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*centre for*  
positive psychology  
*and health*

Session 9: Adolescence as a  
time of expansion—Dr Trudy  
Meehan

# The Science of Health *and Happiness* *for young people*

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**Launched in 2019, Jigsaw and UCD's My World Survey 2 asked young people if there was a special adult in their lives. This was an adult they could turn to when they were in need.**

76% of young people had at least one adult they could talk to when they needed support. Having this person in their lives was linked to better overall mental health.

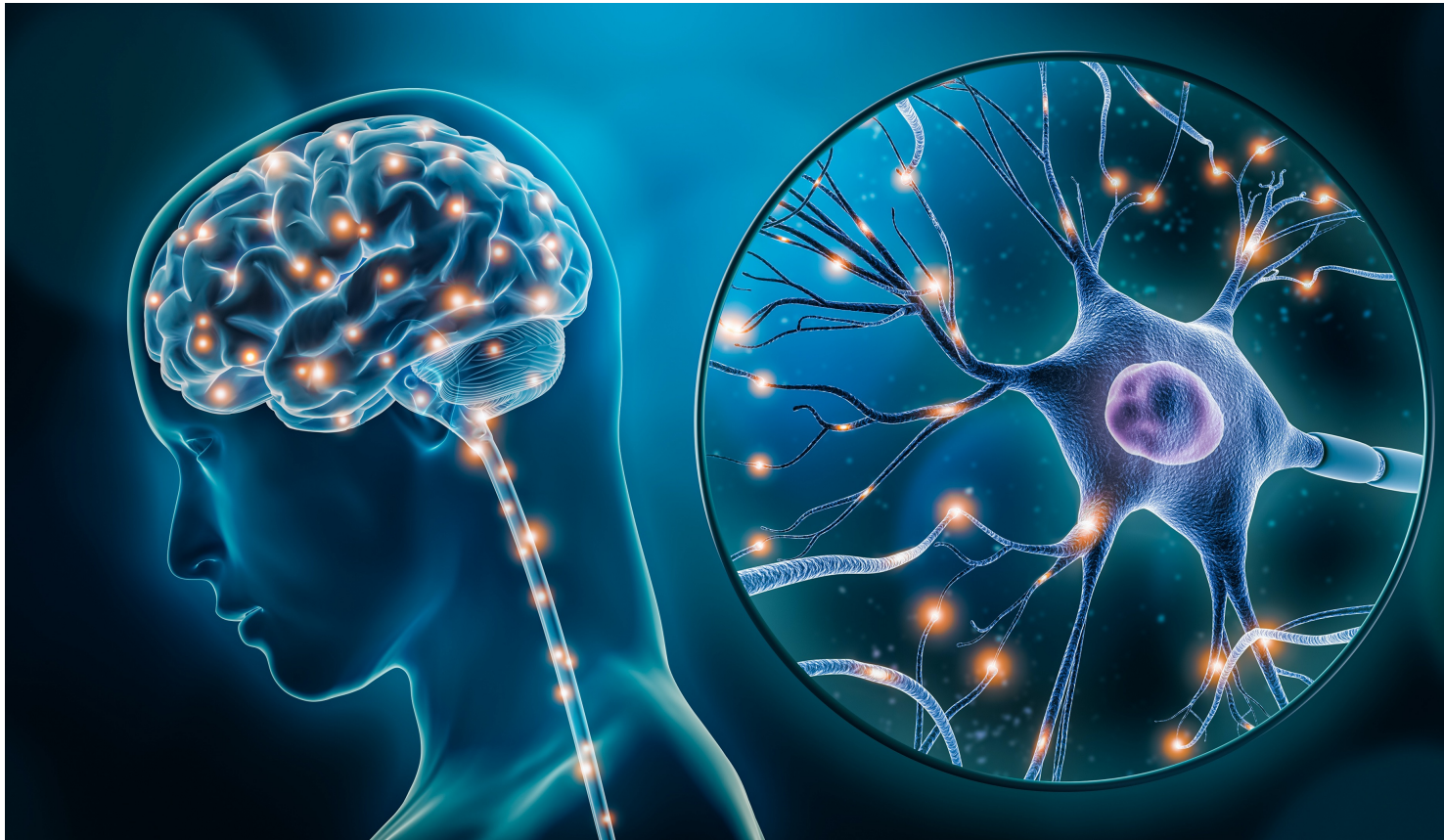
## **What difference does One Good Adult make?**

Young people who reported having one good adult tended to have:

- Increased self-esteem
- More success in school life
- Better mental health
- More likely to seek help
- Less risk taking behaviours.

Not having One Good Adult was linked to higher levels of distress, anti-social behaviour and increased risk for suicidal behaviour. One Good Adults are crucial to helping young people do well and to flourish.

# Your attention shapes your brain



“Where  
attention goes,  
energy flows and  
neurons grow” –  
Dan Siegel

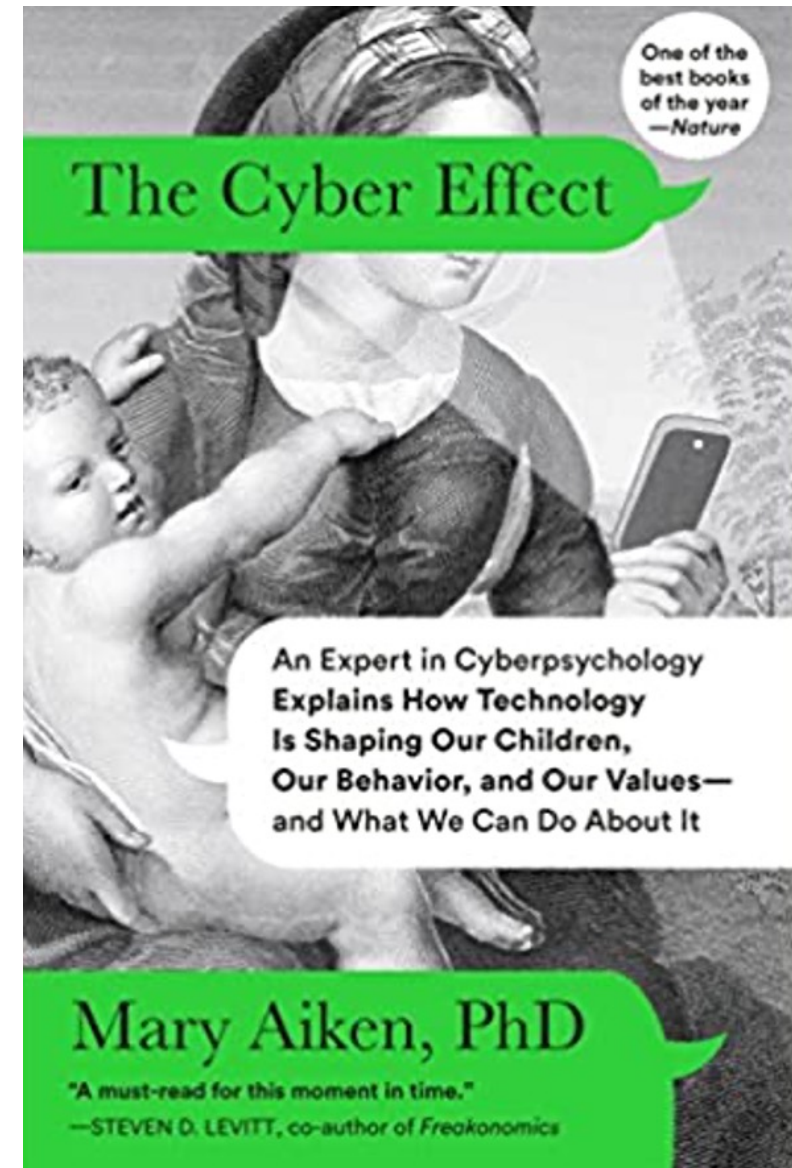


## Key Findings

### Support for more regulation:

- 91% of the public think the Government should stand up to the big tech companies and set rules that protect the public from harmful or illegal use
- 86% agree that major tech companies have too much power and influence over politics and law
- 81% agree that the Government is too frightened of big tech companies to make effective laws to control them
- 70% of the public think that the Government should introduce laws that hold social media companies responsible for content they allow on their platforms

"This research may only be the top of the iceberg when it comes to the reality of Irish people's experience engaging with online platforms and services," **continued Tanya Ward**. Here we see over a half of respondents directly or indirectly affected by harmful use of online or social media. One in five reporting that they have been directly affected. With trust in legislation as an effective way to ensure platforms are held accountable, it is a clear opportunity for the Government's Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill which is due for publication this term. However, if the Bill is to live up to its name, it must include specific provisions for an Online Safety Commissioner with the ability and support to take swift action and a public complaints mechanism so people, particularly children and young people, do not have to place all their faith in the platforms to perform."



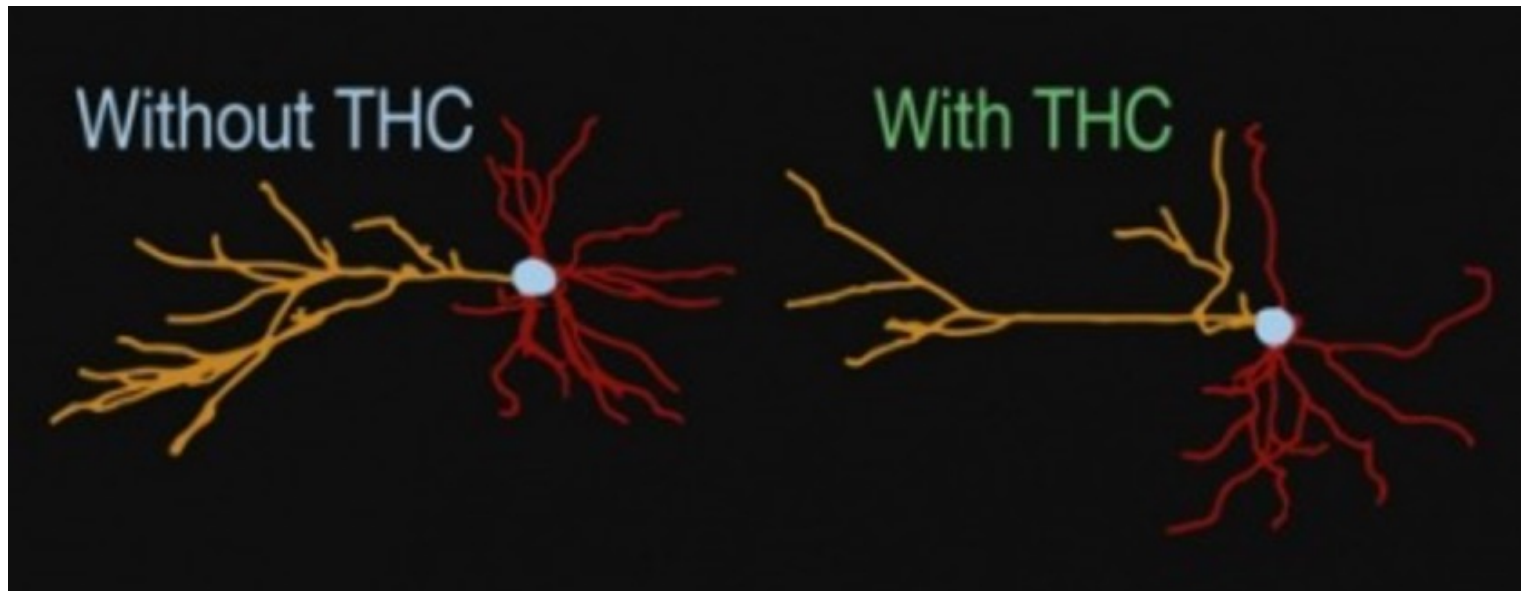


## Delay using additive substances!

- The odds of becoming dependent on alcohol decrease every year you wait to start drinking by up to 14% (Grant & Dawson, 1997).
- People who begin using cannabis before the age of 18 are four to seven times more likely to develop a dependency than people who start in adulthood (Winters & Lee, 2008).




# Cannabis and brain pruning



Miller, M.L., Chadwick, B., Dickstein, D.L., et al. (2018)



A person wearing a teal-colored shirt is holding a small, dark-colored rectangular object wrapped in clear bubble wrap. The person's hands are visible, with light pink nail polish on the fingers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

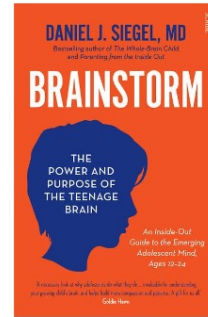
# Keep your brain bubble wrapped

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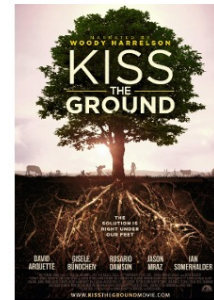
“I’m not interested, I’m protecting my  
brain”



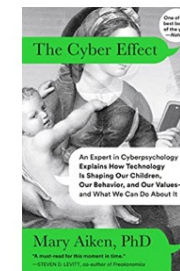
- **11-18 years:**



- **14-24 years:**



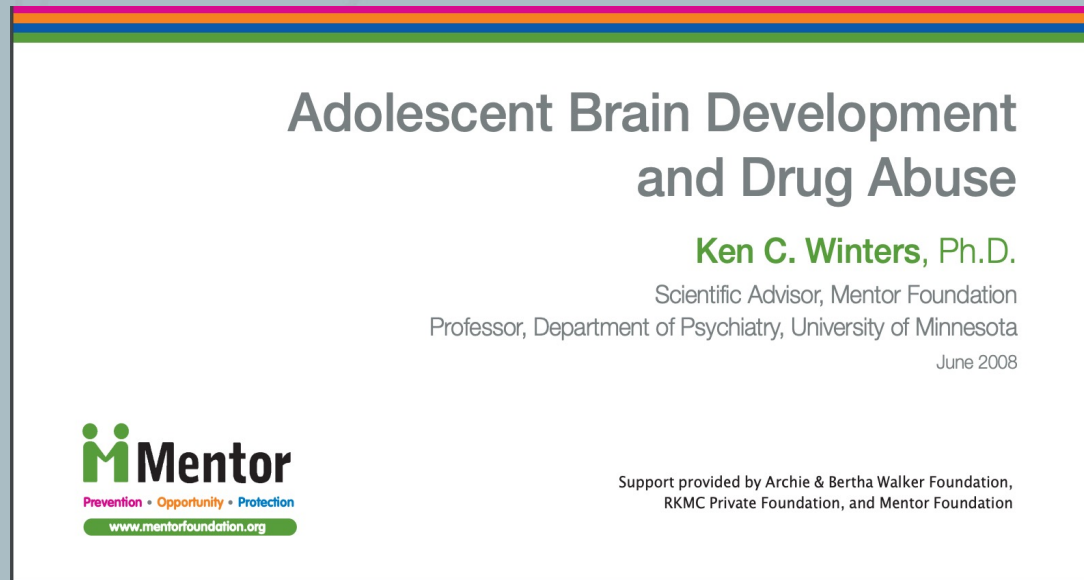
- **All ages:**





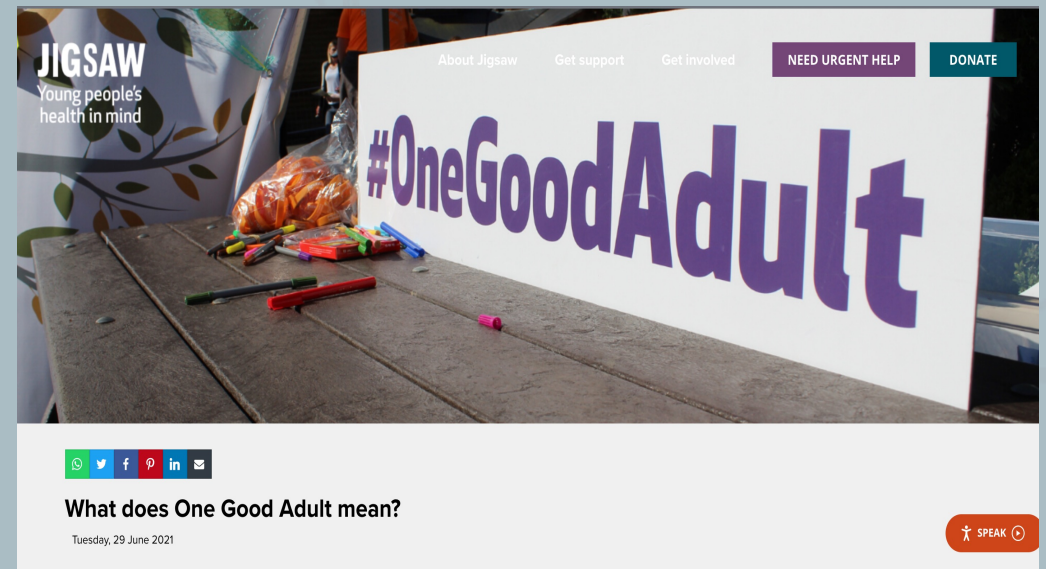
# Resources

## Talking about drugs and the brain



[https://langley.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/145/2017/11/Adolescent\\_Brain\\_Bochure.pdf](https://langley.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/145/2017/11/Adolescent_Brain_Bochure.pdf)

## Jigsaw youth mental health



<https://jigsaw.ie/what-does-one-good-adult-mean/>

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