

Teen Brain Development: supporting, programming, advocating

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A Teen Advocate

Welcome

1. Theory
2. Action
3. Support

Ground Rules

- My goal is discuss the reality behind the problem.
 - Problem: I/my coworkers don't like serving teenagers.
 - Reality: I/my coworkers don't know how to relate to teenagers.
- “Ideas...only become great when they are challenged and tested.”
- “To set up a healthy feedback system, you must remove power dynamics from the equation...focus on the problem, not the person.”
- “Frank talk, spirited debate, laughter, and love...essential ingredients.”

Who am I?

- April Pavis-Shroeder
- *april.shroeder@gmail.com*

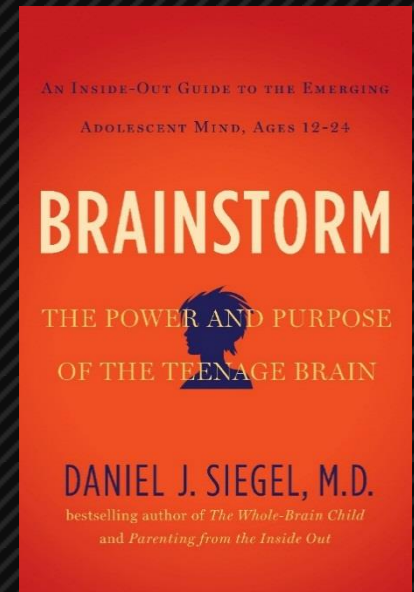
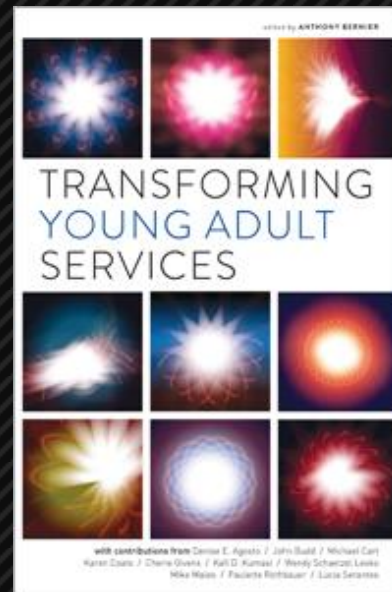
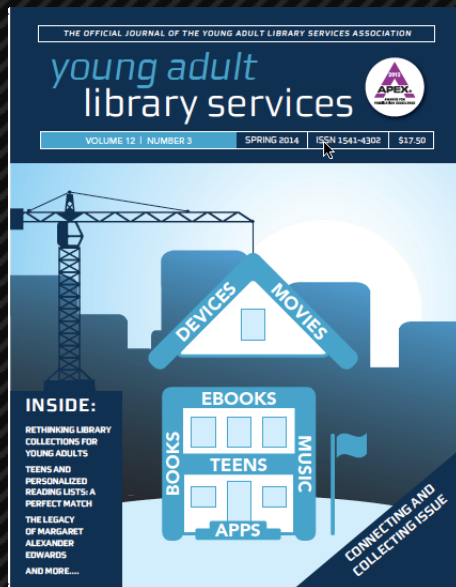


April Layne @alibrarianstake · 6 May 2011

I got the job!! I'm a teen **#librarian** !!!! AHH!! My dream job in an incredible location!! I'm a teen librarian!!!!!!

Where did I get my information?

- Twelve years of service in libraries
- Conversations with teens and library staff
- Professional resources



PART 1: THE TEEN BRAIN

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss current scientific research relating to neurological development in teenagers.
2. Understand why empathy is crucial when working with teenagers.

Where are teens, neurologically and developmentally?

- NIH study shows that brains go undergo a massive reorganization between our 12th and 25th years.
- “Teens are still learning to use their brain’s new networks. Stress, fatigue, or challenges can cause a misfire.”



Photo Credit: Alexander Baxevanis
(Creative Commons)

The Brain

- If teenagers have a heightened ability to learn and retain information, why do they make poor behavioral judgement? [Begin](#)
[2:40](#)

Teen neurology and development

ESSENCE:

- Emotional Support
- Social Engagement
- Novelty-Seeking
- Creative Exploration

What do teens need?



Support Empowerment Boundaries & Expectations
Constructive Use of Time Commitment to Learning
Positive Values Social Competencies Positive Identity

What do teens need?

FIGURE 1.2 | **Seven Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents**

1. Physical Activity
 - boundless energy and dreamy lethargy
 - growing bodies need time to move and relax
2. Competence and Achievement
 - self-conscious about themselves
 - need to do something well and receive admiration
 - chances to prove themselves
3. Self-Definition
 - need opportunities to explore widening world
 - reflect upon new experiences and their roles
4. Creative Expression
 - need to express new feelings and interests
5. Positive Social Interaction with Peers and Adults
 - helps them understand and accept themselves
 - need support, companionship, and criticism
 - relationships with those willing to share
6. Structure and Clear Limits
 - know and understand rules of the system
 - search for security is helped by boundaries
7. Meaningful Participation
 - need to express social and intellectual skills
 - gain a sense of responsibility

SOURCE: Patrick Jones, "Seven Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents" (A handout from Serving the Underserved, a seminar conducted by The Young Adult Library Services Association of the American Library Association, June 1994, in Miami, Florida). Based upon Gayle Dorman, *The Middle Grades Assessment Program: User's Manual* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Center for Early Adolescence, 1981).

What do teens need?

- We must honor the person the adolescent is becoming
- See the power of who they are now and who they will be
- Time to work with peers with adult interference
- Gentle guidance

PART 2: TEENS AS PATRONS

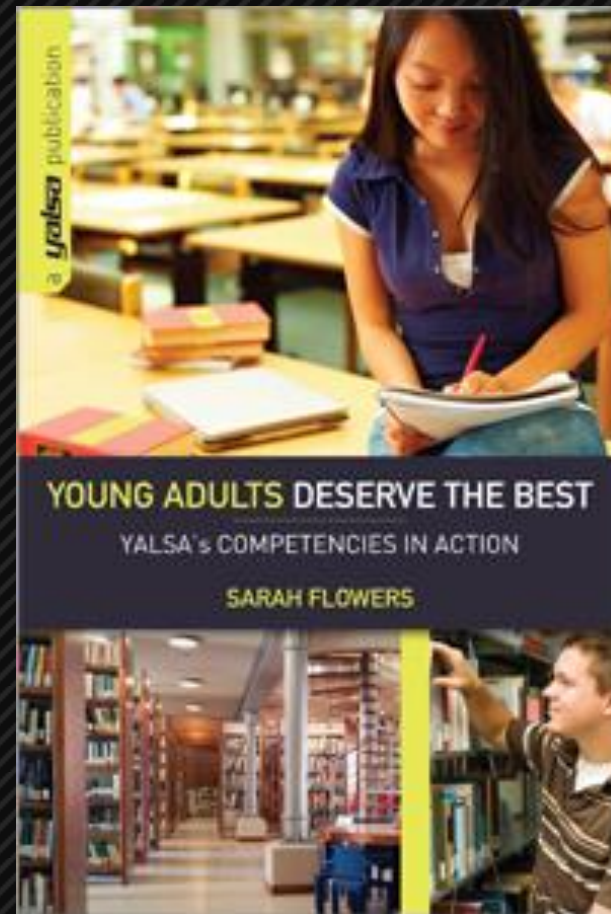
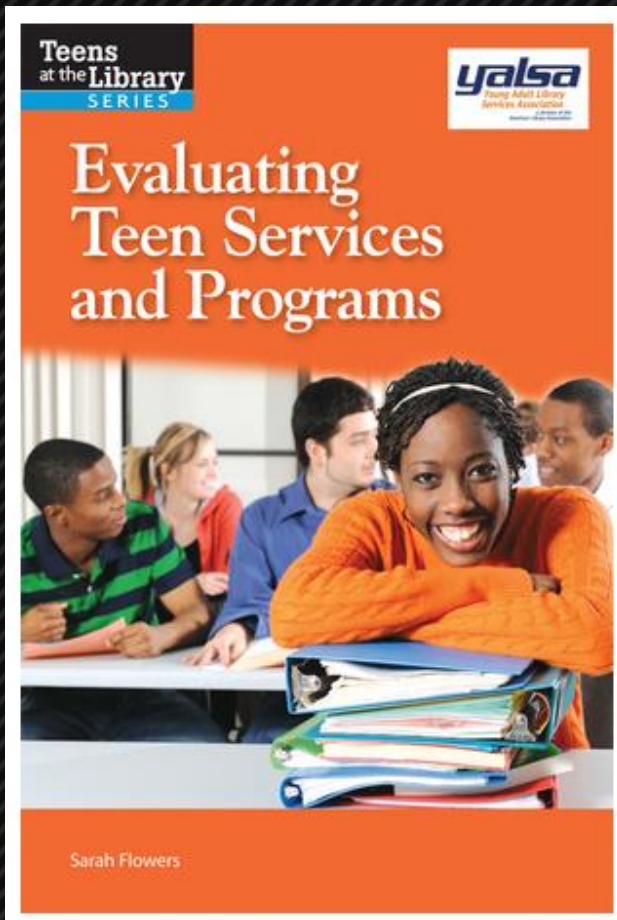
1. Why we need them
2. Why we want them
3. How we can help them

QUESTION

Why do we need or want teen patrons?

How are teenagers valuable customers?

How Can We Help Them?



How Can We Help Them?

- Pressure from Parents
 - ✓ No teen can just “be”
 - ✓ “Ordinary” isn’t good enough
 - ✓ This region is extraordinary in putting stress on youth to succeed
- Special reference assistance
 - ✓ “teens often feel insecure, judging neutral or ambiguous behaviors in others to be negative and threatening.”
 - ✓ Re-assure teens that their questions are valid and that they are not bothering you.

Focus Group Findings

- ☹️ *[teens] don't like to talk to staff*
- ☹️ *[staff] seem judgmental*
- ☹️ *hire nicer people*
- ☹️ *[staff] look at us as if going to steal something!*
- ☹️ *staff walks around more when teens are there; feel like we're being patrolled*
- ☹️ *People stare at us*
- ☹️ *We're treated differently*
- ☹️ *people that work [at the Circulation Desk] are snooty*

QUESTION

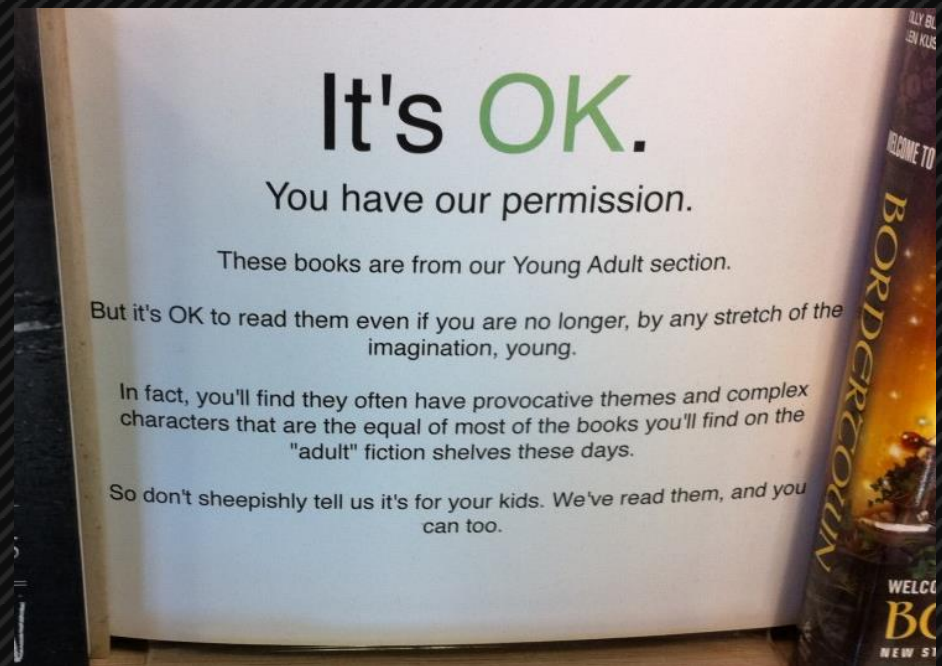
How can you better serve your teen patrons?

PART 3: TEACH OTHERS

1. Talk to your colleagues
2. Talk to patrons

Teach Yourself

- Twelve Ways to Be a Youth Advocate
- Read YA literature



Spotted at a bookstore in Olympia, WA by YA Highway contributor Sarah Enni

Write a vision statement for how you want to be perceived, and how you want to perceive teen patrons going forward.

Action Plan

1. Identify Desired Outcomes

I will...

2. Hypothesize solution

How will I do this?

3. Predict and plan for dissent

Who/what might get in the way of success?

4. Act

5. Analyze and edit

What went right? What didn't go well? What do I need to adjust?

6. Act again

7. Wash, rinse, repeat

Wrap-Up

- What did you learn today that you will employ upon return to your library?
- How can I help you after today?

