

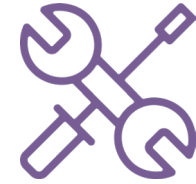
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Applying a Positive Youth Development Framework to Increase Resiliency and Thrive

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A purple shield-shaped logo divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant contains a white pentagon, the top-right a white rectangle, the bottom-left a white star, and the bottom-right a white leaf-like shape.

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Readiness. Knowledge. Network.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture,
U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy,
U.S. Department of Defense under Award Number 2019-48770-30366.

Today's Presenters



Kate Sullivan, Ph.D., MSD

Assistant Professor at the Silver School of Social Work at New York University.



Danny Perkins, Ph.D.

Professor of Family and Youth Resiliency and Policy at Penn State University
Principal Scientist of the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State

Military Connected Youth: Applying a Positive Youth Development Framework to Increase Resilience and Thriving

Dr. Kate Sullivan

NYU Silver School of Social Work



Photo By: Staff Sgt. Vernon Young Jr.

Agenda

1. Who are military youth
 - a. Demographics
 - b. Culture
 - c. Health and mental health
2. Military youth in transition
 - a. Relocation
 - b. Deployment
 - c. Reintegration
3. Promoting positive youth development
4. Questions, discussion



Military Youth Demographics

- 1.6 million children of military service members
 - 36.8% 0-5 years old
 - 32.6% 6-11 years old
 - 24.3% 12-18 years old
- Including active duty, reserve, and veteran-connected children, estimated to be approximately 4 million children.

Source: DoD, 2021.



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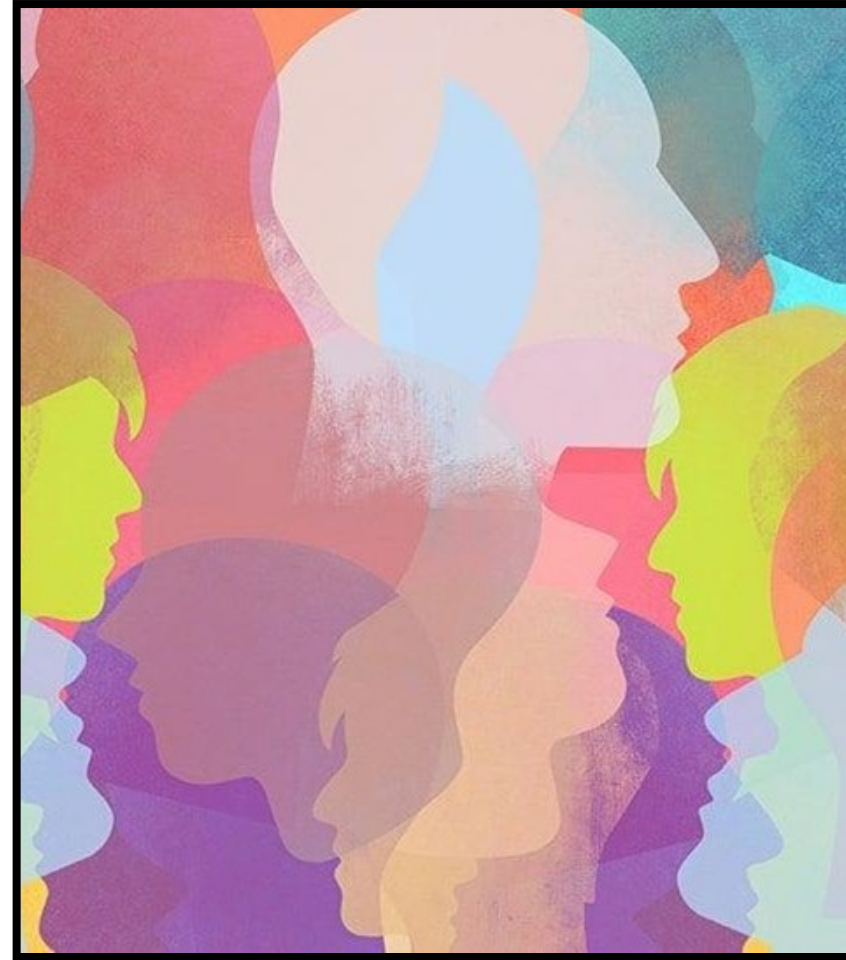


Military Culture

- Ethnically and geographically diverse
- Hierarchical
- Younger on average
- Strengths and stressors

- For military youth:
 - Camaraderie
 - Living on base/post
 - Pressure to conform?
 - Strengths and stressors

NASEM, 2019.



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**From your experience,
what are some ways military culture
affects military youth?**



Health and Mental Health



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- Connections to military transitions
- Little data comparing to civilian youth
 - Except in the context of school
- Most research is focused on mental rather than physical health



Military Youth at School

- 60% of children in active duty families are school age
- Majority of children in Guard and Reserve families are also school age
- 80% of military youth attend public schools
- 71,000 students attend 164 DoDEA schools in 11 foreign countries, 7 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico
- More about the connection between relocation and school....

Kitmotto et al., 2011.



School-Based Research

- California Healthy Kids Survey
- Military youth are:
 - 43% more likely to report suicidal thoughts
 - 71% more likely to make a serious attempt
 - 23% more likely to report high psychological distress
 - 45-75% more likely to have used substances recently
 - 90% more likely to bring any weapon to school
 - 120% more likely to bring a gun to school

Kitmotto et al., 2011.



School-Based Research

➤ Lots of reasons to be concerned, BUT...

	Overall	Military	Nonmilitary		
<u>Lifetime substance use</u>	<u>n (%)</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>OR</u>	<u>95% CI</u>
Cigarettes	114,287 (16.93)	21.35	16.54	1.53	1.48-1.58
Alcohol	266,935 (39.70)	45.22	39.23	1.54	1.50-1.58
Marijuana	187,687 (27.92)	32.57	27.52	1.49	1.45-1.53
Other drugs	106,049 (15.66)	21.58	15.14	1.60	1.56-1.65
Prescription	126,052 (27.36)	35.96	26.68	1.54	1.49-1.59





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Military youth & transitions: What are the Challenges / Opportunities?



Defense.gov

Military Youth in Transition

- Opportunities or challenges?
- Less empirical research about relocation
- More data about the impact of deployment and reintegration

NASEM, 2019.



Relocation

- On average, every 2-3 years
- Presents many opportunities
- Average military youth attends six to nine K-12 schools
 - Academic challenges
 - Missed opportunities for extracurricular activities
- Loss of social connections
- May be associated with depression and anxiety symptoms

Kitmotto et al., 2011



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Deployment

- More than 2 million families have experienced deployment.
- Though opportunities exist, prevailing theme is association with adverse outcomes.
- Potential mechanisms:
 - Worry and fear
 - Family and couple separation
 - Challenges with communication
 - Exposure to combat and it's psychological impact

NASEM, 2019.



Military.com



Deployment Outcomes for Youth

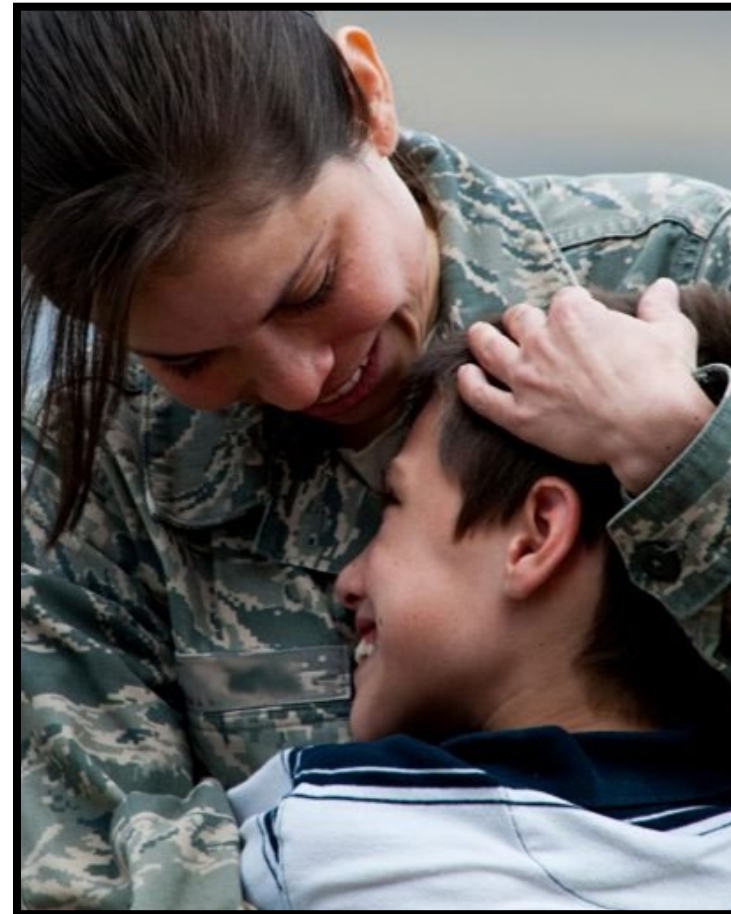
- Strongly influenced by the wellbeing of caregiver at home.
- Cross-sectional studies: increases in distress, academic difficulties, emotional/ behavioral probs, mental health services use, suicidality, child maltreatment
- Longitudinal studies: most adverse outcomes are confined to the period of the deployment and return to pre-deployment levels within months.
 - Increase in emotional problems (reported by spouse)
 - Increase in self-reported substance use among teens
- Longer-term adverse outcomes associated with service members' deployment-related trauma (e.g., PTSD, TBI).

Hawkins et al., 2018; NASEM, 2019.



Reintegration

- Period after deployment when service member returns home – characterized by a honeymoon period followed by a period of boundary ambiguity.
- Impact on children and families strongly influenced by service members' functioning.
- Growing body of research, largely focused on PTSD, highlights difficulties with intimate relationships and parenting secondary to PTSD.



Military Oncesource.com



Some Caveats



- The impact of stressors is likely cumulative.
- Exposure to normative stressors (e.g., parents' adverse childhood experiences) may be much more important than the impact of military stressors.
- Access to **resources** and other protective factors may be more important to understanding outcomes



Positive Youth Development

- Ungar: “Children’s positive outcomes are mostly the result of facilitative environments that provide children with the potential to do well.”
 - Decentrality Positive Youth Development
- PYD: “Rather than intervening only when young people are “at risk”..., positive youth development aims to promote optimal youth development by fostering the skills, interests, attributes, and abilities of all youth.” (Military REACH)

University of Minnesota, 2017.





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**What resources and other protective factors
have you successfully used with youth and
families to promote positive youth
development?**



PYD Services & Supports for Military Youth



- PYD can be fostered in the home, school, and community
- For example, PYD programs:
 - DoD Teen and Youth Centers
 - Partnerships with Boys and Girls Club, 4-H, Big Brother/Sister, YMCA, Boy & Girls Scouts
 - Military Child Education Coalition Student 2 Student Program



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Thank you!

Questions/Comments?



PennState

CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

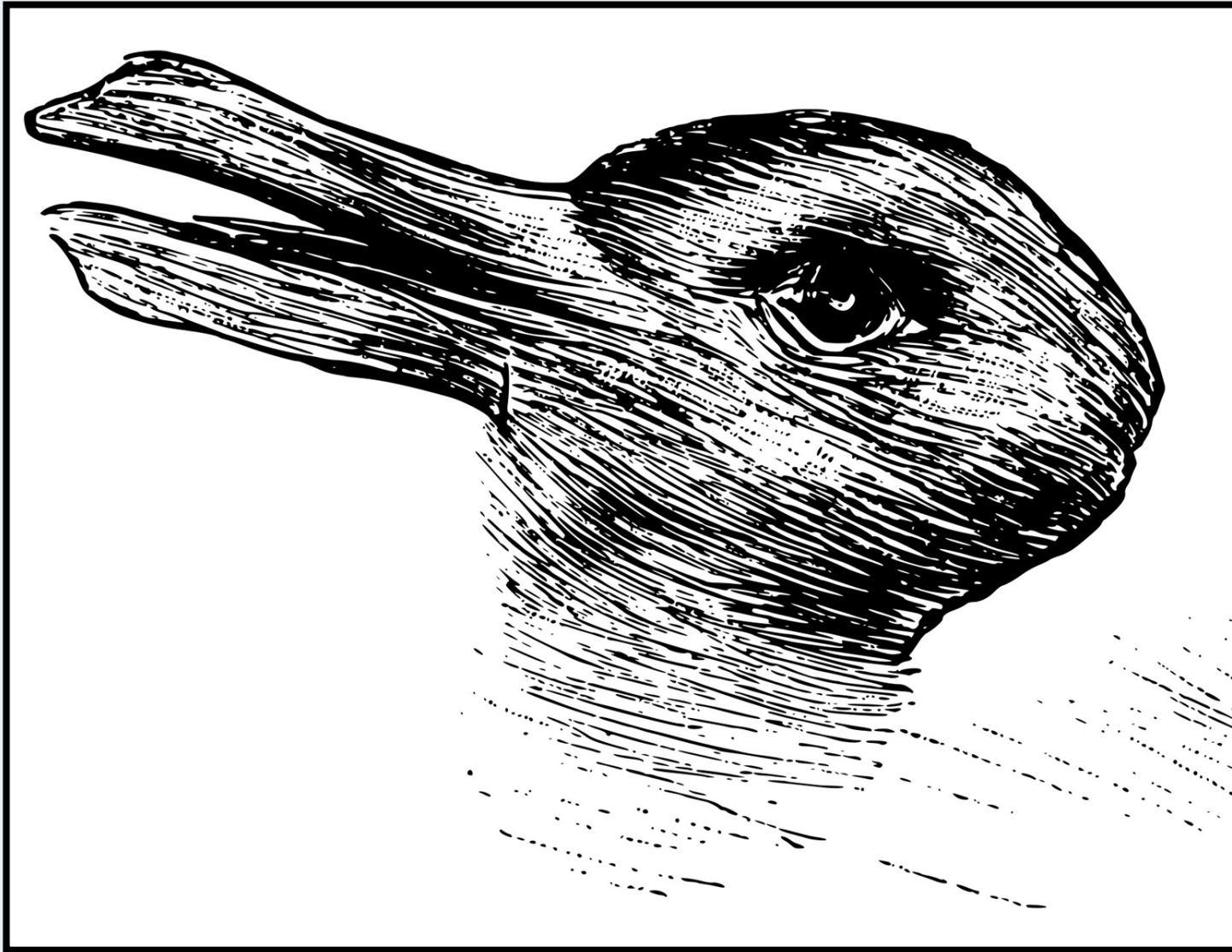
Applying a Positive Youth Development framework to increase their resiliency and thriving.

Daniel F. Perkins, Ph.D.

Professor of Family and Youth Resiliency and Policy

Principal Scientist and Co-Director of the Clearinghouse for Military
Family Readiness at Penn State

May 31, 2023

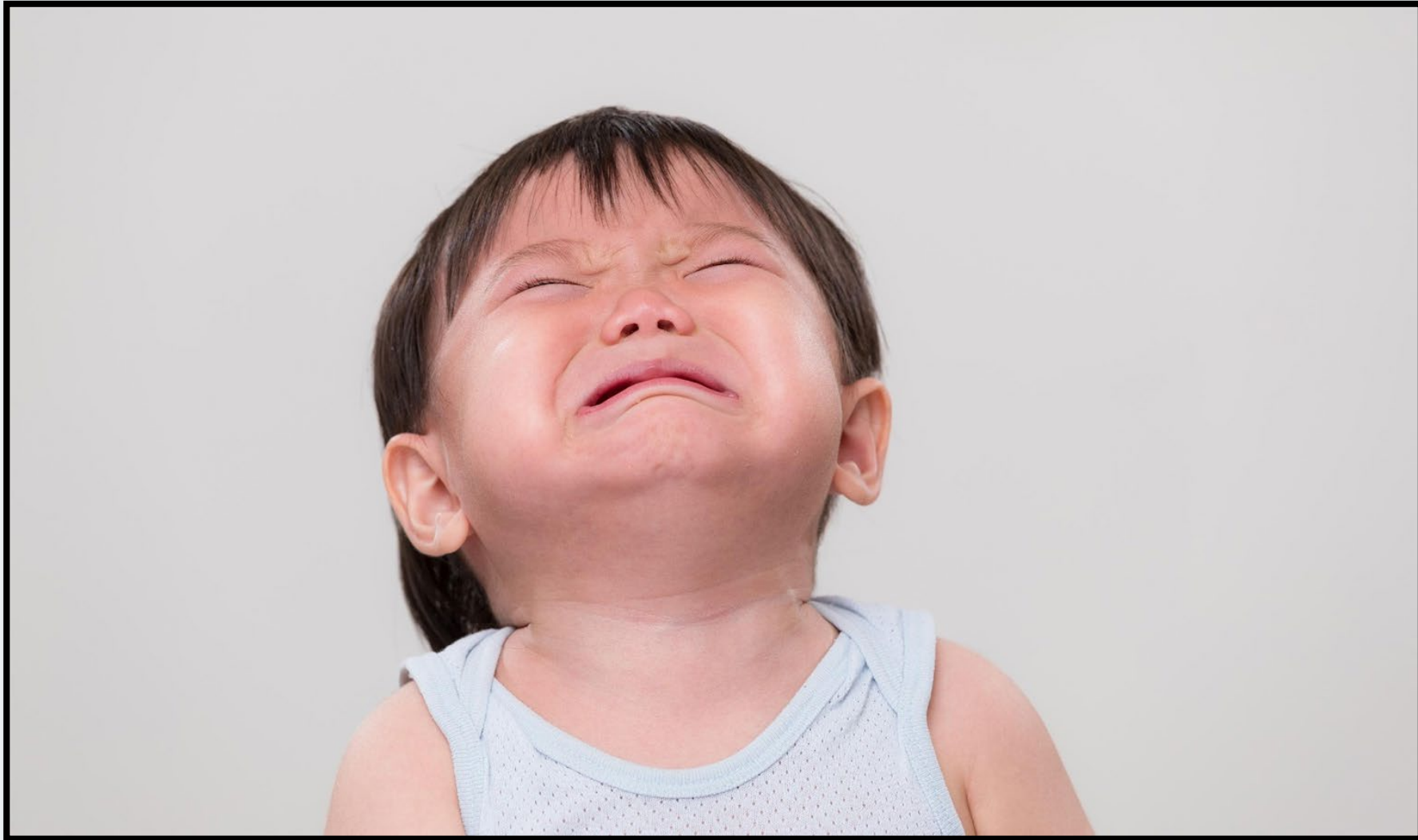


Resiliency: Central Themes

- Adversity – major life stressors
- Flexibility – “Bouncebackability”
- Over time – a process
- Well-being orientation - coping



We all have difficult times



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Coping, Resiliency, & Thriving

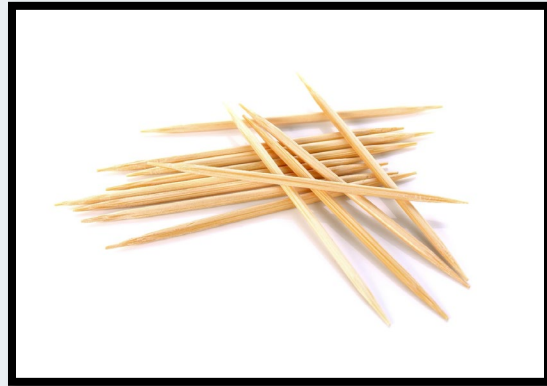
- Coping is the thoughts and actions that an individual does intending to reduce the effects of stress.
- Thriving is one who copes and is resilient, and by doing so, emerges as stronger and more confident.
- Resiliency is “[t]he capacity for healthy development and successful learning in spite of challenges.”



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Resilience is the ability to...

...not only survive, but thrive!



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In order to remain strong, we must stretch ourselves and spring forward!

A certain amount of opposition
is a help, not a hindrance.



*A kite rises against the wind, not
with it.*

--Unknown

Studies of individuals and families in difficult situations (abusive families, poverty, medical crises, etc.) provide evidence for two additional characteristics:



Individual Assets: Developing talents, personality traits, and self reliance to persevere to physical and mental “wellness.”



Community Support: Cultivating a protective environment in which families actively contribute to the physical and emotional survival, safety, and self esteem of children and adults; and minimizing risks which jeopardize healthy development.

Perkins & Caldwell, 2018, pp. 173-192.

Building an Individual's Capacity



Deposit Photos

Experiences provide individuals with learning opportunities and can increase their ability to thrive.

Relationships provide support and safety that enable individuals to weather the storm and even take risks.

Engagement in opportunities enable youth to develop skills for themselves and employ those skills in the real world - gain a sense of usefulness.

He who does not cultivate his field will die of hunger

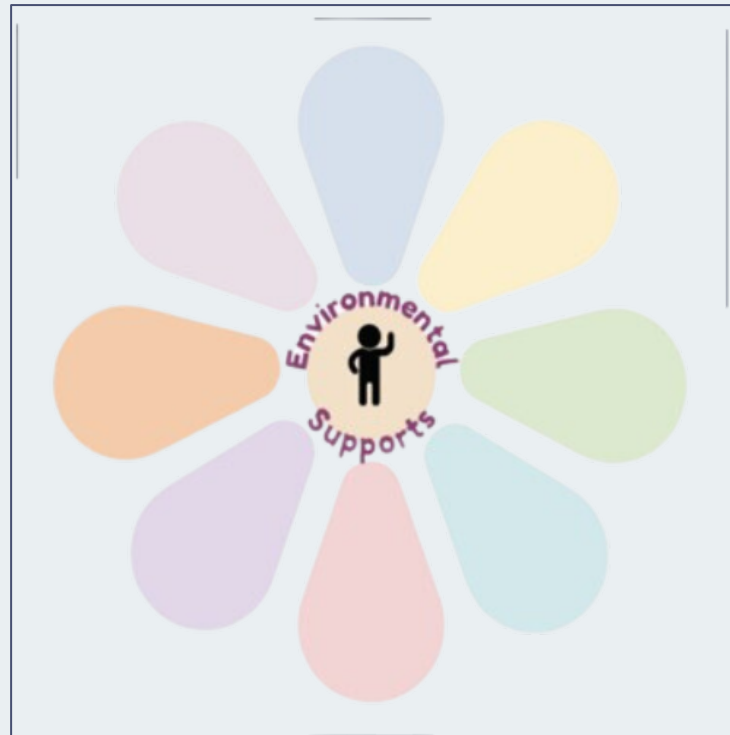
African Proverb



Discussion Break



Take a few minutes to think back over your life growing up and identify the *characteristics* of environmental supports and opportunities (protective factors) that helped you to develop your personal strengths.

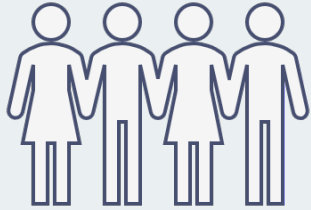


*Image adapted from Thrive: Harmful Behaviors: Recognize. Respond. Repair.

Resiliency Characteristics

Committed

Communication



Connectedness



High Expectations

Self-confidence

Engagement

Change the context of how people live and you change everything



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“Our work must emphasize deliberate investment in positive factors that research has shown to be closely tied to reduced levels of negative behaviors as well as increased levels of thriving attitudes and behaviors.”

(Blyth, 2000)



Essential Elements

- Positive relationships with caring adults
- Physically & emotionally safe environment
- Opportunity for mastery
- Opportunity to value & practice service
- Opportunity for self-determination
- Welcoming environment
- Active participant in the future
- Engagement in learning

8 Elements Distilled Into Circle of Courage

<p><u>GENEROSITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Opportunity to value and practice service for others	<p><u>BELONGING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Positive relationships with a caring adult-An inclusive environment-A safe environment
<p><u>INDEPENDENCE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future-Opportunity for self-determination	<p><u>MASTERY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Engagement in learning-Opportunity for mastery/competency



Where does it fall?

- Youth grades in math and science increased due working on technology projects (e.g., robotics and GPS/GIS).
- Youth were involved in website development for a non-profit in an experience with consulting.
- Youth learned about the internal workings of computers through the *Computer in a Box* program.
- Youth mapped the waterways for DCNR in a remote rural county.
- Youth developed the program's T-shirt and sweatshirt design.
- Ground rules poster developed by youth and staff (high school youth).
- Teens conducted a wire pull through in a building for an alternative school.
- The ratio of adults to youth is 1 to 10 (high school program).
- Youth developed a robot using LEGOS.
- Youth took on leadership responsibilities (assuming ownership of program).

- Answers to choose from: Generosity, Belonging, Independence, Mastery

Questions aligned to the Circle of Courage

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>GENEROSITY</u></p> <p>-What activities or experiences are available for participants to do something positive for others?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>BELONGING</u></p> <p>-What is the youth to adult ratio? -Are cooperative games played? -Is there a bullying policy? -Is the physical setting safe & developmentally appropriate?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>INDEPENDENCE</u></p> <p>-Are there activities that engage youth to think about a positive future for themselves? -Are there activities that enable youth to make decisions? (you can control certain parts of life)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MASTERY</u></p> <p>-Are there opportunities for youth to be totally engaged in learning process for a particular area? -Are there specific learning objectives? -Are there opportunities for youth to demonstrate competency?</p>



Support Elements: Synthesis of Research & Practice Base

- Circle of Courage (Brendtro et al., 2018)
- *Community Program to Promote Youth Development*, National Research Council (Eccles & Gootman, 2002)
- 6 Cs of Community Youth Development (Villaruel et al., 2003).
- America's Promise (2000)
- Assets Model, Search Institute (2020)
- *Safe Havens*, Public/Private Ventures (Gambone & Arbretton, 1997)
- 4-H Thrive Model (Noble, Hall, Hensley, & Arnold, 2021)

Five Cs of PYD

- Competence in academic, social, emotional, and vocational areas;
- Confidence in whom one is becoming (identity);
- Connection to self and others;
- Character that comes from positive values, integrity, and strong sense of morals; and
- Caring and compassion.

Villaruel et al., 2003.

Sixth C: Contribution

- By **Contributing** to their families, neighborhoods, and communities, youth are afforded practical opportunities to make use of the other five Cs.
- *Community youth development* is defined as: purposely creating environments that provide constructive, affirmative, and encouraging relationships that are sustained over time with adults and peers, while concurrently providing an array of opportunities that enable youth to build their competencies and become engaged as partners in their own development as well as the development of their communities.

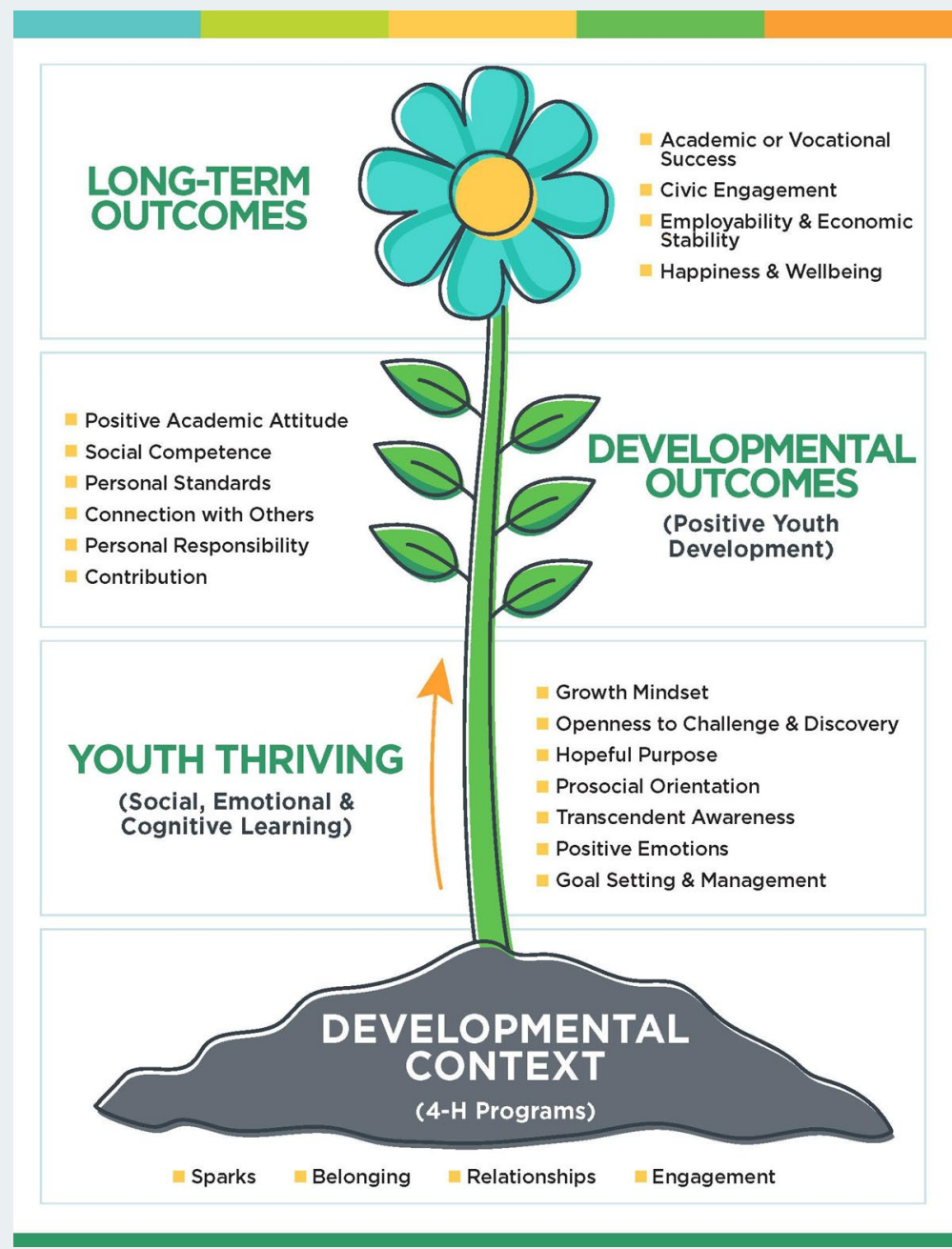
CYD Program Spiderweb Analysis



Seven Developmental Supports and Opportunities

- Sense of safety
- Challenging and interesting activities
- Sense of belonging
- Social support from adults
- Input and decision making
- Leadership
- Volunteer and community service

(Gambone & Arbreton, 1997)



“While youth development happens everywhere and not just in programs, youth development programs are perhaps the most deliberate efforts to stimulate development.”

(Blyth, 2000)

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Upcoming Event



Promoting Youth Mental Well-Being by Building Social Emotional Learning Skills

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

This session will explore how military youth are faring post pandemic And ow do we assess and rebuild programs with a youth development framework that builds resilience and reduces risk of military youth

Continuing education credit will be available for this session!

Continuing Education



This webinar has been approved for the following continuing education (CE) credits:

- 1.5 Board Certified Patient Advocates (BCAP):
 - 1.5 Case Manager (CCMC):
 - 1.5 Certified Family Life Educators (CFLE):
 - 1.5 Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences (CFCS):
 - 1.5 Certified Nutrition & Wellness Educator (CNWE):
 - 1.5 Social Work, LPC, LMFT (UT): *Check with your state licensing agency for reciprocity and/or credit approval if licensed for other professions or in one of the following states: CO, FL, HI, IA, KS, KY, MI, NY, ND, OH, OK.*
- Certificate of attendance

Evaluation Link

Go to the event page for the evaluation and post-test link.

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