
FREE PARENT MINI TRAINING

The Teenage Brain Explained

A short neuroscience guide every parent of teens should understand.

**Why does your teen react so quickly, feel emotions so intensely, or
shut down during conflict?**

Understanding what is happening inside the teenage brain can
completely change the way we respond as parents.

When we understand the brain, everything begins to make more sense.

By Sarah Jaclyn

FOUNDER OF THE RISE UP™ RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK
NEUROSCIENCE-INFORMED COACH & EDUCATOR

RISE UP™ FRAMEWORK | SARAHJACLYN.COM

Before you begin —

If you're feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, or unsure what to do next...

you're not alone.

This training will help you understand what's happening in your teen's
brain.

And when you're ready, I'll show you exactly how to start creating
change.



Hi, I'm Sarah — a neuroscience-informed coach, educator, and curriculum designer with over 20 years of experience helping teens and families build emotional regulation, resilience, and steady inner strength. I've spent my career translating brain science into simple, practical tools that actually work in real homes with real kids. My approach blends evidence-based neuroscience, grounded lived experience, and the quiet wisdom of faith. I believe every parent is capable of leading their family with clarity and confidence — sometimes you just need someone to walk beside you and show you how the brain really works.

I created the RISE UP™ Framework to give families a clear, compassionate roadmap for navigating emotions, communication, and the ups and downs of adolescence. It's research-aligned, real-world tested, and built on the belief that both parents and teens can grow stronger, steadier, and more connected one small step at a time. If you're here, you're already doing something brave. You're choosing to understand your teen more deeply — and that choice alone is a powerful act of love. I'm honored to guide you through this journey.

Sarah Jaclyn

The Teenage Brain Is Still Developing

One of the most important things parents can understand is that the teenage brain is still under construction.

The part of the brain responsible for planning, impulse control, and decision-making — **called the prefrontal cortex** — is not fully developed until the mid-20s.

During adolescence, this area is **still building the pathways** that allow teens to pause, reflect, and make thoughtful decisions.

Because of this, teens often respond first from the emotional center of the brain rather than the logical center.

This can look like:

- reacting quickly during conflict
- saying things they later regret
- struggling to pause before responding
- feeling overwhelmed by strong emotions

Neuroscience Insight

Brain imaging studies show that adolescence is one of the most significant periods of brain development since early childhood. Neural pathways are constantly strengthening and reorganizing.

Why Emotions Feel So Big

During the teen years, **the amygdala** — the brain's emotional center — becomes highly active.

At the same time, the **brain is still developing** the systems that help regulate emotional intensity.

This combination means teens often experience emotions more strongly and more quickly than adults.

A situation that seems small to a parent may feel overwhelming to a teen because their brain is still learning how to process and regulate emotional responses.

Teens may:

- escalate quickly during disagreements
- shut down emotionally
- react strongly to criticism
- struggle to calm down once upset

Neuroscience Insight

Research shows that teens rely more heavily on emotional brain centers when interpreting social situations. This means they may perceive criticism or conflict more intensely than adults.

Why Conflict Escalates So Quickly

Many parent-teen conflicts happen when two **nervous systems become activated** at the same time.

When a teen feels embarrassed, misunderstood, or threatened, their nervous system may shift into a **fight, flight, or freeze (shutdown) response**.

Once the brain enters this survival mode, the ability to think clearly decreases.

If a parent's nervous system becomes activated as well, the conversation can escalate quickly.

Neuroscience Insight

When emotional intensity rises, the brain temporarily shifts away from logical thinking centers and toward survival responses. This is why reasoning in the middle of a heated moment rarely works.

The most powerful thing a parent can do in these moments is regulate their own response first.

A calm nervous system helps a teen's nervous system settle.

Understanding the Brain Is the First Step

But change happens when the environment shifts and new patterns are created.

That's exactly what the **14-Day Reset** is designed to do.

This doesn't create laziness—it changes how the brain responds to effort, focus, and reward.

The RISE UP™ Framework

Understanding the brain helps parents respond with **greater clarity and compassion.**

But teens also need **skills and practice** to build **emotional regulation and resilience.**

R

Regulate emotions

Learn how to calm the brain and body in stressful moments

I

Identify emotions

Name what you're feeling and what may be driving it.

S

Shift perspective

See situations differently and build empathy

E

Empower healthier choices

Build confidence and make better decisions

U

Understand what's beneath the surface

Learn how the brain responds to stress, emotions and social pressure

P

Practice new pathways

Strengthen new habits through repetition and support.

These skills help teens move from reacting impulsively to responding with greater awareness and resilience.

Next Steps

Where to Begin

Now that you understand what's happening in your teen's brain... the next step is creating change.

Start Here

The 14-Day Reset

A simple, structured way to reduce overstimulation, improve focus, and bring more calm back into your home.

Start the Reset

Want to Go Deeper?

The RISE UP™ tools help your teen build emotional resilience, confidence, and long-term skills.

Explore the Full System

Know Another Parent Who Might Benefit From This?

If this guide helped you understand your teen a little better, you're not alone.

Many parents are trying to navigate the emotional intensity of the teen years while supporting their children through school pressures, social challenges, and the constant influence of technology.

Sometimes the most helpful thing we can do is share what we're learning with another parent who may need encouragement too.

If this training helped you see your teen with new understanding, consider passing it along.

Explore additional tools, guides, and parenting resources at:
[SarahJaclyn.com](https://sarahjaclyn.com)

You can learn the full RISE UP process inside the Teen Resilience Workbook and Parent Trail Guide.

Together we can help the next generation grow in resilience, wisdom, and emotional strength.

With Grace & Grit,
— Sarah Jaclyn