



SOUTHERN AFRICAN HIV CLINICIANS SOCIETY

PrEP for Adolescents



What is Adolescence?

Adolescence begins with biological maturation (puberty) when young people must accomplish developmental tasks and develop a sense of personal identity. It ends when young people achieve self-sufficient adulthood as defined by society.



"Don't call me a teenager. From now on, I want to be referred to as a pre-adult."



Definitions

- **Adolescents** are persons between ages of 10–19
- **Youth** between the ages of 15–24
- **Young people** refers to this broader age band of 10–24 years (UNAIDS 2013)
- Also defined within the cultural context of individual countries. The SA national youth policy 2009-2014 defines youth as any person between the ages of 14 to 35



Adolescence is

A period marked by complex changes, such as:

- Rapid physical growth
- Rise of reproductive sexuality
- New social roles
- Growth in thinking, feeling and morals
- School transitions
- Risk taking and experimentation



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Risk / Protective Factors

Risk factors:

- peer pressure
- sexual coercion
- transactional sex
- age-disparate relationships
- teenage pregnancy
- physiological vulnerability
- barriers to using health services
- dropping out of school
- being an orphan or in a child-headed household

Protective factors:

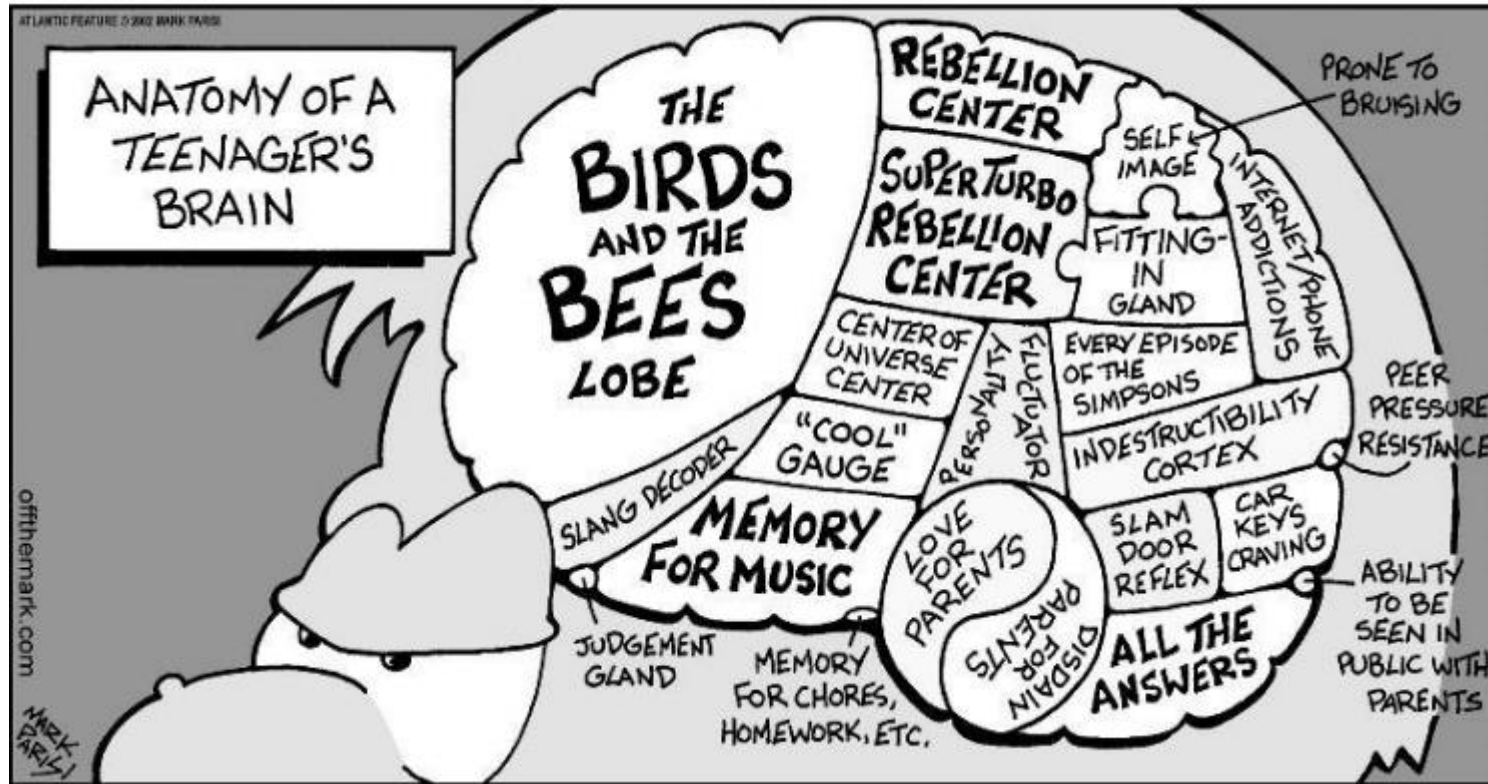
- youth-friendly services
- positive role models
- guidance from and engagement with parents
- trusted adults
- staying in school education



Adolescent Brain

off the mark.com

by Mark Parisi



Risk / Protective Factors

- Adolescents are not a homogenous group
 - Age phases and maturation are significant (different needs for 13-year-old, 16-year-old, 19-year-old)
 - May be part of other key populations which adds additional layers of vulnerability - adolescent sex workers; adolescent MSM; adolescent IDU



Healthcare needs for Adolescents

- Respectful, non-judgemental, patient care
- Very important to listen
- Screening for STIs, TB, contraception, other NCD needs
- Support to use contraception and protection against HIV
- Frequent HIV testing (potentially every 3 months)



Major challenges for Adolescents

- Living with HIV
- Stigma
- Disclosure vs. non-disclosure
- Adherence
- Reproductive health and sexuality
- Mental health
- Transition to adulthood



Food for thought....

Stigma and discrimination

- What are some of the ways adolescents are stigmatised and discriminated against?
- How does this affect their ability to seek healthcare?
- Think about your own reaction when an adolescent is your patient.
- How can HCWs make adolescents feel more at ease in the clinic?



Adolescents in care

- What would you do if an adolescent girl walked into your clinic today?
- What advice would you give her?
- What might she need to prevent HIV?
- Would you offer her PrEP?

