YOUNG PEOPLE
- the same but different -

Anne Deans
Youthsafe Chief Executive
TODAY

- What we now know about adolescent development
- Impact on injury risk for young people
- Supporting young people to be safer
LIFE STAGES
Different Roles & Support Needs
HUMAN BRAIN

- Still maturing until mid/late 20s
- Gender differences - males lag behind females & more prone to aggression & risk taking
- Many aspects of brain development critical to safety of young people

Research in last 15 years
ADOLESCENT BRAIN
work in progress

Andrew Fuller, Clinical Psychologist and Fellow of the Department of Psychiatry and the Development of Learning and Educational Development, University of Melbourne
GREY VS WHITE MATTER

Limbic system dominates...
- Emotions

Frontal lobes...
- High level thinking
- Planning/forethought
- Judgement
- Impulse control
- Delaying gratification

"Teenagers’ brains are not broken they’re just still under construction".  
Dr. Jay Geidd, Child Adolescent Psychiatrist
ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Affects...

- Information flow in brain
- Ability to use information to make good decisions
- Understanding nature & harm potential of hazards when perceived
- Processing critical information about dangerous situations – fewer scenarios to draw on
- Thought patterns – disorganised/prone to making errors/frustration
COMMUNICATIONS

- Interpreting written procedures
- Understanding how to perform tasks explained but not demonstrated
- Translating general instructions into specific actions eg be careful ...what does this mean?
- Relating to something not yet experienced
BEING YOUNG

- New levels of independence & responsibility
- Inexperience with new activities & alcohol/drugs

- Strong influence of peers
- Desires for experimentation & thrill seeking

- Attitudes & behaviours established early on
- Beliefs about inability to control safety
- Societal expectations of risk taking

- Melatonin (sleep hormone) produced later at night
- Fatigue due to busy lifestyles
  ... study, work & socialising
YOUNG PEOPLE & INJURY

Injury major cause of death & disability for 15 to 24 year olds...

- Males > females
- Often lifelong consequences limiting activities/choices

Young people in NSW...

- 16% of licensed drivers but 25–30% of fatalities-serious injuries
- Approx 15 injured daily at work
- 54% who play sport are injured

In Australia...

- 33% of brain injuries
  - 90% d/t trauma
  - 66% male
- 30% of spinal injuries
  - 79% d/t trauma
  - 84% male
APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

General approaches...

- Practical application of research/evidence
- Partnerships & collaboration – whole of community approach
- Multi-strategic rather than 1 size fits all
- Relate to ‘real world’ of young people
- Life skills based approach – resilience building
ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

**Consider...**

- Verbal, written & visual info mix – low reliance on literacy
- Small groups & short sessions
- Specificity & reinforcement
- Supports for parents & others
YOUNG DRIVERS

L, P1 & P2 Involvement in Recorded Crashes in NSW 2006 - 2010
Number of Months since Obtaining Licence Level

Source: RTA 2011
GRADUATED LICENSING SCHEME

Young driver fatal crashes...

51% reduction in since 2000
28% reduction since 2007

GLS accommodates characteristics of young people...

- Supervised driving (L)
- Passenger restrictions (P1 & P2)
- Vehicle restrictions (P1 & P2)
- Zero tolerance of
  - alcohol
  - speeding
  - mobile use
- Testing to control progression
- Minimum period each stage
GTO Field Officer kit & training

Managing...

- Inexperience
  
  "She wants to do more than she’s capable of”

- Risk taking
  
  “He understands the danger but still takes risks”

- Decision making & planning
  
  “He seems a bit disorganised with getting things done”

- Still developing young person
  
  “She was fine yesterday, but today keeps making mistakes”

- Communications
  
  “Sometimes I tell her 3 times and she still doesn’t get it right”
Y Pack

Managing...
- Fatigue & sleep
  "He’s often late for work"
- Alcohol & drugs
  "She always seems a bit dusty on a Monday"
- Stress & mental health
  "Lately he’s become withdrawn and uninterested"

Also fact sheets for...
- Young workers
- Parents
- Employers
SAFER SOCIALISING

Plan 2 – Introduction to planning