

# 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





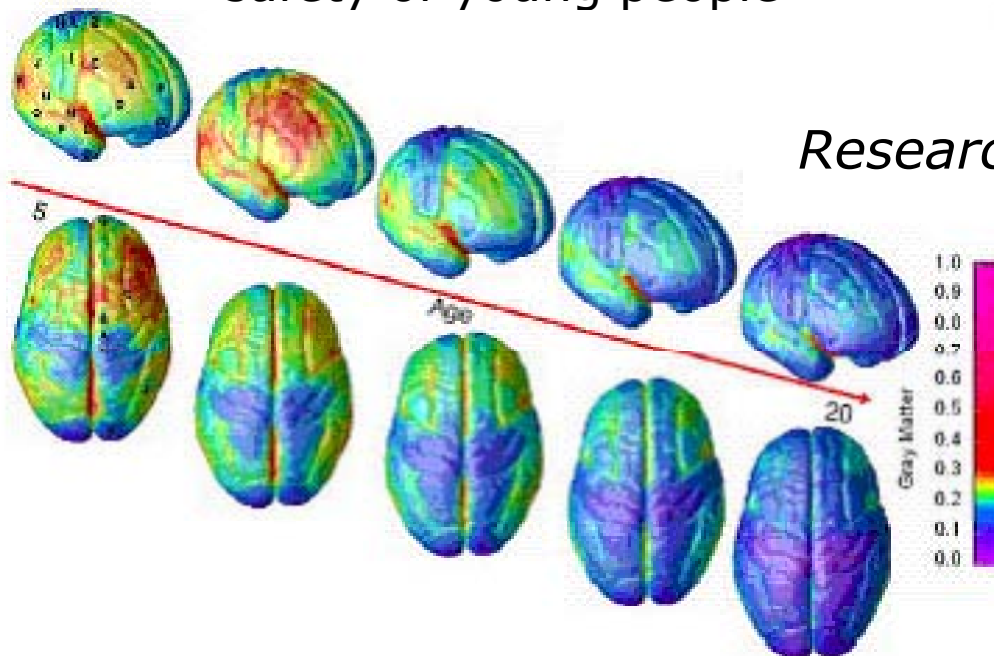
# LIFE STAGES

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



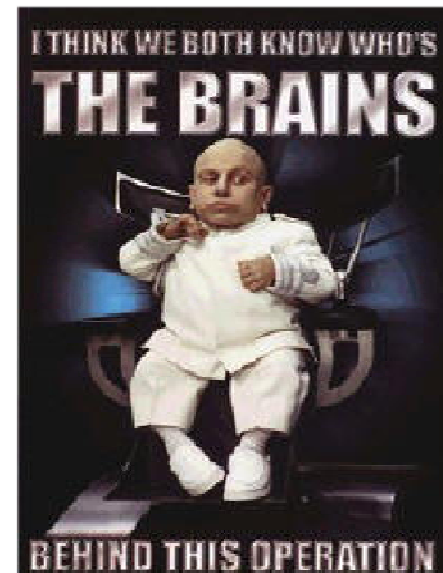
***“Teenagers’ brains are not broken they’re just still under construction”.***

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

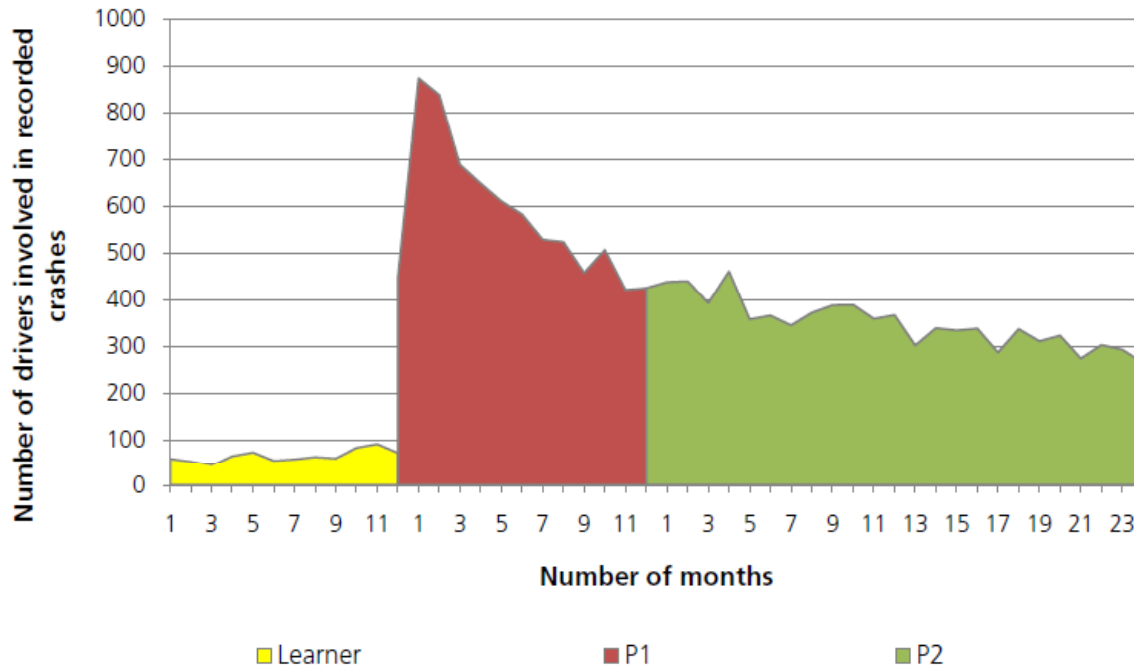
## Consider...

- 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



# Y Pack

## 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

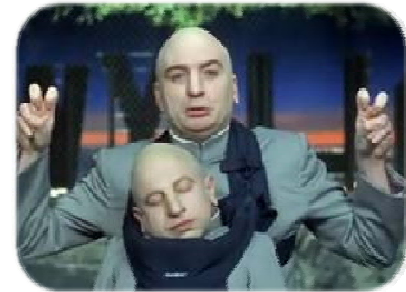
***"He's often late for work"***

- 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



# Plan 2





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[www.youthsafe.org](http://www.youthsafe.org)



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