

The background of the slide is light gray and is decorated with various colorful, hand-drawn style abstract shapes. On the left side, there are yellow, pink, blue, and green shapes, including a large green arrow-like form pointing towards the center. On the right side, there are green, yellow, pink, and blue shapes, including a large yellow spiral and a green zigzag. The central text is positioned in the middle of the slide.

# MindSETSS

Supporting ALL learners through Inclusive Education



# Who Am I?

- Founding Teacher at Valence College Prep!
- Mentor Teacher w/ NSSI (National Summer School Initiative)
- Success Academy: 12:1:1, ICT, Gen Ed & GTL
- Teaching Artist with CO/LAB Theater Group
- Dramaturg – Fish in a Tree (Off Broadway)
- Education Outreach – How to Dance in Ohio (Broadway)
- Masters of Special Education from Hunter College

# Great teaching is as easy as ABC!



## Adaptability

Teachers need to be flexible in order to address individual needs and respond to student performance in the moment. Every lesson won't go as planned – and that's okay!



## Belief

When students feel seen, heard, and valued by their teachers, they are better equipped to learn, grow, and develop a positive sense of self. Positive relationship building is essential!



## Creativity

Students learn best when they are active and engaged in the classroom. Captivate your audience by promoting creativity in your lesson planning and beyond!

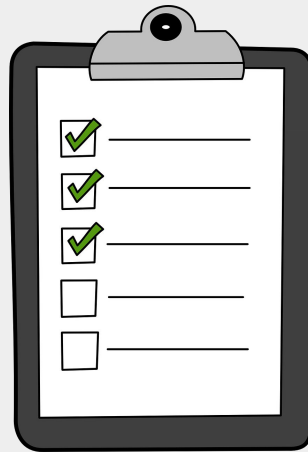
The background is a light gray color, decorated with various abstract, colorful shapes and lines. These include a pink diagonal line in the top left, a yellow curved line, a green spiral, a blue wavy line, a black curved line, a yellow zigzag, a green arrow, a pink wavy line, a black curved line, a blue wavy line, a yellow plus sign, and a pink zigzag. The shapes are scattered around the central text, creating a vibrant and dynamic feel.

# **Understanding Adolescence**

# Goals & Agenda

## Goals:

- Participants will better understand social & developmental impacts on adolescence.
- Teachers will be able to build meaningful relationships with middle schoolers by establishing a supportive environment.



## Agenda:

1. Launch: The Challenges of Adolescence
1. Read & Discuss:
  - "And Then They Stopped Talking to Me"  
(Judith Warner)
  - "Your Middle School Child is the Most Amazing Person"  
(Deborah Farmer Kris)
1. See It In Action: Edutopia Videos
1. Close Out: Reflection & Next Steps

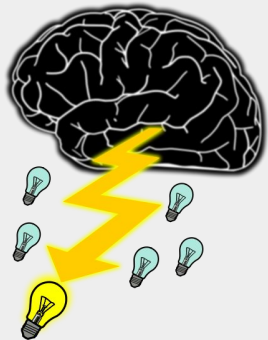
# Think back to when YOU were in MS



Awkward at best...

Embarrassing at worst?





# As we know, middle school is often full of challenges.

- **Within Learning Environment:**

**Made even more difficult by...**

personal trauma

academic gaps

misinterpreting social cues

lack of executive functioning skills

- **Socially:**

slower processing speed

challenges with comprehension

trouble sustaining attention & focus



pressure to  
**FIT IN**

**70%**




pressure to  
**ACHIEVE**

Of middle school students name  
**"anxiety and depression"**  
as a **major problem** facing their peers.  
-PEW Research Center (2018)



pressure of  
**SOCIAL  
MEDIA**



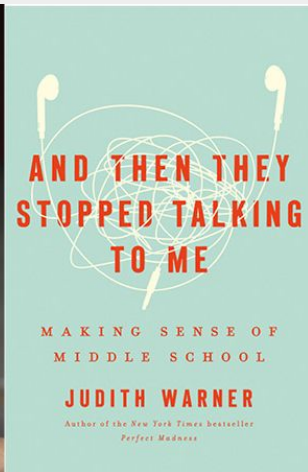
lack of  
**SAFETY**  
in school



"The impact of growing up in this age of extreme inequality has been huge for middle schoolers and their parents at all income levels. ... All kids now receive the message that money equals success ... Academically ambitious parents and kids quickly learn that if they're going to exhaust their high school's math offerings by twelfth grade, they really have to pack as much ninth- and tenth- grade math into their seventh- and eighth- grade years as possible. With college coaches recruiting middle schoolers for future athletic scholarships, parents are told, kids have to seriously start upping their game in sixth grade at the least. Naviance, the online college search and application prep service, is now on offer in seventeen hundred middle schools.

## Additional Context

What all this means for college-bound kids is that the most destructive tendencies of the middle school mindset – **the obsession with status, the endless comparison with peers, the self-questioning and often cruel levels of (self- and other-) criticism** – are now being fed by a new "imaginary audience": college admissions committees. Which, kids are told at earlier and earlier ages, have the power to brand them winners or losers for the rest of their lives."



Not to mention the  
"select high school"  
process in NYC...

**Our  
students  
are human  
beings.**

wants triggers talents insecurities  
needs goals  
hopes anxieties  
dreams stressors  
fears responsibilities  
passions families  
friends lived experiences

# The Art of Growing Up – MindMatters Australia

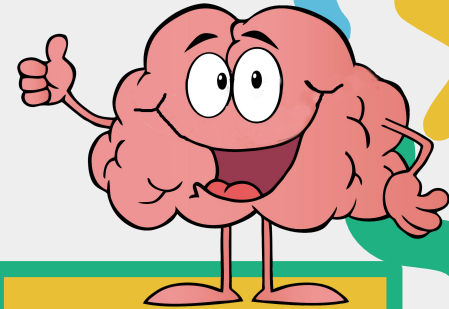


What is  
unique about  
adolescence?






## The Adolescent Brain – Dan Siegel



What is **ACTUALLY** happening in the adolescent brain?

What **OPPORTUNITIES** do we have to support this development?



When we think of  
adolescence in **this** way,  
we have greater

**opportunity**  
to support our students!

**Raging  
Hormones  
vs.  
Remodeling  
Brain**

# A Few Keys to Happiness & Success

“What happens in our middle schools is in many ways a microcosm of our larger society. ***The truth is, we can’t make middle school better for our kids if we don’t make our culture less middle-schoolish.***



After all, psychologists make no secret of what middle schoolers need in order to thrive:

- good relationships
- a sense of belonging
- the feeling of being competent & skilled

Those are the keys to happiness for people of **all ages**, for that matter, and for lifelong resilience.”

– Judith Warner

# What Works?



- Skim through the excerpt from Ch. 8 or the CNN Article: "Your Middle School Child is the Most Amazing Person."
- Take note of teacher moves –
  - What can educators do to...
    - **Develop positive relationships?**
    - **Promote a sense of belonging?**
    - **Celebrate competency & skill?**
- Be ready to share and discuss!

# Talk It Out:



What unique challenges  
do middle schoolers face?

What can we as educators do to better  
support students through adolescence?





# Edutopia Video Library

What **message** is being communicated from these teachers?

What **impact** does this have on students?

How might **YOU** employ a similar practice in your instruction?

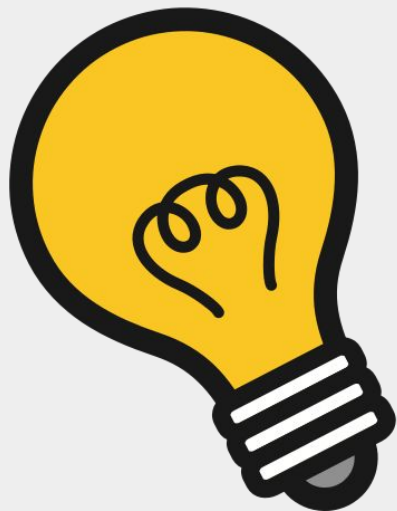


# Close Out:

What ideas do you have to make your classroom one that promotes good relationships, a sense of belonging, and celebrates student achievement?

How has your perspective on working with adolescents changed as a result of something you learned from this session?

Why did you decide to teach middle school? What excites you most about working with students in this particular age group?



The slide features a light gray background with various colorful abstract shapes scattered around the edges. These include a large black 'X' on the left, a green hand-like shape at the top right, a pink oval, a black wavy line, a blue squiggle, a yellow zigzag, a pink plus sign, a green circle, a black horizontal bar, a blue spiral, a pink squiggle, and a yellow squiggle at the bottom left.

# Thanks!

**Do you have any questions?**

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