

The Power of Parents and Caregivers!

What are some of the things we have done over the years to protect our children's brains?

We have protected our children's brains by..



The ABCs of Safer Sleep



Always sleep
your baby...



...on their
back...



...in a clear cot or
sleep space.

(Free of bumpers, toys, pillows and loose bedding)



And
more!

SCITUATE
FACTS

The Power of Parents and Caregivers!

Our children have grown and changed so much, and yet our focus is the same: their health and wellbeing, including the protection of their brain!

THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

A SECOND WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

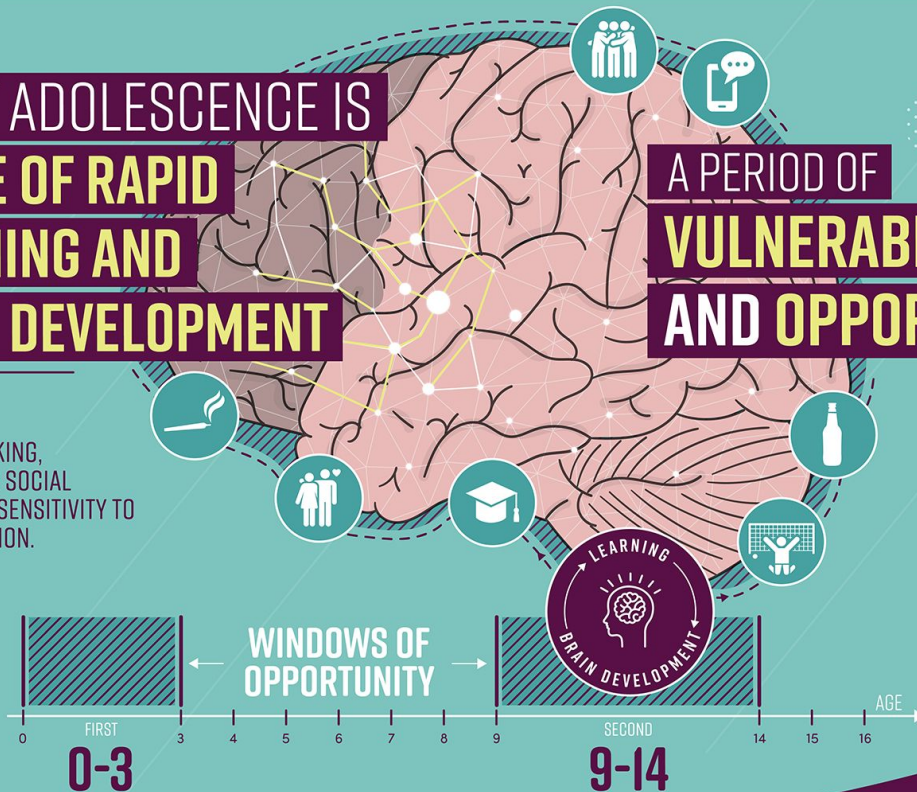
Now what are we trying to protect in adolescence?

EARLY ADOLESCENCE IS
A TIME OF RAPID
LEARNING AND
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

THESE INCLUDE INCREASES IN SENSATION-SEEKING, MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL RELATIONS AND SENSITIVITY TO SOCIAL EVALUATION.

A PERIOD OF
VULNERABILITY
AND OPPORTUNITY

PUBERTY INITIATES INTENSE LEARNING & BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, WHICH LEAD TO STRUCTURAL REMODELING AND NEURAL RE-CONFIGURATION OF KEY BRAIN SYSTEMS. IT'S A CRUCIAL TIME TO INVEST IN ADOLESCENTS.

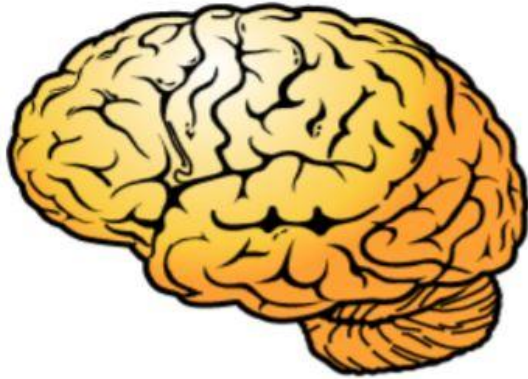


DOWNLOAD

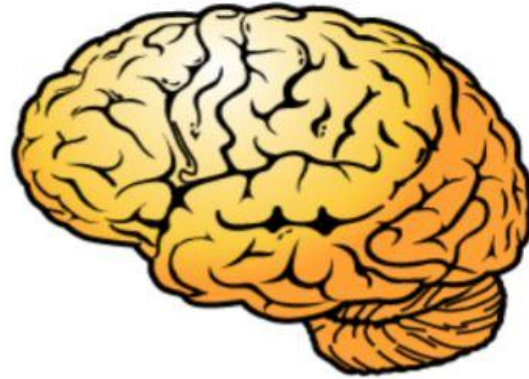
“THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN:
A SECOND WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY”

WWW.UNICEF-IRC.ORG/ADOLESCENT-BRAIN

We used to think...



Teen Brain



Adult Brain

Now we know that the brain doesn't stop developing until at least...

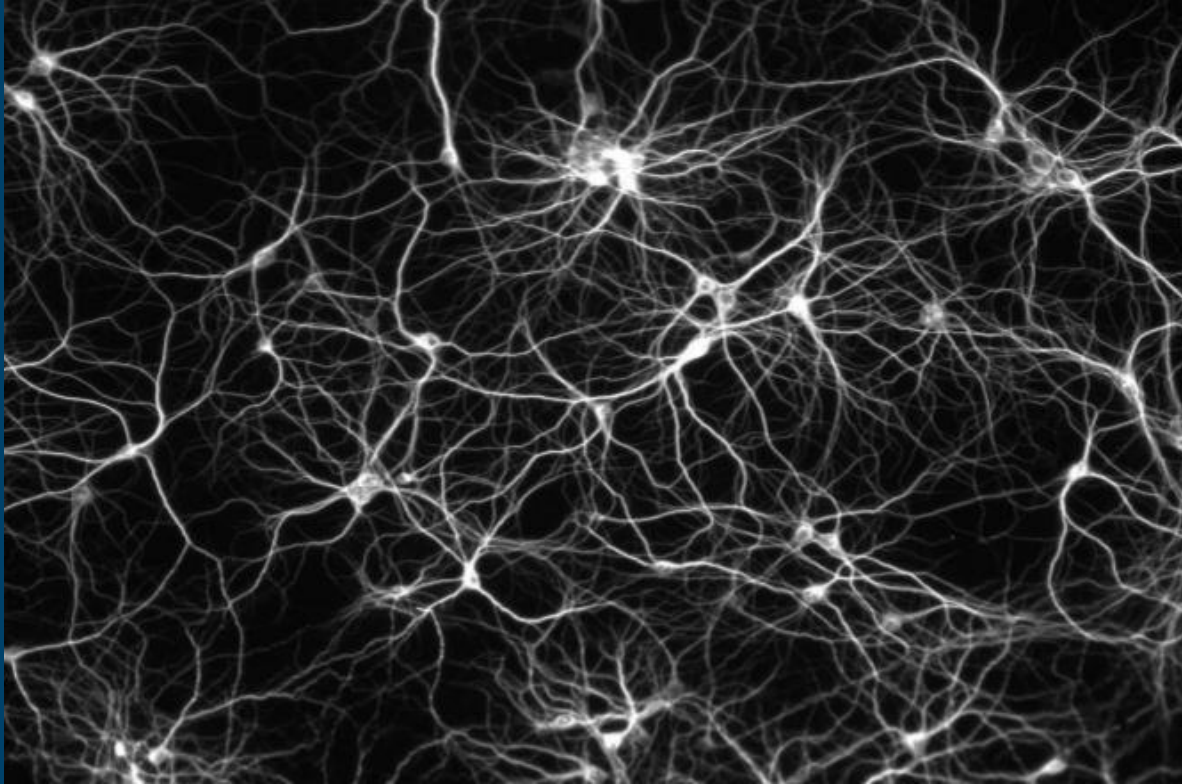
(What do you think???)

24 years old!

Age 12-24 is a critical period
for brain development!

So what is the brain up to during this critical period?

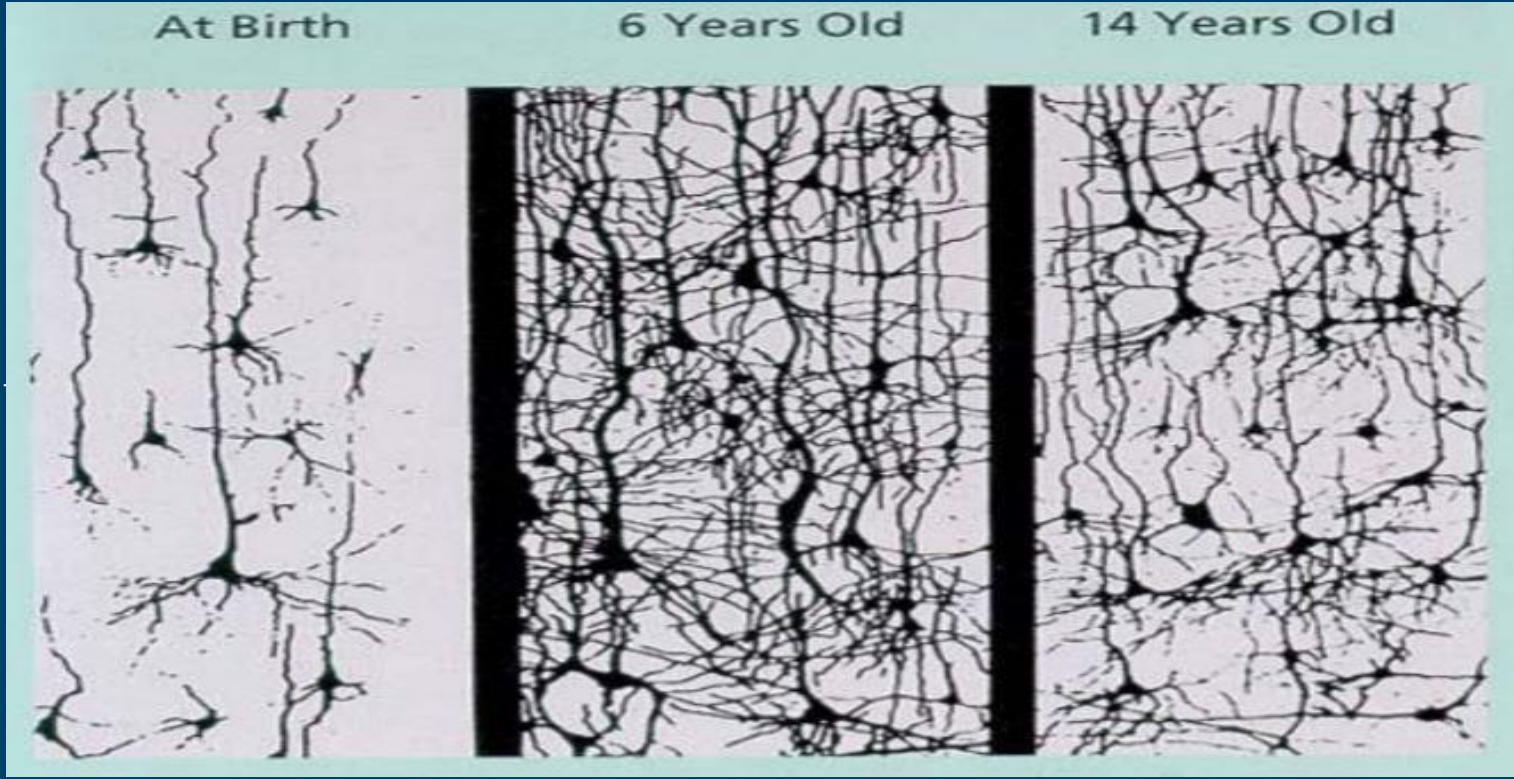
#1 Process: Pruning



**So what is
pruning??
And why is it
important?**

Pruning is also referred to as: “Use it or lose it!” This means that what teens do repetitively during this time strengthens related connections in the brain, while other connections that are no longer used fall away.

Here you see the brain building connections, strengthening connections and allowing unnecessary connections to fall away...

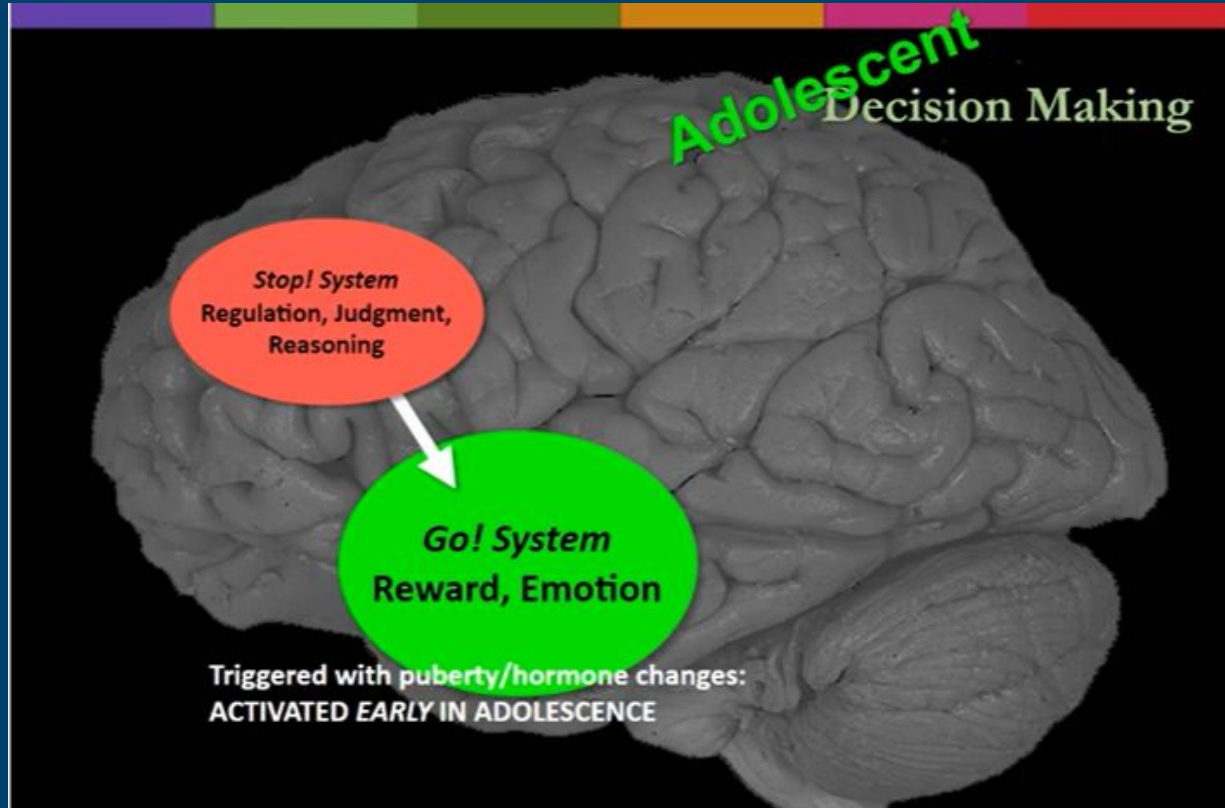


#2 Process: Myelination

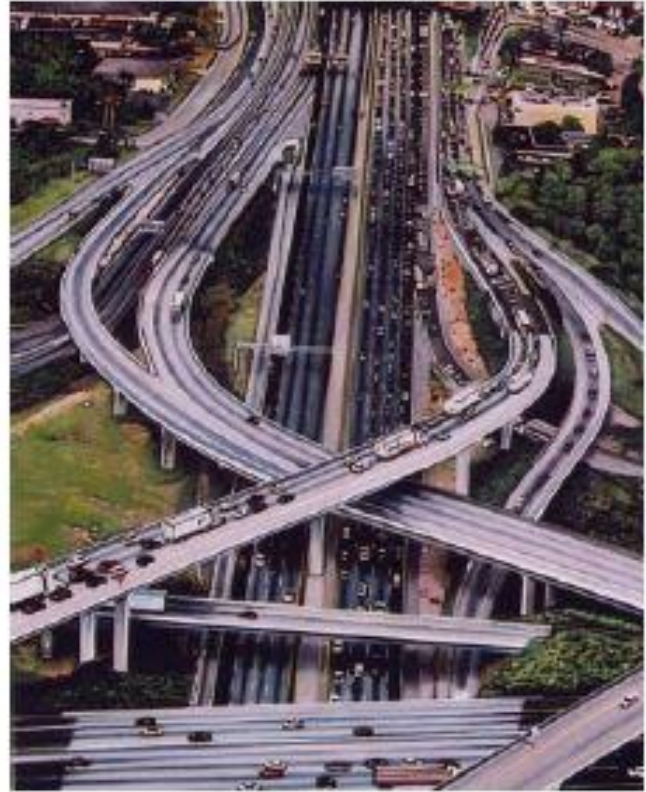
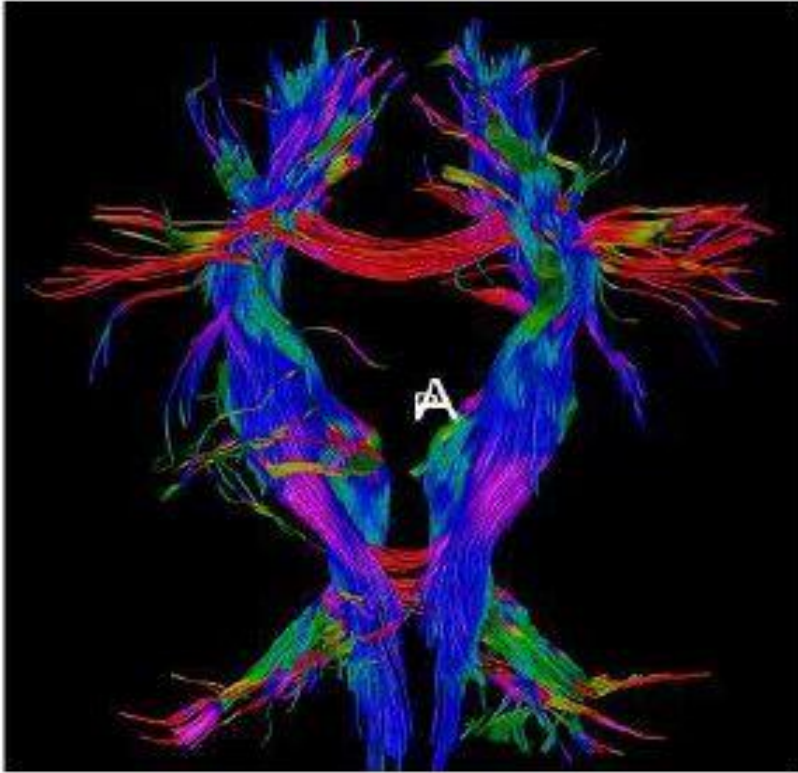
Myelination is when the connections between the brain cells are coated so information can travel across the brain 100 times faster than in the past.

Why is speed so important for the brain?

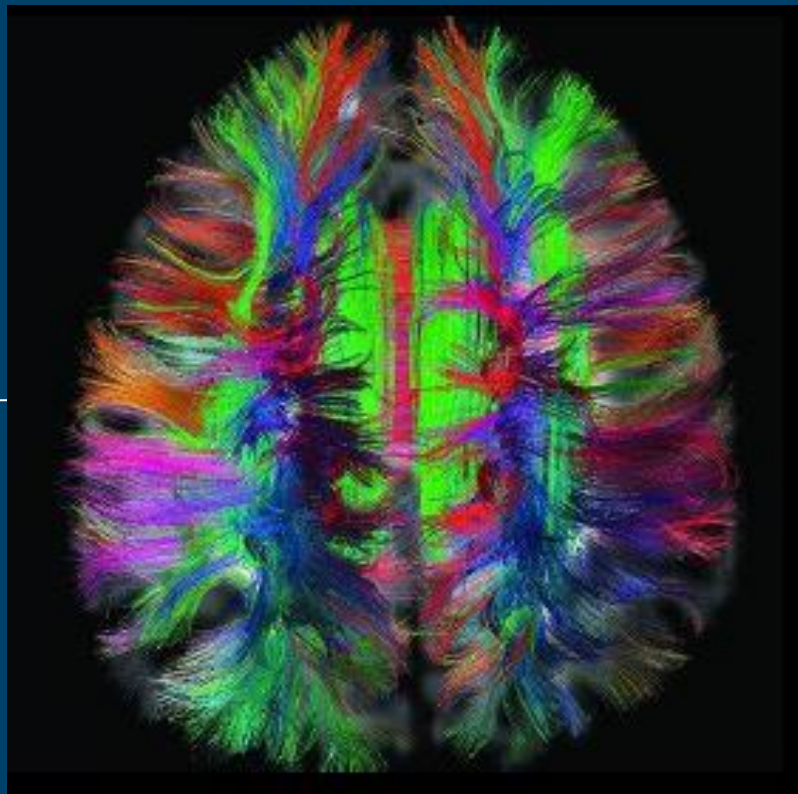
During decision making it is important for the part of the brain that exercises judgment to be able to work as quickly as the part of the brain driven by emotion and reward.



**Information moves across the brain
like cars on a highway--we want traffic flowing!
Healthy teen brain development is making it happen!**



Faster, fewer connections make for an efficient brain!



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So what can you do to support your child as they work to protect their brain during this critical time of brain development???

According to brain researcher, Dr. Sion Kim Harris:

This is the time in our child's development when it is most important for us to **express our disapproval of substance misuse through clear rules and consequences--early and often!**



Why do healthy choices matter more for teens?

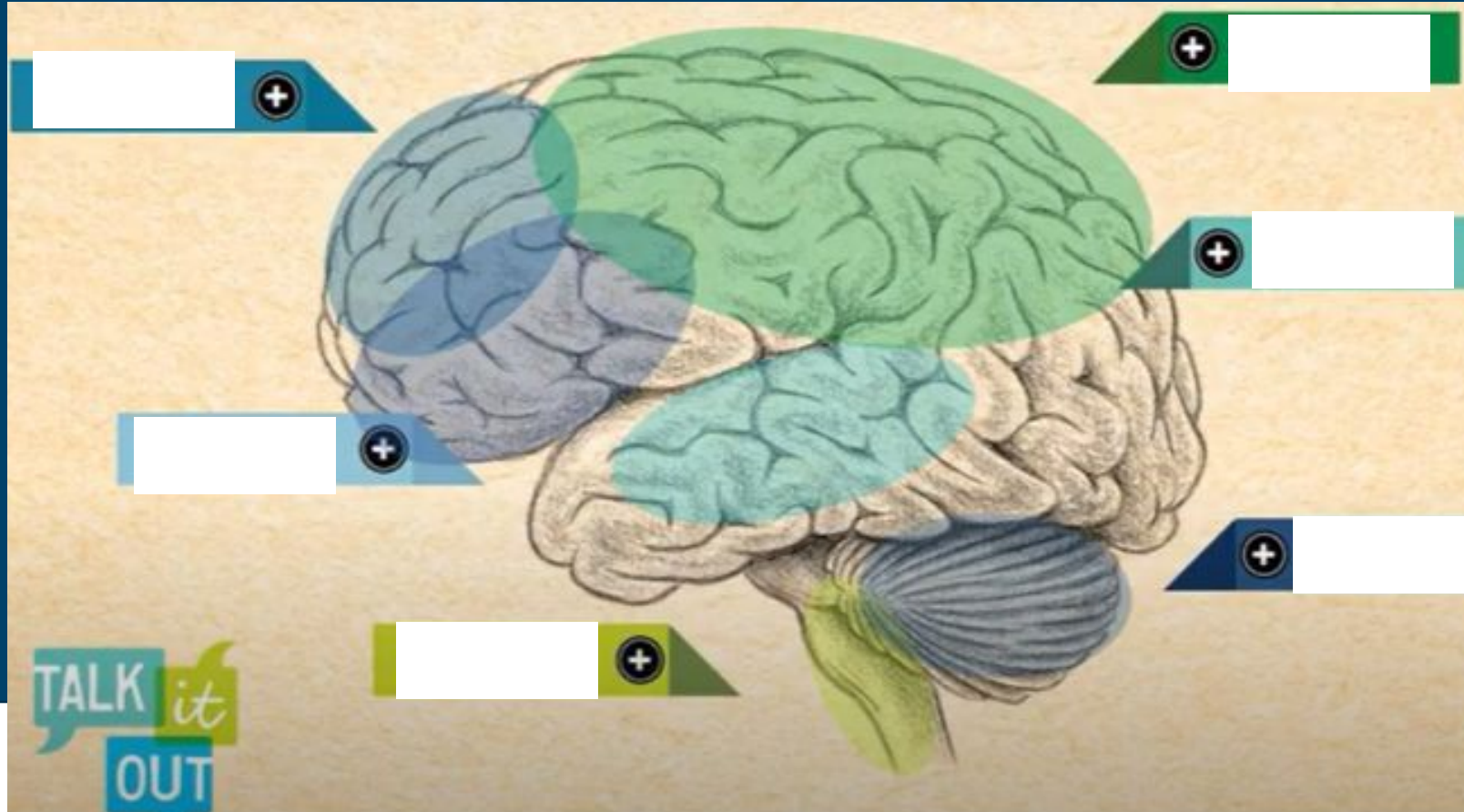
Teen brains have a stronger response to the “rewarding” chemicals in alcohol and other drugs--which makes their brains more vulnerable to addiction.

Why do healthy choices matter more for teens?

2. When it comes to alcohol, specifically, it does not have the same sedative effect on teens as it has on adults, so they tend to drink more, faster, and make more impulsive decisions when drinking.

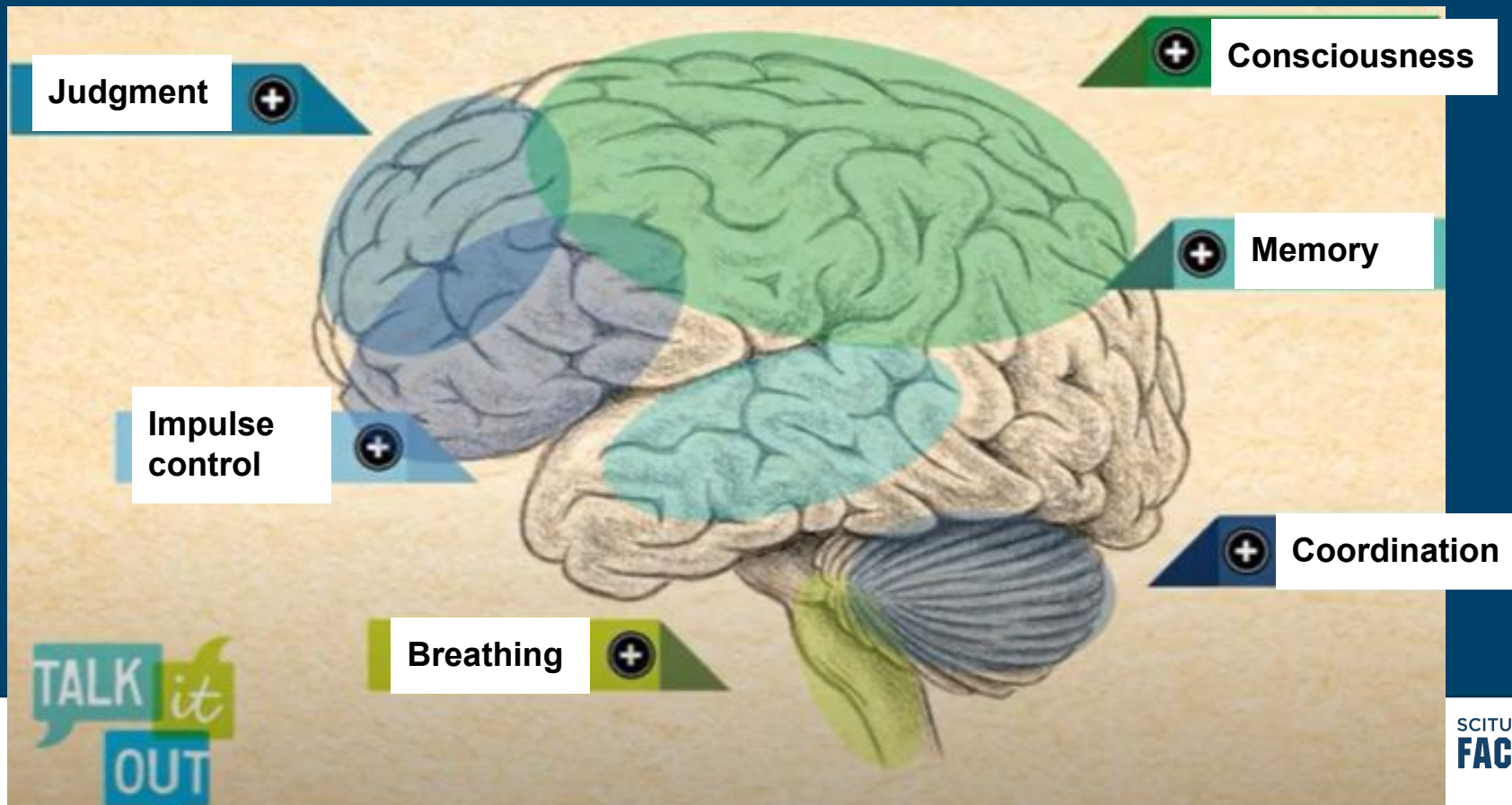
Let's dig deeper...

What parts of the brain are impacted by alcohol?



TALK *it*
OUT

Of course, you want your teen to have all of these on board and functional!



Early use of alcohol or other drugs increases the risk for addiction.

But how much?

When a 14 year old drinks alcohol, what is their risk for addiction as adults?

The Scituate Facts:

47%

But what if that 14 year old
waited until 21?

What would their risk for addiction be?

The Scituate Facts:

10%

It is worth the wait.

Best Brain Health: Just Say Delay!

We can support our children's healthy choices by establishing and enforcing rules and consequences that make clear to them that for the sake of their brain, we want them to wait.