

# Adolescent Psychosocial Development

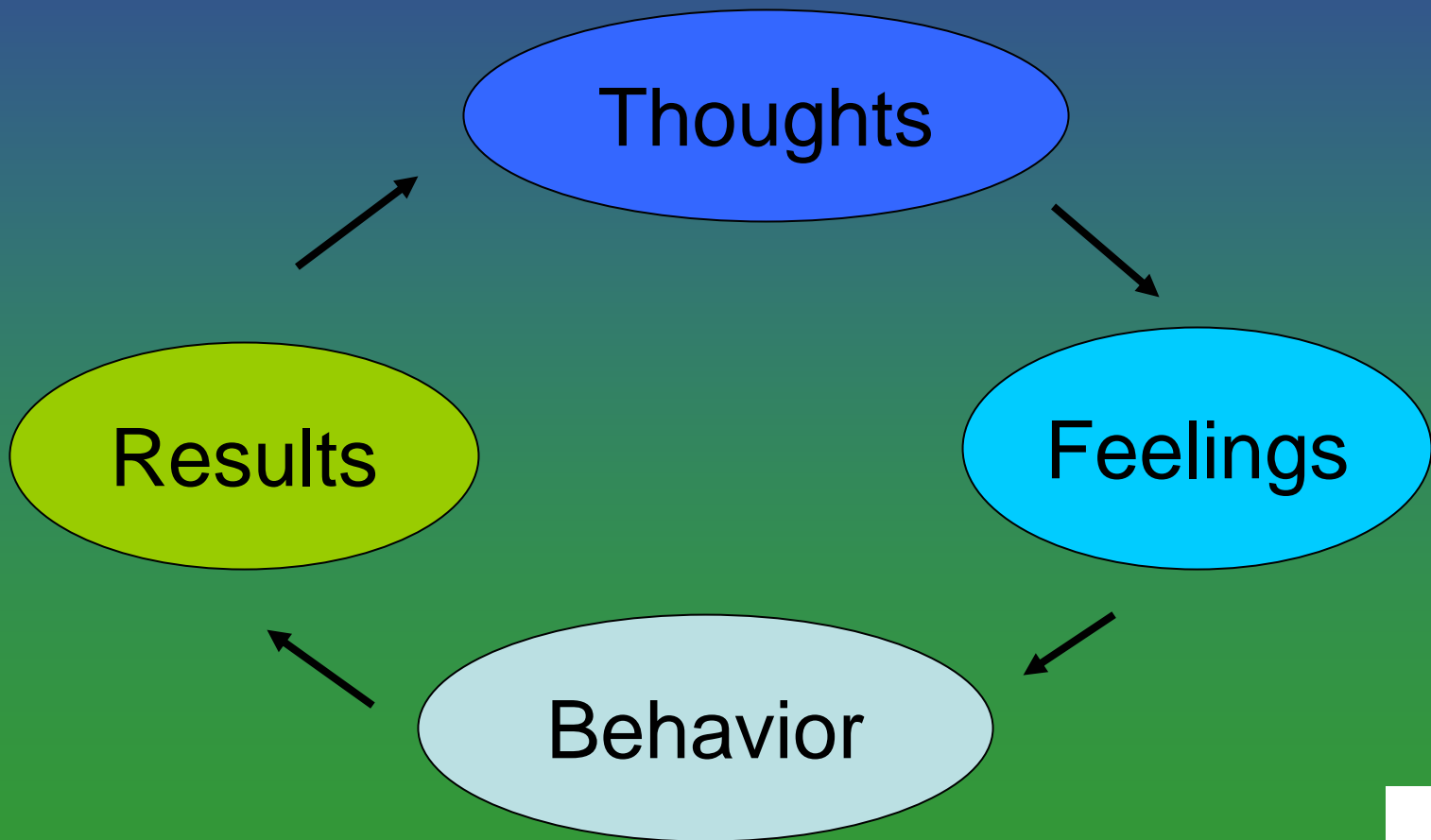
## Module 2



# Resiliency as a Prevention Strategy



# Thought Cycle



# Resiliency

- **Definition**
  - The capacity for healthy development and successful learning in spite of challenges.
  - 15 year old Shawn's definition:
    - “Resiliency is about bouncing back from problems and stuff with power and more smarts.”



# Resiliency-Your Role

- **You can strengthen resiliency in the teens you work with**
- **Resiliency is built by focusing on teens' positive qualities/talents**
- **Resiliency is built through skill development**
- **Resiliency is strengthened through positive reinforcement**



# Core Messages of Resilience Research

## Core Message #1

Resilience is a capacity all youth have for healthy development and successful learning.



# Core Messages of Resilience Research

## Core Message #2

Certain personal strengths are associated with healthy development and successful learning.

### Personal Strengths

- *Social Competence: relationship skills*
- *Autonomy: sense of self/identity*
- *Problem-Solving Skills*
- *Sense of Purpose and Future*



# Core Messages of Resilience Research

## Core Message #3

Certain characteristics of families, schools, and communities are associated with developing personal strengths

Characteristics = Environmental Protective Factors

- *Caring Relationships*
- *High Expectations*
- *Opportunities for Participation*

(Youth in My Life – Add ‘Me’)



# Core Messages of Resilience Research

## Core Message #4

Changing the life trajectories of youth from risk to resilience starts with changing the beliefs of the adults in their families, schools, and communities.

Communicate to youth their ability to:

- *Succeed in life*
- *To be happy*
- *To be proud of themselves*



# **Resilience Research Concludes**

**70% of at-risk teens grow into thriving adults**



# Youth Development and Resiliency

- **Adults are an essential part of teen's environmental protective factors**
- **Resilience strengths are critical survival skills**
- **Not looking to “fix” teen behavior**
- **Success is seen with developmental vs. topic-based behavioral programs**
- **Behavioral programs don't work over the long run**



# Youth Development Perspective

- **Teens express characteristics or skills that they have had a chance to develop**
- **The characteristic must be valued and modeled within teen's community**
- **Create a climate where desired characteristics are the norm, even if only at your site.**
- **This is the youth development approach to prevention and intervention.**



# Problem-solving and Decision-making

- **To build problem solving skills, give teens the chance to make conscious decisions about the things that they care about.**
- **Teens care about their relationships**



# Quote

**“It is widely understood that people learn by example. Adults who are respectful of youth are not just modeling a skill or behavior; they are meeting the emotional needs of those youth, thereby helping to create the psychological conditions for youth to treat others respectfully.”**

**-- Alfie Kohn**

**What does this mean for you?**



# Developmental Assets

- Review Handout -

- **40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents**

Source: [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

- **Pull out ‘Youth in my Life’ handout**
  - Identify current assets
  - Identify assets to develop



# Adolescent Psychosocial Development

## Some Theory to Work With

- **Adolescent Cognitive Development**
- **Adolescent Social Development and Socialization**



# Internal Influences on Teen Relationships

## *Adolescent Cognitive Development*



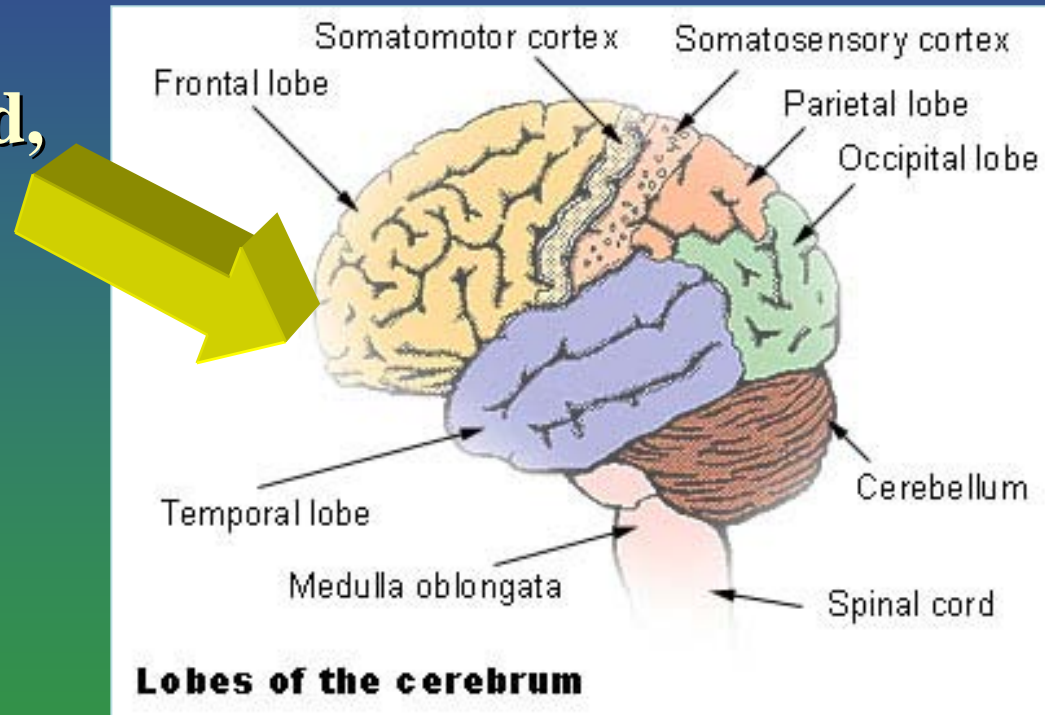
# Adolescent Cognitive Development

- **Different areas of the brain mature at different rates**
- **The pre-frontal cortex is the last part of the adolescent brain to mature**



# Adolescent Cognitive Development

- The prefrontal cortex, right above the forehead, is the brain area that regulates “executive functions” such as:
  - planning
  - setting priorities
  - organizing thoughts
  - suppressing impulses
  - weighing consequences of one’s actions



# Adolescent Cognitive Development

- **Increased hormones during puberty contribute to excitability in teens by affecting the brain's emotional center**
- **Hormones also activate the ability for intense feelings in teens**
- **Decision-making occurs in the emotional center for most teens until maturation**



# Adolescent Cognitive Development

- **The hormone-brain relationship contributes to increased risk-taking at a time when the center of the brain that puts on the brakes is still under construction.**



# External Influences on Teen Relationships

Social Development and  
Socialization



# Adolescent Social Development

- One of the main social developmental tasks of adolescence is the establishment of their own identity – to separate from their family.
- Teens create and maintain friendships and intimate relationships with less adult supervision



# Social Development and Relationship Tasks

- **Many teens have trouble navigating their relationships because they have not developed enough, either:**

- **biologically (brain)**
- **emotionally (maturity) or**
- **socially (self-identity vs. peer pressure)**

**to master necessary relationship tasks or skills.**



# Emotional Maturity

- **Emotional maturity influences the ability to navigate power and control dynamics within a relationship.**
  - **For the abused individual, lack of emotional maturity means they cannot create safe boundaries in their relationship**
  - **For the abuser, lack of emotional maturity can dictate the extent to which they use force, intimidation or assault as a way to feel powerful or secure in a relationship.**



# **Social Development and Socialization**

- **Socialization influences how teens create and sustain healthy friendships and intimate relationships**

## **Includes:**

- **Messages received from family and friends**
- **Communication and negotiation skills**
- **Sense of self (self-identity)**
- **Peer pressure**



# Messages

## From Who

- Parents
- Siblings
- Friends
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Health professionals
- Other trusted adults

## About

- Girlfriends
- Boyfriends
- Sex
- How to maintain personal safety
- What is appropriate dating behavior
  - For different ages
- How to have a healthy relationship
- Personal boundaries



# **Influence of Socialization on Adolescent Development**

- **Teens are influenced by family, peers, school, community and cultural norms**
- **Teens are influenced by personal experiences**
  - **Personal history of abusive relationships can contribute to dysfunctional relationships being viewed as the norm**



# Socialization Summary

- **Adults have a powerful influence on adolescent attitudes, beliefs and behaviors about relationships.**
- **In our exercise, you demonstrated how the adults that you interacted with influenced you.**
- **This influence is still with you whether they were aware of their influence or not.**
- **Likewise, you also can influence the teens that you work with.**



# Adolescent Development Wrap-up

- **Different aspects of family, society and culture influence how an adolescent will learn how to be in a relationship.**
- **Adults have largely shaped this reality; adults have a responsibility to show teens how to be healthy in relationships.**

