsph.edu/bin/s/e/Interactive%20Guide.pdf>
- social and emotional learning toolkit:
http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/sel/
- Dibble Institute www.dibbleinstitute.org or www.BuildingRelationshipSkills.org (this site include free samples and resources)



+ Resources (con't)



Mindfulness and contemplation skills

- Moment meditations (can be brief and focused on using any sense)
- Self-inquiry and reflection
- Positive and negative trigger logs

Check out:

- ➔ <http://www.gestaltreview.com/Portals/0/GR1201Hooker&Fodor.pdf>
- ➔ <http://joyfullyrejoycing.com/changing%20parenting/mindfulparentingzinn.html>
- ➔ <http://www.qesn.meq.gouv.qc.ca/Portfolio/eng/theory-R.htm>
- ➔ <http://us.reachout.com> great web site – how to cope with difficult times - with youth stories, facts, audio and video clips

Creative outlets (multisensory)

- You tube creation
- Vision boards
- Autobiography

Check out:

- ➔ <http://www.makeavisionboard.com/vision-board-gratitude-board-for-kids.html>