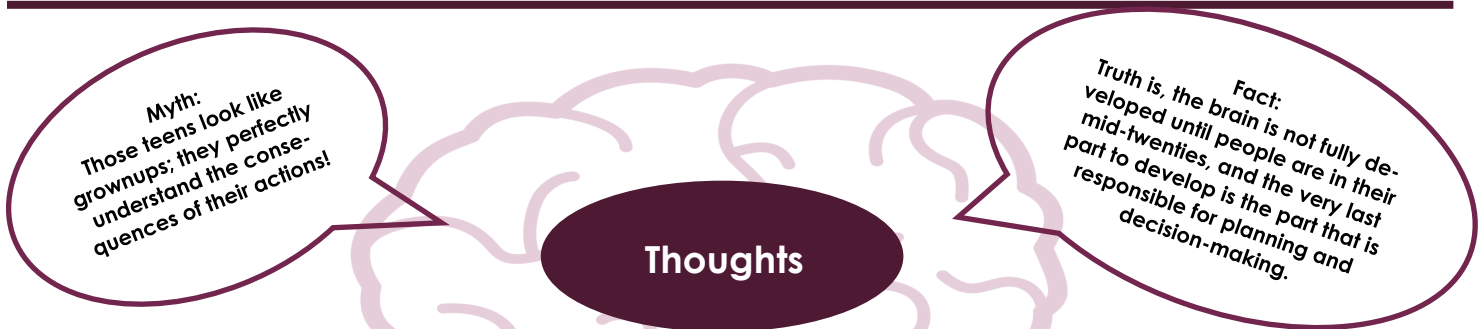


Cognitive Health

The teenage brain is changing and growing fast. These changes help your teen learn new skills and make decisions. Sometimes, how well a teen adapts to the changes can affect different areas of their lives.



During adolescence, teens learn to think. This ability helps them figure out how they learn best and helps them find ways to improve this skill. They are also more likely to make decisions based on emotion than logic. They can often be impulsive and can change their mind often.

Emotions

How teens think, reason and understand can be very dramatic, and are known for:

- being emotional
- jumping to conclusions
- being self-focused
- being dramatic

Changing emotions are completely normal. Emotions influence how teens feel about themselves, their interests and who they are. Understanding these emotional changes can be one of the most difficult parts of parenting a teen.

Sexuality

Teens try to get comfortable with their changing bodies as best they can. Healthy sexual development is a combination of:

- sexual physical changes - how they affect individuality
- sexual behaviors
- positive sexual identity – emotional and sexual attraction

Teens begin to make choices on what sexual activities they want to engage in, if any, and if they are ready. This might sound scary as a parent, but the best approach is to start talking about sexuality early and often.

Relationships

Connections with family members and people outside of the family are very important to teens. They learn to form relationships, examine their experiences and talk about their emotions. Because their brain is not fully developed yet, teens find it hard to process their relationships. Common issues often seen in this area are:

- peer pressure
- learning about their interests
- dating patterns
- group friendships

Where they live, attend school and the relationships they observe also influences the direction of your teen's growth.

Possible areas for discussion:

- Learning styles & disabilities
- School & job success
- Trauma
- Mental health disorders
- Planning for the future



