

Positive Youth Development and Mentoring

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Adolescents: problems to be
managed or assets to be
developed?

Adolescence – Historically Speaking...

'Myths' of adolescence

- Conflict and turmoil
- Raging hormones
- Juvenile delinquents

Debunking the myths

- Normative development
- No different than adult levels
- Applies to minority not majority

“While the positive youth development approach recognises the existence of adversities and developmental challenges that may affect children in various ways, it resists conceiving the development process mainly as an effort to overcome deficits and risk. Instead, it begins with a vision of a fully able child eager to explore the world, gain competence, and acquire the capacity to contribute importantly to the world”

(Damon, 2004, p. 20).

Adolescence – Current Views...

Positive Youth Development

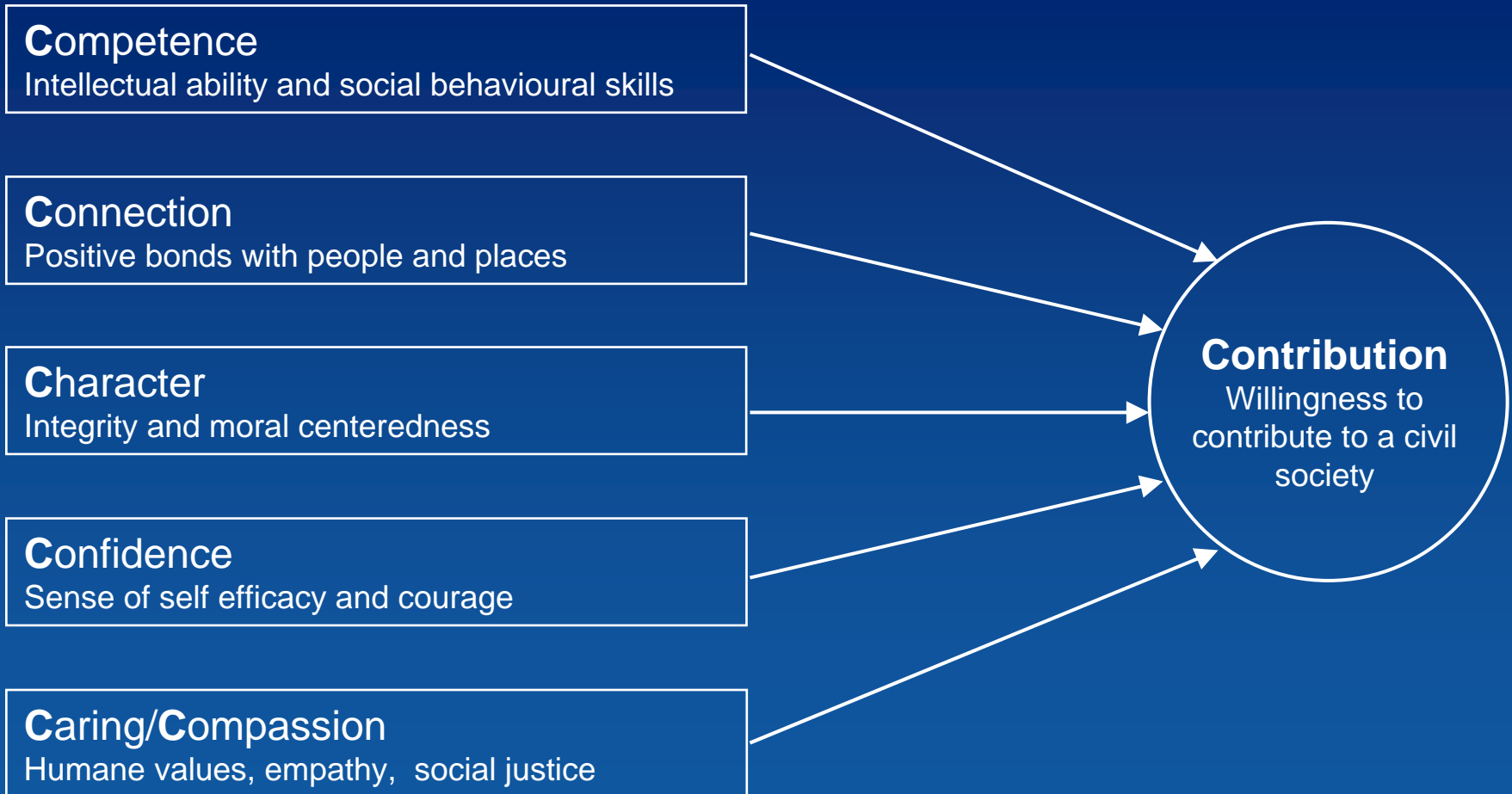


- Importance of context and diversity
- Assumes every child has potential and change is possible through positive intervention
- Development is active and self directed

Theories of PYD

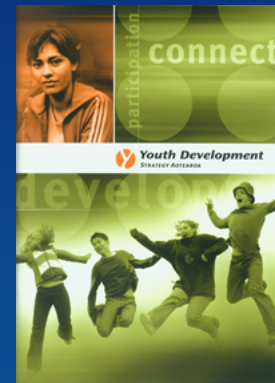
- Developmental Assets
 - Peter L. Benson, The Search Institute
- Development of Initiative
 - Reed Larson (2000)
- Five Cs of PYD
 - Richard M. Lerner (2002)

Lerner's Five Cs of PYD



PYD in Aotearoa

- Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDS; MYD, 2002)
 - The Vision:
 - “ A country where young people are vibrant and optimistic through being supported and encouraged to take up challenges”
(p. 7).



YDS Aotearoa (MYD, 2002)

- The Aims:
 1. All young people have the opportunities to establish positive connections to their key environments.
 2. Government policy and practice reflect a positive youth development approach.
 3. All young people have access to a range of youth development opportunities.

Current Trends in Mentoring

- Philosophical shift (Pittman, et al. 2002)
 - From: reducing the incidence of a single identified problem
 - To: increasing opportunities and support structures to fully prepare youth for the challenges ahead
- “Problem free is not fully prepared” (Pittman, 1996)

Mentoring and PYD

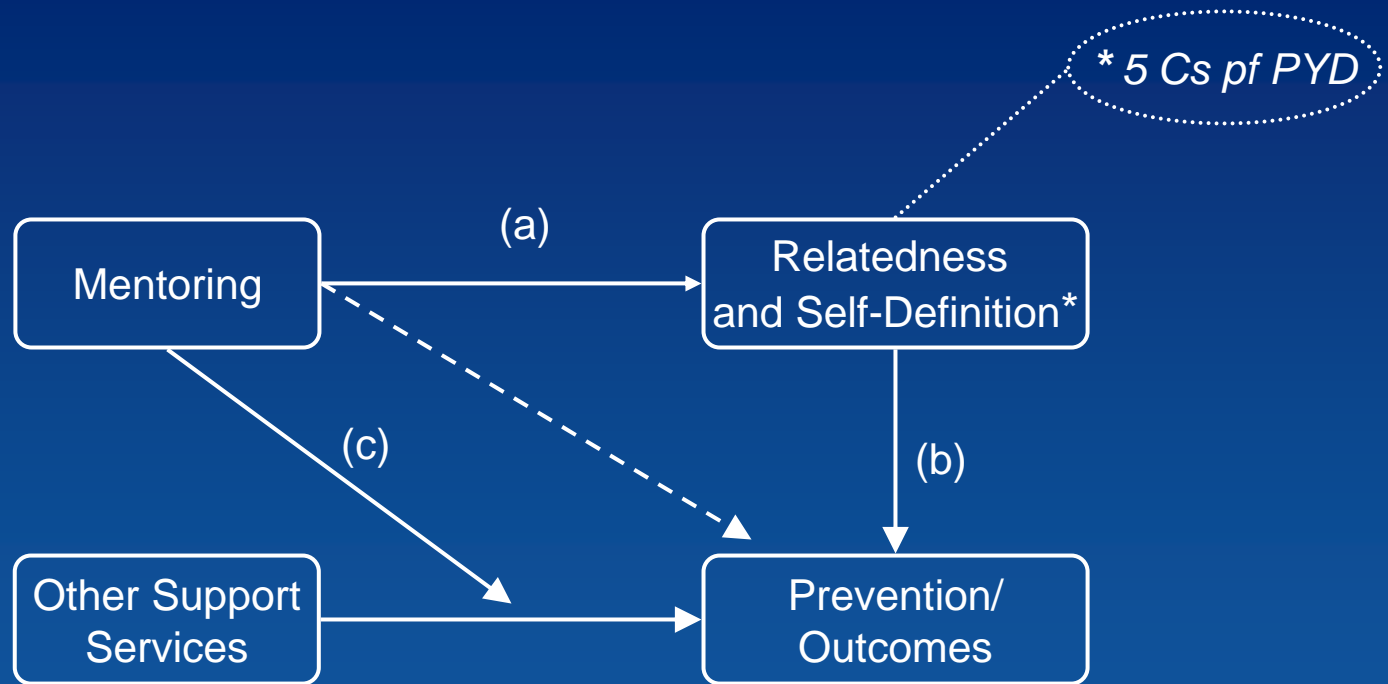
Positive Youth Development

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Mentoring Programmes and PYD

- Address multiple contexts of development
- Positive change via developmental assets
- Support and enable youth to be active agents in their own development

Mentoring and PYD



Reference: Kuperminc, G. P. et al., 2005

Challenges of Applying PYD Framework to Mentoring

- Youth as active agents
 - Personal agency
 - Agency must enhance well-being and encourage constructive participation in society
- The Intentionality Paradox (Larson, 2006)
 - Keeping ownership in the hands of youth versus keeping the programme on track

Mentors and PYD

- Effective mentors (Rhodes, 2002)
 - Allow for joint decision making
 - Challenge youth
 - Provide moderate levels of structure
 - Balance having fun with working towards practical goals
- Supportive relationships between young people and non-parental adults are vital to PYD (Scales, 2003)

Conclusions

- Adolescents are assets to be developed
- Government policy and PYD
- Mentors play a vital role in PYD
- PYD framework can be a useful tool for programme development, delivery and evaluation