

Supporting your teenager through difficult things

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What we will be looking at

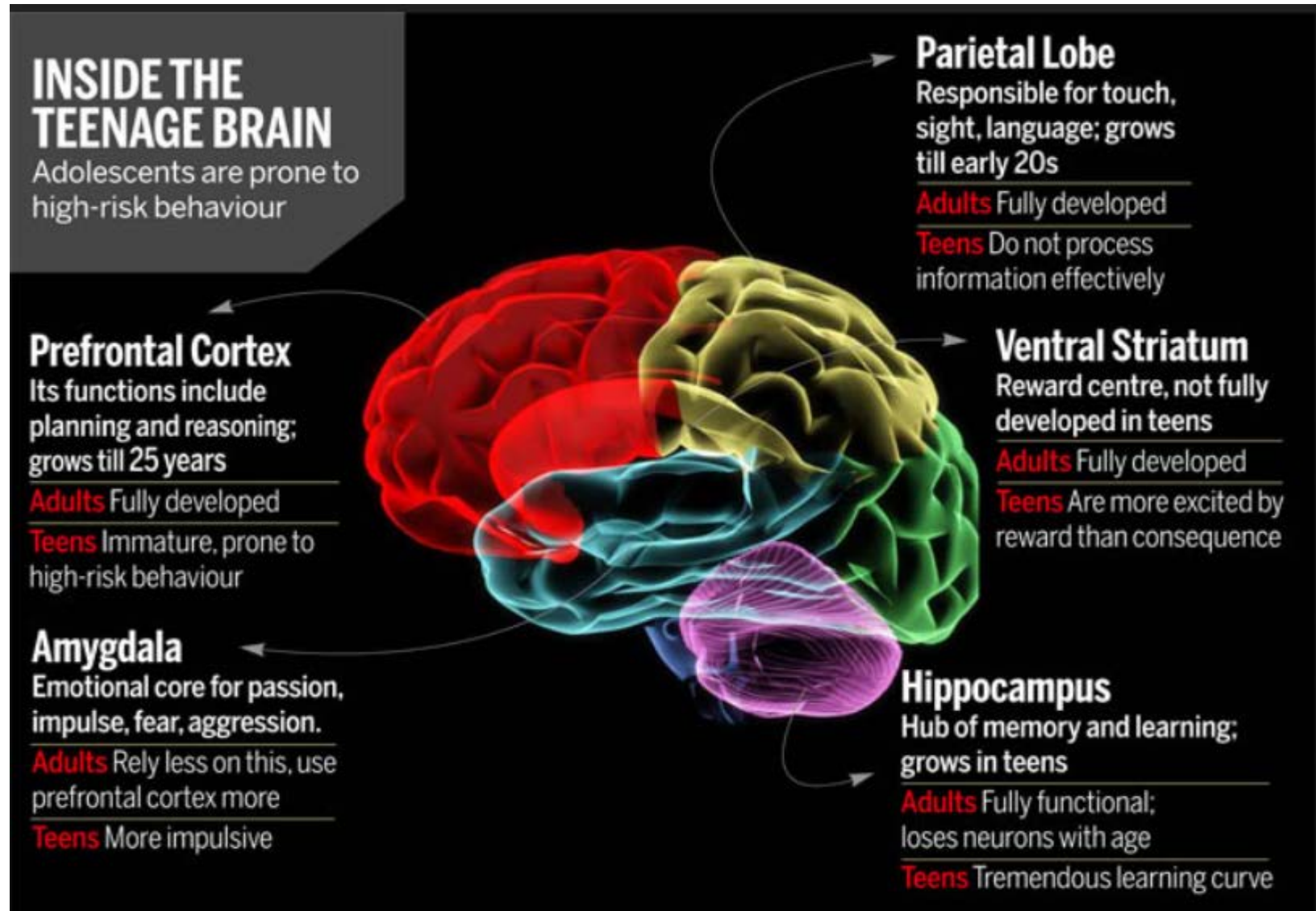
- How the teenage brain works
- Common problems teens are facing
- How to support your child
- Getting help for yourself



They're not just being awkward

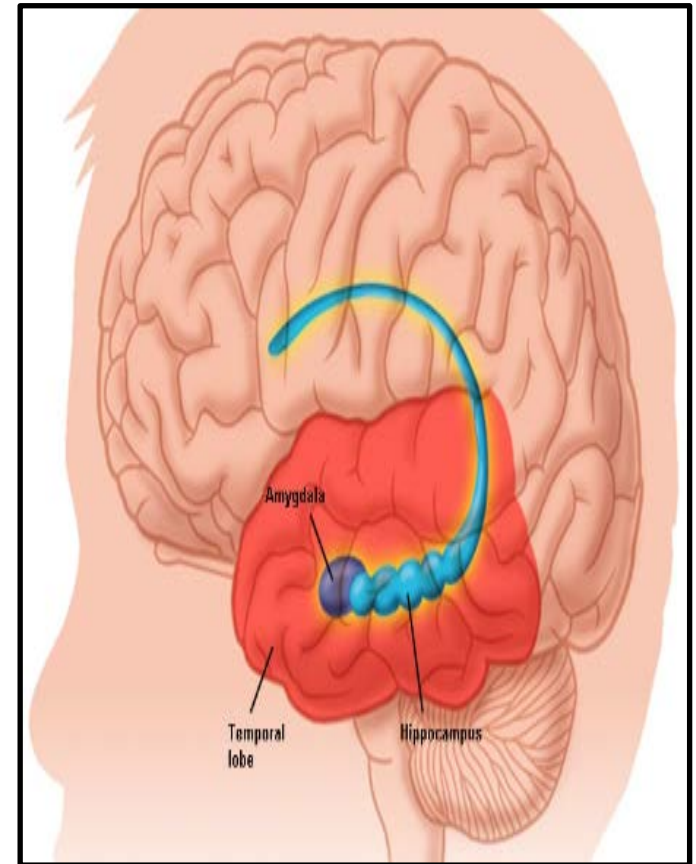
- The teenage brain is not fully wired up
- All behaviours are forms of communication
- Your own emotional reaction is important
- People of all ages will do anything to avoid anxiety, often without realising it
- Biologically, we are still a prey animal

A work in progress



The amygdala – part of your “lizard brain”

- Linked to survival responses – “fright, flight, freeze, food and fornication”
- Triggers an uncontrollable and unthinking physiological response
- Can’t tell the difference between real or perceived threats



So you see ...



But the amygdala sees...



**But...brain
functions are not
fully mature**

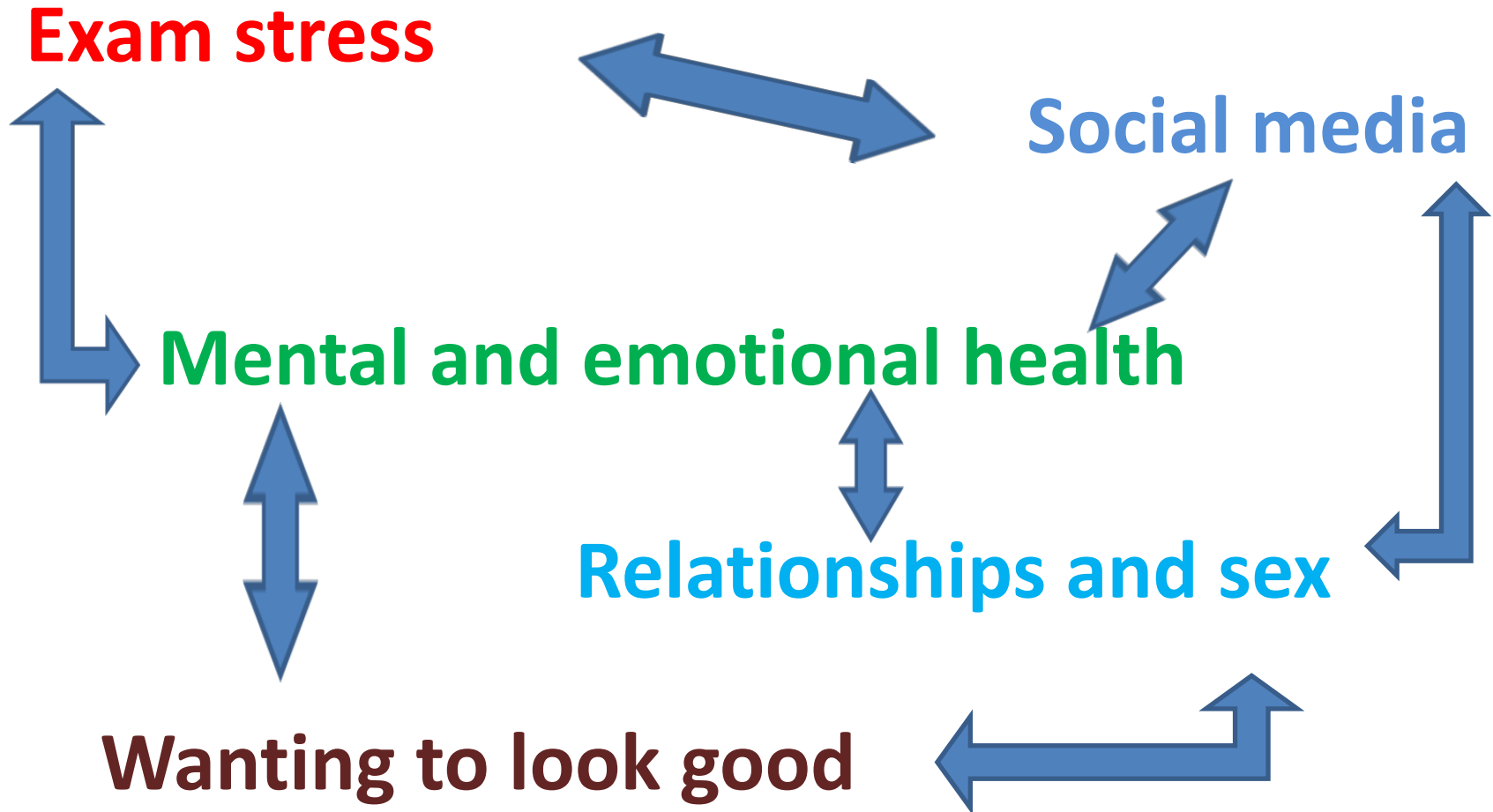
**Bodies are
physically
adult and
hormones are
driving sexual
behaviour**

**Technology
allows new
forms of
behaviour and
risk-taking**

**Social and academic
demands affect behaviour**



Common problems teens face



Let's examine these in turn....

Wanting to look good

- 35% of binge eaters and 15% of people with anorexia are male

Body image 'a problem for boys', says advertising think tank

- 70% of 18-24 year olds would consider cosmetic surgery

News > Health

Girls 'as young as nine' seeking labiaplasty on the NHS, says doctor

JESSICA MORGAN | Monday 3 July 2017 09:17 BST

- 9 out of 10 girls say they are unhappy with their bodies

Anonymous • 20-24 y/o  Northern Ireland

"Instagram easily makes girls and women feel as if their bodies aren't good enough as people add filters and edit their pictures in order for them to look 'perfect'."



Social media

**YOUNG
HEALTH
MOVE-
MENT**

RSPH



Nearly seven in 10 teens report receiving support on social media during tough or challenging times

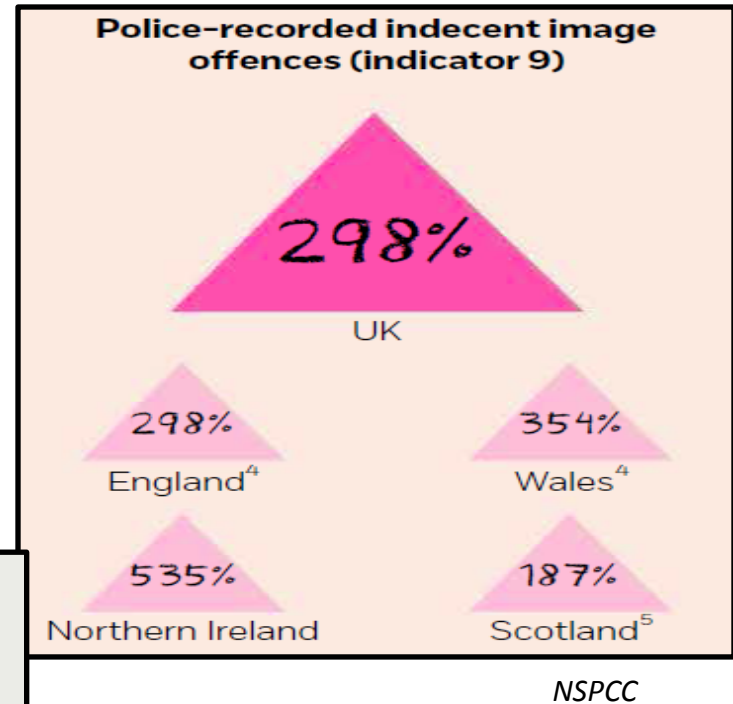
#StatusOfMind

Social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing



91% of young people who reported cyberbullying said no action was taken as a result

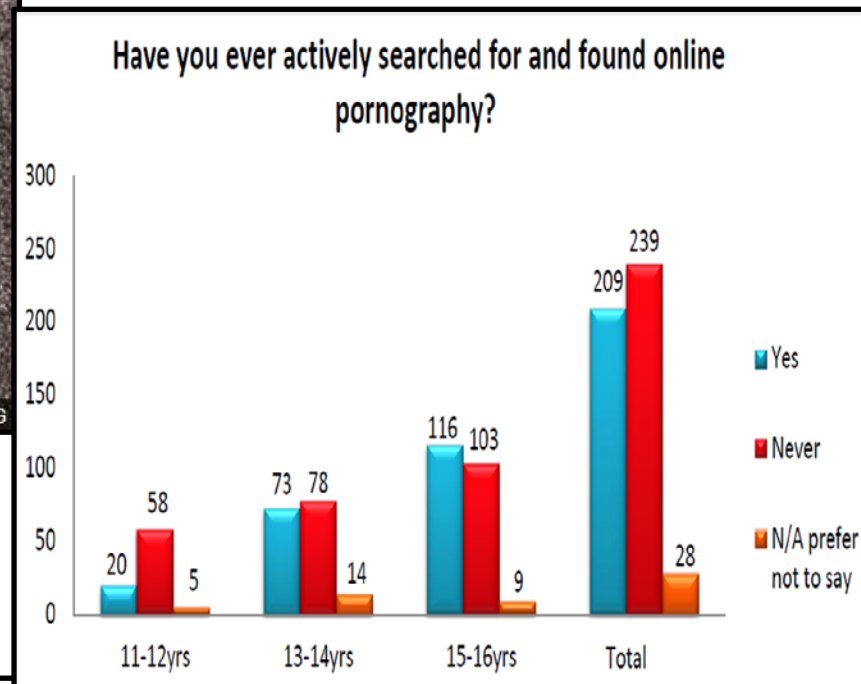
Mixed messages



Relationships

"You better learn
to answer a man
when he speaks
to you!"
@catcallsofnyc

SOPHIE SANDBERG



**40% of LGBT+ people face abuse,
government survey says**

Mental and emotional health



- 1 in 6 young people will experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives
- 80 000 children and young people have severe depression

Exam stress

Exams

Stress and serious anxiety: how the new GCSE is affecting mental health

Guardian, May 2018

Childline delivered 3,135 counselling sessions on exam stress in 2016/17 – a rise of 11% over the past 2 years.

NSPCC

**SATs stress hits children aged just 10:
Young struggling to sleep and turning
to junk food as fears grow about over-
testing**

Daily Mail, 2015

Ideas for supporting your teenager

Using the self-talk cycle

Someone we believe gives us information about ourselves

This becomes our “truth”, stored subconsciously

We cannot bear the unconscious anxiety when we move away from our “truth”

We go out of our way to make things “true” again

- “Your room is always messy.”
- Mum says I’m a messy person. Mum must be right.
- Messy people don’t put their pants in the laundry basket.
- My room is a mess. Pants all over the place.
- See? Mum was right!

- “You’re usually much tidier than this.”
- Mum says I’m a tidy person. Mum must be right.
- Tidy people put their pants in the laundry basket.
- My room’s tidy again. Everything’s been put away.
- See? Mum was right!

Creating a new truth – tricking the lizard



- You're always rude to your mother → • You are normally such a considerate person
- You are spiteful to exclude Tom from the WhatsApp group → • You know that bullying is not okay. I see you as a kind person
- Why is your homework always messy? → • Look how neat your work can be. Being messy isn't like you

Emotional literacy

- Give them the words they need to tell you about their feelings
- Be honest about your own emotions
- Try to remember that what is trivial to you may be huge to them
- Don't sweat the small stuff – then they'll know they can tell you about the big stuff



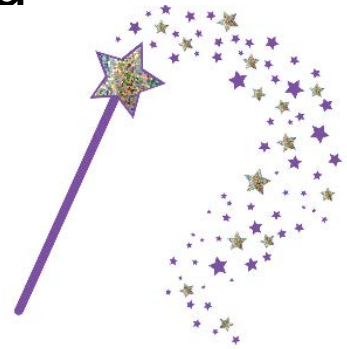
Make it okay to talk

- Avoid phrases like “man up” or “don’t be a girl”
- Try to stay calm, however hard it may feel
- Know where to go for help and support



Solution-focussed thinking

- “If you had a magic wand, what would you do...?”
- Identify small, practical steps to take
- The steps won’t remove the problem, but will help alleviate the “symptomatic” behaviours or worries
- Use a thermometer scale to measure change

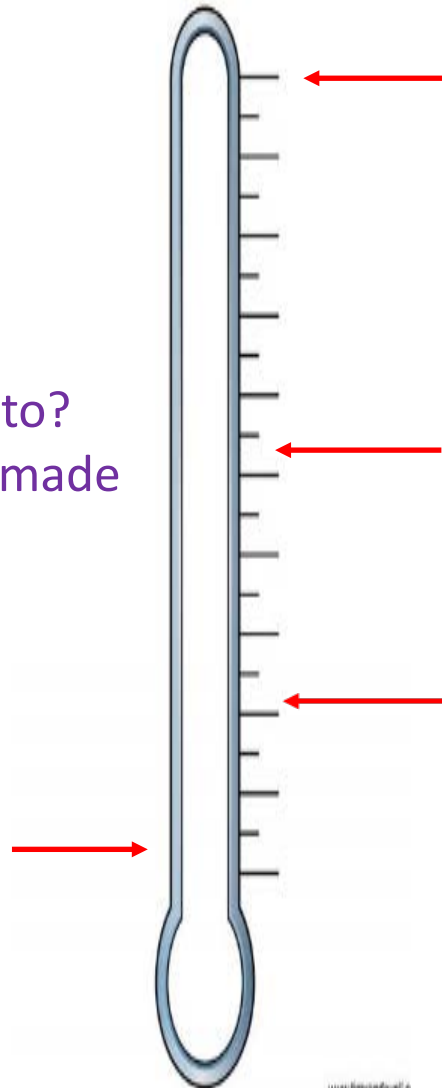


GOAL!

Conversations to have:

- Where are you today?
- Where do you want to get to?
- How will you know you've made it?

0 – the problem
(I can't cope with revision)



10 - The day after the magic wand has worked
(I was calm during the exam)

5 – I do an hour's revision without giving up

3 – I agree a revision plan with my dad – he promises not to nag if I stick to it

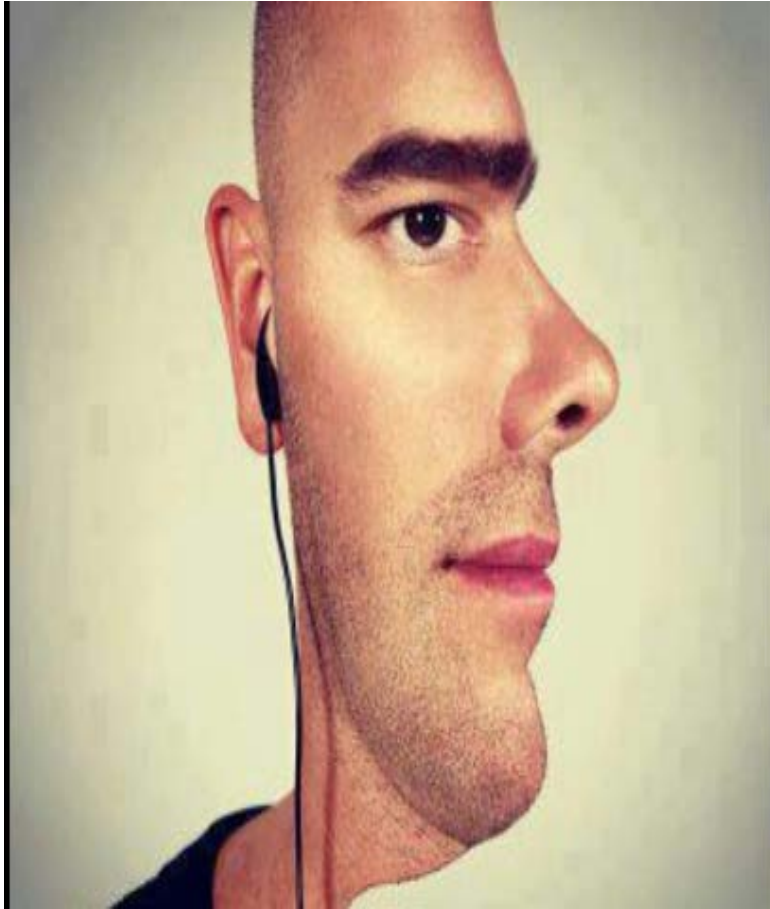
(With thanks to Brief Solutions)

Exam pressure

- Help to make realistic revision plans
- Build in leisure and relaxation time – this is just as important as reading
- Leave room for dreams – sometimes they come true



A sense of perspective



Be ready to explore other options – clearing, a different course, an apprenticeship

Help them identify all their strengths, not just the academic ones

Value all their aspirations

Relationship warning signs

- Being isolated from friends and family
- “You don’t love me, otherwise you would...”
- Being told what to wear, where to go, with whom
- Having phones, texts and emails checked
- Physical or verbal abuse
- Pressure to send nude images

Help with online lives

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents



- <https://www.childnet.com/resources/how-to-make-a-report>



- <https://www.iwf.org.uk/>



Where to get more help



Support and advice for parents on talking to their children about mental health

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>



Support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and their families

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>



Resources for adults about young people's mental health

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/>



Information and support on sex and relationships

<https://www.brook.org.uk/>



Support for young people with mental health problems

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>



Information and help for young people affected by eating disorders

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>



Advice on staying safe online, including a report function for use in cases where a young person has been a victim of internet abuse

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>



Support for people with learning disabilities

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/>

A final thought

INSIDE EACH OF US ARE TWO WOLVES

ONE IS EVIL

IT IS ANGER
ENVY SORROW
REGRET GREED
ARROGANCE
SELF PITY
GUILT
RESENTMENT
INFERIORITY
LIES
FALSE PRIDE
SUPERIORITY
AND EGO



ONE IS GOOD

IT IS JOY
PEACE LOVE
HOPE
SERENITY
HUMILITY
KINDNESS
BENEVOLENCE
EMPATHY
GENEROSITY
TRUTH
COMPASSION
AND FAITH

WHICH WOLF WINS? THE ONE YOU FEED MOST

