

Welcome to our brand-new website featuring all our current work.

The past 6 months has been exceptionally busy since we have secured £500,000 from Big Lottery. Have a look under ROOTS.

We continue to provide services commissioned by schools offering activities that help families deal with their emotional distress. Our work is both innovative and creative.

I am concerned that it seems to have become the 'norm' to 'medicate' away behavioural problems, rather than tackle the root cause.

Recent research informs us the rising numbers of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who are prescribed the drug Ritalin isn't new. But the grim reality lies in figures published this week, showing that prescriptions for the drug have more than doubled in the past ten years — from 700,000 to more than 1.5 million now.

Apparently, it means that some children — who are outgoing, boisterous and less academic — simply can't fit in and need drugs to mould their behaviour to suit the modern classroom.

In the same way teenagers brain scans show the prefrontal cortex is the last part of the brain to fully develop and is undergoing change until well into the 20s. This part of the brain is emotional high command; the seat of impulse control, of foreseeing and judging consequences of behaviour, of initiating appropriate behaviour and inhibiting inappropriate behaviour, and of controlling our reaction to people and events.

It's relative immaturity is why teenagers behave the way they do. A teenager may understand that a particular action is wrong or dangerous, but they lack the hardwiring in their brain to properly process these thoughts in the way an adult does.

An article for Dr Max informs us 'easy access to online pornography. While an adult can view porn and, in the majority of cases, understand that this is not a blueprint for human relationships, the thinking of teenagers can be warped by this exposure. The impact of violent video games on young brains is also a concern, while the uninhibited use of social media, posting messages and, in some cases, inappropriate pictures of themselves, should alarm every parent. But there is a positive to be taken from this. I've seen many teenagers with severe mental health problems who, given time, get better. Of course, mental health support helps, but really what's happened is their neurological development has caught up and enabled them to regulate their emotions.

I've noticed this particularly in cases of self-harm, in which some youngsters resort to injuring themselves as a way of coping with stress or emotions that threaten to overwhelm them.

CYCA's philosophy is about normalising damaging emotions such as depression and anxiety. These conditions don't need or have to become a lifelong illness, learning strategies to change unhelpful thinking styles is the first step recovery.

Watch this space for our new dates for Autumn training.