

Intentionally Left Blank

# Youth Mental Health: Understanding the Challenges and Opportunities

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May 10, 2023

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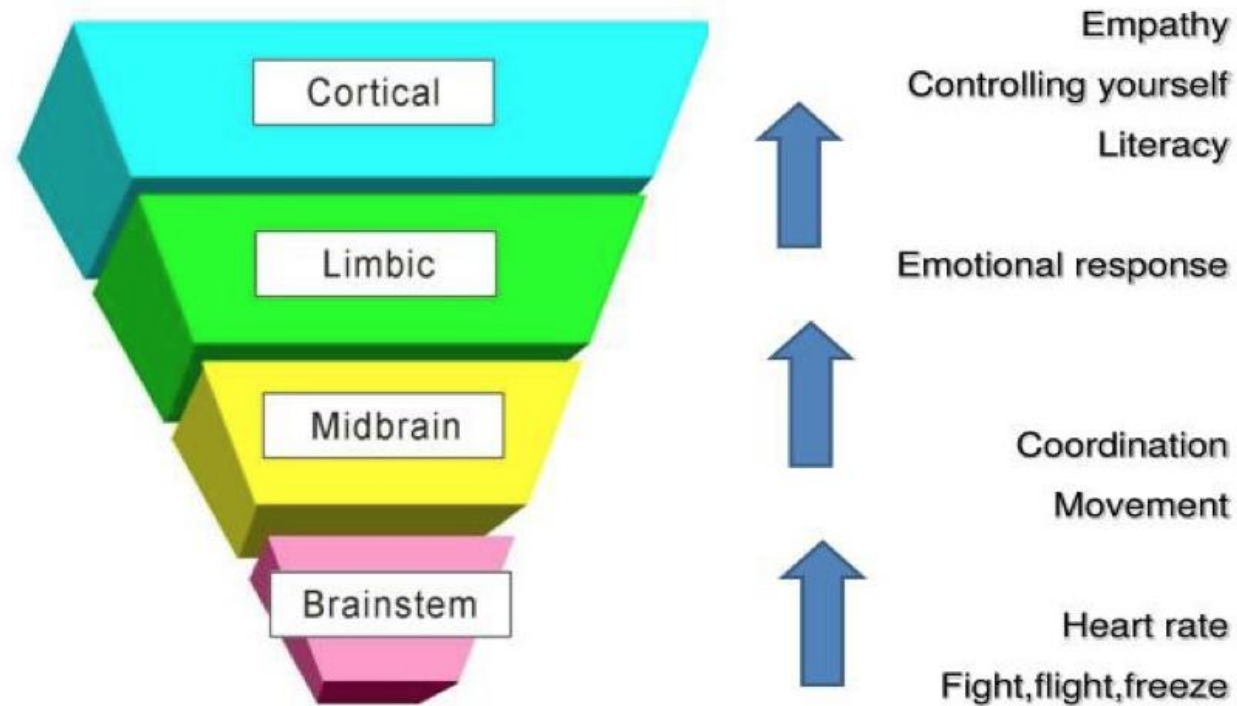
# What's Brains Got To Do With It?



# Sequential Unfolding of Human Brain

(Bruce Perry, 2020)

## Perry's Neurosequential Model



Perry, B.D. (2002). *Brain Structure and Function I: Basics of Organisation*. Adapted in part from "Maltreated Children: Experience, Brain Development and the Next Generation (W.W. Norton & Company).

# Quick Launch Ages 0 - 6

0-6 Years Old: Grasp the right brain training period.

**0 ~ 3  
YRS OLD**

**Absorption  
Period**



**3 ~ 6  
YRS OLD**

**Consolidation  
Period**



**6 ~ 12  
YRS OLD**

**Output  
Period**



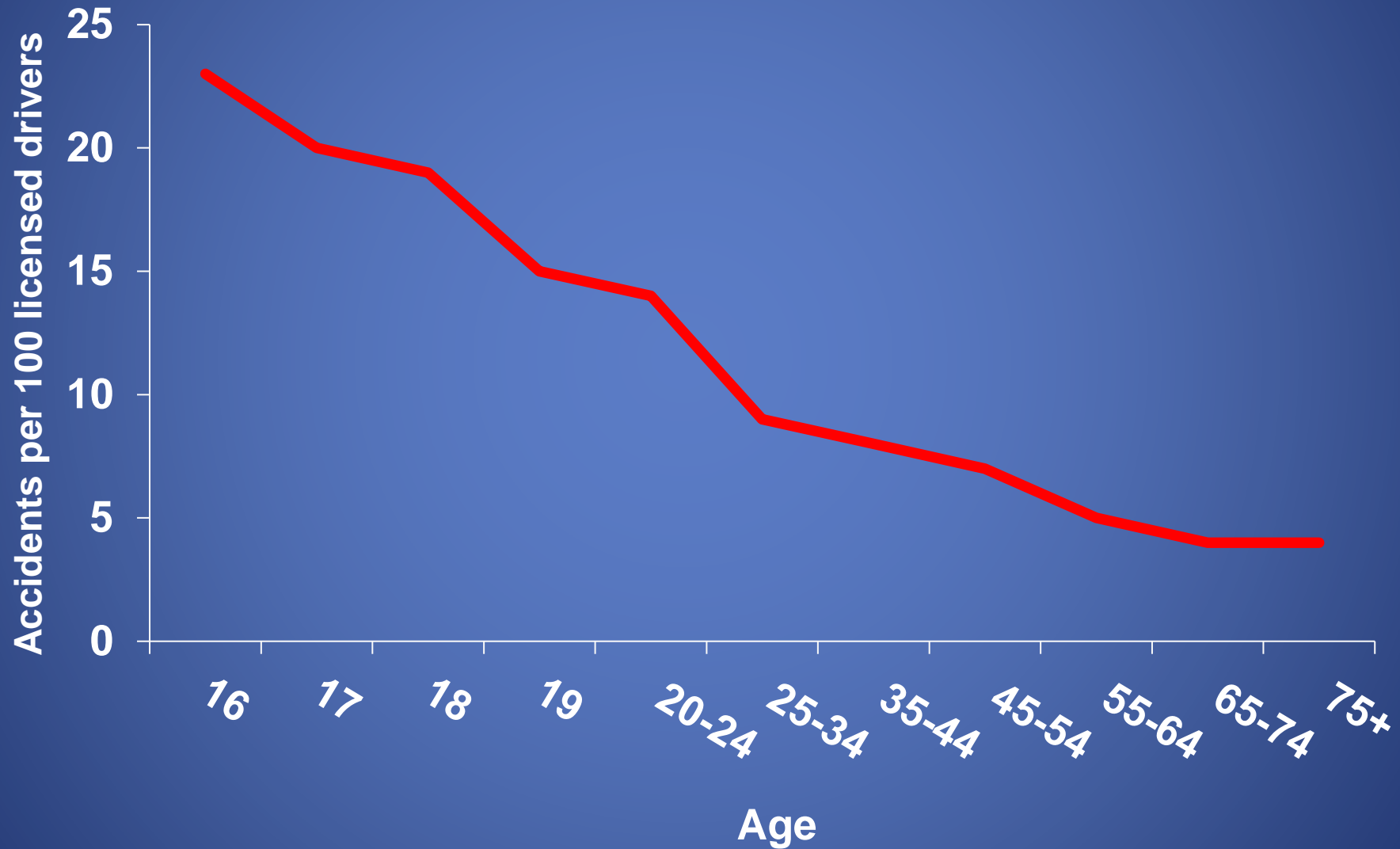
# Normative Adolescent and Emerging Adult Development: There Is A *Lot* Goin' On



Have more car crashes....



# Automobile Crashes

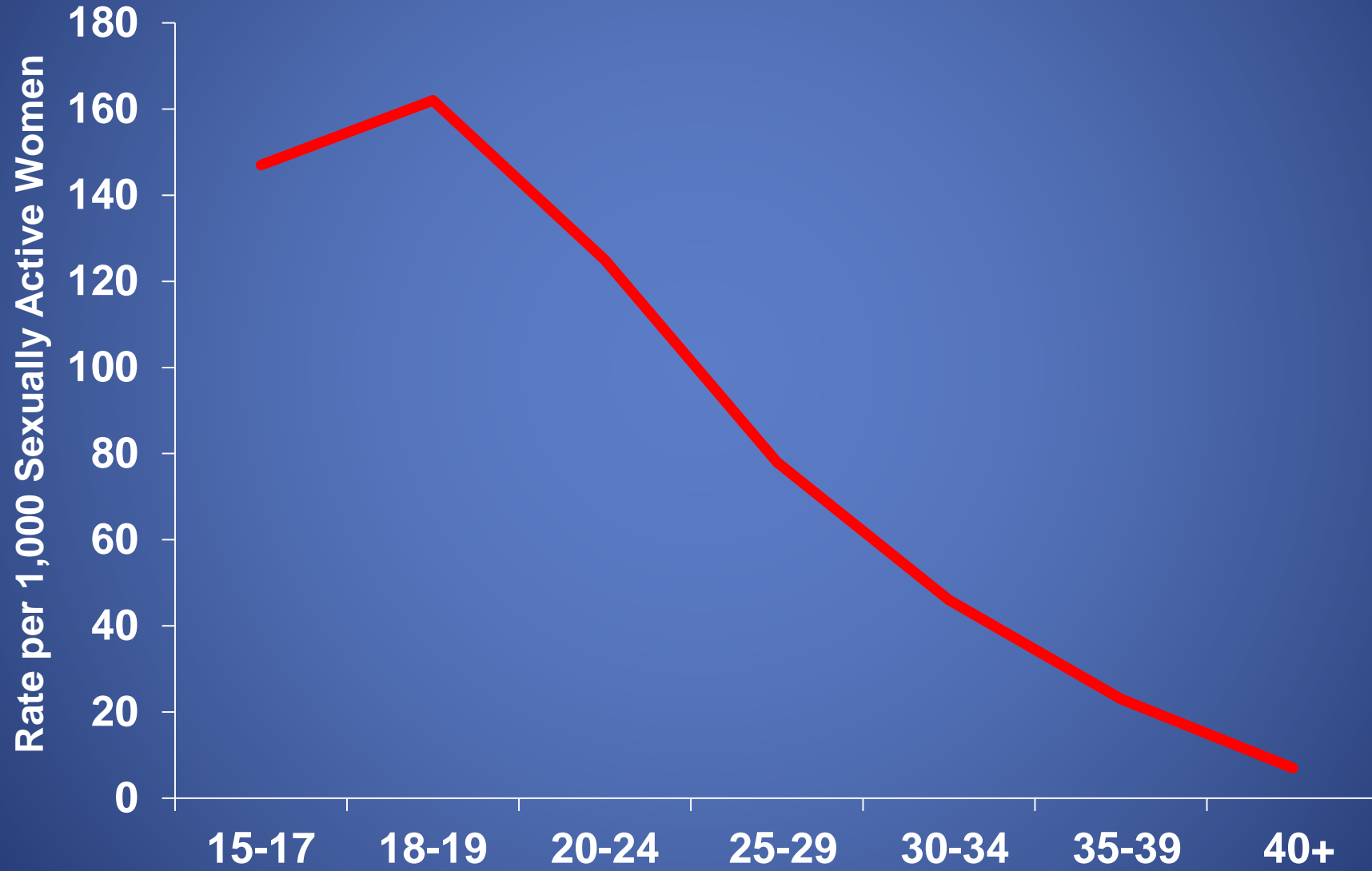




**Are more likely to have  
unintended pregnancies....**



# Unintended Pregnancies

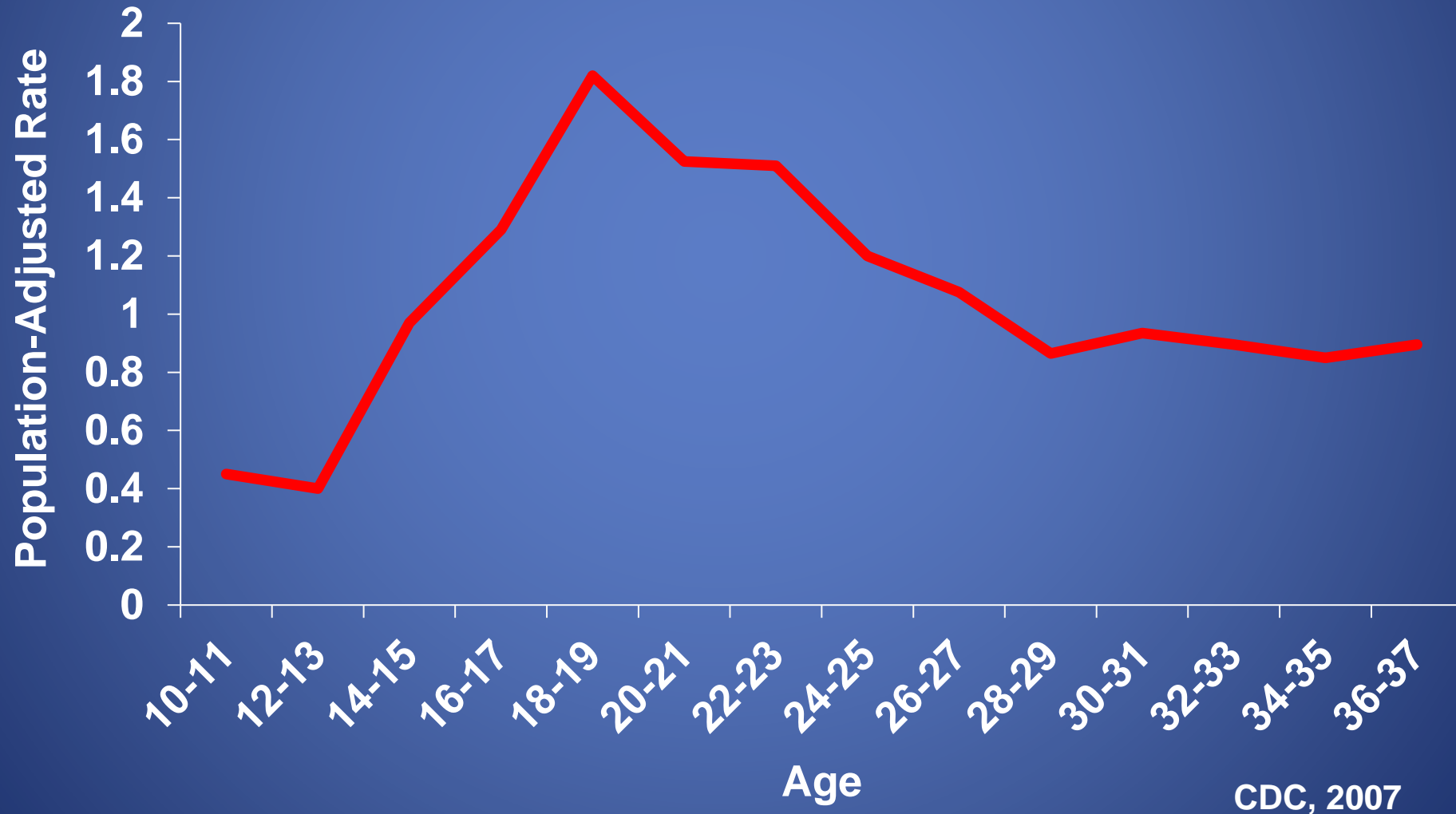


Finer, 2010

Drown more often....



# Unintentional Drowning



Attempt suicide more often and  
engage in more non-suicidal  
self-inflicted injury....



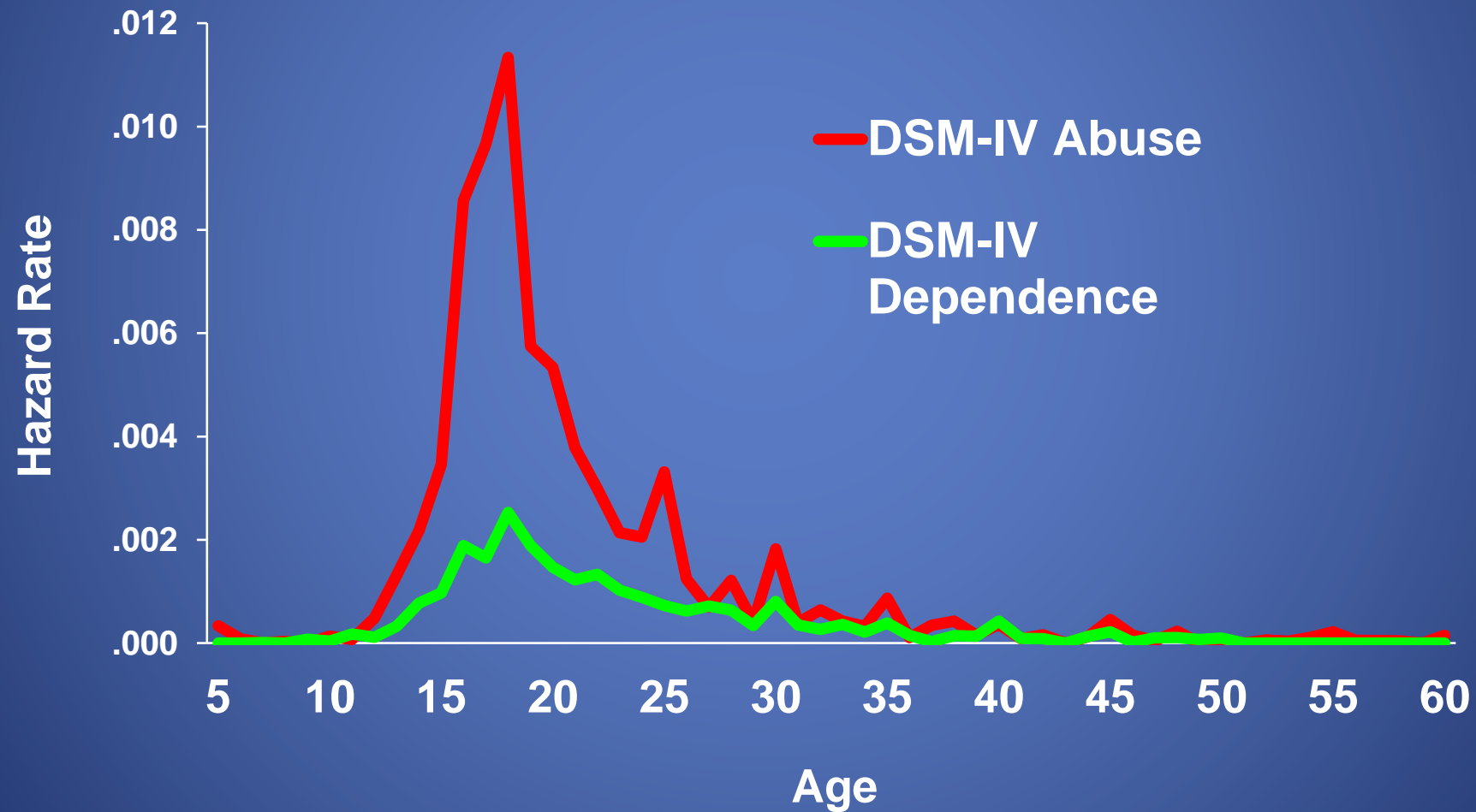
# Non-Fatal Self-Inflicted Injuries



Are more likely to begin experimenting with substances  
*and*  
develop patterns of substance abuse and addiction....



# Age of Onset of Illicit Drug Abuse or Dependence



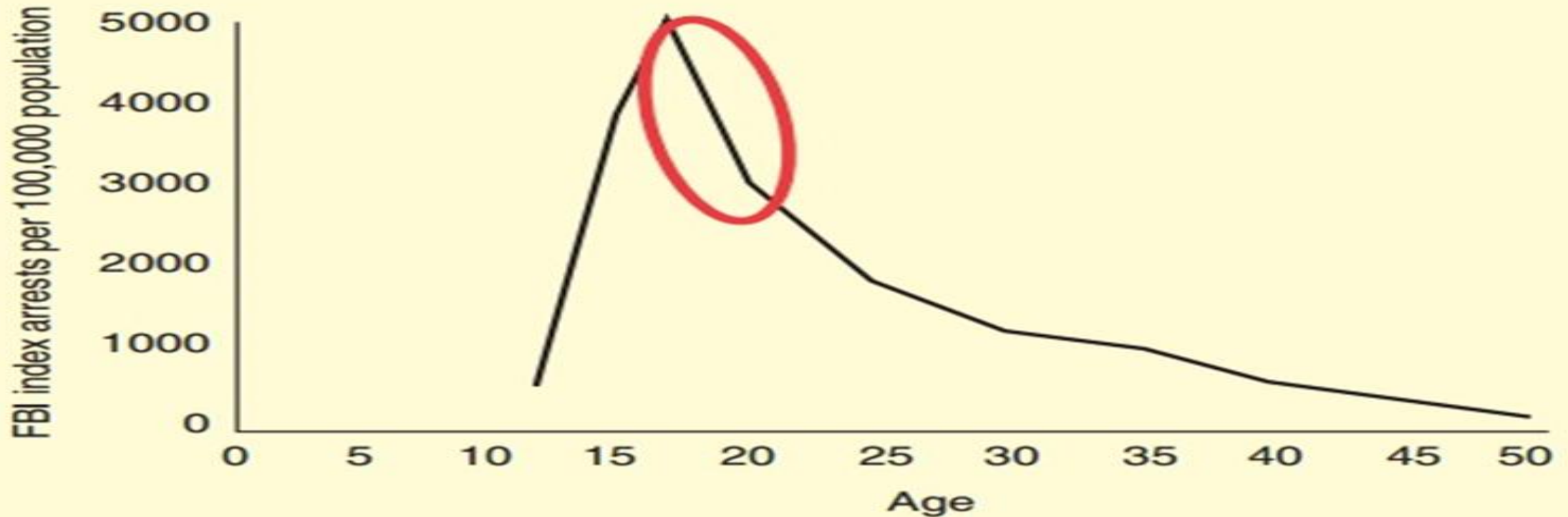


*And*

Compared to adults, adolescents  
and young adults commit more  
crimes....



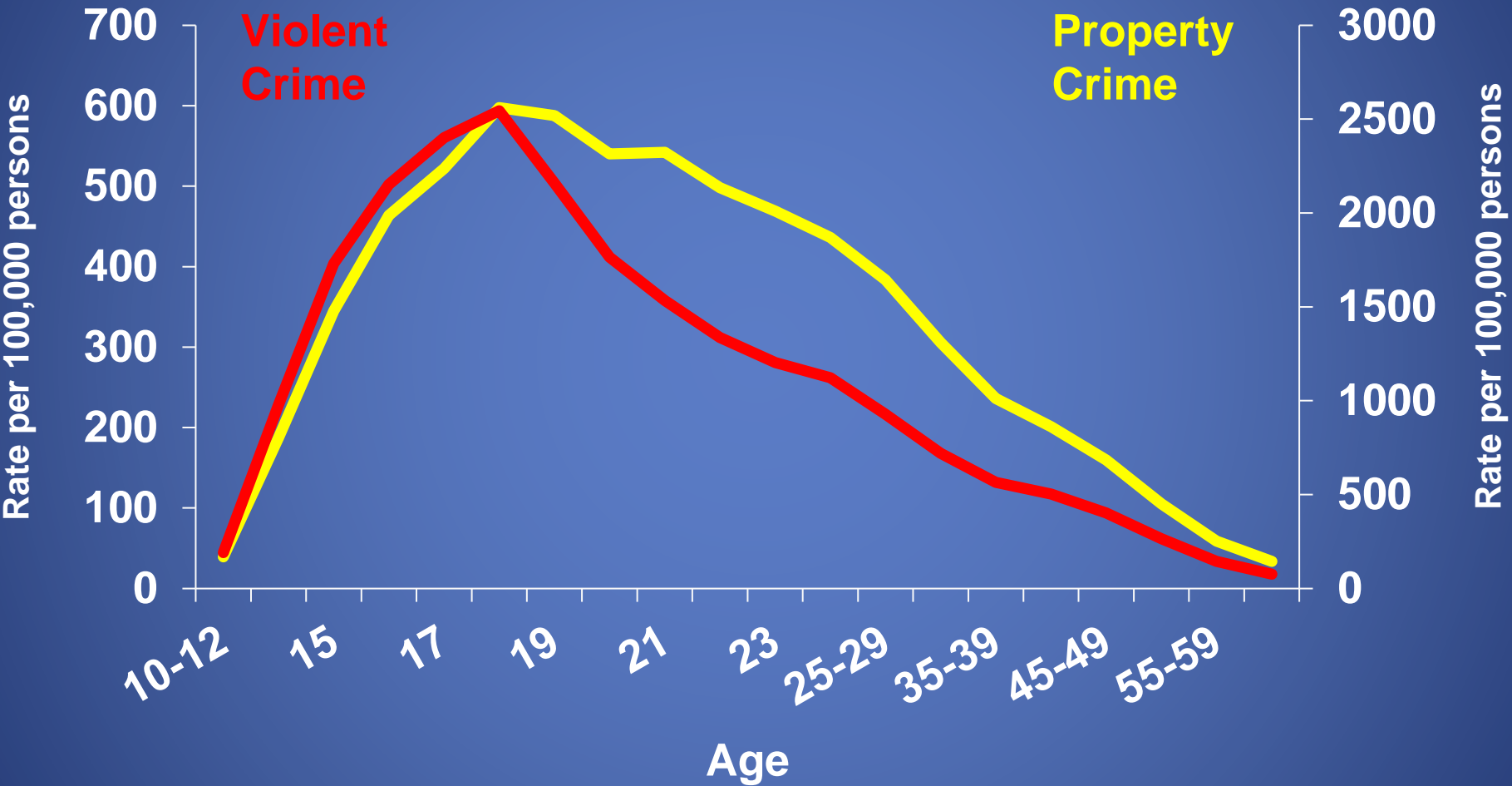
# Self-Desisting Misconduct With Maturation



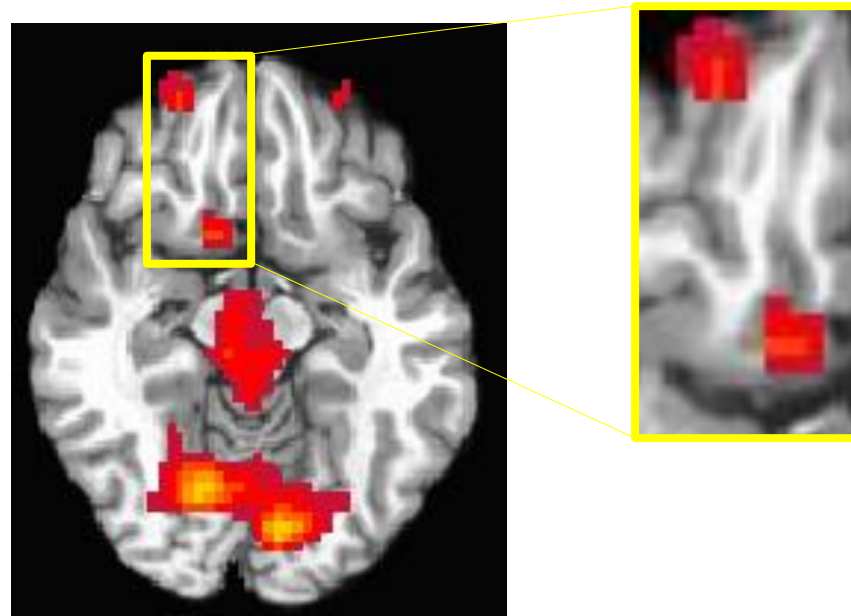
*Blumstein, A., Cohen, J., & Farrington, D.P. (1988). Criminal careers research: Its value for criminology. Criminology, 25, p.11*

**Figure 1: Age-specific crime rate**

# Crime



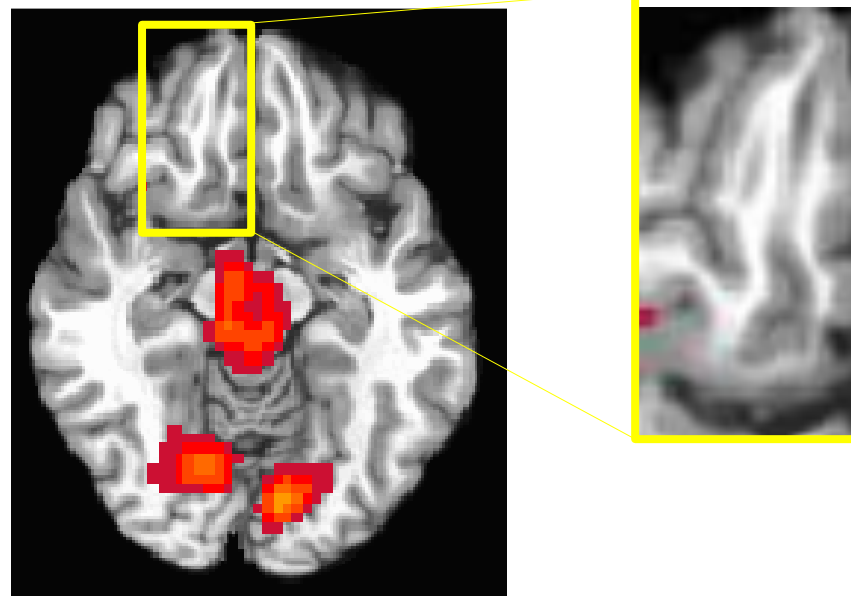
Friends  
Watching



Average change in brain activity among adolescent participants (14-18 years) playing the driving game, either with friends watching, or with no audience.

*There is significantly greater activation in reward centers when friends are watching.*

Alone



No such effect is seen among adults

# Executive Functioning in Contexts

## Hot Cognition

- Under stress, in the heat of the moment, sense of immediacy, during high emotional arousal
- Emotionally influenced thinking – more susceptible to impulse, risk-taking, influence of others



## Cold Cognition

- Calm environment
- Time and tools to make well-thought out decisions, time to consider inputs
- More logical and reasoned thinking



# Remember: Brains are Being Sculpted by Interactions with their Environment



# Basic Principles

- Adolescent – Young Adult Brains in Development
- Social Environment Sculpting Brain Systems, Shaping Learning
- Positive Social Environment Also Brain “Exoskeleton”
- “Curves” Down Reflect Brain + Social Maturation

# So What Happened With COVID?

- Isolation As Positive Youth Development Resources Diminish
- Limits on Socializing Experiences => Less Social Learning
- Emergence of Primacy of Virtual World and Social Media
- Anxiety-Stoking Functioning of Adult Social Environment



# So, What To DO?

## From a Neuro and Social Development Perspective:

- ENGAGEMENT, ENGAGEMENT, ENGAGEMENT
- TAMP DOWN Noise and Anxiety of Proximate Adult Systems
- Teach Adults and Children Skills of Social-Emotional Development
- Avoid Over-Pathologizing Expectable Reactions of Children

**Attributed to  
Frederick Douglass**

***It is easier to build  
strong children than  
to repair broken  
men***

