

National Convention *of* Youth Drama

Friday 24 March 2023 | #DramaCon2023



Youth
Theatre
Arts
Scotland

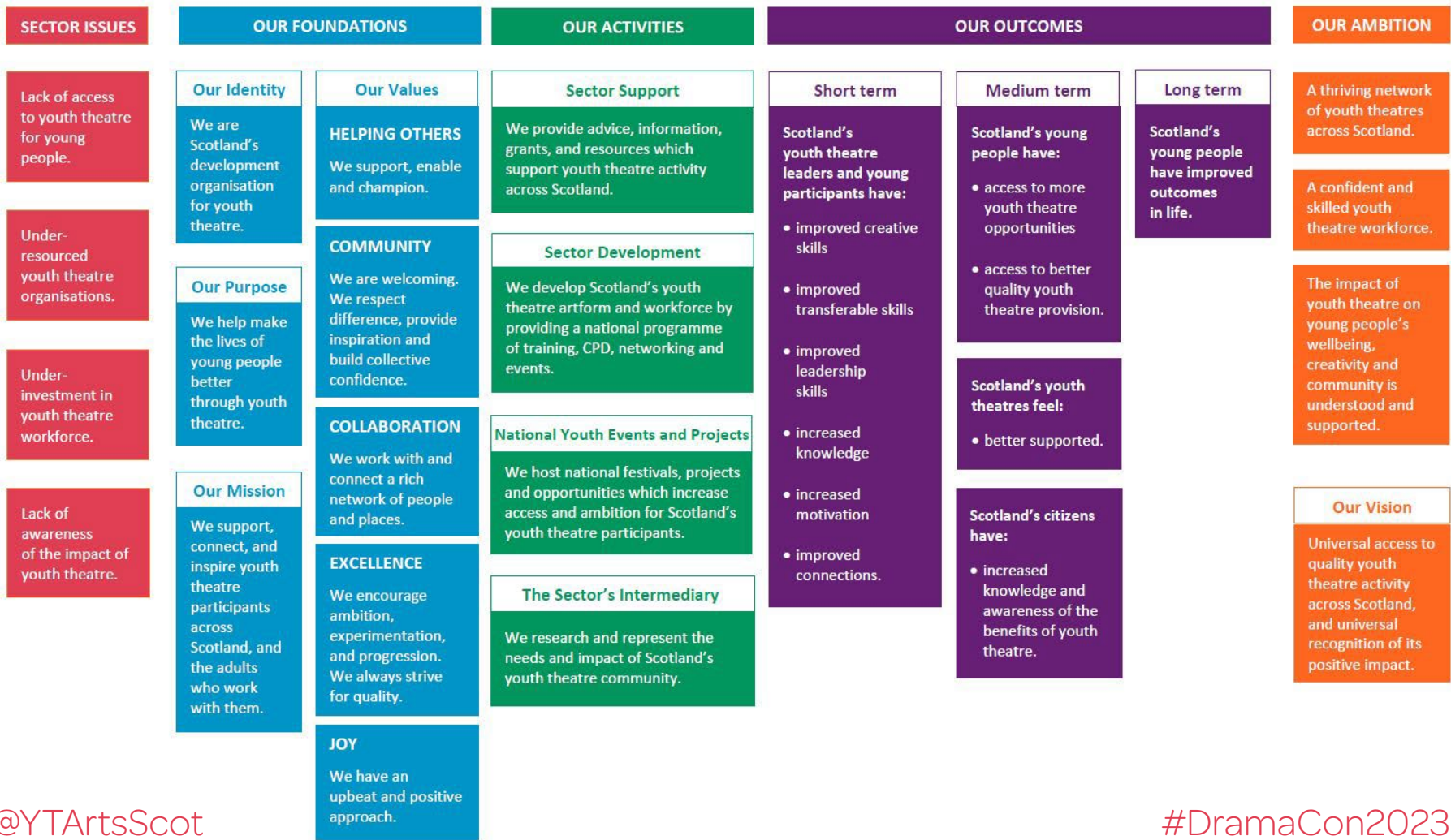
**CAPITAL
THEATRES**



We are the national development organisation for
Scotland's youth theatre sector.

We help make the lives of young people in Scotland
better through youth theatre.

We exist to support, connect, and inspire youth theatre participants
across Scotland and the adults who work with them.





National Convention
of Youth Drama 2018 Report

"Pass the Mic..."



"A head full of ideas and a refreshed energy for our sector. It's always an inspiring and reassuring day spending time at a YTAS event."

Attender



NATIONAL CONVENTION of
YOUTH DRAMA
Friday 20 March | #DramaCon2020

CANCELLED





Event Programme

10.30am	Welcome and YTAS Updates
11am	Keynote: <i>Adolescent Brain Development and Tackling Social Isolation</i>
11.45am	Shout Outs
1pm	Networking Lunch
2pm	Discussion Groups & Workshop Assistants' Exchange
4.10pm	Report Back and Wrap-Up
4.30pm	Close

YTAS's plans for 2023...

Helping Others:

We support, enable and champion.

➡ **New Membership Support Hub and Coordinator**

Excellence:

We encourage ambition, experimentation, and progression.

We always strive for quality.

➡ **Developing sector training and best practice**

Collaboration:

We work with and connect a rich network of people and places.

➡ **Partnerships with our members and other sector leaders**

Community:

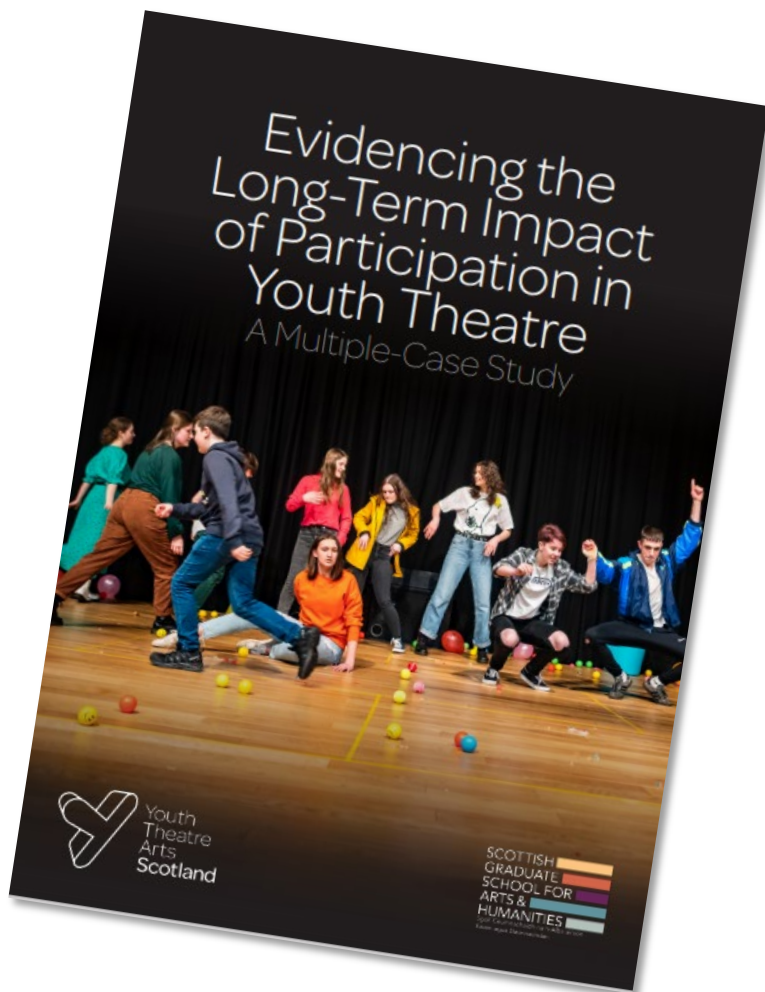
We are welcoming. We respect difference, provide inspiration and build collective confidence.

➡ **Sector Review 2023**

Joy:

We have an upbeat and positive approach.

➡ **In all that we plan to do!**



- **Increased confidence** (or self-belief)
- **Increased emotional Intelligence** (or ability to empathise with others)
- **Increased resilience** (or ability to respond well to stress and/or pressure)
- **Improved teamwork and leadership skills**
- **Improved emotional wellbeing**
- **Broadened horizons**

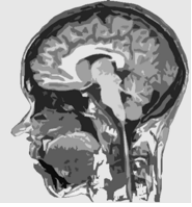
As a result of...

- Creative skills development activities
- Nurturing facilitation
- Supportive environment and community

Keynote

Adolescent Brain Development and Tackling Social Isolation

Dr Livia Tomova: University of Cambridge



Adolescent Brain Development and Social Isolation

Dr Livia Tomova

Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Group
University of Cambridge

24 March 2023

Talk Outline

- What is adolescence?
- Adolescent brain development
- Effects of isolation and loneliness on adolescents



Talk Outline

- What is adolescence?
- Adolescent brain development
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What is adolescence?



- Unique period of physical, psychological and social transition between childhood and adulthood (Spear 2000)
- Begins with the onset of puberty and ends with the assumption of a stable adult role (Damon 2004)
- The age of adolescence ~ 10 – 24 years (Sawyer 2018)

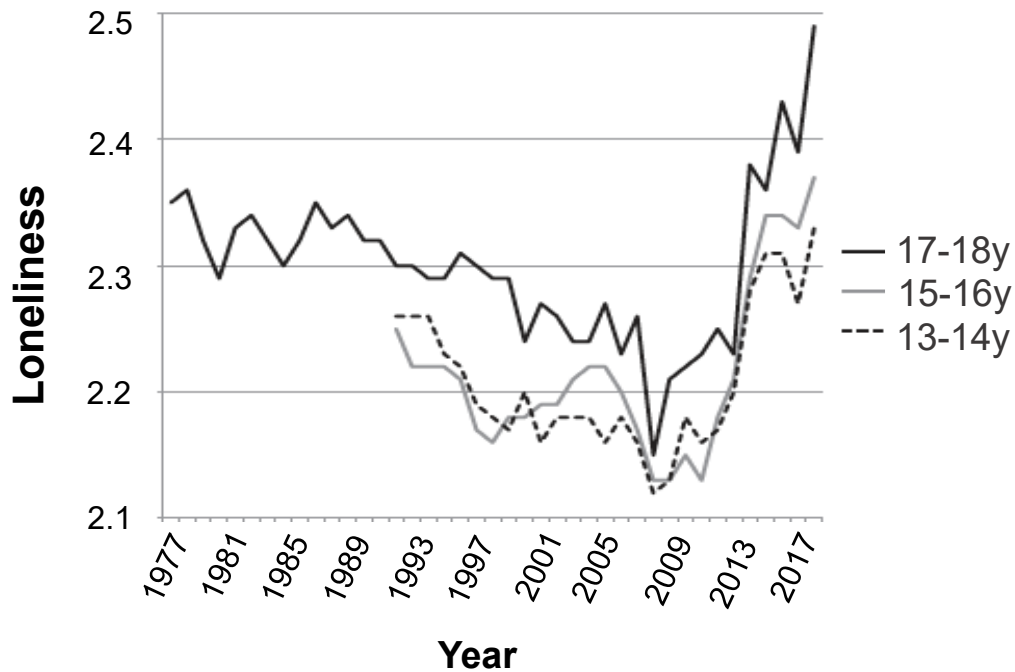


What is adolescence?

- Social “reorientation” : adolescents spend more time with peers than parents
- This is observed across species



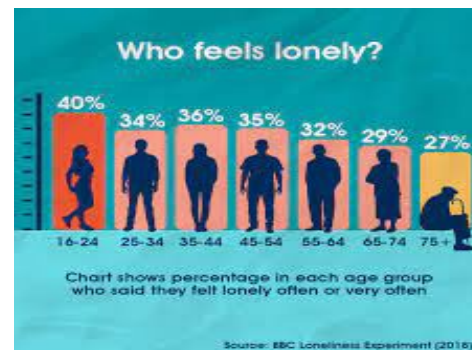
Loneliness during adolescence



Twenge et al 2019, JSPR

BBC loneliness study, 2018, UK:

→ **40%** 16- to 24-year-olds in UK feel **lonely** often or very often



Talk Outline

- What is adolescence?

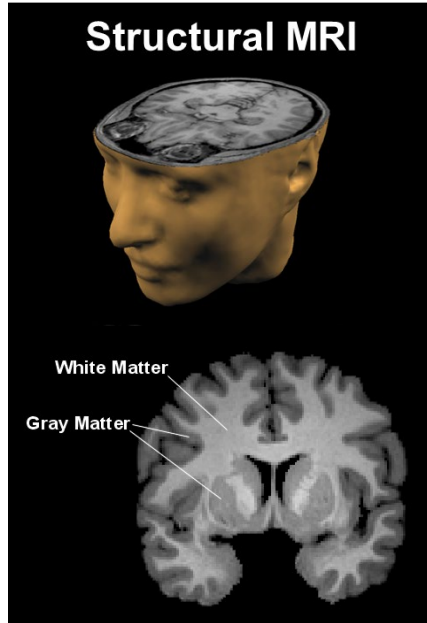
- Adolescent brain development

- Effects of isolation and loneliness on adolescents



Measuring brain structure and function

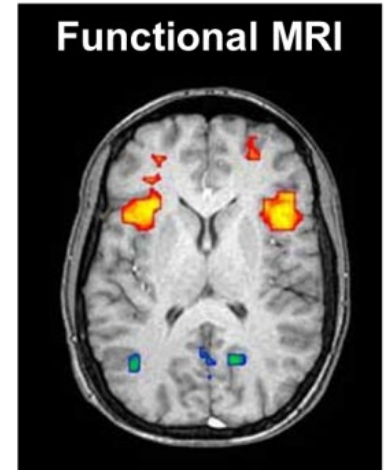
Structural MRI



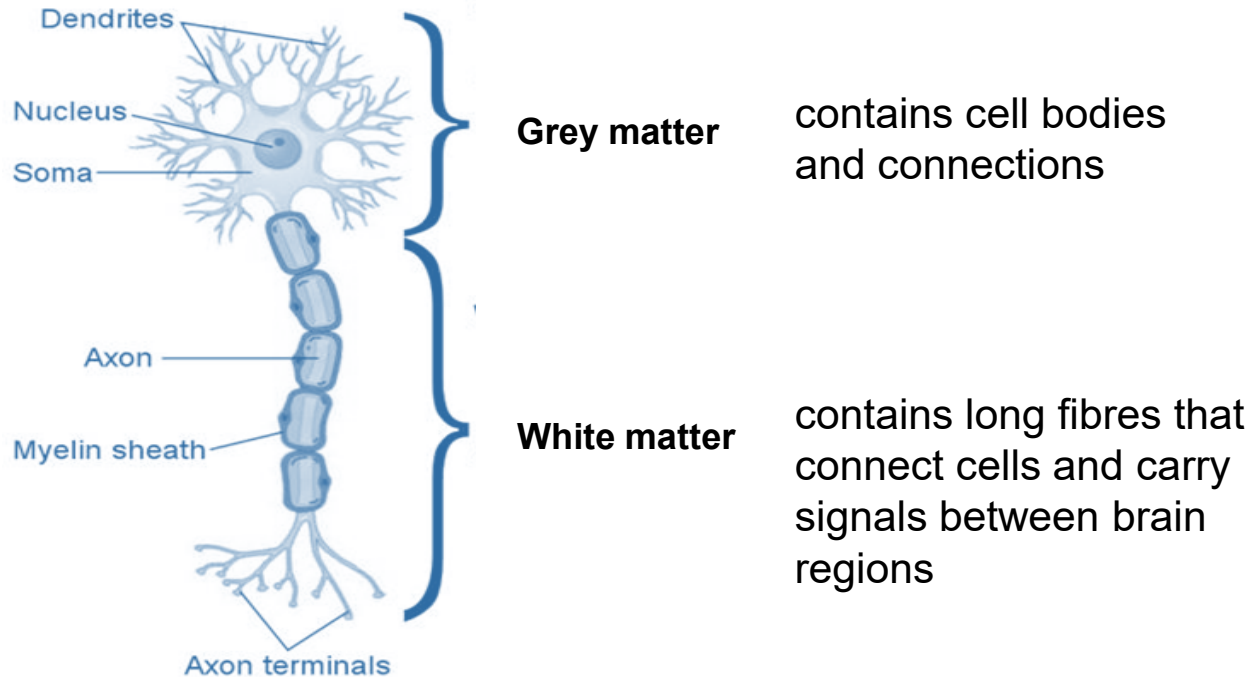
MRI Scanner



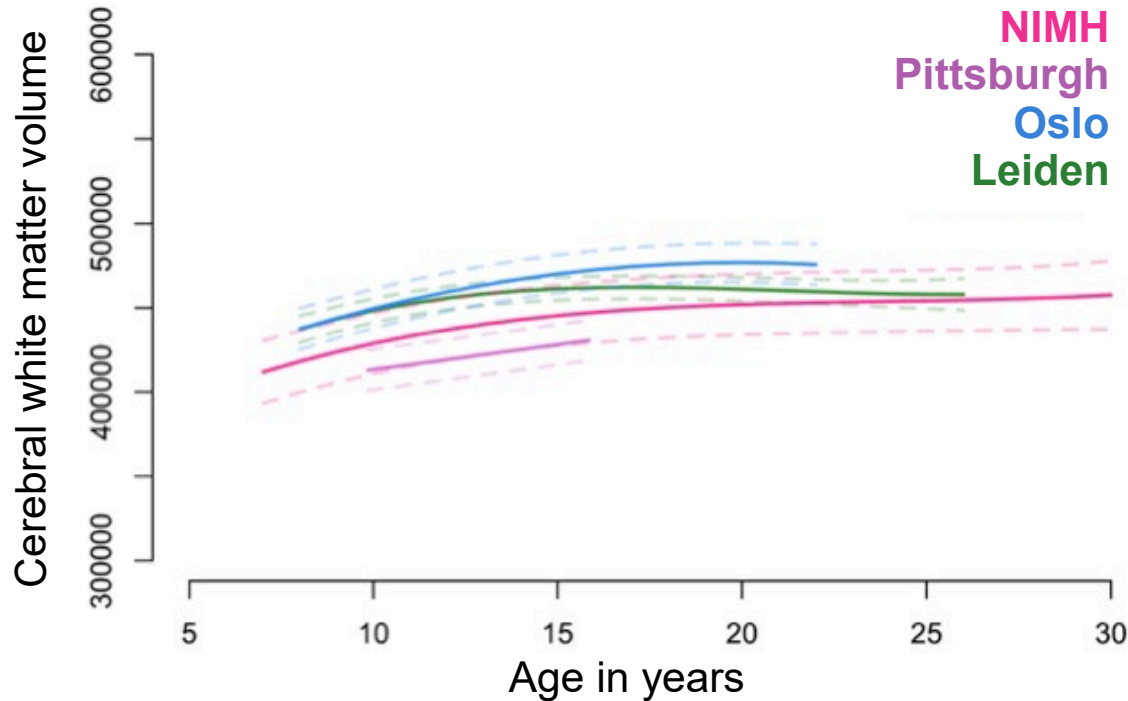
Functional MRI



Neurons



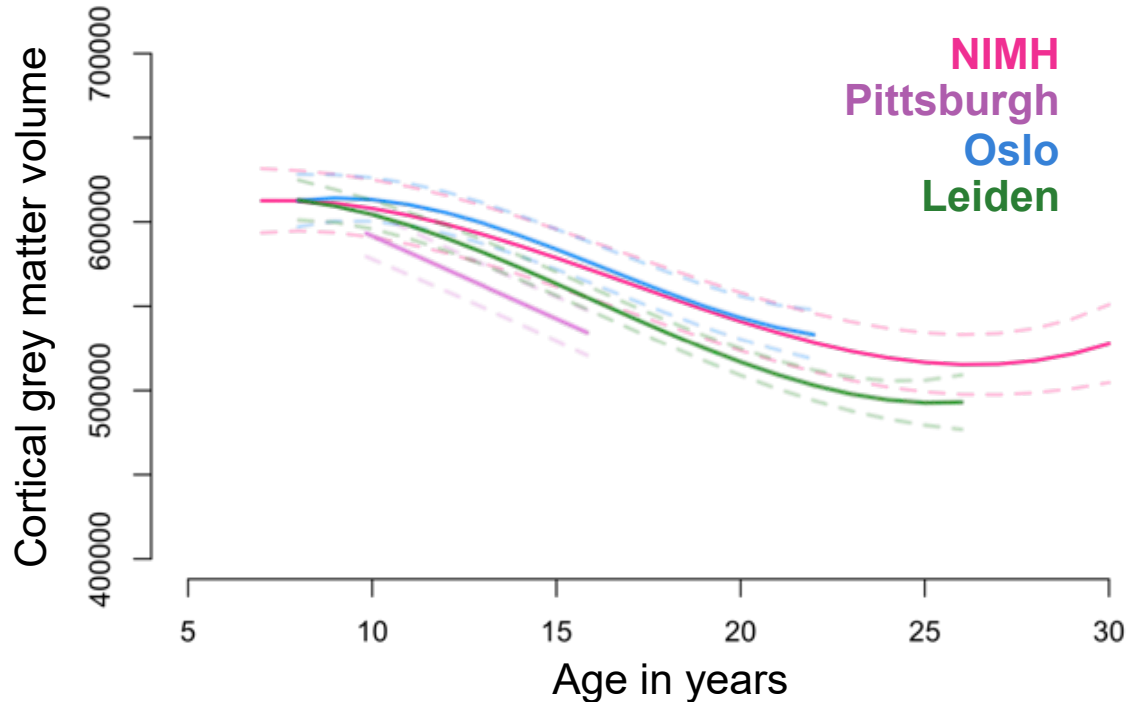
Adolescent brain development - White matter volume



White matter volume increases by 1% annually during adolescence.

Mills et al. (2016) *Neuroimage*

Adolescent brain development - Gray matter volume



Gray matter volume decreases by 1.5% annually during adolescence

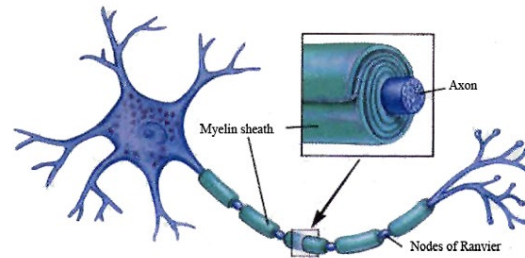
Mills et al. (2016) *Neuroimage*

Adolescent brain development - Microstructural changes

Myelination

Axonal growth

Synaptic pruning

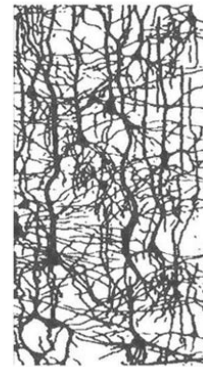


SYNAPTIC PRUNING (Density)

AT BIRTH

6 YEARS OLD

14 YEARS OLD

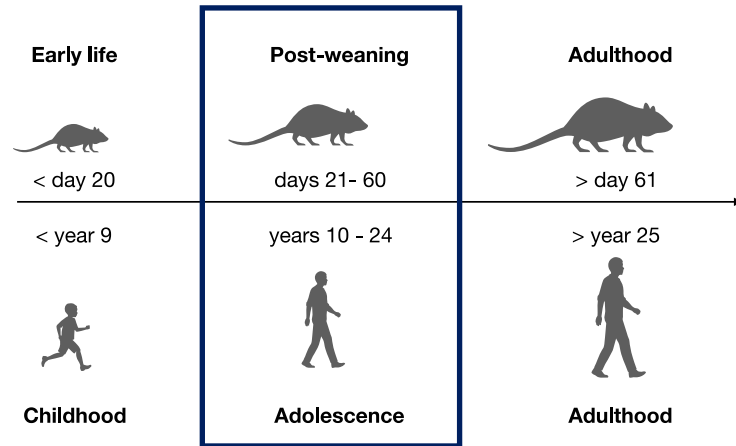


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Effects of isolation on brain development – animal models



Animal model of adolescence

→ Increased reward seeking

→ Increased anxiety

Modulations in serotonergic & dopaminergic brain systems

Effects of isolation on cognition in adolescence

“Being Alone Study” Adolescents 16-19 years (N = 40)



<https://osf.io/w5um9/>

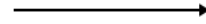
Ultra-high field
7T MRI scanning



Brain structure
Neural reward sensitivity



Social Isolation



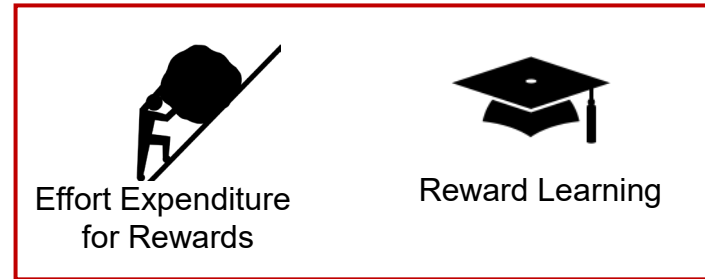
Baseline



Isolation with
social media



Behavioral Testing



Effort Expenditure
for Rewards

Reward Learning



Fear acquisition



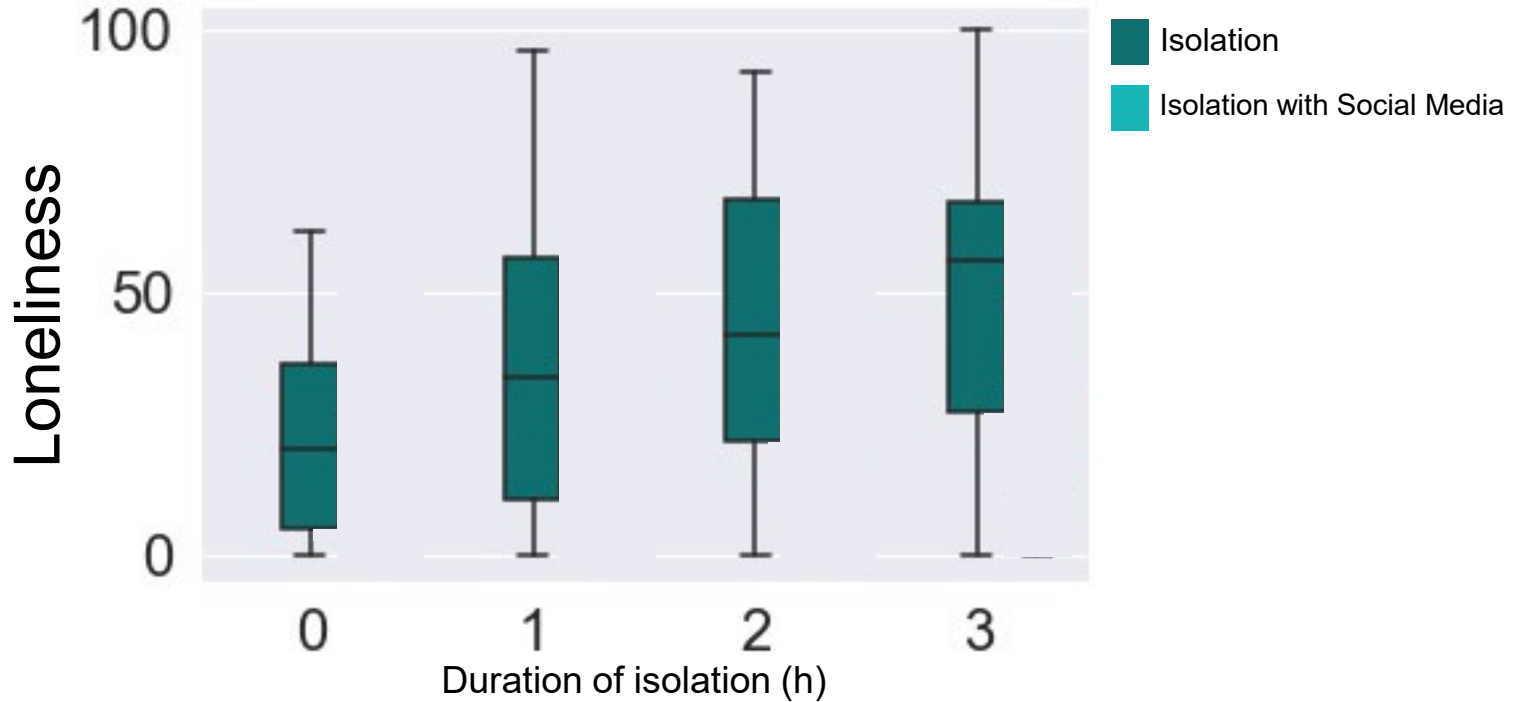
Impulse inhibition

Experimental manipulation of loneliness in adolescents

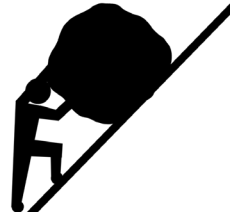
Social Isolation



Isolation with social media



Isolation and reward sensitivity in adolescents



Effort Expenditure for Rewards



Isolation and reward sensitivity in adolescents

Effort: hard

Points: 4

Do you want to do the task?

y = yes

n = no



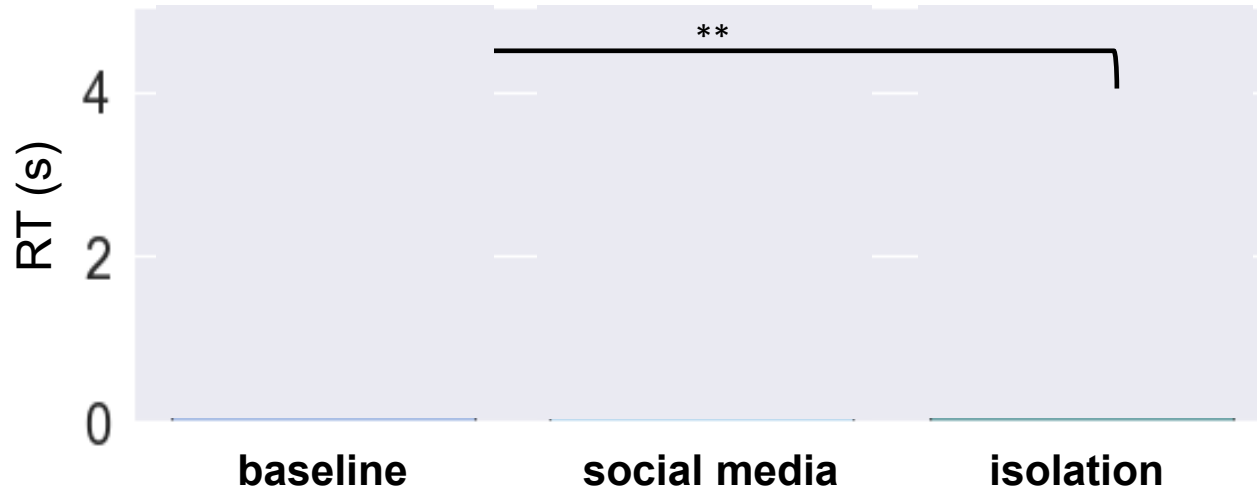
Isolation and reward sensitivity in adolescents

Use your index finger



Isolation and reward sensitivity in adolescents

High Reward – High Effort

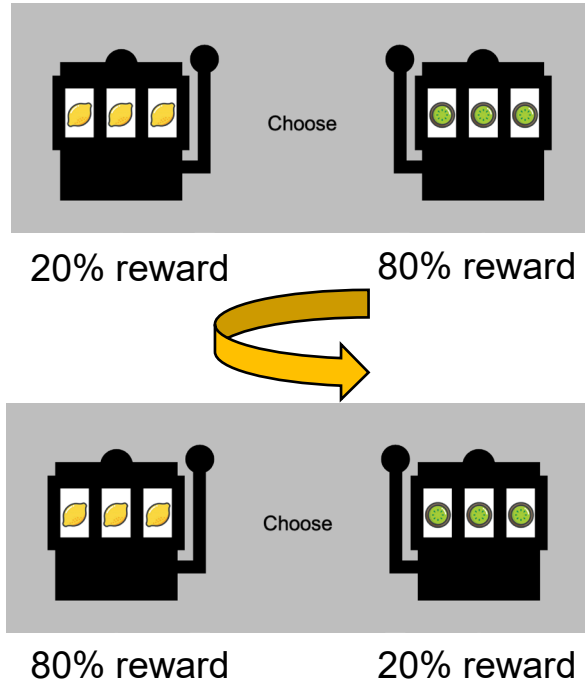


→ Isolation increases reward sensitivity in adolescents



Isolation and reward learning in adolescents

Learning from feedback through trial and error:



Feedback

win

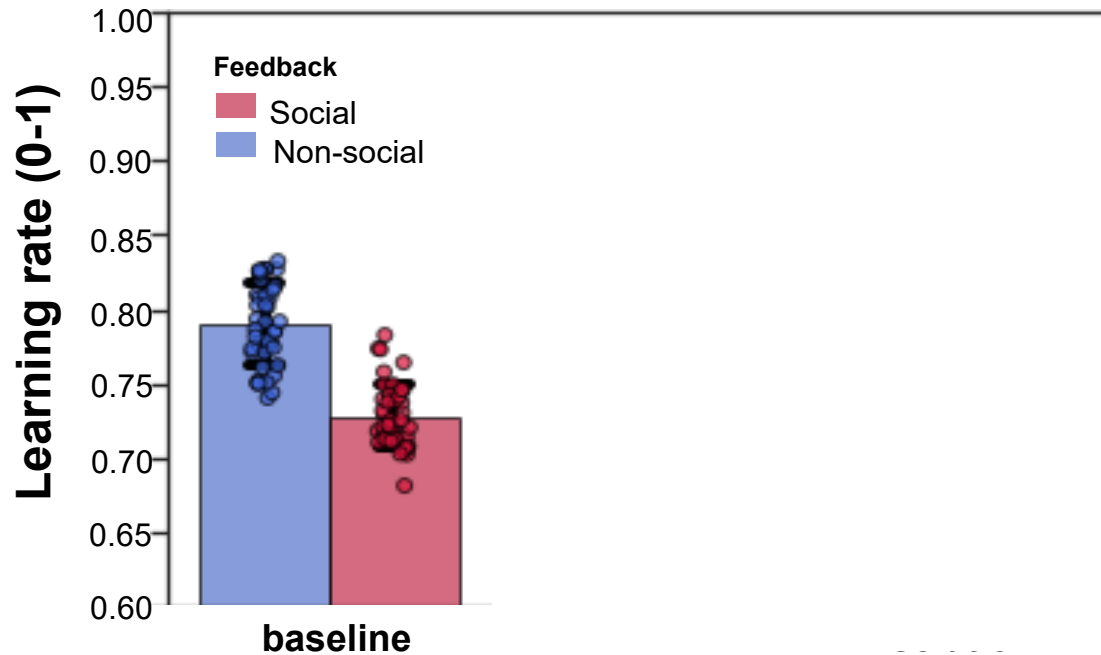
+

no win

0



Isolation and reward learning in adolescents



→ Isolation increases reward learning in adolescents



Effects of isolation in adolescence



→ Increased reward seeking

→ Increased reward learning

→ Remediates some of the effects of isolation

→ Has unique effects too (decreased social learning)



How to tackle isolation?

Original Paper | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 07 November 2022](#)

Cross-sectional and longitudinal associations between arts engagement, loneliness, and social support in adolescence

[Jessica K. Bone](#) , [Daisy Fancourt](#), [Meg E. Fluharty](#), [Elise Paul](#), [Jill K. Sonke](#) & [Feifei Bu](#)

Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

1290 Accesses | 22 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

→ Engagement in arts activities was associated with higher odds of good social support from peers, both concurrently and one year later, independent of participation in other extracurricular activities.



Thank you!



Sarah-Jayne
Blakemore



Emily Towner



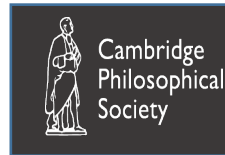
Kirsten Thomas



The Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Group

NIHR | Cambridge Biomedical
Research Centre

J JACOBS
FOUNDATION
Our Promise to Youth



 UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



<https://tomova.scripts.mit.edu/tomova/>



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Now it's your turn...

Time for Shout Outs



1. Rikki Payne: Scottish Youth Theatre
2. James Beagon: Strange Town
3. Jenny Anderson: Kabuki UK
4. Izzie Kerr: Wester Hailes High School
5. Jordan Blackwood: Aberdeen Performing Arts
6. Rachel-Jane Morrison: Stellar Quines and Young Quines
7. Katie Gillespie: Toonspeak
8. Natalia Barua: Lyra
9. Louise Brown: Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

5 minute break

10. Zoë Farrugia: Prickly Pear Productions
11. Hollie Wegner-Jaszkin: Youth Theatre Arts Scotland
12. Hannah Edie: Emergence
13. Craig McCulloch: Solar Bear
14. Claire Swanson: Capital Theatres
15. Emma Forsyth: Theatre Royal Dumfries
16. All of today's sign-ups!



Discussion Groups 1: 2pm-2.50pm

Freelancers' Forum: Led by Zoë Farrugia, Freelancer and Creative Edinburgh Programme Manager

For anyone who works in our sector as a freelance artist. This group will engage in conversation around key issues such as job-juggling, freelance representation, work-life balance and mentoring.

Managers' Mingle: Led by Lynsay Wilson, Participation Producer at Aberdeen Performing Arts

For the managers and leaders. This group will investigate top challenges and opportunities for managers, including supporting wellbeing, community collaborations and setting goals for the future.

Creative Conversation: Led by Claire Swanson, Head of Creative Engagement at Capital Theatres

For any practitioner looking for creative inspiration. This group will investigate how to keep the spark for creativity going, where to find inspiration and what practices generate the strongest and most satisfying work for practitioners, as well as for the young artists we work with.

Workshop Assistants' Skill Share: Led by Jo Sharp, freelance artist

Investigate what it takes to be a good facilitator and exchange tools and exercises that are useful when running and assisting youth theatre workshops.

Discussion Groups 2: 3pm-3.50pm

Access & Inclusion Assembly: Led by Claire Swanson, Head of Creative Engagement, Capital Theatres
For anyone interested in addressing inequalities. This group will investigate how the youth theatre sector can create a more inclusive industry in the future and respond to access needs with limited resource.

Education Exchange: Led by Marion Geoffray, Dignity in School Project Worker, Children's Parliament
For anyone interested in the intersection between education and youth theatre. This exchange will investigate the role of artists in an educational context and how we can better connect with schools.

Wellbeing Wag: Led by Lynsay Wilson, Participation Producer at Aberdeen Performing Arts
For anyone interested in the connections between wellbeing and youth theatre. This chin-wag will investigate how art can enhance wellbeing for participants, creating safe spaces, and protecting ourselves as practitioners.

Workshop Assistants' Discussion Group: Led by YTAS Board member Mhairi Gilmour
Chat about being an assistant in your home youth theatres, and challenges and desires for the future. The thoughts from this session will help to shape future Workshop Assistant Exchanges.

Report Back and Wrap-up

**We hope you enjoyed
#DramaCon2023!**



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**CAPITAL
THEATRES**