

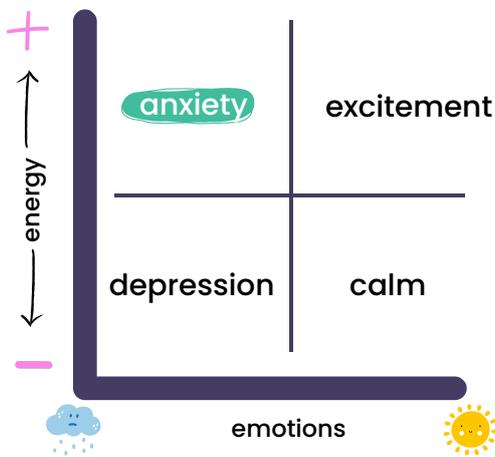
FACT SHEET

let's get real

about
teen mental health

50% of mental health issues are established by age 14, and 75% by age 24

We can intervene early to prevent mental illness and crisis



anxiety and depression combine negative emotions with high or low energy respectively

why do mental health issues appear in teens?

- the brain is undergoing a wave of major changes – and sex **hormones** directly affect brain development
- **rejection sensitivity** is at its peak due to changing attachments and relationships
- **frontal lobe** (“thinking brain”) is still developing until age 25
- genetic heritability isn't the biggest driver: 50-70% of mental health issues are **environmental**

- **25%** of contacts to Kids Helpline involve **mental health**
- **25%** involve **emotional wellbeing**
- **16%** of contacts are about **suicide**, and suicide-related contacts have more than **doubled** in the last 5 years

DID YOU KNOW...?

why teens don't tell...

parents

- preference for self-reliance
- fear of parental response
- to 'protect' their parent

teachers

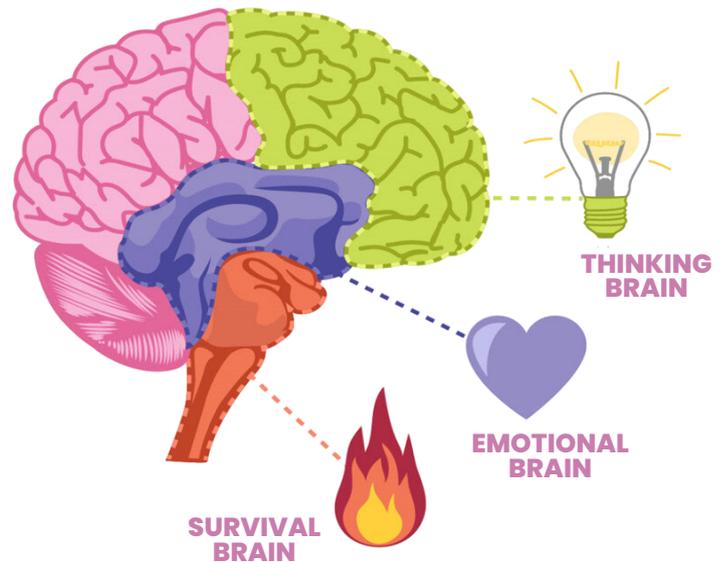
- desire to stay 'in control'
- avoiding emotional facial expressions

counsellor tip #1

it's your relationship that counts

when talking to teens about their troubles...

- be **curious & neutral** – stay calm and remember, they're in their "emotional brain"
- any next steps should be **collaborative** – ask them what they think their options are



counsellor tip #2

understand teen behaviour

- **stress & anxiety** are an expression of not having the skills needed to cope
- "survival brain" is often in **fight/flight/freeze** which manifests in conflict/avoidance/withdrawal
- **social skills & connections** can have a big impact on mental health – foster the improvement of these for better outcomes

anxiety is...



counsellor tip #3

a GP visit can be a good first step!

get the environment 'basics' right

- **lifestyle factors** – getting enough movement & sleep
- **physical health** – issues with hormones, thyroid etc.
- **nutrition** – consider diet, test for deficiencies



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