Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development

Edmond P. Bowers · G. John Geldhof
Sara K. Johnson · Lacey J. Hilliard
Rachel M. Hershberg · Jacqueline V. Lerner
Richard M. Lerner
Editors

Promoting Positive Youth Development

Lessons from the 4-H Study

Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development

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ISSN 2195-089X ISSN 2195-0903 (electronic)
Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development
ISBN 978-3-319-17165-4 ISBN 978-3-319-17166-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015941307

Springer Cham Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London
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Printed on acid-free paper

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Preface

Over the past decade, the positive youth development (PYD) perspective has been adopted by researchers studying adolescence, practitioners of youth development, and policy makers concerned with improving the life chances of young people and their families. This book describes research about youth development that provides evidence for policy and programs aimed at promoting positive development (thriving) among the diverse youth of the U.S. Using this evidence, the authors of each chapter in this book make specific recommendations for policy innovations and youth development programs.

Much of the evidence about youth thriving that is discussed in this book is derived from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD), a longitudinal study supported by the National 4-H Council and the Altria Corporation that spanned nearly a decade. Accordingly, the book describes the concept of PYD, the theoretical basis of the 4-H Study, and the method the 4-H Study used to study youth. In particular, we discuss the Five Cs model of PYD—involving Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring—and the links across adolescence among the Five Cs and a "sixth C" of youth Contributions to self, family, school, and community.

Each of the chapters in this book focuses on a specific facet of youth development, such as youth strengths (e.g., intentional self regulation, school engagement, and hopeful future expectations) or contextual resources that, in combination with youth strengths, provide the bases of PYD. Examples of these ecological assets are parents, peers, and, of course, out-of-school-time youth development programs. Across the chapters, authors explain how the integration of youth strengths and ecological resources promotes thriving and, in turn, is associated with such "outcomes" of PYD as academic achievement, facets of youth identity development, positive and active engaged citizenship, sexual health, and diminished engagement in bullying. A final chapter in the book, by Suzanne Le Menestrel, formerly the National Program Leader of the Division of Youth and 4-H within the National Institute for Food and Agriculture of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides a scholarly reflection on

research about PYD, as illustrated by the 4-H Study, and discusses how developmental research provides an essential means to advance evidence-based practice and policy innovations for youth development programs.

In sum, our goals in editing this work are to further research and contribute to evidence-based applications aimed at promoting PYD among diverse youth. Our hope is that the book will be a useful resource for policy makers, practitioners, applied developmental scientists, and members of the public interested in the use of theory-predicated, developmental research in community-based actions designed to enhance the lives of diverse young people.

We are grateful to numerous people and organizations for making this book possible. We are profoundly grateful to the authors of the chapters. Their singular levels of expertise and mastery of their areas of youth development scholarship are richly and compellingly conveyed in this volume. We also express particular gratitude to Suzanne Le Menestrel for writing the concluding chapter of this book and for all of her years of support and service on the Advisory Board of the 4-H Study.

We are grateful as well to the other members of our 4-H Study Advisory Board—Drs. Dale A. Blyth, University of Minnesota; Lynne M. Borden, University of Arizona; Constance A. Flanagan, The University of Wisconsin; Daniel F. Perkins, The Pennsylvania State University; Michael J. Rovine, The Pennsylvania State University; and Linda Jo Turner, University of Missouri—and in particular to Professor Alexander von Eye, of Michigan State University, for chairing the Advisory Board. His thoughtful, illuminating, and generous scientific collaboration across all the years of the study was essential to us.

Of course, we have deep and enduring gratitude to the National 4-H Council and to the Altria Corporation for the opportunity to conduct the research described in this book. In particular, we want to thank Donald T. Floyd, Jr., past President and CEO of the National 4-H Council, and his colleagues, Jennifer Sirangelo, the President and CEO of National 4-H Council, and Linda Jo Turner, retired Foundations Relations Consultant at National 4-H Council, for their unflagging faith in and support of the work involved in conducting the 4-H Study. We also gratefully acknowledge the financial support from Philip Morris USA, an Altria company, and the collegial support from our Altria colleagues, including Jennifer Hunter, Megan Witherspoon, Joel Schendel, and Ed Largo. Without Don, Jennifer, and their teams, neither the study nor the field of PYD would have existed.

We are also grateful for the contribution of the Thrive Foundation of Youth of Menlo Park, CA, and their past Executive Director, Carol Gray, and her colleagues, and Nicole Taylor, the current Executive Director, and her colleagues, for some of the research reported in this book. We thank the Thrive Foundation for the funding to develop tools and measures for youth-serving organizations that were based on findings from the 4-H Study.

The editors and authors of this book have been exceedingly fortunate to have had superb scholarly support and intellectual and editorial guidance from Professor Roger J. R. Levesque, Indiana University, the Editor of the Springer *Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development* series. We are honored and privileged to have this book appear in his series.

We are also grateful to Judy Jones, Senior Editor, Springer Publishing, for her support and wise editorial guidance. Her enthusiasm and commitment to this book enabled both editors and authors to complete their work with quality and efficiency.

Jarrett M. Lerner, the Managing Editor in the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts, was involved with this book since its inception. He has organized and advanced every facet of the editorial and production process. His professionalism, knowledge, organizational capacities, efficiency, commitment, and indefatigable, positive spirit were vital to the existence, and to any contributions, of this book.

Finally, we are grateful to the youth who participated in the 4-H Study. It was a privilege to work with them and to report about their development and achievements. The commitment of these young people and their parents to participating in a long-term longitudinal project was extraordinary. Obviously, without them, this book could not exist. Accordingly, we believe it is fitting to dedicate this book to them.

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Chapter 1
Applying Research About Adolescence in Real-World Settings: The Sample Case of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

Edmond P. Bowers, G. John Geldhof, Sara K. Johnson, Lacey J. Hilliard, Rachel M. Hershberg, Jacqueline V. Lerner, and Richard M. Lerner

This book describes the nature of positive youth development (PYD) and the evidence from developmental research about how to promote thriving among the diverse youth of the United States. This evidence comes from research associated with the 4-H Study of PYD and, as well, from other relevant research pertinent to promoting positive development among adolescents.

In this chapter we discuss the PYD perspective and the specific approach to understanding PYD used within the 4-H Study. We then explain how findings from both the 4-H Study and other research can support practitioners and policy makers as they propose ideas and take actions to promote youth thriving, or PYD. In this way, we hope that colleagues in youth development programs and policy professions may provide ways for communities across America to enhance youth thriving. To explain how research from the 4-H Study may be used, we provide brief summaries of each of the chapters in this book. Finally, we summarize how the other chapters in this book provide a means to advance evidence-based practice and policy innovations for youth development programs.

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_1

The Positive Youth Development Perspective

Only about a dozen years ago at this writing, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003a, 2003b) reviewed the literature on youth development programs aimed at enhancing health and thriving among adolescents. They concluded that young people should be regarded not as problems to be managed but, instead, as resources to be developed. Their insight built on at least three sources. First, Larson (2000) provided a compelling vision for research aimed at understanding and promoting PYD. Second, Eccles and Gootman (2002) edited a field-defining report issued by the National Academy of Sciences about the ways in which community programs for youth development could promote several attributes of psychological and behavioral functioning believed to be indicative of such development. The report included a summary of the attributes of positive development and suggested that they could be represented by five constructs, or by "Five Cs": competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring. Third, Hamilton (1999) explained that the idea of PYD was being used in the developmental science literature in three ways: (1) as a label for a model of the processes through which health and thriving developed in adolescence; (2) as a philosophy for, or an approach to, designing community-based programs aimed at promoting thriving; and (3) as instances of such programs.

The links between the positive development of youth and their engagement with contextual resources, or ecological "developmental assets" (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006), represented by community-based youth development programs, reflected the spirit of the times, the *zeitgeist* of developmental science during the latter years of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first (Lerner, 2012; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015). In earlier periods, conceptions of human development stressed genetic or maturational determinants of development *or* approaches to development that reduced human behavior to stimulus-response relations. Today, these ideas are being replaced by concepts that emphasize that development involves mutually influential relations among a person's biological and psychological characteristics, as well as their social relationships. The latter influences are associated with families, schools, community institutions, out-of-school time (OST) programs, and both the designed and natural environments. These influences are always present across life and are believed to change in their significance across both life and historical periods (e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Lerner, 2012; Overton, 2015).

When the individual and his or her context are the focus of research, these mutually influential relations are represented as individual ↔ context relations (Lerner, 2006). The relations involved in these exchanges are termed "developmental regulations" (Brandtstädter, 1998). When developmental regulations are beneficial to both the individual and the context, they are regarded as *adaptive* developmental regulations (Brandtstädter, 1998).

The scholars interested in the development of PYD (e.g., Benson et al., 2006; Damon, 2004, 2008; Eccles, 2004; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2009; Larson, 2000; Lerner et al., 2015; Masten, 2001; Spencer, 2006) framed their approaches within

this set of ideas. PYD was regarded as an instance of an adaptive developmental regulation that involved mutually beneficial relations between youth and their families, schools, and communities. PYD was thought to arise when there was a match, or fit, between, on the one hand, attributes of youth such as strengths such as self-governance, self-control (or what we term intentional self-regulation; Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, & Lerner, 2014; Lerner et al., 2015), hopeful future expectations, and school engagement and, on the other hand, support from the social world such as warmth and monitoring by an engaged mother or father or sustained relations with a caring and competent mentor or youth program leader. This strength-based approach to youth development in general, and to the understanding of thriving in particular, was a framework for the design of PYD programs and was involved in activities of such programs (e.g., Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard, & Arthur, 2002; Flay & Allred, 2003; Kurtines et al., 2008).

The 4-H Study of PYD

In the context of the above-described scholarly work, the 4-H Study of PYD was designed and launched in 2002 (Lerner et al., 2005). The study aimed to collect repeated (longitudinal) information about youth and the key settings in their lives. The goal was to understand the possible links between the strengths of youth and ecological assets. The study assessed these links by measuring the Five Cs of PYD noted above among participants. The study also sought to learn about the possible impact of the development of the Five Cs on youth actions that benefited their families, schools, and communities. Specifically, youth *contributions* to these settings were measured. In addition, the associations between PYD, youth contributions, and risk/problem behaviors were also measured, with the aim of learning if the promotion of thriving was connected to lowering risks and problem behaviors among adolescents (Schwartz, Pantin, Coatsworth, & Szapocznik, 2007). An illustration of the relations assessed in the 4-H Study is presented in Fig. 1.1.

With the support of the National 4-H Council and the Altria Corporation, the 4-H Study involved eight waves of data collection. Most of the youth who participated in the study, however, were *not* involved in 4-H clubs or programs. The study sought to examine the strengths of diverse youth within the several different settings in which they are embedded. Many, but not all, youth were engaged in a variety of OST activities, but, again, the great majority of youth were not engaged in 4-H programs. The findings from the study have been reported in several special issues of journals (Bowers et al., 2014; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner, von Eye, Bowers, & Lewin-Bizan, 2011; Lerner, von Eye, Lerner, & Lewin-Bizan, 2009; Lerner, von Eye, Lerner, Lewin-Bizan, & Bowers, 2010), in special sections of journals (Geldhof, Bowers, & Lerner, 2013), and in numerous single articles, chapters, and books (see Lerner et al., 2015, for a review). In this book, we seek to use the 8 years of data from the 4-H Study, along with research by

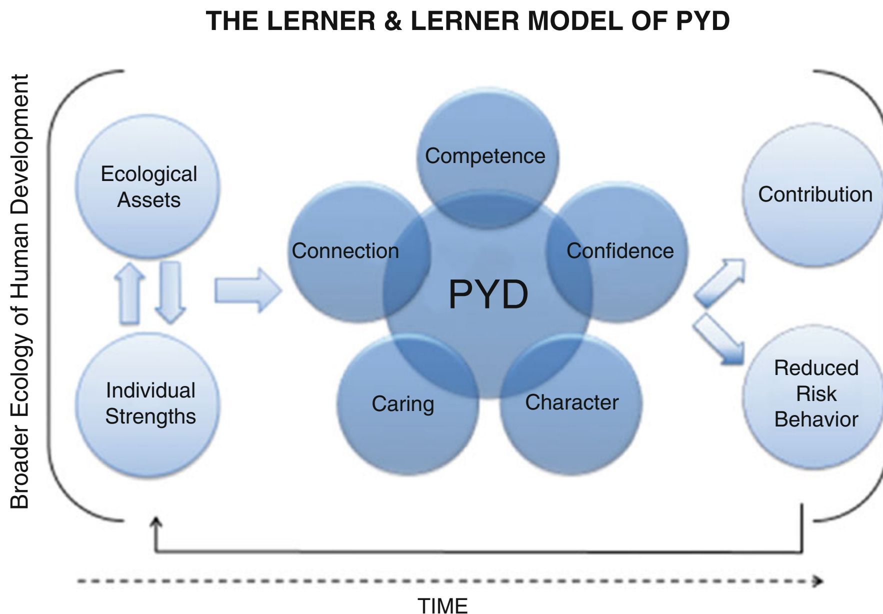

Fig. 1.1 The relational, developmental systems model of PYD used by Lerner, Lerner, and colleagues

other scholars of youth development from across the nation, to both summarize what is known about PYD in regard to several key areas of adolescent behavior and development and, as well, to discuss implications of this information for applications to programs and policies. However, before summarizing how the chapters in this book provide this information, it is useful to briefly describe how the 4-H Study was conducted.

Methods of the 4-H Study of PYD

The full details of the method of the 4-H Study have appeared in numerous publications (e.g., Lerner et al., 2005, 2009, 2010, 2011). Accordingly, we provide here only a summary of the overall method of the study.

Design and Sample

The 4-H Study of PYD began in 2002 with a convenience sample of about 1,700 fifth grade youth and about 1,100 parents from 13 states in the United States. The 4-H Study was funded through the support of the National 4-H Council (and hence

its label) although, as we have noted, most participants in the research did not participate in 4-H programming. The study used a research design wherein the sample size *increased* across successive waves of testing. That is, information from fifth graders were gathered in Wave 1 of the study (the 2002–2003 school year), and these fifth graders were the initial group (cohort) in the study. However, in order to be able to assess the effects of retesting youth repeatedly over several years, the research included in each additional wave of measurement of the study a new group of youth (and a sample of their parents) of the same age as the original group of youth. Participants in the added "retest control" group were then also followed repeatedly (longitudinally).

For instance, in Wave 2, the grade level of the initial cohort was Grade 6. As such, a "retest control" group of sixth graders was added to the study, and these youth became members of a second longitudinal group. Both the original group recruited during their fifth grade year and the added group of sixth graders were followed into Grade 7. Then, in Grade 7, in addition to retesting the initial Grade 5 and initial Grade 6 youth, a new group of seventh graders was added to the study (along with a sample of their parents). This process was followed in subsequent waves of testing.

By the completion of collection of Grade 12 data, the 4-H Study included more than 7,000 youth (about half of whom have been assessed two or more times) and about 3,500 parents from 42 states. As shown in Table 1.1, in Grade 5 the average age of participants was 10.9 years ($SD=0.42$ years), and in Grade 12 the average age was 17.7 years ($SD=0.76$). In regard to race/ethnicity, the sample was 65.8 % White, 7.3 % Black, 9.4 % Latino, and 14.4 % others (including Asian, Native American, multiethnic/multiracial, or "others" and 3.1 % of youth did not report race/ethnicity). Participants resided in different types of communities, with 35.7 % living in rural areas, 16.3 % in urban areas, and 25.7 % in suburban areas (22.2 % had missing data for locale). The sample's demographic characteristics were not completely constant across all waves of the study, however. There were more female and White participants in later waves of the study.

The participants' parents provided data regarding the socioeconomic status of their families, as indexed by the amount of education completed by the child's mother. In Grade 5, 20.8 % of mothers had attended or completed high school, 24.8 % had completed some college, and 18.6 % had a bachelor's degree or higher (35.8 % did not respond); average per capita income at Grade 5 was about $13,657 ($SD=\$8,348$) and rose to $23,401 ($SD=\$13,798$) in Grade 12.

Although, as noted, initial waves of the study corresponded to particular school grades (for instance, Wave 1 = Grade 5, Wave 2 = Grade 6, and Wave 3 = Grade 7), as the youth traversed their subsequent grades, their academic careers became more varied. Accordingly, at later waves of the study, there was not only one grade level represented within a wave. In general, wave and grade continued to correspond (such that in Wave 8 most participants were in Grade 12), but there was some variation in grades, particularly in Waves 6–8. Because of this variation, reports derived from the 4-H Study always make clear the grade/age composition of the participants involved in any statistical analysis.

Table 1.1 Participant demographics in the 4-H Study of PYD, by grade

	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Age *M*	10.94	12.01	13.00	14.02	14.98	15.82	16.83	17.71
(*SD*)	(0.42)	(0.43)	(0.47)	(0.53)	(0.57)	(0.70)	(0.76)	(0.76)
Mother's education (%)								
High school or less	20.8	18.2	13.2	6.4	2.8	1.2	1.0	1.6
Some college	24.8	22.1	19.4	9.9	9.1	4.2	4.3	1.4
BA or higher	18.6	17.8	18.2	10.3	8.5	6.8	4.4	3.2
% missing	35.8	42.0	49.3	73.4	79.6	87.8	90.3	93.8
Mean per capita income	13,656.86	13,635.81	16,553.42	19,137.40	19,981.29	24,331.31	24,981.29	23,401.44
(*SD*)	(8,348.46)	(8,621.05)	(10,631.93)	(13,216.27)	(12,938.41)	(18,664.92)	(17,316.31)	(13,798.49)

It is important to note that one key limitation of the 4-H Study method is the limited racial and ethnic variability of the sample. That is, the majority of the convenience sample used throughout the study was European American (on average, about 65 % across waves). The absence of sufficient, representative numbers of youth from diverse racial and ethnic groups limits the generalizability of the 4-H data set. To address this limitation, future research should be conducted with more diverse, representatively sampled groups of youth than are present in the 4-H Study data set.

Measures

Consistent with the illustration presented in Fig. 1.1, the measures involved in the 4-H Study include assessments of each part of the model. These measures included individual characteristics of youth that were thought to reflect their individual strengths (Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2011). Measures included *intentional self-regulation*, assessed through the Baltes and colleagues' measure of selection, optimization, and compensation (e.g., Freund & Baltes, 2002; see also Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2007); *hopeful future expectations* (e.g., Schmid et al., 2011); and *cognitive, emotional, and behavioral school engagement* (Li & Lerner, 2011).

Measures of ecological developmental assets were based on the work of Theokas and Lerner (2006). We assessed *individuals in the lives of youth* (e.g., parents, teachers, coaches, or mentors; Laursen & Collins, 2009; Rhodes & Lowe, 2009); *opportunities for youth-adult collaboration* in family, school, or community activities (e.g., food or clothing drives, community- or educational-planning organizations or meetings; Lerner, 2004); *institutional resources* such as out-of-school time (OST) programs, parks, playgrounds, libraries, and media (e.g., Boyd & Dobrow, 2011; Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015); and *access* to individual, collaborative, or institutional resources. To illustrate, we indexed the nature of parents as resources through assessments of parental warmth, monitoring, and academic/school involvement (e.g., Bebiroglu, Geldhof, Pinderhughes, Phelps, & Lerner, 2013; Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, & Lerner, 2010). Opportunities for youth-adult collaboration were assessed through the presence of youth coalitions in the community (Bowers et al., 2011). We measured institutional resources in the lives of youth by assessments of youth participation in OST programs (e.g., Urban, Lewin-Bizan, & Lerner, 2009; 2010; Zarrett et al., 2009).

PYD was measured through assessing the Five Cs shown in Fig. 1.1. In turn, we measured youth *contribution* (Alberts et al., 2006; Jelicic, Bobek, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2007) and, in later grades, active and engaged citizenship (Zaff, Boyd, Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010). Finally, we measured *risk/problem behaviors* by assessing substance use, bullying, delinquency, and depression (e.g., Lerner et al., 2005; Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010). Additional information about the full set of measures assessed at each wave of the 4-H Study is available at http://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/researchPositive4HpydResources.htm.

Procedure

In Grades 5 through 7 of the 4-H Study, trained study staff or, at more distant locations, hired assistants collected data from youth. We used the same "script" to collect data and to ensure the return of all study materials. After Grade 5, youth who were absent on the day of the survey or who were from schools or programs that did not allow on-site testing were contacted by e-mail, mail, or phone. They were asked to complete and return the survey to us. Beginning in Grade 8, youth completed the survey online, unless they requested a paper survey. Parents completed paper surveys that were delivered to their homes by their children or through the mail. Return postage was provided if a survey was sent through the mail.

From Method to Findings

The succeeding chapters in this book draw from all waves of the 4-H Study and from related research about youth development. We now summarize briefly the ways in which the chapters in this book illuminate the course of thriving among the participants on the 4-H Study.

Overview of the Chapters in This Book

The chapters in this book highlight the diverse ways positive development can occur across adolescence. In addition, the chapters illustrate that different facets of PYD are interrelated while discussing the possible bases of PYD. All chapters draw implications of the evidence about the nature and bases of PYD for programs and policies that exist or may be designed to promote thriving among diverse young people.

The first section of the book is a set of chapters about the strengths of youth. In the opening chapter in this section, Weiner, Geldhof, and Gestsdottir discuss the nature and role of intentional self-regulation in adolescence. They note that self-regulation is a broad concept that encompasses a wide variety of emotional, cognitive, and social processes. Furthermore, self-regulation plays a critical role in goal-directed behaviors. In this chapter we provide information about self-regulation and recommendations for youth development practitioners and policy makers who want to use research on self-regulation to promote thriving among youth. Specifically, they discuss various lessons that can be learned from previous research on self-regulation, emphasizing intentional self-regulation as a facet of self-regulation that is especially important during adolescence. They note also the limitations of this research. Finally, they recommend five priorities for improving youth policy and practice such as making adolescent ISR a funding priority and the importance of promoting ISR across the life span.

In the next chapter, Wang, Vujovic, Barrett, and Lerner discuss a specific facet of self-regulation: emotion regulation. They explain that how one behaves in one's world and the social relationships one experiences in one's life are always associated with one's emotions. A key part of healthy development is to understand the rules, or "regulations," that govern the links among behavior, experience, and emotions. The child must attain the skills to adjust, or regulate, his or her emotions to create good matches among emotions, behaviors, and social experiences/social relationships. Emotion regulation (ER) is, then, a key facet of healthy and positive development and may be particularly important during adolescence, given that the young person is undergoing major, interacted changes in his or her physical, psychological, and social functioning. Drawing on evidence from the 4-H Study and from other research, they discuss both important facets of ER during adolescence and the bases of ER during this period of life. They suggest some implications for applications to policy and practice based on this evidence and recommend that parents, practitioners, and policy makers should take a more targeted focus (e.g., specific ER skills, particular time periods), use a process-oriented perspective (e.g., consider the interaction among thoughts, behaviors, and emotions), and capitalize on social supports from different contexts (e.g., family, school, and community) in order to promote ER and positive youth development.

Another facet of self-regulation involves a young person's engagement with his or her school. Chase, Warren, and Lerner discuss the interrelation of school engagement and academic achievement. They point out that school engagement is integral to the promotion of academic success. To explore the relations between school engagement and school success, they review findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development and other related research in order to describe how cognitive, emotional, and behavioral school engagement relates to academic success and thriving among youth. Based on the research they review, they make recommendations for in-school and out-of-school programs and for policies supporting such programs that involve assessing school engagement across all school years, supporting peer mentoring and modeling programs, enhancing the integration of in-school, school-engagement promotion with out-of-school time youth development programs, and rigorously evaluating school-engagement enhancement initiatives. If proven effective through such evaluations, the programs and policies they recommend can lead to more actively engaged students. The actions can result, then, in the development of youth who invest their time and energy to achieve positive and valued academic and life goals.

Callina, Mueller, Buckingham, and Gutierrez discuss the contexts that support hope in youth. They explain that, within the field of positive youth development (PYD), a key goal is to identify strengths of youth that will help explain why some adolescents are able to develop into successful young adults by working toward productive goals and selecting positive behaviors, whereas others follow developmental paths marked by problematic behaviors. They describe the importance of *hope* in positive development and define hope as having three key ingredients: intentional self-regulation, positive future expectations, and connectedness. The

authors provide evidence from the 4-H Study of PYD to show how these three ingredients work together to promote the Five Cs of PYD and youth contribution. They make recommendations for practitioners to incorporate or enhance each of these hope ingredients in their youth development programs, as well as how to recognize hopelessness among youth and how to intervene. The authors conclude the chapter with priorities for youth policy, such as allocating funding for programs and program evaluations that take a comprehensive and integrative approach to youth development programming. They believe that hope should be a cornerstone of youth programming and that practitioners, researchers, and policy makers can be intentional in promoting hope to ensure all young people have opportunities to thrive.

We have noted that the PYD model emphasizes that when the strengths of young people are aligned with resources in their contexts, thriving is enhanced. Accordingly, the second set of chapters is about these ecological assets. In the first chapter in this section, Bowers, Johnson, Warren, Tirrell, and Lerner discuss how youth relationships with parents and mentors may promote PYD. The authors note that resources to promote positive development in young people have been identified in many contexts such as families, schools, neighborhoods, and out-of-school time programs. The most important resources within these contexts are the relationships that young people have with committed, caring adults. They provide an overview of research, based on findings from the 4-H Study and other scholarly work, on the essential role of adults in promoting PYD. The authors offer examples of organizations that have applied this research to their programming and practices to impact the well-being of young people. Finally, they provide priorities for practice and policy based on these findings. Specifically, they recommend that programs promote positive parenting behaviors, build cultural competence among their staff, engage parents more fully in programs, train staff and youth in relationship-building skills, and thoughtfully consider how they create mentoring matches. The authors believe that policy makers should invest in creating supportive youth systems in which youth voices are heard, such as family support programs and comprehensive community initiatives, to promote youth thriving.

Donlan, Lynch, and Lerner discuss the significance of peers in the lives of youth, drawing on research from the 4-H Study and other related work. They note that the peers of adolescents can be the source of both positive and problematic development among youth. Positive peer relationships are associated with school engagement, perceived academic competence, school achievement, and character virtues, whereas involvement with problematic peer groups is linked with risk behaviors (e.g., delinquent acts and bullying, respectively) and lowered school functioning. Although over time youth spend increasingly more time with peers than with their family, parents remain a primary source of support for most adolescents. In studies of adolescents, parental monitoring, warmth, and communication have been associated with academic achievement, lower levels of risk-taking, and positive mood. The authors discuss the importance of peers in promoting PYD and recommend ways schools can build environments rich with supportive peers who value achievement. They show that young people typically do not turn away from parents to

embrace their peers, but rather both parents and peers can cumulatively support youth. The authors also discuss how the school-wide peer culture can promote both positive peer relationships and positive behaviors among youth, for example, through the creation of peer mentoring programs. Finally, the authors explore how strengthening the connections between in-school programs and out-of-school time (OST) youth development programs can enhance across the ecology of youth the positive contributions of peer relationships to PYD. They call for policy innovations that build bridges among the key contexts of youth.

Another major context of youth development involves the in-school and out-of-school time activities in which youth are engaged. Agans, Champine, Johnson, Erickson, and Yalin discuss the ways in which activity participation may promote healthy lifestyles among youth. The authors explain that most young people in the United States participate in some form of structured movement activity, such as sports or dance, and these activities have the potential to support positive youth development and continued engagement in healthy activity. They discuss the potential benefits and risks associated with youth participation in movement activities, potential barriers and facilitators to activity participation across diverse contexts, and ways to promote sustained participation. The authors emphasize that development takes place within an integrated system involving youth, their social relationships, and the multiple activities in which they participate. They examine how three key elements (positive sustained youth-adult relationships, life skill development, and opportunities for leadership) can be used to help movement-based programs promote positive youth development. In particular, the authors recommend that programs and policy makers should work collaboratively to provide developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant activities for young people that incorporate these three key elements, in order to better support positive youth development and healthy lifestyles.

The next set of chapters is about these outcomes. We believe that the chief set of outcomes of youth ↔ context alignments involves the Five Cs of PYD. Accordingly, the opening chapter in this section is about the Five Cs model of PYD. Geldhof, Bowers, Mueller, Napolitano, Callina, Walsh, Lerner, and Lerner note that the growing consensus among developmental scientists is that optimizing young people's development requires much more than simply ensuring that they avoid negative outcomes (e.g., drug use, delinquency). Practitioners must also foster strengths that help youth thrive in their diverse ecologies. As such, the authors draw on data and research from the 4-H Study to discuss the benefits of promoting such strength-based perspectives in youth development programs. Their discussion focuses primarily on the Five Cs of positive youth development and on how our understanding of this model can inform social policies and enhance the experience of both practitioners and the youth they serve.

The Cs of PYD include a positive sense of self (e.g., involving a young person's confidence that they can act in positive ways that matter to themselves, family members, teachers, peers, and other people in their world). The sense of self involved in this "C" pertains to a central construct in the adolescent development literature: identity. In the next chapter in this section, Xing, Chico, Lambouths, Brittian, and

Schwartz explain why identity formation is a central characteristic of adolescent development and discuss the links between adolescent identity development and other aspects of adolescents' health and positive development. The authors note that adolescents experience several developmental transitions involving physical growth, advances in cognition (thinking), and increased expectations from society. In light of these developmental experiences, they typically begin to explore and understand their place in the social world. This process is commonly described as identity development. The authors briefly review identity theories that are relevant for youth practitioners and policy makers to consider. They discuss how identity relates to other aspects of adolescents' health and development. In addition, they discuss priorities for youth policy and practice regarding adolescents' identity development and highlight a youth-centered policy and youth organization that focus on developing adolescents' positive identity (My Brother's Keeper and The Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health). Finally, they provide a few practical recommendations for youth practitioners and policy makers. Specifically, they describe three strategies that can be used by youth development practitioners who want to incorporate identity development into their programming: (1) encourage adolescents to explore social issues, (2) encourage adolescents to reflect on their experiences, and (3) give adolescents opportunities to engage in decision making.

One of the major outcomes of PYD studied among scholars of adolescent development involves youth contributions to themselves, their families, their schools, and the communities more generally: the "Sixth C" of the PYD model. Accordingly, Hershberg, Johnson, DeSouza, Hunter, and Zaff discuss conceptualizations and measurement of contribution within PYD research. The authors explain that contribution to civil society is a key outcome of PYD, as evidenced by findings from the 4-H Study. They focus on conceptualizations and measurement of contribution within PYD research. The authors first discuss conceptualizations of contribution as active and engaged citizenship (AEC) and the relations among AEC and other constructs, such as school engagement and risk behaviors, within the 4-H Study sample. They then describe research on contribution among youth of color, including recent research on social justice youth development and critical consciousness. They review strategies that practitioners can use to develop and promote meaningful contributions among diverse young people. Given associations between contribution and positive outcomes among America's diverse youth, the authors emphasize that policies and programs should provide more opportunities for youth contributions to society, including community service, social activism, and/or participation in local polities.

As the 4-H Study continued to assess youth across the adolescent years, it increased the number of youth development outcomes that were assessed. Two sets of outcomes—one ubiquitous in the lives of youth (sexuality) and the other a feature of their lives that is a growing concern among policy makers and practitioners (bullying)—became important foci of the research.

In the next chapter, Arbeit, Baldi, Rubin, Harris, and Lerner discuss positive sexuality development. They explain that sexual activity may be a part of positive, adaptive youth development, particularly in the later years of adolescence. Through

promoting PYD, youth development programs can take an active role in improving adolescent sexual health. In this chapter, they emphasize the positive potential of adolescent sexuality development. The authors review research regarding the interplay between indicators of PYD and indicators of adolescent sexual behavior and sexual health and research on the role of youth development programs in addressing adolescent sexual health outcomes. They present specific ideas about what aspects of youth development programs can be leveraged in promoting what aspects of adolescent sexuality development. The authors specifically explore the "Big Three" aspects of youth development programs: youth-adult relationships, skill building, and opportunities for leadership. They conclude with additional suggestions for how youth development programs can support both PYD and sexual health in integrated ways, with particular attention to the needs of systematically marginalized youth as relates to their sexual and relational development.

In the next chapter, Hilliard, Batanova, and Bowers note the growing presence of bullying research and interventions and discuss their ideas for reframing the design of anti-bullying programs from a PYD perspective. They note that bullying has been linked to a number of problematic developmental outcomes. However, to create positive and meaningful change in individuals, programs and policies need to go beyond punitive actions against bullying behaviors and acknowledge and respond to the complexities involved in bullying. They present a reframing of bullying and bullying interventions using a strength-based, positive youth development perspective. They then discuss innovative and effective ways of approaching bullying prevention and intervention efforts. To this end, the authors discuss the need for taking the whole child into account as well as the multiple contexts in which he or she lives. By moving beyond traditional bullying perspectives, they offer an approach that will help practitioners, policy makers, and educators create effective learning environments that support the development of the whole student and promote a positive school climate. The authors conclude the chapter by providing recommendations for future research, educational programs, and policy initiatives. Specifically, they recommend that programs and schools (1) address peer group, family, and program/school norms; (2) promote social and emotional learning as foundational to individual development, peer group functioning, and school climate; and (3) involve families in anti-bullying and positive behavior promotion efforts.

Finally, in an afterword for the book, Suzanne Le Menestrel places the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development into the context of 4-H, both as an instance of a youth development program and as a national system for promoting PYD. She discusses the relative absence of strength-based approaches to youth development that characterized the literature on youth development prior to the 4-H Study, and she notes the impact of the study on the investigation of youth development and on the 4-H youth development organization. These impacts include the clear articulation of PYD improving the quality of 4-H programming, the articulation of impacts through the power of longitudinal research, and raising more questions about youth programs and the positive youth development process. She concludes that the 4-H Study has provided a strong baseline from which PYD research can continue to grow as youth development professionals strive to exemplify the 4-H motto: "To Make the Best Better."

Conclusions

The findings derived from the 4-H Study and related research discussed in this book indicate that there is now an evidence base for discussing young people in a new way. In the past, positive development in youth was discussed in regard to what youth did not do (Benson et al., 2011). Youth were thriving if they did not fail in school, smoke, drink, bully, or engage in unsafe sex (Benson et al., 2011). The absence of bad was evidence of positive functioning.

The chapters in this book make clear, however, that there now exists evidence for the use of a strength-based vocabulary to speak about youth development—one predicated on attributes of youth that are valued by adults as well (King et al., 2005). In addition, the research derived from the 4-H Study and related investigations makes clear that there are measures that practitioners can use to efficiently, and with reliability and validity, index: (1) PYD; (2) key antecedents of PYD—such as developmental assets in the ecology of young people as well as the strengths of young people, such as intentional self-regulation and hope; and (3) key outcomes of PYD, such as contribution and active/engaged citizenship.

We believe that the 4-H Study research base provides evidence that can be used to inform the practice of youth-serving professionals who are trying to arrange the conditions needed to promote PYD. Knowledge about the process of youth ↔ context relations involved in PYD can provide a means for promoting behaviors that parents, policy makers, and youth themselves value. Moreover, when PYD, its antecedents, and/or its outcomes are part of the theory of change framing youth development programs, practitioners can make use of the set of tools described in this book to gauge the effectiveness of their programs in leading to the enhancement of PYD.

The findings of the 4-H Study make at least two innovative contributions to youth policy, especially when these contributions are put into historical context. When the 4-H Study started, policy makers were not in the business of defining their actions as promoting good attributes but rather in diminishing bad ones. That is, elections were won by politicians promising to decrease youth drug use, to get teenage prostitutes off the streets, or to throw violent youth in jail. Politicians did not get votes by showing that they sponsored actions resulting in youth having better self-esteem, caring, or positive connections to mentors.

Accordingly, the first innovative impact of the 4-H Study on policy is that policy makers can now show to their constituents that there are desirable and measurable ways to promote good attributes and not just to diminish bad ones. For instance, they can point to active citizenship as something that is worthy of promoting and that has visible impacts in their communities. Therefore, one implication of the 4-H Study is that policy makers now have evidence they can point to about promoting good characteristics of youth through their policies. The second implication of the 4-H Study has been to illustrate for policy makers what can be done through youth programs to promote these visible, positive aspects of youth. Therefore, policy makers now have a greater rationale for investing in youth-serving programs because

these programs promote desirable, definable, and quantifiable qualities of youth. Their constituents value and can experience the benefits of, for example, 4-H programs promoting responsible young people by getting youth more engaged in their communities, by showing that youth are adding to the economy of their communities, and by demonstrating that youth are contributing to the welfare of the multiple generations living in their communities.

In sum, the chapters in this book will be a means to further evidence-based practice and policy innovations for youth development programs. We aspire for this book to be used as a resource for advancing the applications aimed at promoting healthy and positive development among youth. We also hope this book illustrates how theory-predicated, developmental research can accompany community-based actions designed to enhance the lives of diverse young people.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

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Part I
The Strengths of Youth: Self-Regulatory Capacities

Chapter 2
Intentional Self-Regulation in Youth: Applying Research Findings to Practice and Programs

Michelle B. Weiner, G. John Geldhof, and Steinunn Gestsdottir

Self-regulation is a broad concept that encompasses a wide variety of emotional, cognitive, and social processes (McClelland, Geldhof, Cameron, & Wanless, 2015). Although the breadth of self-regulation has led to some disagreement about what, exactly, self-regulation comprises, the general consensus among scholars is that self-regulation refers to people's deliberate attempts to use, modify, or inhibit their own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to reach their goals (McClelland, Ponitz, Messersmith, & Tominey, 2010; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Given the critical role self-regulation plays in promoting goal-directed actions, it is not surprising that research has consistently found a strong relationship between self-regulation skills and indicators of positive youth development (PYD). To date, however, many of these research findings have not been presented in a manner easily accessible to practitioners and policy makers. Therefore, in this chapter, we provide information about self-regulation and recommendations for youth development practitioners and policy makers who want to use research on self-regulation to promote thriving among youth. We first discuss various lessons that can be learned

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_2

from previous research on self-regulation, emphasizing intentional self-regulation (ISR) as a facet of self-regulation that is especially important during adolescence. We then discuss the limitations of this research. Last, we recommend five priorities for improving youth policy and practice.

Lessons Learned from Research on Self-Regulation

Self-regulation helps people take advantage of the opportunities afforded by their contexts. For example, well-regulated individuals are better able to leverage resources in their contexts (e.g., schools, mentors, and out of school time activities) in ways that promote their own development and to strengthen the communities in which they live. Thus, self-regulation can foster the development of active and positively engaged citizens (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015).

Taken as a whole, research on self-regulation suggests that it is a key strength which enables individuals to accomplish major developmental tasks. For example, self-regulatory skills have been strongly implicated in placing young people on positive developmental trajectories into adulthood. Research has shown a positive relation between self-regulation and the development of the Five Cs of PYD (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring; Lerner et al., 2015); see also Chap. 9). Furthermore, when youth display the Five Cs of PYD, a sixth C of contribution emerges. Thriving youth contribute to their families, communities, and to society as a whole. In light of these relations, encouraging the development of self-regulatory skills may be one way of promoting youth thriving (Lerner et al., 2015). It is therefore critical that programs and policies designed to promote youth development consider ways to promote self-regulation.

In the last few decades, self-regulation has received enormous attention from scholars within developmental science—a research field focused on studying and promoting positive human development. To provide a better understanding of self-regulation, in the next section, we briefly discuss what, exactly, self-regulation comprises. We provide an overview of prior and current research on adolescent self-regulation and discuss how such research relates to studies of healthy functioning in childhood and adulthood.

What Is Self-Regulation?

Despite the growing interest of scholars, definitions of self-regulation still vary widely. One reason that self-regulation lacks conceptual agreement among researchers is that scientists use a wide array of self-regulation measures to assess similar skills and processes. One self-regulation researcher might measure an adolescent's ability to press buttons in response to a certain type of cue (but to not respond to other types of cues); a second researcher may ask college students about how well

they can stay on task while studying; and yet a third researcher might be interested in adolescents' ability to set and accomplish long-term goals. Although all three researchers are examining how youth direct or inhibit their behaviors or thoughts, they are far from studying the same thing.

Another reason for the various definitions of self-regulation is that such skills appear very different at different stages of the life span. In childhood, self-regulation skills are observed in children's increased capabilities to control their attention and inhibit behaviors, as well as the ability to control their emotions (McClelland et al., 2015; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). As such, research on early or middle childhood frequently focuses on executive functions, which represent how well a child can control his or her attention, inhibit behaviors and responses, and hold information in memory. Furthermore, having control over one's emotions is a major developmental task of childhood, and, accordingly, children's growing abilities to modulate their emotional states and reactions have also been a focus of much research (see, e.g., Eisenberg, Smith, Sadovsky, & Spinrad, 2004; Chap. 3). As children's self-regulation develops, children become more skilled at various behavioral, social, and cognitive tasks, such as interacting with peers without conflicts, sitting still and paying attention for longer periods of time, and inhibiting disruptive behaviors. As youth mature, these early skills continue to be important during adolescence.

Self-regulation looks quite different during adolescence. Despite that fact that most teenagers have mastered basic self-regulatory skills, such as sitting still and avoiding temper tantrums, self-regulation continues to undergo important changes until youth are in their early- to mid-20s. In particular, the advanced, adultlike self-regulation (e.g., the ability to regulate behavior in accordance with long-term goals), which is very limited during childhood, grows during adolescence and early adulthood (Brandtstädter, 2006; Demetriou, 2000; Geldhof, Little, & Colombo, 2010).

Such advanced cognitive self-regulation skills have been defined as intentional self-regulation (ISR), which involves actions that are actively aimed toward harmonizing demands in the person's social and physical context with a person's resources in order to attain better functioning and enhance self-development (Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2008). ISR skills help individuals set goals, create plans to achieve goals, and change their plans if goals cannot be reached according to the original plan. As such, ISR enables individuals to select and execute goal-directed behaviors (Brandtstädter, 2006).

ISR skills continue to develop in adolescence and acquire increased significance for healthy functioning. For example, ISR can help youth deal with the changes and transitions that are characteristic of this period of life such as transitions from middle to high school or transitions from high school to college, work, or military service (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). Nevertheless, as we have noted, there is a lack of comprehensive theories and measures that describe and capture ISR during adolescence. In the absence of established theories that are specific to adolescent self-regulation, theories of adult self-regulation have often informed studies of adolescent self-regulation, as described below.

What Have We Learned from Recent Studies of Adolescent Self-Regulation?

A growing number of studies have demonstrated links between children's and adolescents' self-regulation skills and various indicators of healthy development. Specifically, higher levels of self-regulation are related to greater social and emotional competences, higher levels of school readiness, and academic success. For example, Duckworth, Tsukayama, and May (2010) showed that self-control (a component of self-regulation) predicted changes in early adolescents' subsequent grade point averages (GPAs), such that high self-control predicted high GPA. This finding highlights the importance of self-regulation for promoting positive youth outcomes.

These findings mirror research in other fields that underscores the importance of self-regulation skills for adaptive development. For instance, Heckman and Kautz (2012) note that goal pursuit strategies, such as self-regulation skills, often predict positive developmental outcomes as strongly as other abilities (e.g., performance on achievement tests). They even suggest that self-regulatory skills may help explain why high school dropouts who earn a GED display more negative outcomes (e.g., divorce, exiting employment, and going to jail) than high school completers who display similar scores on achievement tests. It may be that high school is an important setting for honing ISR skills. Lindqvist and Vestman (2011) similarly found that skills such as self-regulation during late adolescence and early adulthood predicted later unemployment more strongly than did other abilities, highlighting the fact that adolescent self-regulation skills are important for employment outcomes later in life. Thus, self-regulation skills are at least equally important predictors of adult functioning compared to other abilities.

Self-regulation has not only been linked to various positive outcomes (as observed by Heckman & Kautz, 2012), but it has also been related to lower levels of problematic development, such as delinquent behavior, depression, and substance use. For instance, Brody and Ge (2001) found that higher youth self-regulation was associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms, hostility, and alcohol use and with higher levels of self-esteem, compared to youth with lower levels of self-regulation. Using data collected from a sample of college students, Quinn and Fromme (2010) similarly found that self-regulation was a protective factor against episodes of heavy drinking, alcohol-related problems, and unprotected sex. These studies provide evidence that, in addition to directly promoting positive development, self-regulation can also protect individuals from problematic development during adolescence and early adulthood.

In addition to examining outcomes associated with self-regulation, researchers have investigated gender differences in the self-regulation skills of youth. Studies of early childhood have frequently demonstrated that girls outperform boys on measures of self-regulation (e.g., Kochanska, Coy, & Murray, 2001). However, there is no consensus that adolescent girls have better self-regulation than boys or that self-regulation functions differently across the two genders during adolescence. Studies with adolescents frequently report no or minor mean differences on

measures of self-regulation and find that good self-regulatory skills are important for the healthy functioning of both adolescent boys and girls (see, e.g., Moilanen, Rasmussen, & Padilla-Walker, 2014).

Major longitudinal research also supports the importance of self-regulation for youth development. For instance, research from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (see Chap. 1) has identified ISR as a central characteristic that places young people on positive developmental trajectories. Consequently, the 4-H Study has documented how ISR develops across adolescence and its role in healthy youth development and, as such, has provided considerable insight of any study into the issue of adolescent ISR.

Researchers in the 4-H Study have used the selection, optimization, and compensation (SOC) model, developed by Freund, Baltes, and colleagues (e.g., Freund & Baltes, 2002) to conceptualize and measure ISR. The SOC model was initially developed with adult populations in mind and describes three distinct processes. Selection describes how people set, prioritize, and commit to a set of goals they want to achieve. Optimization explains how individuals use internal and external resources (such as persistence or help from others) to go about reaching their selected goals. Compensation describes how individuals cope when their goals are not being reached according to their initial plan.

Research from the 4-H Study has provided information on how the SOC theory can be used to understand adolescents' ISR and how the SOC skills contribute to healthy functioning. However, unlike research with adult populations that has found three unique components of SOC, research using adolescent samples has found that adolescents do not discriminate between the processes of selecting goals, using optimization strategies to accomplish goals, and compensating in the event of failures or losses. Instead, a single SOC process represents global ISR and has consistently predicted higher levels of positive development (e.g., the Five Cs of PYD; see Chap. 9) and lower levels of problem behaviors (e.g., depression, delinquency, and risk behaviors) across different periods of adolescence (e.g., Zimmerman, Phelps, & Lerner, 2007). For example, Zimmerman and colleagues (2007) found that overall SOC scores at fifth grade positively predicted participants' seventh grade scores on PYD and negatively predicted their scores on depressive symptoms, delinquency, and risk behaviors.

Applying these findings from the 4-H Study, researchers conducted Project GPS, whereby they developed measurement rubrics based on the SOC model of ISR as tools to be used in high-quality mentoring programs (see Chap. 6). The project title, "GPS," is a metaphor for a navigational system used to provide directions, such that *g*oal selection, *p*ursuit of strategies, and *s*hifting gears to overcome obstacles are represented by the components of the acronym GPS, respectively (Bowers et al., 2013). Specifically, these skills coincide with SOC model of ISR, such that goal selection, pursuit of strategies, and shifting gears coincide with selection, optimization, and compensation skills, respectively. Project GPS aimed to help mentors promote the development of self-regulatory skills among youth and provided an opportunity for researchers to examine various aspects of how self-regulation develops (Napolitano, Bowers, Gestsdóttir, & Chase, 2011).

For example, Bowers and colleagues (2013) examined the reliability and validity of the GPS rubrics with 152 pairs of mentors and mentees. Their results supported the reliability of the rubrics (the consistency of the responses) and the validity of the rubrics (that the GPS tool is in fact a measure of self-regulation) and found positive relations between self-regulation and the outcomes of PYD and youth contribution. In addition, the measurement properties of the rubrics represented one process describing global ISR, suggesting the rubrics provide a similar measurement of ISR compared to the SOC measure previously described above (Napolitano et al., 2014). Furthermore, results indicate that the mentor–mentee relationship influences youth ISR skills, suggesting that mentors may play a key role in promoting the development of youth ISR (Bowers, Wang, Tirrell, & Lerner, in press). Taken together, these findings suggest that the GPS rubrics provide tools that researchers can use to gain a better understanding of the types of youth, mentor, and programming characteristics that support and promote ISR skills.

The findings from Project GPS are important, but many questions remain unanswered. One question is whether the Project GPS findings apply to diverse youth due to the relatively small number of youth and mentors who participated in the project. Furthermore, other questions relate to how the mentoring relationship plays a role in promoting the development of self-regulatory skills, and which characteristics of the relationships are most important to self-regulatory skills. Nevertheless, this research provides one example of an applied project that can expand the understanding of self-regulatory skills in a practical setting.

The consistent links that have been demonstrated between ISR skills and various positive outcomes have also been used to inform school-related interventions. Traditionally, intervention efforts that aim to support youth's academic achievement or positive development have focused on narrowly defined learning-related skills, such as IQ. As emphasized by Cunha and Heckman's (2010) model of skill development, the importance of self-regulation for a wide range of functioning, as well as the malleability of self-regulation during adolescence, makes self-regulation an important area for practitioners to consider. Later investments, such as during adolescence, can improve skills, like self-regulation, more strongly than they can improve skills that may be less malleable, such as IQ. Thus, it is critical that programs and policies designed to promote youth development consider ways to promote youth self-regulation.

Limitations of Research on Adolescent Self-Regulation and Implications for Practice

We have described advances that recent studies have made toward a fuller understanding about adolescent self-regulation. However, our discussion also suggests that the field's understanding of adolescent self-regulation is incomplete. In this section, we describe some of the limitations of the self-regulation literature and the implications that these limitations have for future research and practice.

As previously mentioned, several definitions of adolescent self-regulation exist in the research literature. The lack of precise definitions of, and theories about, adolescent self-regulation limits the implementation of effective policies and programs in at least two ways. First, the lack of precise definitions makes it difficult to design policies and programs that effectively promote adolescent self-regulation. Ambiguously defined concepts can only be promoted ambiguously. Second, imprecise definitions make self-regulation difficult to measure. Depending on one's definition, self-regulation can be defined so broadly that it encompasses any conscious or nonconscious action that moves an individual closer to a goal. This definition can include a very wide range of behaviors, both automatic and intentional, that people use to regulate their interactions with their environment. As such, self-regulation can refer to behaviors ranging from resisting the temptation to eat an extra slice of cake to pursuing complex, longitudinal goals, such as graduating from college. With such broad definitions, how can practitioners consistently evaluate their programs' effectiveness in promoting self-regulation? For self-regulation to become a meaningful aspect of youth development programs and policies, researchers must produce measures of self-regulation based on widely agreed-on definitions and make those measures *easily* accessible to program and policy evaluators. The 4-H Study has contributed to such an advance by adapting a widely used theory and measure of adult self-regulation—the SOC model—to define and index one type of adolescent self-regulation, ISR.

Furthermore, additional research is needed to determine how different aspects of self-regulation may impact functioning in different domains (e.g., social vs. academic). Relatedly, we do not know if self-regulation skills in one domain are transferrable to functioning in other domains. For example, if a young person's ISR skills are supported in one area of functioning (e.g., in relation to the pursuit of academic goals), will such skills lead to better functioning in other contexts (e.g., employment)? Furthermore, our discussion in this chapter has mostly focused on advances in understanding the cognitive and behavioral aspects of self-regulation during adolescence. Although advances in understanding self-regulation of emotions in adolescence may be less dramatic than during childhood, adolescents' abilities to control their emotional states are important for their own well-being and for positive interactions with other people (see, e.g., Silk, Steinberg, & Morris, 2003). There is a need to create a better understanding of how emotional self-regulation overlaps, and interacts, with other aspects of adolescent self-regulation, as highlighted in this chapter (McClelland et al., 2010).

In addition to limitations in our knowledge of different aspects of ISR, limitations in the measurement of ISR also exist. Past research has frequently relied on self-reported levels of adolescent self-regulation, and this research would benefit from additional assessment strategies (e.g., direct observations of self-regulated behavior). Such research would inform whether the self-regulation skills that adolescents report using are reflected in their actual behavior. In addition, because self-regulation is a rapidly developing area of study across all ages of life span, there is a need for more tools to measure self-regulation at all ages. Specifically, there are few measures of self-regulation that are appropriate for use with youth.

We have described how researchers working within the 4-H Study have used the SOC measure with adolescents, and we recommend this measure for use in future research. However, the SOC measure may not capture all of the self-regulatory skills that are specific to the adolescent period, especially emotion regulation. As such, although the SOC measure has been used successfully in various research projects and continues to be developed for use with adolescent samples, it may be premature to use this measure in relation to the development, implementation, or evaluation of youth development programs.

Future research must also recognize the uniqueness of the adolescent period and how it may shape adolescent ISR and how such skills function. Although research has demonstrated that youth seem to acquire certain aspects of adultlike ISR skills during adolescence, ISR is not fully developed in adolescence and may not relate to adolescent functioning in the same way as it does for adults. For example, the selection of goals may look somewhat different in adolescence and adulthood. Adults must decide which of their desired goals should take priority, so that high-priority goals can be given the most resources. In adolescence, however, youth are still exploring multiple pathways to adulthood. Having flexible goal priorities may be particularly adaptive during adolescence (Gestsdóttir, Lewin-Bizan, von Eye, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009; Napolitano et al., 2011).

Although adolescent ISR skills may not be identical to adult ISR, research based on the 4-H Study, as well as other studies, has consistently related adolescent self-regulation to positive and negative developmental outcomes in the expected directions. These outcomes include broad indicators of PYD, community contributions, depression, and risk behaviors (see, e.g., Bowers et al., 2011). In addition, ISR is more clearly related to indicators of positive development than to indicators of risk and depression (see, e.g., Bowers et al., 2011; Gestsdottir et al., 2009), and the strength of these relations increases with age. ISR may therefore gain increased relevance for healthy functioning as youth move through adolescence. In addition, when looking at patterns of positive and negative behaviors across time, high ISR scores are related to following the most adaptive developmental patterns of behavior (Zimmerman, Phelps, & Lerner, 2008). Specifically, youth with high ISR scores were more likely to exhibit higher levels of PYD and contribution and lower levels of depressive symptoms and risk/problem behaviors compared with youth with lower ISR scores.

Implications for Youth Policy and Practice

Although research on the nature, development, and role of adolescent self-regulation for healthy functioning is still evolving, self-regulation has been consistently related to positive youth development and young people's contributions to their families and communities. We are confident, then, in recommending that supporting ISR skills will be a fruitful way to support thriving among youth. In other words, increasing young people's ISR skills will support their positive development. We also expect that strong self-regulation skills will help youth navigate away from

Table 2.1 Priorities for policies and practice

• Improved ISR should become a benchmark for evaluating programs and policies
• Adolescent ISR should become a funding priority
• Promote ISR across the life span
• Promote the idea that ISR takes a village
• Improving ISR is only part of a successful intervention

problematic behaviors. However, in light of weaker relations between self-regulation and negative developmental outcomes, we encourage the pursuit of other approaches to deter problem behaviors among youth.

As summarized in Table 2.1, we have distilled research on self-regulation into five concrete priorities for practice. These priorities represent only the "tip of the iceberg" in regard to how self-regulation research can inform applied work, but these priorities are broad and flexible enough that they can be practically implemented. As such, we believe that addressing these priorities will serve as the first step in a paradigm shift that places a premium within youth policy and practice on the promotion of self-regulation skills.

Priority 1: Improved ISR Skills Become a Benchmark for Evaluation

Improved self-regulation skills should become a benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of programs and policies. The well-known importance of self-regulation for healthy youth development is at odds with currently prevailing ideals that emphasize improved scores on achievement tests (see also Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Heckman & Rubinstein, 2001). The kind of knowledge reflected by mathematics and reading achievement tests is certainly important for individual thriving, but achievement tests can only tell part of the story. Skills like self-regulation predict tangible developmental outcomes (e.g., earnings, educational attainment). As Heckman and Kautz (2012) note, evidence supporting the importance of self-regulation and related skills "should give pause to analysts and policy makers who rely solely on achievement tests…" (p. 462).

As compared to the knowledge reflected in achievement tests, self-regulation may be especially important for young people who are at the greatest risk for maladaptive outcomes. Economists have found that abilities like self-regulation help individuals with the fewest resources avoid failure, whereas other abilities promote thriving among individuals with more resources. More specifically, abilities like IQ predicted wages better than did other skills such as self-regulation, especially among individuals in the upper half of the income distribution. In turn, abilities like self-regulation were more strongly associated with avoiding unemployment than IQ-like abilities (Heckman & Kautz, 2012).

Priority 2: Adolescent ISR Becomes a Funding Priority

Understanding how self-regulation develops during adolescence must become a funding priority for governmental agencies and private foundations. The 4-H Study of PYD consistently found that adolescents do not readily distinguish between the processes of selecting goals, optimizing their goals, and compensating for failures and losses. This lack of differentiation was expected among younger adolescents, but developmental theories hypothesized that older adolescents would readily distinguish among the three processes. In this case, the data obviously did not support the theory.

A great deal of research describes the development of self-regulation skills in early childhood, but research on adolescent and adult self-regulation is incomplete at best. Despite this limitation, the evidence that does exist provides support for the critical role that self-regulation plays during adolescence. However, the field lacks integrative theories that comprehensively describe adolescent self-regulation and link its growth to the development that occurs during other periods of the life span (e.g., childhood and adulthood). Making ISR a funding priority is necessary to allow researchers to explore these unanswered questions.

Priority 3: Promote ISR Across the Life Span

Shifting to a paradigm that acknowledges the importance of self-regulation must involve recognizing that ISR skills can be enhanced at any stage of the life span. It is well known that earlier interventions produce larger impacts (e.g., Heckman & Kautz, 2012), and improving children's self-regulation has already become a cornerstone of promoting children's school readiness (Tominey & McClelland, 2011).

However, self-regulation skills develop and can be meaningfully impacted during any stage of the life span, especially during adolescence. It is certainly worth investing in young children's self-regulation skills, but the dividends from such efforts can be substantially improved by continuing to invest in these skills at least through the end of adolescence. The value of these efforts in adolescent self-regulation is such that even investing in youth who did not receive early interventions will likely produce a positive return on investment (Cunha & Heckman, 2010).

Priority 4: Promoting ISR "Takes a Village"

Promoting youth self-regulation "takes a village." Limited-scope programs such as those that assign mentors to at-risk youth can provide young people with well-regulated exemplars whom they can emulate and go to for help. Furthermore, young people thrive when they can take advantage of the resources available in their contexts. Providing multiple resources and exemplars will lead to better-regulated,

thriving youth. As such, programs and policies designed to improve youth self-regulation must be multifaceted (Maniar & Zaff, 2011). Such interventions should not only provide youth with useful information (e.g., tips for improving important components of self-regulation such as study skills) but must also impact the people with whom youth interact. Programs can provide mentors, teachers, or other important nonparental adults whom young people can emulate (See Chap. 6). Parenting education courses can empower caregivers to strengthen young people's ISR, and peers should be encouraged to help each other.

The fact that interventions can improve all people's ISR skills (including those of adults) means that multifaceted interventions have the added benefit of improving the lives of adults in a community. If adults are to model and teach successful self-regulation strategies to young people, those adults must learn to use the strategies themselves (Maniar & Zaff, 2011). Self-regulation has several economic and social benefits during adulthood, and improving adults' self-regulation will not only impact youth directly (e.g., by making those adults better models) but will also increase the number of resources adults can access and can therefore provide to young people. As an example, improved self-regulation can help parents maintain employment, and the resulting economic stability will improve the resources families can access.

Priority 5: Improving ISR Is Only Part of a Successful Intervention

Promoting interventions that specify self-regulation is only one part of a larger solution. For instance, self-regulation skills tend to correlate with indicators of positive development more strongly than with indicators of problematic development. As with any strength-based intervention, we recommend that policies and programs designed to improve adolescent self-regulation should complement, not replace, interventions meant to reduce problem behaviors. For instance, simply improving bullies' self-regulation skills will not make them stop bullying. In fact, cool, calculating, well-regulated bullies may be a worse problem than poorly regulated bullies. Similarly, improving a substance user's ISR skills without altering the motivations that underlie his or her substance use might inadvertently help the user hide an addiction from friends and family.

Even interventions designed to both improve self-regulation and prevent problem behaviors are inadequate, however. Youth who are told what not to do and given the self-regulation skills needed to improve their own lives must also learn what they *should* do to place themselves on positive developmental trajectories. Positive development is not the same as an absence of problem behaviors. As previously mentioned and also noted by Geldhof and colleagues (Chap. 9), one influential model of positive youth development specifies that young people thrive when they exhibit Five Cs (see also Lerner et al., 2015), which, in turn, give rise to a sixth C

of contribution. In order to promote such positive outcomes, youth must be given the skills (ISR), as well as direction, e.g., by providing them with a hopeful future and exposing them to positive role models (see also Chap. 5).

As such, we recommend that the effectiveness of programs and policies be judged according to how they impact (a) personal skills such as self-regulation, (b) indicators of positive development such as the Five Cs, and (c) indicators of negative development such as depression, substance use, and delinquency. Thriving can only be promoted when all three of these aspects are addressed simultaneously.

Conclusions

Self-regulation is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of definitions and behaviors that have been studied by researchers across different periods of development. Across the life span, self-regulatory strategies help individuals manage and utilize resources within their contexts and themselves to accomplish developmentally appropriate tasks. As a result, these skills enhance the ability of youth to thrive and to become contributing and engaged adults. Because of the important link between self-regulation strategies and positive outcomes, it is critical that programs and policies designed to promote youth development encourage the growth of young people's self-regulation skills.

In order to accomplish this goal, we have outlined priorities to improve applied work and for researchers to broaden their understanding of self-regulation. Self-regulation can be used as a benchmark of evaluating and assessing the impact of youth development programs, and it is important to encourage and develop this skill among all youth. One way to encourage self-regulatory skills is through adults' modeling of these behaviors (e.g., monitoring and reflecting on progress toward achieving goals), which would require developing self-regulation skills among adults. The benefits of fostering these skills among adults are twofold: adults would be able to provide a model for youth to learn, and developing these skills may also improve the lives and functioning of the adults themselves. However, self-regulation on its own is not enough. Although self-regulation is especially important for promoting positive outcomes, it should not replace interventions that target reducing problematic and risky behaviors.

Previous research is limited, and there is a need for more research on the different aspects and domains of self-regulation and a lack of self-report measures appropriate for youth. In order to fill in these gaps, ISR should become a funding priority so that researchers can obtain funding for studies that advance their understanding of ISR. Furthermore, research is needed to identify the optimal ways to encourage the development of ISR skills and the most effective ways to apply this knowledge in settings that promote youth development (e.g., youth development programs).

Despite these limitations, however, present research provides promising evidence that self-regulatory skills are a key strength and tool for youth; these skills enable youth to thrive and to become contributing adults who are engaged in their communities and society. If researchers can continue to explore the development of

self-regulatory strategies across all phases of the life span, they will be better able to create tools that practitioners can implement in applied settings to promote self-regulation strategies. ISR is a valuable skill and should be invested in by researchers, policy makers, and practitioners.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Duckworth, A. L. (2013, April). *The key to success? Grit* [Video File]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit

In this TED talk, Angela Duckworth describes her work studying grit (i.e., passion and perseverance for long-term goals) among children and adults, highlighting the importance of grit as a key predictor of educational and occupational success. This video clip is useful for individuals hoping to learn more about grit and the current state of this field of research.

Geldhof, G. J., Weiner, M. B., Agans, J. P., Mueller, M. K., & Lerner, R. M. (2013). Understanding entrepreneurial intent in late adolescence: The role of intentional self-regulation and innovation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 43*(1), 81–91.

This paper describes self-regulation, as measured by the Entrepreneurial Intentional Self-Regulation Questionnaire, as an important factor for predicting entrepreneurial intent among young adults. This article is useful for individuals seeking information about the importance of self-regulatory skills in the domain of entrepreneurship.

Gerstein, J. (2014, August 24). *Self-regulation: The other 21st century skills*. [Website]. Retrieved from http://usergeneratededucation.wordpress.com/2014/08/24/self-regulation-the-other-21st-century-skills/

This website provides a description of self-regulation and describes ways educators can foster the development of self-regulation skills among youth. This resource is valuable for individuals interested in promoting self-regulation skills among children and adolescence.

Gestsdottir, S., & Lerner, R. M. (2008). Positive development in adolescence: The development and role of intentional self-regulation. *Human Development, 51*(3), 202–224. doi:10.1159/000135757.

This article describes the development of intentional self-regulation in adolescence. The authors emphasize a model of selection, optimization, and compensation and explore the relations between intentional self-regulation and positive youth development. This article is useful for practitioners and policy makers who

would like to learn more about what intentional self-regulation comprises and its relation to positive youth development.

Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Bowers, E. P., Lewin-Bizan, S., Gestsdottir, S., & Brown Urban, J. (Eds.) (2011). *Thriving in childhood and adolescence: The role of self regulation processes* (Number 133, New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development). New York: Wiley.

This volume integrates research from scholars who have focused on different age-specific aspects of self-regulation to enhance the understanding of the importance of self-regulation for human development. This publication is useful for individuals who would like to learn more about the development of self-regulation across the life span.

Maniar, S., & Zaff, J. F. (2011). A life-span, relational, public health model of self-regulation: Impact on individual and community health. In R. M. Lerner, J. V. Lerner, E. P. Bowers, S. Lewin-Bizan, S. Gestsdottir, & J. B. Urban (Eds.), *Thriving in childhood and adolescence: The role of self-regulation processes* (Number 133, New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, pp. 77–86). New York: Wiley.

This chapter highlights the importance of self-regulation in the transitions between childhood to adulthood as a key process for promoting individual and community health. This chapter is useful for individuals who want to understand how supporting individuals' self-regulation promotes positive health outcomes for individuals and communities.

Napolitano, C. M., Bowers, E. P., Arbeit, M. R., Chase, P., Geldhof, G. J., Lerner, J. V., et al. (2014). The GPS to success growth grids: Measurement properties of a tool to promote intentional self-regulation in mentoring programs. *Applied Developmental Science, 18*(1), 46–58.

This article provides details of the measurement properties of the "GPS to Success Growth Grids," a tool that may be useful for mentors in promoting intentional self-regulation. This article is useful to individuals looking for a validated tool that mentors can use with mentees to promote the development of self-regulation skills.

Zimmerman, S. M., Phelps, E., & Lerner, R. M. (2008). Positive and negative developmental trajectories in U.S. adolescents: Where the positive youth perspective meets the deficit model. *Research in Human Development, 5*(3), 153–165.

This article examines the different paths (trajectories) of the Five Cs of Positive Youth Development (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring), contribution, and risk behaviors that youth follow across early adolescence. The article is based on data from grades 5 to 8 of the 4-H Study. Results showed that youth with higher intentional self-regulation scores were more likely to be in the most favorable trajectory compared to the other possible trajectories for each outcome variable.

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Chapter 3
The Regulation of Emotion in Adolescence

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Beginning in infancy and continuing throughout the rest of life, individuals express a range of emotions. Even during a child's earliest years of life, a parent can tell when the child is feeling happy, angry, sad, or surprised. Facial expressions and bodily reactions may be virtually universal indicators that a child is feeling one of these emotions. Later in the childhood years and certainly during adolescence, emotions become more complex. They are associated with social relationships and the child's growing understanding of the rules of social conduct—that is, rules that depict how a person is expected to behave in school and in public places and in interactions with peers, family members, and "grown-ups." Fulfilling or not fulfilling these expectations may result in feeling pride for one's accomplishments or embarrassment, guilt, shame, or disappointment for falling short of expectations (Barrett, 2013). In addition, children may feel love for those people who support them in their lives and gratitude for the help they receive. Children who are supported or helped may also experience hope that they will succeed in life (see Chap. 5).

One renowned scholar of adolescent development, Erik H. Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968), proposed a theory that involved the idea that different fundamental and healthy emotions should develop as individuals go through critical psychosocial stages across life. Healthy emotions and social relationships depend on whether individuals can appropriately cope with challenges associated with each stage. From infancy through early adolescence, Erikson proposed that the sequence of positive socioemotional development involves developing senses of basic trust in

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_3

one's world (e.g., "I feel safe in my home or with my parents"), autonomy (e.g., "I feel I can do this task by myself"), initiative (e.g., "I feel okay if I decide to do something without my parents helping me"), industry (e.g., "I feel I know what to do to succeed in school"), and identity (e.g., "I know who I am. I know my role in society") (see Chap. 10). However, if the child experiences problems in his or her development, for instance, if he or she suffered abuse or neglect or developed in dangerous or deprived circumstances, then the negative socioemotional counterparts would be more likely to develop. The child might, then, develop feelings of mistrust, shame, doubt, guilt, inferiority, and identity/role confusion.

Erikson's ideas illustrate an important point in regard to one's emotions. How one behaves in one's world and the social relationships one experiences in one's life are always associated with one's emotions. Simply, emotions, behaviors, thoughts, and social relationships are all interrelated in life. Positive and healthy development, then, will involve a coordination of the person and his or her world in manners that enable adaptive emotional responses to be more likely to occur and maladaptive emotional responses less likely to occur.

Of course, to behave in ways that are adaptive for the context, a child learns what emotions and emotional responses "should" be associated with particular situations. However, different children, families, and cultures experience and express different emotions in the same context; a child must also learn what emotions and responses are deemed appropriate in different personal and social situations. Parents, teachers, and other adult caregivers might agree that a child should not express happiness or joy when he or she fails in school or witnesses a sibling or a friend experiencing a painful accident. However, they might differ regarding whether it is reasonable for the child to display anger when the child is not given freedom or autonomy.

In short, a child must learn what situations and what emotions should go together in life. Thus, healthy emotional development includes understanding rules and consequences of displaying particular responses to particular emotions in particular contexts, as well as developing skills to enable adaptive responses. Just as the child must learn to regulate his or her behavior (see Chap. 2) and his or her social relationships with adults (see Chaps. 1 and 6) and with peers (see Chap. 7) to contribute to his or her own positive development, the child must also attain the skills to adjust, or regulate, his or her emotions to create good/positive matches among emotions, behaviors, and social experiences/social relationships (Barrett, 2013). Emotion regulation (ER) is, then, a key facet of healthy and positive youth development (PYD).

ER may be especially challenging in adolescence, however, when the several major changes of the period, involving the person and his or her context, begin to occur in often rapid and interrelated order (see Chaps. 1, 4, 6, and 7). However, we will note that when adolescents do show successful ER, they are more likely to also show school success and positive social development (Valiente, Swanson, & Eisenberg, 2012). In turn, we will also discuss that difficulties with ER are associated with many behavioral health disorders (Gross & Muñoz, 1995). Accordingly, because of the importance of ER for PYD, we will discuss its role in adolescent development and draw from some heretofore unexplored facets of the 4-H Study of PYD (see Chap. 1) to illustrate the importance of the links between ER and PYD. We

will then suggest some implications for applications to policy and practice based on empirical evidence from the 4-H Study and other research about the development of ER in adolescence. We begin this discussion by presenting a brief overview of emotional development in adolescence.

Emotional Development in Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of dramatic biological, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Compared to younger children and adults, adolescents' positive and negative emotional experiences are more frequent, intense, and long-lasting (e.g., Goodenough, 1931; Greene, 1990; Larson, Moneta, Richards, & Wilson, 2002). Thus, youth may display especially strong passion about their goals but may also be challenged by unprecedentedly powerful emotions. The ways that youth handle emotional responses to challenges, successes, and failures therefore stands to have a powerful impact on their development. For example, the frustration caused by a difficult math problem may cause some young people to give up and develop math anxiety. This same frustration may motivate others to focus their attention, persist at solving the problem, and develop a sense of self-efficacy for mathematics. The sadness from losing a beloved pet may cause some youth to exhibit symptoms of depression while leading others to seek comfort from others and thereby strengthen their social bonds. Alternatively, the exhilaration of winning a tennis match might lead some youth to narcissism, while it may motivate others to practice harder and become an even better tennis player. Thus, understanding the function, development, utilization, and regulation of adolescents' emotions is therefore critical for promoting PYD.

Overly intense emotions may also impair planfulness and reduce adaptive responses to pursuing important goals (e.g., "too mad to think" or "too anxious to sleep"). Handling emotions during adolescence is like horseback riding on an unpredictable road. One steers the horse one way to avoid a pothole, only to mire the horse in deep mud. Thus, one might avoid thinking about a test, which successfully reduces the overdue anxiety at the moment. However, persistent avoidance may prevent one from studying, leading to even greater anxiety on the test day.

Understanding the development of ER during adolescence is complicated by the fact that youth simultaneously pursue multiple goals and often experience mixed emotions in the context of a single emotional event. Simply following the call of one predominant emotion as it relates to a single goal can hamper a young person's ability to fulfill other goals. For example, if a young person responds to a bully aggressively, both positive and negative outcomes may occur. The perpetrator may stop bullying the youth, but the young person's actions may also lead peers to see him or her as a violent person. This impression may, in turn, hamper the young person's social relationships.

Understanding how parents, practitioners, and policy makers can work to enhance young people's ER is therefore a critical component of promoting PYD.

Well-regulated emotions help adolescents focus their attention, solve problems, and relate well to others. In contrast, overly intense and poorly regulated emotions can disrupt attention, interfere with problem-solving, and harm social relationships (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004). Effective ER promotes dynamic flexibility, helping youth “pursue and prioritize different goals” as well as “mobilize emotions and cognitions in the service of [their] goals” (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003, p. 125). In order for parents, practitioners, and policy makers to improve youth ER, however, they must first understand how ER manifests and how it develops.

Key Facets of ER

It is one thing to stipulate that adolescents must regulate their emotions appropriately in order to interact well in key social settings (e.g., schools, sites of part-time employment, faith institutions) and with the various people with who they interact (e.g., parents, siblings, peers, teachers, coaches, mentors, and individuals encountered in social gatherings). It is quite another matter, however, to explain precisely what adolescents can and should do to be successful at ER. How can adolescents react with adaptive emotional responses when they encounter people and events or, in other words, how can they regulate their emotions appropriately when they receive “input” (stimulation) from people and events? In turn, how can adolescents demonstrate the appropriate emotional responses to others (how can they regulate “output”) in specific social situations?

Different skills, or “strategies,” have been found to be useful in regulating the “input” or the “output” associated with emotions (Gross, 1998). Two types of ER strategies have frequently been studied in adolescence. One is termed *reappraisal* and other is termed *suppression*. Reappraisal is an ER strategy wherein a young person tries to alter emotional “inputs” (an emotion-eliciting event, e.g., a parent telling you that you cannot participate in an event with your peers because you neglected doing a school assignment) before it generates full and perhaps problematic emotional responses (e.g., showing a high level of anger, along with associated behavioral agitation and “yelling and screaming”). Reappraisal changes the way one thinks about emotion-eliciting situations so as to alter its impact (Gross, 1998). This strategy might entail seeing “the bright side” or “the bigger picture,” such as interpreting parents’ discipline as caring rather than controlling. Suppression, on the other hand, is a response-focused strategy that helps young people deal with the “output” of their emotions (e.g., anger, anxiety). Suppression helps youth inhibit emotional responses that are already elicited, such as hiding one’s anger at a parent or gloating after passing an important exam that one’s best friend failed.

As we shall explain below, not all youth use these strategies and, if they do, the strategies may not be equally effective. In addition, the effective use of these strategies may vary across the adolescent period. Evidence for these generalizations comes from both the 4-H Study and other research. However, it should be noted that, at this writing, information in the 4-H Study about the use and effectiveness of

these two strategies has not been published previously. We used the 4-H Study data set to learn about ER for two reasons, however.

First, as we have explained, ER is an important component of healthy development, in general, and a contributor to PYD in particular. Therefore, we believed that it is important to discuss ER in this volume. Second, however, we wanted to demonstrate an important use of an investigation of the richness and scope of the 4-H Study, that is, the study may be used to answer questions about youth development that were not initially targets of investigation by the designers of the research (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015; see Chap. 1. That is, although the 4-H Study has completed its collection of new data, the information compiled in this research is still of great value to researchers and practitioners seeking to ask questions about youth development that this unique longitudinal study can address. Our research on ER using the 4-H data set is an example of the ongoing value of the 4-H Study data set. We report preliminary findings from new analyses of the 4-H Study about ER, findings that are important to understand the role of this facet of an individual's skills in governing his or her own behavior. At the same time, these initial data analyses illustrate the potential for continuing to use the 4-H Study to understand the bases of thriving among adolescents.

Normative Development of ER during Adolescence

ER develops rapidly throughout childhood and adolescence. During middle childhood and early adolescence, youth develop an increased understanding that internal feelings differ from external expressions of emotions (Holodynski, 2004). Compared to children, adolescents demonstrate improved mastery about the "rules" about how and when to display their emotions. These rules specify how emotions are appropriately expressed in specific contexts (Saarni, 1999). Youth also show greater variety, flexibility, and effectiveness in using ER strategies as they get older (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006). Reappraisal and suppression take on new meanings as these skills develop and have complex influences on youth emotional well-being.

Adolescents' Use of Reappraisal and Suppression

The development of reappraisal and suppression (and ER in general) appears to follow complex pathways across adolescence (e.g., Gullone, Hughes, King, & Tonge, 2010; McRae et al., 2012). In one study of Australian young adolescents (ages 9 and 15 years), over 1,000 youth reported on their use of reappraisal and suppression over 2 years (Gullone et al., 2010). The use of reappraisal remained stable; however, the use of suppression declined over the course of the study. The data in 4-H Study extend this line of research by describing the developmental patterns of older American adolescents (aged between 15 and 18 years). The analyses we

conducted showed that the use of reappraisal steadily increased, whereas the use of suppression remained stable. Thus, the use of suppression appears to decline between ages 9 and 15 years, whereas the use of reappraisal appears to increase between ages 15 and 18 years.

This developmental trend might be adaptive, as youth are increasingly expected to self-initiate regulatory strategies that show both immediate and longer term effectiveness. As we shall describe below, long-term suppression is associated with negative outcomes. However, in middle adolescence (about 14–15 years old) when suppression has decreased and reappraisal has not yet increased, youth may appear less regulated than older and perhaps even younger adolescents. As reappraisal and suppression develop, their effects on youth behavioral and social adjustment may also vary. In the next section, we discuss the implications of reappraisal and suppression for psychological well-being among adolescent boys and girls.

Reappraisal, Suppression, and Depression in Adolescent Boys and Girls

Gender differences in emotionality and emotional responses have been examined for decades. Females typically report more emotional experiences and expressions than males (Balswick & Avertt, 1977; Simon & Nath, 2004). Females are also more proactive and persistent in solving emotional problems (e.g., Gottman & Levenson, 1988). Unsurprisingly, then, our analyses of the 4-H Study data set replicated findings from earlier studies (e.g., Gullone et al., 2010; Larsen et al., 2013) and found that adolescent girls rated themselves higher on the use of reappraisal but lower on the use of suppression than adolescent boys.

Furthermore, adolescent girls' depression was not only positively associated with the use of suppression, but depression also predicted more suppression 1 year later (see also Larsen et al., 2013). Thus, although girls used suppression less frequently than boys, they used it more frequently when experiencing depression. Adolescent boys' use of reappraisal and suppression were positively associated concurrently, but the use of reappraisal negatively predicted the use of suppression 1 year later. Among boys, suppression was not associated with depression but seems to be a second ER method used to supplement reappraisal.

Despite gender differences in the relation between depression and reappraisal, reappraisal and suppression tends to similarly related to many other psychological processes among both boys and girls. For example, youth with higher reappraisal are also more likely to persist in goal pursuit and try different alternatives to approach their goals even in the face of failure. These youth also tended to report holding a *growth mindset*—the belief that personal characteristics including IQ, competence, personality, and emotions can be developed or changed through dedicated effort. Such a mindset is considered to be a key indicator of success in life (Dweck, 2012). However, youth who had higher ratings on suppression were less likely to use effort to pursue a goal; these youth tended to hold a more *fixed mindset*.

A fixed mindset means that these youth consider most personal characteristics as fixed "traits" that are hard (or even impossible) to change (Dweck, 2012). Thus, the dominant use of reappraisal in regulating emotions is in line with taking initiative in problem-solving and with self-improvement in other domains. However, the dominant use of suppression is associated with passive acceptance of personal limitations in the face of various obstacles.

The use of any one ER strategy is not itself indicative of healthy or unhealthy development. However, habitual heavy reliance on suppression appears to put youth at higher risk for depression and anxiety (Lougheed & Hollenstein, 2012). It may be that different ER strategies are effective under different circumstances. For instance, reappraisal helps one think of the emotion-eliciting event from a positive perspective and helps prevent the potential negative impact of emotions elicited from social relationship "inputs." Suppression, on the other hand, helps control "outputs," that is, it helps one inhibit potentially inappropriate emotional responses after the emotion has been elicited.

But habitual use of suppression is less likely than reappraisal to be associated with many long-term positive outcomes (e.g., active problem-solving tendencies and growth mindset). Thus, the joint use of multiple ER strategies (particularly self-initiated and problem-centered ones) should be cultivated by parents, teachers, and youth-serving practitioners. Such skill training will enable adolescents to flexibly use ER strategies according to their personal goals and contextual demands (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003; Lougheed & Hollenstein, 2012). To help youth develop a wider range of ER strategies and use different strategies more effectively (e.g., knowing when and how to use reappraisal and suppression), knowledge about what personal and contextual resources might contribute to the development of ER among youth is important.

Personal and Contextual Resources for the Development of ER

ER strategy use is influenced by a great many internal and external resources. Different ER strategies may require unique resources, and the availability of different ER resources changes over the course of development (Opitz, Gross, & Urry, 2012; Urry & Gross, 2010). As we explain, adolescents may be in particular need of ER resources, as well as resources that have been identified as relevant to the development of ER.

Brain Maturation in Adolescence

ER in adolescence may be linked to brain development during this period of life (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008; Steinberg, 2014). The part of the brain associated with rapid emotional responses (the limbic system) is more mature than the part of the

brain that regulates those responses (the prefrontal cortex). As such, it is possible to hypothesize that adolescents may be steered more by rapid emotional responses relative to adults because the regulatory part of the brain is insufficiently mature to effectively deal with the highly developed quick response system. If one adopts this hypothesis—and it is a controversial one that continues to be debated (e.g., Moshman, 2011)—then one might further hypothesize that, even if adolescents understand the risks associated with certain behaviors, they may continue to engage in such behaviors anyway (Steinberg, 2005, 2014). Again, these conjectures about brain development and emotional and behavioral characteristics of adolescents are not proven (Moshman, 2011). Another explanation for adolescents' tendency to appear less emotionally regulated than adults is that adolescents are more influenced by the rewards they seek. Youth pay more attention to rewards, even though they know the consequences of a risky action. As a consequence, they sometimes make risky decisions (Steinberg, 2014). Therefore, it might be more beneficial to convince adolescents that rewards of a risky activity are small than to persuade them that the costs are large (Kahneman, 2011; Reyna & Farley, 2006).

The brain continues to mature through adolescence, and the human brain is susceptible to change, growth, and learning (Paus et al., 1999; Pfeifer & Blakemore, 2012; Steinberg, 2005). For example, adolescents' prefrontal cortex, which is associated with behavioral self-regulation and ER, may be adversely affected by early stress, negative parent–child relationships, negative peer relationships, poor sleep habits, and the use of psychoactive drugs (e.g., Hasler et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2013; Whittle et al., 2008). Alternatively, positive relationships with parents or peers, physical activity, and early sensory experiences appear to facilitate development of the prefrontal cortex (e.g., Feldman, Rosenthal, & Eidelman, 2014; Morgan, Shaw, & Forbes, 2014). Thus, activities that promote a healthy lifestyle (e.g., physical activity and good sleep habits, fostering positive relationships with both parents and peers, discouraging the use of psychoactive drugs) should be considered as a possible means to promote physiological health in general and ER among youth.

Emotion Awareness and Understanding

Emotion awareness and understanding also influence how youth use ER strategies (Izard et al., 2011). Understanding what adolescents are feeling, why they feel that way, and what they can do about the emotion helps them employ effective ER strategies. Adolescent girls with better emotion awareness are more likely to use reappraisal, less likely to use suppression, and less likely to suffer from depression or anxiety (Eastabrook, Flynn, & Hollenstein, 2014). Thus, improving youth emotion awareness might promote the use of reappraisal, alleviate the reliance on suppression, and decrease the likelihood of problems such as depression.

Some school-based programs have already shown great potential to promote youth ER strategies through emotion awareness and understanding. One example is the Learning to BREATHE Program (Metz et al., 2013), which is a mindfulness-

based training program that can be easily incorporated into modularized courses at schools. This program covers six core themes through presentations, activities, and discussions: (1) body awareness; (2) understanding and working with thoughts; (3) understanding and working with feelings; (4) integrating awareness of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations; (5) reducing harmful self-judgments; and (6) integrating mindful awareness into daily life. Through participation in this program, students increase their efficacy for regulating emotions and reduce their emotional regulation difficulties (Metz et al., 2013).

Working Memory Capacity

Working memory capacity (WMC) has been identified as another useful personal resource for promoting the use of ER strategies. WMC reflects a young person's ability to retain mental information while simultaneously processing other information or doing other cognitive tasks (Schmeichel, Volokhov, & Demaree, 2008). Compared to people with lower WMC, people higher in WMC are better at suppressing expressions of both positive and negative emotions. Those with higher WMC are also better at appraising emotional stimuli and, thus, at experiencing and expressing fewer emotions (Schmeichel et al., 2008).

WMC typically reaches adultlike levels by age 19 years; thus, adolescents may especially benefit from training to improve WMC (Luna, Garver, Urban, Lazar, & Sweeney, 2004; Olesen, Westerberg, & Klingberg, 2003). Current research does not show definitively if and how such programs directly influence ER. A future research challenge, therefore, is to learn how programs that enhance WMC can be translated into real-life practices that provide more cognitive resources for the development of ER.

Contextual Resources for the Development of ER

In addition to personal factors associated with ER, the family, school, community, and culture may influence the development of these skills (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Adolescents rely on their parents, teachers, peers, and others to model, assist, and coach them on how to cope with emotions (Zeman, Cassano, & Adrian, 2013; see too Chaps. 6 and 7). Among high school students, social support contributes to youth happiness, gratification, self-confidence, and perceived ability to obtain and savor positive life events (Meehan, Durlak, & Bryant, 1993). It is important, then, for applications aimed at enhancing the development of ER to know how the resources present in the key contexts of youth can promote ER and their links to PYD.

ER Resources from the Family Youth obtain ER support from their families by (1) observing how family members model emotional displays and interactions,

(2) parenting practices specifically related to ER, and (3) the emotional climate of the family, as reflected by the parents' marital relationship, the family attachment quality, and family expressiveness (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007). Family members are the very first emotional role models for youth (e.g., Erikson, 1950, 1959). What youth observe or experience in their families provides them with a reference about what to do in various emotion-eliciting situations. Youth see which emotions are acceptable and expected in the family and how emotional experiences are elicited and managed (e.g., Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997). Therefore, emotional qualities and ER usage can be "contagious" among family members.

In addition, parents are children's first "emotion coaches." Parents usually have a much better understanding of their children's emotions than anyone else, and they have the most opportunities to intervene in their children's emotional world. Youth develop better ER when parents accept and validate their emotions, empathize with their feelings, and help them problem solve in emotion-eliciting situations (e.g., Lunkenheimer, Hollenstein, Wang, & Shields, 2012). Youth ER is hampered when the parents dismiss, disapprove, or punish their children's emotional reactions (e.g., Yap, Allen, & Ladouceur, 2008).

Family emotional climates characterized by harmonious marital relations, secure attachment, and flexibility in how emotions may be shown within the family make youth feel accepted, nurtured, secure, and free to express emotions. Youth feel confident that their emotional needs can be met within the family, and the consequences would be consistent and predictable. In the terms used by Erikson (1950), youth will develop a basic sense of trust (see too Chap. 10). Thus, ER resources within the family, such as modeling, mentoring, sharing, and emotional *synchrony* (coordinating child and parent emotions), should be assessed and used by practitioners to support positive and healthy ER development among youth.

ER Resources from Peers During middle childhood and adolescence, peer groups provide important socialization contexts in which youth develop ER skills (see Chap. 7). Youth not only spend more time with peers in various school and out-of-school activities, but establishing a desired group identity also becomes increasingly crucial for their psychological well-being and social functioning (Chap. 7). Depending on the degree to which personal and familial characteristics are shared among members of a peer group, ER skills learned from the home context may or may not be easily transferred to the peer context. Unique peer group norms may shape the expression, experience, and regulation of emotions, which may require youth to retain, abandon, or adjust ER skills learned at home (Harris, 1995).

Surrounded by continuous social comparisons among peers, youth may experience in-group favoritism, out-group hostility, within-group assimilation, and between-group contrast (see also Chap. 13). Youth may also experience support, alliance, and teaching or in turn ostracizing, gossiping, ridiculing, and bullying (e.g., Zeman et al., 2013; see too Chap. 13). All of these experiences intensify peer norms that the youth face and guide the youth in ER processes. Thus, instilling prosocial norms and ER skills within peer groups is essential for promoting adaptive ER in individual youth.

Particularly in close friendships, a favorable emotional climate and deep mutual understanding may allow youth a greater opportunity to explore and solve problems, to appraise and share emotional experiences, and to learn new coping skills (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995). For instance, youth are more likely to show emotion *reciprocity* (receiving and giving love, trust, or support), emotional understanding, and genuine emotions with friends than non-friends (Parker & Gottman, 1989). Youth are also more willing to take responsibility and make an effort to repair relationships when they are in conflict with a friend than a non-friend (Whitesell & Harter, 1996).

Discussing emotion-eliciting events with a close friend can ease negative emotions for children, adolescents, and adults (Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). However, the ER strategies used in friend dyads differ by age. Preadolescents mainly use distraction (e.g., bringing up a more pleasant topic) to help friends cope with emotions. Adults are more likely to validate their friend's excuses and to reconstruct the event with the friend. Adolescent friends are in the transition from relying on distraction to the use of validation and co-construction. Thus, friendship is both an important resource and a unique context for youth to develop new emotional experiences and ER skills (see also Chap. 7).

ER Resources from Schools and Communities Schools provide a unique opportunity to identify, prevent, and provide interventions for youth, and an increasing number of school-based programs have been employed to serve young people's socioemotional needs. Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and curricula are aimed at helping individuals "acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Collaborative for Academic & Social, Emotional Learning, 2013, p. 4). The SEL approach has been effectively adapted to serve youth of different ages, in settings varying in regard to family and socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds, and in both in-school and out-of-school-time settings (e.g., Gravesteijn, Diekstra, Sklad, & de Winter, 2011; Merrell, Juskelis, Tran, & Buchanan, 2008). Although it is obviously challenging to tailor programs to precisely fit every setting, the SEL approach has been increasingly recognized as a useful resource for youth ER development (Felver-Gant & Levi, 2011). Indeed, SEL programs have started to be incorporated into teacher education curricula, as youth SEL is directly influenced by the teaching, modeling, and practicing of socioemotional skills (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

Moreover, throughout development, many youth also have extended family members or nonfamilial adults, such as coaches and church leaders, whose formal and informal mentoring can support youth thriving (Rhodes, Bogat, Roffman, Edelman, & Galasso, 2002; see also Chaps. 1 and 6). Having a mentor can also enhance persistence and optimism and prevent depression or substance use among adolescents (Klaw, Rhodes, & Fitzgerald, 2003; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Moreover, sustained and positive relationships with mentors have been directly associated with better self-regulation and ER abilities among youth (e.g., Bowers, Wang, Tirrell, & Lerner, 2014; Kogan, Brody, & Chen, 2011).

In short, there is a plethora of resources that are available in youth school and community settings that could be used to promote the development of positive and healthy ER strategies among adolescents. This conclusion is associated with several other ones for evidence-based applications to programs and policies supporting ER and PYD among youth.

Evidence-Based Conclusions About ER

ER skills are crucial in everyday life and matter for overall well-being and success. It is important to recognize the different developmental patterns of ER during different portions of the adolescent period, as they exist among different individuals and are manifested in different contexts. The research findings we have reviewed offer some important implications for youth development practice and policies:

- Adolescence is a unique developmental period during which the brain areas associated with rapid emotional responding and regulation are on different developmental timetables. These differences *may* create challenges for youth emotional life. Whatever the ultimate "fate" of hypotheses about the links between brain changes and ER in adolescence (Moshman, 2011; Steinberg, 2014), it is nevertheless important to help adolescents enhance intentional ER skills and become less likely to impulsively respond to emotional situations.
- Whereas the use of suppression starts to decline in early adolescence, reappraisal increases in use in older adolescence. Thus, both of these ER strategies are relatively less available during middle adolescence, making it a particularly important period to intervene, to provide ER support, and to teach ER strategies.
- Adolescent girls are more susceptible to depression than boys. Depression predicts both immediate and later use of suppression. As suppression is often associated with passive acceptance of personal limitations rather than proactive problem-solving in the face of obstacles, girls' disproportional reliance on suppression may deprive them of the opportunity to learn new coping skills. Intervention and prevention efforts that attempt to break the "depression–suppression" chain among adolescent girls should be promoted.
- Although the "depression–suppression" association was not found among adolescent boys, boys use suppression more than girls. In addition, the more frequently boys use suppression, the less frequently they will use reappraisal in the future. Because suppression is associated with passive coping and reappraisal is associated with proactive coping for boys and girls, teaching boys more proactive ER strategies can help increase their effectiveness in regulating emotions and dealing with challenges.
- A healthy lifestyle can facilitate the development of regulatory functioning. Engaging in practices that can improve the working memory capacity of youth may allow youth to process emotion information with greater efficiency. Emotional awareness and understanding can be learned and improved through mindfulness practices and may lead to more conscious and effective use of ER strategies.

- The various social contexts in which the youth grow offer many resources that can contribute to youth ER development. Family members, peers, teachers, and practitioners in community-based programs all can be role models, learning partners, cheerleaders, and mentors for youth ER during daily interactions and structured activities. There is great room to develop family-based, peer group-based, school-based, and community-based programs to benefit youth ER.

In sum, the research evidence we have derived from the 4-H Study and other investigations of ER in adolescence afford several generalizations about the bases and impact of ER in adolescence. These evidence-based conclusions have several important implications for applications for youth programs and for policies that may enhance the capacity of programs to promote ER and ER–PYD links. We have several recommendations about these implications.

Recommendations for Youth Practitioners and Policy Makers

Although ER is important for positive development across the life span, targeted and individualized approaches must be pursued. Youth in different developmental periods, of different genders, and from different sociocultural backgrounds often have quite unique emotional profiles and favored ER strategies. It is both unrealistic and unreasonable to apply one common ER toolbox to all youth.

Accordingly, resources must be provided to both in-school and out-of-school-time programs in order to enable understanding of what practices work best for whom and under which conditions. Matching the individual characteristics of youth with the specific resources in their context is the key for building youth strengths and circumventing their weaknesses (see Chap. 1).

The identification of the details of such matching is by no means easy or inexpensive. Accordingly, we recommend allocating funding to support researcher–practitioner partnerships in conducting person-specific ER interventions with the youth. Such programs can be small scale in regard to the number of targeted participants, targeted skills, and even targeted time periods. Nevertheless, accumulated research evidence and practical experiences from this approach can greatly enrich and complement current understanding of youth ER and may lay the foundation for more feasible and effective larger-scale programs.

Second, ER works jointly with and relies on many internal and external processes, including physiological functioning, working memory capacity, emotional awareness and understanding, depression, problem-solving styles, and various socialization resources inside and outside families. Thus, even for programs focused on improving youth ER, practitioners need to assess how these other processes may affect the youth with which they work and how such affects may need to be considered to appropriately sequence and integrate curricula. Again, then, resources to support such individualized approaches are needed. Researcher–practitioner partnerships should be supported here as well, in regard to both the design and the evaluation of such individualized programs.

The socialization of youth ER occurs in multiple contexts, including families, peer groups, schools, and out-of-school programs. Each of these contexts has its own operating norms and formats, but the more consistent these contexts are in encouraging prosocial norms, demonstrating adaptive ER strategies, and providing youth security and satisfaction in improving their ER skills, the easier it is for the youth to develop ER skills. Accordingly, funding priority should be given to programs that promote family–school and school–community collaborations. These collaborative partnerships, which involve significant individuals in young people's lives (family members, friends, and mentors), should be designed to create harmonious and growth-oriented environments. ER training for parents and teachers, as well as ER curricula for the entire peer group, can have great impacts on the ER development of individual youth. In turn, adolescents who use ER adaptively can use their responses to negative situations as a resource to help others in distress (Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). Given the potential benefits of such ER programs for individual and the social context, new funding streams should be created to foster and evaluate models of such collaboration.

Conclusions

Youth have many personal resources to help improve their ER skills. In addition, parents, peers, teachers, and practitioners can also contribute greatly to the development of healthy ER and its link to overall thriving among youth. As emphasized in the PYD model that framed the 4-H Study, the attributes of individuals and of their contexts must be considered in designing effective youth development programs (see the introductory chapter for this volume).

Through such integrative programs, youth developing across the adolescent period can be supported in manifesting adaptive responses to emotions. Whether focused on the inputs or outputs involved in their emotional life, such programs can support youth in becoming more aware of their emotions and of strategies such as mindfulness, social problem-solving, and reappraisal that help them deal effectively with emotional situations. Such skills will contribute mightily to ensure that young people will thrive across their adolescence and into subsequent periods of their lives.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Gullotta, T. P., Bloom, M., Gullotta, C. F., &. Messina, C. F. (2010). *A blueprint for promoting academic and social competence in after-school programs*. New York: Springer.

Focusing on children in Grades 1 through 6, the authors identify the best practices of effective socioemotional leaning (SEL) programs. They discuss the methods for enhancing school-based skills and making them portable to home and neighborhood settings.

Phillips, K. F. V., & Power, M. J. (2007). A new self-report measure of emotion regulation in adolescents: The regulation of emotions questionnaire. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 14*, 145–156.

This paper presents a new assessment tool to evaluate youth use of two common emotion regulation strategies—reappraisal and suppression. The original Regulation of Emotions Questionnaire has been widely used among adults. The authors adapted the measure to make it available for adolescents. This paper provides information about the reliability and validity of this measure and informs and explains how researchers and practitioners can use the measure to better understand adolescents' emotional life better.

Urban, J. B., Lewin-Bizan, S., & Lerner, R. M. (2009). The role of neighborhood ecological assets and activity involvement in youth developmental outcomes: Differential impacts of asset poor and asset rich neighborhoods. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 30*(5), 601–614.

This paper presents results from the 4-H Study about how activity involvement and neighborhood assets jointly influence positive youth development, risk behavior, and depression among adolescents. The paper explains how patterns vary for adolescent boys and girls from different socioeconomic settings. This information directs researchers and practitioners to consider multiple contextual influences when seeking to understand or promote adolescents' positive development and emotional well-being.

Zeman, J., Cassano, M., & Adrian, M. C. (2013). Socialization influences on children's and adolescents' emotional self-regulation processes. In K. C. Barrett, N. A. Fox, G. A., Morgan, D. J. Fidler, & L. A. Daunhauer (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulatory processes in development: New directions and international perspectives* (pp. 79–106). New York: Psychology Press.

This chapter discusses socialization influences from the family and the peer group and explains how these influences may foster development toward normative or atypical trajectories of ER. This chapter also provides helpful information regarding the role parents and peers play in youth emotion regulation.

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Chapter 4
School Engagement, Academic Achievement, and Positive Youth Development

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It has always seemed strange to me that in our endless discussions about education so little stress is laid on the pleasure of becoming an educated person, the enormous interest it adds to life. To be able to be caught up into the world of thought—that is to be educated.

Edith Hamilton, educator and writer (1867–1963)

As adults, many of us view our primary and secondary school years through rose-colored glasses—a time in our lives when our goals and responsibilities were relatively simple. However, for many American youth, progressing through school involves adapting to outcomes-oriented curricula that become increasingly demanding as children progress into the high school years (Eccles & Midgley, 1989). As they move into secondary school, youth must simultaneously cope with greater academic expectations, new school environments, and unfamiliar social settings (Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004), often with large student populations (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). Such a set of challenges can be difficult for even the most intelligent, hard-working, and resilient students.

Many students are able to meet these challenges and succeed in school. However, a large percentage of students struggle academically (Zaff, 2011). Although a lack of academic success is not tantamount to a guaranteed life of failure, students who experience academic failure are more likely to experience prolonged unemployment, illicit substance use, and delinquency as adults (Chavez, Oetting, & Swaim, 1994). One explanation for the relation between academic accomplishment and life achievement is that students with poor academic outcomes become less desirable to

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_4

potential employers and therefore have fewer career opportunities. Therefore, it is important to examine the determinants of students' academic success.

In this chapter, we discuss the idea that *school engagement* is an important key to success in school and, as well, to more general thriving, or success in life, that is, to positive youth development (PYD). School engagement is a concept that describes the extent to which students participate in the academic and nonacademic activities of school, feel connected at school, and value the goals of education (Finn, 1989; Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007; Li & Lerner, 2011, 2013). An adolescent's failing to engage in school-based instructional and social activities may be linked to decreased academic achievement and increased adjustment problems. Students may not only miss the opportunity to acquire knowledge but they also may be exposed to risky activities. We will discuss the idea that positive school-engagement buffers, or protects, youth from encountering these problems. In turn, we note that school engagement is associated with individual thriving and positive social relationships with schoolmates.

There are at least three well-measured components of school engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Li, Bebiroglu, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2008; Li & Lerner, 2011, 2013). Behavioral school engagement entails involvement in academic activities, participation in school-based social activities, positive conduct, and the absence of disruptive behaviors (Fredricks et al., 2004). Emotional engagement involves a student's emotional reactions to the school, the teacher, and schoolmates (Stipek, 2002). The cognitive dimension of school engagement pertains to a student's "thoughts" in relation to learning and education (Li & Lerner, 2013). Students who are thoughtful about their education and are willing to invest in learning are believed to be cognitively engaged (Marks, 2000).

We discuss this three-part conception of school engagement and explain how school engagement, academic achievement, and PYD may be related. Our discussion draws on findings from the 4-H Study of PYD (see Chap. 1; Lerner et al., 2005) and on the results of other relevant studies. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications these findings may have about the relations of school engagement and academic and out-of-school success for designing programs and policies aimed at enhancing the lives of the youth through promoting school engagement.

School Engagement as a Foundation of Academic Success and PYD

Parents and teachers who are dedicated to successful academic outcomes are concerned with keeping students interested and engaged in school and for a good reason. As we have noted, the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of school engagement appear to be important bases of academic success (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2007; Kindermann, 2007). For example, behaviors reflecting disengagement from school, such as being inattentive or disruptive in class at Grade 8, predicted lower

grade point average (GPA) among high school students (Finn & Rock, 1997). Similarly, a desire to succeed in school appears to be an important part of positive school engagement. That is, a desire to succeed may give students the drive and ability to regulate themselves toward their academic goals (Larson & Rusk, 2011). In addition, there is a positive association between emotional engagement and school achievement (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Research derived from the 4-H Study of PYD confirms the link between school engagement and academic success (e.g., Li & Lerner, 2011). As well, findings from the 4-H Study extend understanding of the implications of school engagement by interrelating it to facets of both PYD and risk/problem behaviors. The general idea tested in the 4-H Study was that positive school engagement would be positively associated with attributes that marked thriving and that engagement would be negatively associated with indications of risk/problem behaviors.

Across the grades assessed within the 4-H Study (Grades 5–12), youth participants showed different levels of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement in school. Some youth began and ended their middle school and high school years at relatively high levels of engagement for all three of the components. Other youth began and ended this period of life with consistently low levels of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement, and, as well, there were youth who maintained average levels of engagement across their middle through high school years. Still other youth waxed and waned in their levels of engagement, being high, moderate, or low in their levels of engagement during some grades and showing different levels for some or all facets of engagement at other grades. What were the implications of these different configurations of school engagement across grades (pathways that we may term "trajectories" of change)?

Across Grades 5–8, membership in different trajectories of behavioral and emotional engagement was significantly linked to school grades, a finding that is not surprising given past findings about the associations between school engagement and academic success (Li & Lerner, 2011). However, membership in different school-engagement trajectories was also associated with indications of either PYD or problem behaviors. The different pathways were linked to variation in depression, delinquency, and substance use. Overall, youth who were in the highest (most positive) trajectory of behavioral or emotional engagement were the best students in all facets of development that were measured. Conversely, youth who showed either decreasing levels of emotional engagement or decreasing levels of behavioral engagement had the lowest grades and the highest rates of delinquency and substance use; they were also the most depressed of all students studied. Simply, experiencing problematic pathways of school engagements was not only associated with worse academic achievement but also was associated with more frequent involvement in substance use and delinquency. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, youth who experienced problematic pathways of school engagement were also less happy.

In this analysis of the 4-H Study data, students who experienced the most problematic pathways of school engagement vary also in relation to their gender and socioeconomic status (SES) of their families. Boys and youth from low SES families were more likely to experience problematic pathways of behavioral and emotional

engagement. These findings are consistent with the results of some other research about school engagement, which has also reported SES and, as well, racial/ethnic variation in the size of the relation between academic success and school engagement (Shernoff & Schmidt, 2008). However, such contextual variation is not consistently found in all studies.

For instance, in another report of participants in the 4-H Study, this time of youth in Grades 5 through 11, higher degrees of behavioral and emotional school engagement were associated with a lower likelihood of involvement in delinquency and substance use (Li, Zhang, et al., 2011). However, these findings were the case across SES levels.

Another feature of the context of youth, peers, does seem to be consistently linked to school engagement, however. As discussed in Chap. 7, the peers that youth encounter in their schools contribute to the levels of school engagement shown by students. For instance, the links among peer support, associating with "problem-behaving" friends, and bullying in the development of behavioral and emotional school engagement were studied among 4-H Study youth across Grades 6–8. Peer support for school-related activities was positively related to both behavioral and emotional school engagement. However, if the youth associated with problem-behaving friends, such as friends who engaged in delinquent behaviors and/or bullying, then the youth showed lower levels of behavioral and emotional school engagement (Li, Lynch, Kalvin, Liu, & Lerner, 2011).

Moreover, across grades the positive or problematic role of peers changed. The positive influence of peer support on emotional engagement with school was greater at higher grade levels, and, as well, the negative influences of associating with problem-behaving friends on behavioral engagement became more detrimental across grades. Interestingly, the influence of peer relationships on school engagement was not different for boys and girls or for youth with different family socioeconomic backgrounds. Positive or problematic peers were associated with different levels of school engagement for both genders and for youth from a range of family economic circumstances (Li, Lynch, et al., 2011).

Clearly, then, the 4-H Study demonstrates that, consistent with other research on school engagement, differences in the several facets of school engagement are linked to differences in academic success (and to the indicators of positive or problematic behaviors also assessed in the 4-H Study). The 4-H Study points also to the importance of the peer context of youth development. The quality of one's peer relationships is a key contributor to the pathway from school engagement to academic achievement.

However, it may be that, in addition to school engagement leading to school success, experiencing school success may promote greater school engagement among youth. Indeed, there is some support for the idea that the more successful students are in school, the more efficacious they will feel. These feelings, in turn, increased students' engagement (Hauser-Cram et al., 2006). Another report using data from the 4-H Study of PYD confirmed that there may in fact be a two-way street, so to speak, between school engagement and school success, that is, school engagement → school success and school success → school engagement. Students' grade point average

(GPA) at Grade 10 positively predicted emotional and cognitive school engagement in Grade 11. In addition, GPA at Grade 11 positively predicted Grade 12 behavioral school engagement (Chase, Hilliard, Geldhof, Warren, & Lerner, 2014). In turn, however, emotional and behavioral school engagement at Grade 10 predicted GPA at Grades 11 and 12, respectively (Chase et al., 2014).

This last set of findings suggests that students who thrive academically may be more likely to feel encouraged by their previous successes. Such success may lead to greater emotional connection and understanding of the importance of school, as well as to greater active engagement in the school context.

This idea is certainly worthy of further testing. It speaks to the potential of creating a mutually reinforcing relation—a bidirectional "system" of influence—between school engagement and academic success. Moreover, since the findings from the 4-H Study also point to the ways that high levels of school engagement are associated with indicators of PYD (and with low levels of problem/risk behaviors, such as delinquency or substance use), such a system holds the promise of enhancing the overall life successes of the youth. We explore these ideas further as we turn to a discussion of the implications for programs and policies of evidence about the importance of school engagement for academic and life success.

Implications of Findings from the 4-H Study for Practice and Policy

What can be done to create a system wherein all students experience cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement with their schools and, as a consequence, reap the benefits of such engagement? We believe that there are three sets of actions that derive from the findings of the 4-H Study (and related research) that, together, enable school-based educational practitioners (e.g., teachers, counselors, administrators) to create conditions that promote school engagement.

Regularly Assess All Three Components of School Engagement

An old adage says that all roads lead to Rome. By analogy, there are three roads that lead to school engagement: emotion, cognition, and behavior. These components are all interrelated, and at different points within the middle school to high school grade range, there appear to be different connections among them (Li & Lerner, 2011). In some grades, growth in emotional engagement may promote the development of the other two components. In other grades, development of one of the other components (e.g., behavioral engagement) may enhance the growth of cognitive and emotional engagement. More research will assuredly need to be conducted with groups of youth different than those who participated in the 4-H Study in order to eventually be able to make general statements about growth in which component, at

which grade levels, will be most important for growth in the other components. However, there is no need for practitioners to await these results before they can begin to capitalize on the fact that the three parts of school engagement exist in a mutually interrelated system.

Our advice is to assess all three components regularly, at least yearly and, ideally, at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year. Using these measurements, teachers, practitioners, and mentors can then focus on enhancing the components that are most feasible to promote, given the needs, resources, and skill sets of school personnel and, as well, the opinions and interests of student leaders. We shall return to the important role that student leaders may play in promoting school engagement, but here we should point out that in focusing on one of the components (e.g., behavioral engagement), one should take steps to promote the component through both in-class activities (e.g., making certain that students with low scores on behavioral engagement are given opportunities to take a leadership role in presenting or discussing material) and in school-based programs (e.g., involving students with low scores for behavioral engagement to participate in designing and placing posters announcing school events or acting as "ambassadors" for acquainting new students with the school). The idea of students as ambassadors to new students will also be discussed again, below.

However, here it is also important to note other reasons why repeated assessments of all three components of school engagement should be part of the actions taken by school-based practitioners and, as well, why a focus on any one of the components is appropriate as a starting point for enhancing engagement. We have noted the 4-H Study findings that different youth show different patterns of change among the components (Li, Zhang, et al., 2011). In other words, different youth have different trajectories for the three components. Therefore, one has to repeatedly assess levels of school engagement across the three components in order to obtain an understanding of the course of school-engagement development for any one student as he or she progresses across grades. As well, repeated assessment is needed because, across students, different facets of engagement may become problematic for all students or, more likely, subgroups of them. Therefore, focus on any one component of school engagement at virtually any point in a given grade will be just the right focus needed to improve engagement for at least some of the students in a school.

Of course, if schools are able to focus on all components of engagement at all times, then the likelihood of doing the right thing for each student at particular times will be optimized. Nevertheless, practical constraints on resources should not limit the optimism of practitioners that any focus on any one component of school engagement will have beneficial effects.

There is one final reason why repeated assessment of the three components is essential. We have noted that findings from the 4-H Study indicate that some trajectories of engagement, those that show steady drops in engagement, are particularly problematic (e.g., youth who showed decreasing levels of emotional engagement had the lowest grades and the highest rates of delinquency, substance use, and depression; Li & Lerner, 2011). School-based practitioners must monitor youth

who appear to be on such problematic trajectories and intervene as early as possible to foster growth in the component in question. As cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning extend in a constant way across time, it becomes harder to change; that is, the longer a person is on a particular pathway, the more intense an intervention must become to alter that pathway (Lerner, 1984, 2002, 2012). Therefore, early actions to correct problematic trajectories of school engagement will have the greatest chance of success (e.g., see Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver, 2007).

There are many ways to intervene to promote school engagement (and we have briefly given some examples already). However, the next set of actions that we derive from the findings of the 4-H Study provides the best chance of transforming school engagement across a school.

Use Positively Engaged Students as School-Engagement Models and Mentors

The results of the 4-H Study indicate that *a*, and perhaps *the*, key facet of the school setting involved in a student's school engagement is his or her peer groups. For instance, positive peer group support for school-related activities was positively related to both behavioral and emotional school engagement, but when youth associated with problem-behaving friends (e.g., youth engaged in delinquent acts or bullying), behavioral and emotional school engagement were lower (Li, Lynch, et al., 2011). Simply, problematic friends reduce engagement. Thriving friends enhance engagement (see too Chap. 7). Therefore, school-based practitioners need to know more than just a given student's levels of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional school engagement, as these facets may exist at a given time or change across time. In addition, the friends of each student must also be ascertained, and the levels of both school engagement and of indicators of PYD and of risk/problem behaviors for the students' friends must be ascertained as well. In other words, a map of the different social networks within the school would be an important tool to generate and to use to develop strategies to enhance school engagement and to prevent the problematic outcomes of having problematic friends and low engagement.

Understanding the qualities of PYD and school engagement of the youth in one's school will provide an opportunity for school-based practitioners to use positive peer networks to enhance school engagement. For instance, both in-class and out-of-class activities can be created where youth with low engagement are placed in groups composed of several peers who are highly engaged. The focus of the highly engaged youth group may involve the facet of engagement in which a target, problematic, youth is low. However, given the system of interconnections among the three engagement components, our advice is to focus on creating a large group of youth showing any facet of engagement within which to place a problematic child.

An additional benefit of identifying a network of highly engaged youth in one's school is that these youth may be able to take a leadership role in devising activities that will enhance the engagement of other students. We return to the idea of youth

as ambassadors to illustrate this point. There is ample evidence that youth can act as models of and mentors for positive development among their peers (Rhodes & Lowe, 2009, and see Chap. 7). They can be ambassadors welcoming new students to the school, they can help a peer who is weak in regard to some facet of engagement through modeling successful practices, and they can support a peer who is trying to extricate himself or herself from a network of problematic friends. Simply, positively engaged peers can act as models or mentors for positive student-to-student relationships that are the seeds for enhancing school engagement in others.

There are in fact examples of such school-based programs that capitalize on the power of peer mentors to enhance their classmates' school engagement and academic and life successes (Rhodes & Lowe, 2009). For instance, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC: www.militarychild.org) has developed such a peer mentoring program—termed Student-To-Student (S2S)—which fosters the positive and successful transition of new students (often from military families; Cozza & Lerner, 2013) to the school context. Appraisals of S2S indicate that a school-wide peer culture (Lynch, Lerner, & Leventhal, 2013) that promotes engagement and success is created through peer mentoring within a school context that is based on the core values of respect and support found in military families (Cozza & Lerner, 2013).

Of course, adult mentoring of youth should also be an important part of any comprehensive effort to enhance school engagement (Rhodes & Lowe, 2009, and see Chaps. 1 and 6). We believe that if the sort of social network map we described above is constructed, then school-based practitioners will be able to identify youth for whom mentoring will be most important. Knowledge of the levels of engagement of a given youth, and of his or her set of positive or problematic friends, will provide the school-based practitioner with the information he or she needs to best understand how the school-engagement system may best be used to enhance both school engagement and school and life successes. Focus on the school-engagement system provides a basis for our discussion on the third set of actions to enhance school engagement that we derive from the findings of the 4-H Study.

Remember that Engagement Breeds Success and that Success Breeds Engagement

The 4-H Study found that school engagement and academic and life success (as measured in school through indicators of PYD) were mutually influential (Chase et al., 2014). Students' emotional and behavioral school engagement at Grade 10 predicted GPA at Grades 10 and 11 (Chase et al., 2014). In turn, GPA at Grade 10 positively predicted emotional and cognitive school engagement in Grade 11, and GPA at Grade 11 positively predicted Grade 12 behavioral school engagement (Chase et al., 2014). Simply, engagement led to success and success led to engagement, a relation that might be represented as school engagement ← → school success.

The key step that school-based practitioners must take in order to capitalize on the mutually influential relation between success and engagement is to create opportunities

for low-engaged students to succeed. For instance, we have noted that involving low behaviorally engaged students in student groups charged with disseminating information about upcoming school events (e.g., through hanging posters, designing and distributing flyers, or making announcements in classes or at assemblies) can provide a means for these youth to enhance their engagement in school.

In addition, Peter Benson (2008) has described a more general way to enhance all facets of engagement in youth. Benson noted that every youth has a "spark," a topic, an interest, or an activity about which he or she cares greatly or is even passionate about. Such sparks can involve sports, video games, or music—actually anything about which the young person feels deeply. Youth are emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively engaged in the focus of their sparks. School-based practitioners can use young people's personal engagement in their sparks as a lever for building school engagement. Practitioners can work with youth to identity their sparks and then give them opportunities to tell other students about them. A school can create in-school events wherein students "teach" small classes about their sparks. There can be school-wide events in which several students create booths or posters displaying information about their sparks, and other students in the school then visit the poster or booth to discuss the sparks with them. Whatever action is invented, however, the idea is to make the school setting a place in which a student's personal spark is transformed into a topic that is valued in the school setting. The goal is to make the student's personal, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement with his or her spark a matter of school engagement as well.

There are additional ways in which success can be used to promote engagement. In addition to having personal sparks, students also have activities in which they invest their out-of-school time (OST). Today, most youth who are enrolled in school also participate in one, and usually more, OST programs (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015; and see Chap. 8). These programs are aimed at providing youth with useful and wholesome ways to spend their OST hours and, often, to enhance the capacities or skills of young people. For example, OST programs may aim to enhance artistic or creative talents or interests, athletic pursuits, academic abilities, entrepreneurial goals, religious instruction, civic participation, or life skills (Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b; Vandell et al., 2015). When these OST activities provide safe spaces for the youth and, as well, involve at least three key program features (positive and sustained relations with a caring and competent adult, life skills development, and opportunities for youth participation in and leadership of valued family, school, or community activities), then PYD is promoted (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b). Lerner (2004) has termed these three program features of OST activities "The Big Three" and notes that their presence operationalizes the activities involved in an effective *youth development* program.

Because such youth development programs are linked to PYD (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b) or life successes beyond the walls of the school, a young person's involvement in such programs can be used as a set of success experiences for generating engagement in schools. However, this use involves integrating the activities occurring within school with activities in OST youth development programs. Numerous OST youth development programs are finding schools that are

open to such collaborations. However, policy innovations should be created to enhance the settings within which youth live, making them better integrated in the service of promoting in-school and out-of-school successes. This point allows us to discuss the several policy recommendations we believe may be forwarded based on findings from the 4-H Study and other related research.

Policy Recommendations

A young person's positive engagement with school is linked to a host of academic and life successes. Promoting school engagement is therefore in the interest of the youth, schools, families, communities, and the United States more generally. We believe that there are four policy recommendations that may be derived from the research on school engagement that we have discussed.

Provide Resources to Support the Assessment of School Engagement Across All School Years

Knowledge of the levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement within individual students, groups of students, and the school as a whole will enable school-based practitioners to design in-class and out-of-class activities to enhance engagement. Such assessment will also enable targeted interventions to be instituted for students whose trajectories of engagement place them most at risk for failing to succeed in school or to thrive more generally.

Provide Resources to Support Peer Mentoring and Modeling Programs

Peers can play a decisive role in promoting positive school engagement and in fostering the life successes associated with PYD. Positively engaged peers model these successes for other students, and in the context of peer mentoring programs, they can help provide a convoy of support for students who may be at risk for falling short of optimal levels of engagement. In addition, in the context of the comprehensive assessments of school engagement we called for in our first recommendation, the social network mapping tool we described above can be created in a manner that identifies students with profiles of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement that suggest they can take leadership roles as models and mentors.

Provide Resources to Enhance the Integration of In-School School-Engagement-Promoting Programs and OST Youth Development Programs

The successes that the youth may have in OST youth development programs, ones that may also reflect sparks in their lives, can be an important building block for in-school successes. Policies need to be created to facilitate schools opening their doors to OST youth development programs, such that collaborations in the service of enhancing school and life successes can be created. Resources need to be allocated to institute, bring to scale, and sustain such partnerships.

Provide Resources to Evaluate School-Engagement Enhancement Initiatives

Actions in support of the first three policy recommendations we have made must be predicated on more than good intentions and on more than the ideas for programs we have derived from our interpretations of the research literature. Actions need to be predicated on evidence that the specific steps taken to promote school engagement are effective.

As such, resources need to be provided for rigorous program evaluations, and there exist today a plethora of different approach to such evaluations (Lerner, Lerner, Zaff, & Urban, in press). Whatever their design, these evaluations should be planned before the launching of any initiative and implemented at the same time that the actions commence. Through prudent allocation of resources based on evidence from such evaluations, school-based and OST-based practitioners can work together to increase the opportunities for all youth to succeed in school and in life through positive school engagement.

Conclusions

Positive relationships between youth and the academic and nonacademic facets of their schools afford a foundation for school achievement and life successes. By integrating the efforts of in-school youth practitioners, OST youth development program practitioners, and youth themselves, a strong foundation for positive school engagement can be created. Use of the integrative approach that we have discussed may enable actions to be taken that support strongly engaged students continuing to prosper through their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral links to their schools and that scaffold youth with weaker levels of engagement to grow in regard to the important facets of school life.

The implications for programs and policies that we discussed hold the promise of "winning the hearts and minds," and the behaviors, of students with low or problematic levels of school engagement. If proven effective through rigorous evaluations, such programs and policies will lead to more actively engaged students. The actions can result in the development of youth who avidly invest their time and energy to achieve positive and valued academic and life goals.

Acknowledgments The preparation of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., & MacIver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle-grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist, 42*(4), 223–235.

Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver emphasize how the warning signs of behavioral disengagement in early middle school can be extremely reliable predictors of school dropout. The article highlights specific ways of identifying students who are at the greatest risk of eventual academic failure. The authors suggest a variety of interventions that may be used to increase the likelihood of high school graduation for at-risk students.

Benson, P. L. (2008). *Sparks: How parents can ignite the hidden strengths of teenagers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Peter Benson describes a plan for awakening the spark that lives inside each and every young person, the feeling or idea that motivates them to engage their world—their families, peers, schools, and communities—in positive and productive ways. Sparks—when illuminated and nurtured—give young people joy, energy, and direction. They have the power to change a young person's life from one of "surviving" to one of "thriving." The book provides a step-by-step approach to helping teenagers discover their unique gifts and is applicable to *all* families, no matter their economic status, parenting situation, or ethnic background.

Shernoff, D. J. (2013). *Optimal learning environments to promote student engagement*. New York: Springer.

David Shernoff discusses the psychological, social, and academic features of school engagement. He draws on ideas from developmental science, positive psychology, and theories of motivation to conceptualize school engagement as a learning experience, explaining how it occurs (or not), and how schools can adapt to maximize it among adolescents. The book identifies key innovations, including community-school partnerships, technology-supported learning, and the potential for engaging learning opportunities during an expanded school day.

Shernoff, D. J. & Bempechat, J. (Eds.). (2014). *NSSE yearbook: Engaging youth in schools: Evidence-based models to guide future innovations* (Vol. 113, Issue 1). New York: Columbia University Press.

This issue of the National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook provides the most recent and comprehensive overview of theory and research about school engagement. The book includes contributions from leading researchers studying all components of school engagement. It provides an important foundation for efforts aimed at enhancing school engagement among diverse youth.

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Chapter 5
Building Hope for Positive Youth Development: Research, Practice, and Policy

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Most teenagers hope for a future with a job they like, the ability to buy the things they need, and a happy family life (Nurmi, 2004; Schmid, Phelps, Mueller et al., 2011). As a society, we hope that young people will become productive, self-sufficient adults who contribute to a healthy democracy through active and engaged citizenship (Lerner, 2004). For researchers and practitioners who are concerned with positive youth development (PYD), a key goal is to identify strengths of young people that will help predict and explain different pathways that adolescents can take toward adulthood and to optimize these pathways such that every young person has a chance to thrive. In this chapter, we describe the importance of *hope* as an important youth strength that leads to positive development.

We define hope as a combination of three components—intentional self-regulation, positive future expectations, and connectedness—and we provide evidence from the 4-H Study of PYD (Lerner et al., 2005; see also Chap. 1) to show how these three aspects of hope work together to promote PYD. After reviewing lessons from the research, we highlight examples of programs and contexts that can be sources of hope for youth and provide guidelines for how policy-makers and practitioners can support and maintain this vital individual asset. We conclude the chapter by showing how hope is linked to contribution, a key goal of many youth

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_5

development programs. Programs that aim to encourage youth to give back to their schools and communities, and to become productive citizens in society, must be sources of hope for youth.

Hope Is a Strength That Promotes Positive Youth Development

A young person's goals, expectations, and emotions about the future are powerful forces in shaping his or her development. Adolescents' imagined futures, or *possible selves*, motivate present-day behaviors. Many of the decisions that adolescents make, such as selecting friends, choosing extracurricular activities, and deciding what to study, are reflections of their hoped-for future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2009; Yowell, 2000). Mental activities involved in navigating the future—setting expectations, imagining possibilities, planning for one's future—comprise "a central organizing feature of perception, cognition, affect, memory, motivation, and action" (Seligman, Railton, Baumeister, & Sripada, 2013, p. 119). Hope is among the highest virtues in many religious and philosophical texts and is often associated with faith and spirituality.

Yet despite the seemingly obvious importance of hope for young people, it is not easily defined. A look at the psychological research on hope might lead us to conclude that it is a very complex phenomenon. For instance, hope has been defined as a positive *emotion* (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990); a set of *cognitions*, or perceptions, about one's goals and the means for attaining those goals (Snyder et al., 1991); and as something that elicits *action* from the individual (Breznitz, 1986). Hope is associated with resilience, and it is often viewed as a source of strength to confront adversity and as a way to find meaning in suffering (Frankl, 1959; Seginer, 2008; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Moreover, we are all familiar with pedestrian, or everyday, hopes ("I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow") and more fanciful hopes ("I hope I win the lottery"), and these different uses of hope in our daily lives can add to the confusion about what it is and how to study it.

With so many varied definitions of hope, how can researchers and practitioners measure it among youth and promote it, respectively, and see if their efforts are working? One way to overcome the complicated issue of defining hope is to measure it indirectly, by understanding the constituent parts that, when combined, make up hope. This method is analogous to baking a cake. We know that there are some key ingredients that are necessary to start a cake, such as eggs, flour, and sugar. Then, we adjust some ingredients or add new ones to determine what kind of cake we want—strawberries, chocolate, or cream-cheese frosting. Using this metaphor to understand hope, there is no disagreement about the key ingredient. Philosophers, psychologists, and the great poets and thinkers who have written about hope for at least 2,000 years all agree that hope involves future expectations. However, for researchers and practitioners in the field of PYD, this ingredient on its own is not enough. We aim to promote among young people the kind of hope that will help

them achieve positive developmental outcomes, such as the Five Cs of PYD described in Chap. 1. Knowing what kind of hope we want to promote, we can point to key ingredients that, when combined, will yield the type of hope necessary for youth to place themselves on positive pathways to adulthood.

Three Ingredients for Hope

In this section, we present three ingredients that are necessary for a model of hope, one that will be useful to predict PYD: intentional self-regulation skills, positive future expectations, and connectedness. Each of these three ingredients can be found throughout the PYD literature separately, but when they are brought together, they create something new entirely: hope. This recipe for hope is based on research showing that these three ingredients are critical features of the kind of hope that is necessary to promote PYD.

Intentional Self-Regulation Skills

Adolescent development occurs in a rich set of contexts made up of people, institutions, communities, and society. To function successfully or effectively in the face of the myriad changes that characterize adolescence, youth must be able to identify, maintain, and enhance the resources—or "developmental assets"—that exist in these contexts (e.g., Lerner, Freund, De Stefanis, & Habermas, 2001; Nurmi, 1991). Young people need agency, the belief that they can act effectively to control themselves or their world in order to attain their goals.

One of the ways that young people show agency is through intentional self-regulation (e.g., Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2006; Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2008). Intentional self-regulation (ISR) may involve selecting goals, optimizing one's resources in order to achieve those goals, and compensating by adjusting when original goals are blocked or when strategies for optimization fail (Freund & Baltes, 2002; also see Chap. 2, for more information about ISR skills). Young people who have high levels of ISR skills are better able to choose positive goals. They are also good at finding resources, like mentors, who can help them achieve those goals. Finally, adolescents with strong ISR skills are not daunted by setbacks; they simply adjust their strategies for achieving a goal.

Prior PYD research has identified ISR skills as a key individual strength that promotes youth thriving. ISR skills are important for setting and maintaining goals. When young people have high ISR skills and access to developmental assets in their families, schools, and communities, they are more likely to have high scores on the Five Cs of PYD—competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring (Gestsdóttir, Bowers, von Eye, Napolitano, & Lerner, 2010; Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2007; Gestsdóttir, Lewin-Bizan, von Eye, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009; Urban, Lewin-Bizan, &

Lerner, 2010; Zimmerman, Phelps, & Lerner, 2007, 2008; see too Chap. 2). Without ISR skills, young people might have trouble selecting and managing their goals. For instance, they might set vague or unrealistic goals, or they will be overwhelmed by setbacks. Young people without ISR might struggle to find help and motivation for achieving their goals. ISR skills are therefore critical for realizing future expectations. To promote hope among young people, practitioners must help them learn about and practice the ISR skills that they will need to garner resources necessary to attain future goals.

Positive Future Expectations

Effective goal setting and management in adolescence is motivated by expectations about a happy, successful, and productive adulthood. As we described above, young people who are able to imagine a positive future and who feel confident in their ability to achieve their future goals are best able to select behaviors in the present that lead to a productive adulthood, one marked by contribution in their families and communities. These positive future expectations represent the motivations necessary to energize behavior in the direction of future goals.

Adolescents' positive future expectations, including emotions such as optimism, are a crucial component in the positive development of a young person (e.g., Benson, 2008; Nurmi, 2004; Yowell, 2000). The representations of one's future self may be thought of in terms of "possible selves," which encompass one's expected, hoped for, and feared future self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In turn, possible selves "dynamically organize and energize behavior" (Yowell, 2000, p. 215) by helping a young person regulate his or her behaviors and make meaning out of different experiences. In other words, behavioral outcomes in later adolescence are influenced by earlier expectations about the future through self-conceptions that determine how information is processed.

For instance, a young person who expects to attend college will be more likely to filter experiences through that lens in order to select behaviors consistent with their goal (such as doing homework and getting good grades). The person will also avoid behaviors that are inconsistent with their goal (such as skipping class). In this way, ideas about future self help regulate behavior in the present. Therefore, practitioners should help young people find meaningful goals about which they feel excited that "spark" their enthusiasm (Benson, 2008; see also Chap. 4). In fact, research on youth sparks (Benson, 2008) and purpose (Damon, 2008) also points to the role of positive future expectations in PYD.

Connectedness

Butter is a special ingredient for baking, because it both helps to bind the dry ingredients together and adds flavor to mixture. Connectedness is a special ingredient in hope. As the relational element of hope, connectedness may be thought of as trust

or caring (Callina, Johnson, Buckingham, & Lerner, 2014; Tennen, Affleck, & Tennen, 2002). Connectedness is an important ingredient for hope because youth need relationships that are founded on trust in order to achieve their future goals. Such relationships help provide young people with the confidence they need to attain their goals and inspire them to imagine hopeful futures, and they help to open pathways to future aspirations (Oyserman & James, 2009). Thus, connectedness binds ISR and positive future expectations together to create hope.

Connectedness also adds a certain flavor to hope that makes it useful for predicting positive developmental outcomes for youth, especially contribution and civic engagement. In order to fully understand the role of hope in PYD, it is not enough just to know that a young person has ISR skills and positive future expectations. In fact, these two dimensions alone are significantly correlated with so-called "Machiavellian" attitudes, such as endorsing social manipulation as a strategy for achieving one's goals (Callina, 2013).

For the kind of hope that researchers and practitioners want to promote among young people—hope associated with positive functioning across childhood and adolescence—it is necessary for researchers to identify whether young people are working toward their future goals in a prosocial way. Youth who are more hopeful are more likely to approach other individuals in a positive way, and are more likely to work toward collective goals, than youth whose futures seem bleak (Flanagan, 2003; Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997).

Putting the Ingredients Together: The Recipe for Hope

In sum, we define hope as having three parts. The first part is intentional self-regulation skills, which help a young person set and manage goals. The second component of hope is positive future expectations. The third component of hope is connectedness. Connectedness is the ingredient that helps to ensure that a young person's future-oriented thoughts and behaviors will be directed toward prosocial goals.

Although each of these constructs stands alone as an important factor in promoting PYD, they are more effective when combined. Moreover, in the same way that ingredients, when baked together, create something new, these psychosocial ingredients work together to create the kind of hope that researchers and practitioners can be confident will guide young people on developmental pathways marked by PYD. When any ingredient is weak or missing, young people may require some intervention to boost their levels of hope.

For instance, without ISR skills to set goals and overcome obstacles, an adolescent may feel that the future is vague and uncertain; however, without positive future expectations, a young person may be unmotivated to put his or her goal-setting skills to use. Finally, connectedness is the ingredient that binds ISR and positive future expectations together. In the following section, we provide evidence from research that demonstrates how these three ingredients create hope and to promote PYD.

Research on Hope and PYD

Evidence from the 4-H Study of PYD lends support to our definition of hope and to our understanding about the importance of hope for placing youth on positive developmental pathways (see Chap. 1). In addition to measuring the Five Cs of PYD (Lerner et al., 2005), researchers in the 4-H Study assessed youth contribution and civic engagement, academic achievement, healthy living, peer and parent relationships, school engagement, and the ingredients of hope we have described.

Data from the 4-H Study of PYD show how the three components of hope described above—positive future expectations, intentional self-regulation skills, and connectedness—work together to place youth on positive pathways across the adolescent period. For instance, these data showed that adolescents' positive future expectations and intentional self-regulation skills are important predictors of positive development (Schmid, Phelps, Mueller et al., 2011). Youth in the 4-H Study of PYD were grouped into different trajectories of positive and problematic outcomes across 3 years of adolescence (ages 13–15/Grades 7 through 9). Whereas many of the youth in the study had high, stable levels of PYD, some of the participants started low in PYD and declined over time. Problematic outcomes were assessed by measuring depressive symptoms and drug use. Some youth had few depressive symptoms, whereas others showed increasing levels of symptoms over the course of the 3 years. For drug use, most of the youth did not use drugs or reported very infrequent use.

To test the role of the components of hope in predicting these trajectories, the relationship between group membership and ISR skills and positive future expectations was assessed. Overall, youth with strong ISR skills and high levels of positive future expectations were more likely to be in the group with the highest levels of PYD across Grades 7 through 9 as well as in the group with the lowest levels of problematic outcomes, including drug use and depressive symptoms.

This research was extended by investigating how positive future expectations and ISR skills work together to predict the Five Cs across the adolescence (Callina et al., 2014; Schmid, Phelps, & Lerner, 2011). This work was based on the idea that PYD requires both the ISR skills needed to realize future goals and the emotional and cognitive activation—in the form of positive future expectations—that give meaning to the use of ISR skills (Benson, 2008; Damon, 2008; Damon et al., 2003). In other words, the researchers hypothesized that a young person might not put his or her ISR skills to use without positive expectations for the future. Data from Grades 7 through 9 of the 4-H Study showed that, as expected, both positive future expectations and ISR predicted PYD scores across Grades 7 and 8 (Schmid, Phelps, & Lerner, 2011). However, earlier positive future expectations had greater influence on later ISR skills, which suggests that positive future expectations might be especially important for thriving among younger adolescents.

In regard to connectedness, an examination of whether young people have different profiles of development with respect to positive future expectations and parental trust across the middle adolescent years (Grades 7 through 10) found that, for the

most part, young people had high positive future expectations and trust across these 4 years (Callina et al., 2014). In fact, their patterns did not fluctuate very much. However, some of the 4-H Study participants showed trajectories of positive future expectations and trust that decreased over the same 4 years. Another profile showed that some youth had moderate levels of positive future expectations, but their parent trust dipped across Grades 8 and 9 and then recovered in Grade 10. This last group of youth had the lowest scores on positive outcomes such as contribution. The importance of contribution is discussed in greater detail, below.

Research on the positive effects of mentoring in the lives of young people provides further insight into how connectedness, ISR, and positive future expectations work together to comprise the type of hope that enhances positive outcomes for youth. For example, youth who had a mentor scored higher on measures of optimism and positive attitudes about the future (Rhodes, Ebert, & Fischer, 1992). Data from participants in Grades 10 through 12 in the 4-H Study of PYD showed that the greater number of important nonparental adults in a young person's life, the more he or she believed it would be likely to achieve life goals such as graduating from college and having a happy family life (Bowers et al., 2012). In turn, higher expectations for future success predicted three of the Five Cs of PYD (confidence, character, and caring). It appears, then, that youth with high levels of positive future expectations may be more effective in their ability to form positive relationships with others (e.g., Bowers et al., 2012; Bowers & Johnson, 2013). This research shows how the three ingredients of hope are important on their own for PYD, but that they are especially powerful in combination.

Hope Beyond the Self: Links Between Hope and Youth Contribution

The Five Cs of PYD lead to a sixth C, contribution (see Chap. 11). The theory linking PYD and contribution is that youth who are thriving—in other words, showing high levels of the Five Cs—will have the skills, motivation, and resources to "give back" in some way to the key settings and people in their lives. Contribution may therefore take many forms, such as volunteering in one's school or community, helping neighbors or family members, or engaging in activities that are important to support and maintain a civil society (this last group of activities is often termed "civic engagement"). Components of hope are linked to contribution and civic engagement among youth. For example, ISR skills predicted prosocial behavior toward strangers, friends, and family members (Padilla-Walker & Christensen, 2011). As we described earlier, trust and positive future expectations have been shown to predict contribution scores in the 4-H Study of PYD (Callina et al., 2014).

How might hope lead to contribution among young people? Hope may function to promote the well-being of one's social group, because individuals with higher hope have the capacity and the motivation to realize the shared goals of the collec-

tive (Snyder et al., 1997). Hopeful youth are more likely to engage with their context in positive ways, such as through contributions to their families, schools, communities, and society. Therefore, "The hopeful person's resolute trust and capacity to rely on others may also explain why hopeful people are able to select pathways that facilitate others' assistance or support" (Tennen et al., 2002, p. 312). Individuals who are hopeful are more likely to receive help and positive feedback from others, which may motivate them, in turn, to engage in contribution. As we mentioned earlier, connectedness is a special ingredient for hope. Through the development of connectedness and trust, in particular, as well as by setting positive expectations for the future of their communities and by practicing goal-setting skills, hopeful youth are more likely engage with their communities through contribution and civic engagement.

The development of connectedness and trust involves a history of positive social interactions. Trust is one of the first psychosocial strengths humans acquire when, as infants, we learn to rely on our caregivers to be nurturing and sensitive to our needs (Erikson, 1959). As children get older, they begin to learn about trustworthiness and reciprocity in peer relationships. Ideally, the reach of these positive social interactions expands throughout later childhood and adolescence to encompass not just one's family, friends, and community, but outward to include all of humanity and even all living things (Warren, 2011). In particular, adolescents who are exposed to diverse others in their communities are more likely to extend their trust outward from their immediate network of family, friends, and other "in-group" individuals, to include strangers (Flanagan, 2003). This extended form of trust is called *global trust*, and it is founded on a positive history with strangers and institutions of civil society. Global trust leads to the belief that, in general, people are likely to be fair and benevolent (Flanagan, 2003).

Global trust facilitates a type of hope called *civic hope*, the belief that one can realize civic engagement goals. Civic hope involves setting meaningful goals that benefit others, the belief that one can realize these goals, and establishing connections or collaborations necessary to achieve those goals. In theory, civic hope should be manifested by contributions to one's community. However, more research is needed to better understand how civic hope develops across adolescence and how it is related to similar concepts such as civic engagement (see Chap. 11).

In sum, ISR, positive future expectations, and connectedness are each important ingredients for promoting the Five Cs of PYD as well as the sixth C, contribution. These ingredients are also important in combination to create hope among youth. Future research should look more carefully at the interplay among these hope ingredients. Creative research study designs are needed to better understand how youth think about hope and its ingredients.

For instance, although there has been much work done in positive psychology (Snyder, 2002) and other fields (such as nursing psychiatry; see Farran, Herth, & Popovich, 1995 for a review) to measure hope, there are almost no studies in which youth are interviewed about how they define hope and its importance for their lives and for their own positive development. Research is needed about whether promoting the hope ingredients described here will enhance positive functioning across

different domains of a young person's life, such as educational and vocational aspirations, engagement in out-of-school time activities (sports, art, and other interests), and family and peer relationships.

What Can Practitioners Do to Promote Hope Among Youth?

In the previous sections, we defined three components of hope and presented research from the 4-H Study of positive youth development to show the important role that each of these hope ingredients plays in promoting PYD. As we pointed out earlier, it is difficult to measure hope directly, and so we recommend assessing hope by its three key ingredients: ISR, positive future expectations, and connectedness.

Similarly, it might be more useful for practitioners to think about promoting the three ingredients of hope, rather than trying to promote hope, itself, which might feel elusive. Many programs target one of these hope ingredients, and practitioners should consider whether their program can be tailored appropriately to target all three. Still other programs might incorporate all three hope ingredients, but do not realize it yet! In the following section, we describe evidence about the effectiveness of hope enhancement strategies for youth, and how these hope interventions can be improved to maximize positive developmental outcomes for young people. We also discuss features of youth development programs that are important for promoting ISR, positive future expectations, and connectedness. We use the example of human–animal interaction programs to show how practitioners can create interventions that will enhance hope among children and adolescents.

Finally, we recognize that although it is important for practitioners to promote hope, it is also critical that they are able to recognize hopelessness. Accordingly, we present some information about how hopelessness develops and what practitioners and researchers can do to build evidence-based practices for hope enhancement strategies.

Evidence About the Effectiveness of Hope Enhancement Strategies for Youth

Hope enhancement strategies—aimed at increasing hopefulness, life satisfaction, and at reducing hopelessness and depression—have been employed in clinical settings in the United States since at least the 1950s (Menninger, 1960; see Weis & Speridakos, 2011, for a review). More recently, hope interventions have been implemented in a range of clinical and community health settings as well as in schools and universities (Weis & Speridakos, 2011). Recall, however, that not everyone uses the same recipe for hope. The most commonly used theory and measure of hope in psychology comes from research done by Rick Snyder, a clinician and researcher who renewed interest in hope in the field of positive psychology in the 1990s.

Snyder (2002) argued that there are two ingredients that make up hope: pathways thinking and agency thinking. Because of the prevalence of Snyder's model, most hope interventions involve working with a young person to help him or her set goals, to imagine pathways to attaining goals, and to support his or her agency to work toward those goals. For instance, a school-based program, called "Making Hope Happen," uses a 5-week curriculum to help students set positive goals, think of strategies to overcome obstacles, and reflect upon and evaluate their process for goal attainment (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008). Hope scores (measured by items that assessed participants' pathways thinking and agency thinking) were higher among students who participated in the "Making Hope Happen" program compared with a control group of students who did not receive the curriculum.

At the same time that Snyder's model has been influential in positive psychology, researchers and practitioners in the fields of nursing, medicine, and health psychology have adopted a model of hope created by Karen Herth (e.g., Herth, 1992). Herth's recipe for hope includes similar ingredients to Snyder's pathways thinking (which she calls the "affective–behavioral" dimension of hope) and agency thinking (the "cognitive–temporal" dimension). Similar to the hope recipe we presented in this chapter, Herth has a third ingredient, called the "affiliative–contextual" dimension. This component of hope is measured by asking people if they feel they have social support and are comforted by faith or whether they "feel all alone." Hope enhancement strategies that are designed based on Herth's model, such as the Hope Intervention Program (Herth, 2001), target each of these dimensions by encouraging participants to set goals, identify their personal strengths that will help them achieve those goals, and to reflect on their support system. The Hope Intervention Program was designed for adults with long-term illnesses and has been adapted for adolescents.

There is very little research on the effectiveness of Herth's hope intervention for healthy adolescents, however. Because the Hope Intervention Program focuses on building hope and coping strategies during illness, it is likely that the intervention would need to be restructured for youth who have other types of strengths and challenges. Hope interventions should be tailored to meet the particular developmental and individual needs of youth with respect to developing ISR skills, positive future expectations, and connectedness that are relevant to their own experiences and that build on their existing strengths and the assets available in their contexts.

Despite these efforts to promote hope in clinical and community settings, there is mixed evidence that hope enhancement strategies work. In a comparison of 27 studies of hope enhancement interventions, undertaken to determine how effective the interventions were in promoting hope and life satisfaction and in reducing psychological distress, all of the studies measured hope as an outcome using either the Snyder measure or the Herth measure (Weis & Speridakos, 2011). Interventions were compared across various dimensions, such as whether they took place in a clinical/medical setting or in a research setting. Surprisingly, the hope enhancement strategies in applied settings (such as therapy) had weaker effects on hope than interventions that were conducted in laboratory research settings (Weis & Speridakos, 2011). Interventions were not compared by specific program practices, with the exception of whether the intervention was delivered individually or in a

group setting. There were no differences in hope scores for participants who received an intervention individually or in a group.

These findings lend support to the idea that hope is indeed a malleable personal strength that can be promoted in specific contexts. However, it is clear that practitioners and researchers must work together to translate best practices in hope enhancement strategies from laboratory to applied settings (see Hamilton, in press, for information about conducting translational research for youth development).

Despite the potential utility of Herth's hope model, we believe that a key ingredient is missing from most hope enhancement interventions—connectedness. Hope interventions have focused primarily on the internal strengths of young people, such as intentional self-regulation and positive future expectations, to help them imagine a more hopeful future. The "Making Hope Happen" program described above paired students into "Hope Buddy" partnerships so that high-hope students could model goal-setting behaviors for low-hope students (see Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008). However, the effects of the Making Hope Happen program were weak (see Weis & Speridakos, 2011), perhaps because the focus of this intervention was on goal-setting skills rather than on building trust and connectedness.

In contrast, one hope enhancement program for at-risk youth used a challenge ropes course, which is a type of obstacle course that challenges participants to use teamwork to accomplish goals (such as completing the course) and to promote trust-building and problem-solving. This program had strong positive effects on youth hope (Robitschek, 1996). We recommend, therefore, that in addition to designing programs for youth that promote ISR skills and positive future expectations, practitioners work to connect youth with adults and peers who can help them select positive behaviors and stay on track toward their long-term, hopeful future goals. Youth development programs that facilitate long-term, trusting relationships between adults and youth may be especially powerful to promote hope (Rhodes et al., 1992; see too Chap. 6).

Of course, connectedness is found not only through mentoring relationships, but also among peers, siblings, parents and other adult relatives (see Chaps. 6 and 7). As we will discuss later, even pets can provide the feelings of connectedness necessary for a young person to find and maintain hope. Practitioners should consider the unique strengths and interests of the youth in their program that will allow them to find opportunities for engaging young people in a way that builds trust and connectedness. More research in various applied settings will be needed to better understand the specific hope enhancement strategies that best promote ISR, positive future expectations, and connectedness.

Features of Youth Development Programs That Promote Hope

There may be as many as 15 constructs, or objectives, associated with positive developmental pathways (see Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004, for review). PYD programs may seek to achieve at least one of the 15 objectives

(Catalano et al., 2004). These objectives include promoting resilience, fostering prosocial norms, and promoting competencies across different domains (social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and moral). The objectives most closely related to promoting hope among youth are fostering belief in the future and self-efficacy, promoting bonding, and providing opportunities for prosocial involvement (Catalano et al., 2004).

An evaluation of youth development programs describes how programs can successfully promote positive belief in the future:

> Programs which sought to influence a child's belief in his or her future potential, goals, options, choices, or long range hopes and plans were classified as promoting belief in the future. Strategies included guaranteed tuition to post-secondary institutions, school-to-work linkages, future employment opportunities, or future financial incentives to encourage continued progress on a prosocial trajectory. Belief in the future could also be fostered by programs designed to influence youth's optimism about a healthy and productive adult life (Catalano et al., 2004, p. 21–22).

There are several strategies for promoting not only positive future expectations ("youth's optimism") but also the goal management strategies necessary to realize those goals. Practitioners may or may not have control over whether youth are guaranteed certain pathways to their future goals, such as college tuition or employment. We will return to this issue later when we discuss priorities for policy. However, practitioners who work with youth can help them be prepared to take advantage of opportunities and to feel confident in their goal attainment skills.

A framework of youth development programming known as the "Big Three" may be useful for promoting hope (Lerner, 2004). The first component of this framework is sustained, positive relationships with adults, which build trust and positive connections. Second, successful programs offer skill-building opportunities, which support the goal setting and management skills necessary for enacting pathways to positive, hoped-for future outcomes. Finally, programs that promote positive developmental outcomes provide opportunities to take leadership roles, which may enhance feelings of purpose and lead individuals to set meaningful, prosocial goals that benefit a young person's school, neighborhood, environment, or society.

Schools and community-based youth-serving organizations have much to contribute to the hopeful futures of young people by supporting their positive future expectations, helping them set and manage goals, and by providing opportunities to make meaningful contributions that foster a sense of connectedness and global trust. City Year's *Whole School Whole Child* (*WSWC*) is one example of a program that builds hope through program components that mirror the "Big Three" and promote adolescents' positive beliefs in the future. *WSWC* is a school-based program aimed at supporting youth who have been identified as at-risk for dropping out of school. The program components range from school-wide supports, in which City Year corps members collaborate with educators in the school to create an "overall positive learning environment" (City Year, 2014), to individual intensive interventions provided by young adult mentors. Central to the model is creating a positive atmosphere and fostering a welcoming environment for students to feel

excited about school. Components of the *WSWC* program comprise a multifaceted approach to promoting hope for a bright future in school.

One feature of the WSWC program is expanded learning time that helps students delve more deeply into subjects being covered in the classroom (City Year Annual Report, 2013). During this time, students work toward academic goals while experiencing connectedness with their mentors during one-on-one time and group activities. As described by City Year, the social–emotional component of these interactions helps to build an environment where students are eager to engage with adults and other students in their schools and work harder toward their academic goals. The opportunity afforded to them to become proactive learners and decision-makers in their school success allows students to practice the goal setting and management skills necessary to build intentional self-regulation and to develop positive expectations of themselves and those who are there to support their endeavors.

Unfortunately, there has been little research conducted on the City Year program, and the few evaluations that we were able to locate focused more on academic achievement, rather than on the aspects of positive development and well-being thought to promote hope. We describe later how policy-makers can help shape researchers' and practitioners' understanding of the development and outcomes of hope by prioritizing program evaluations that focus on multiple aspects of youth development. First, however, we provide a sample case of youth programming that has great potential to promote hope: human-animal interaction.

Contexts for Promoting Hope: Human–Animal Interaction as a Sample Case

Beyond structured youth development programs, many diverse contexts have the potential to promote hope in youth. One opportunity for promoting hope that is available to many young people is interacting with animals. Recently, increased attention is being paid to the role of pets as a source of strength in the family context, a source that can promote health and positive development.

As family sizes are decreasing, children are more likely to grow up with a pet in the home than a younger sibling or a grandparent (Melson, 2001). Animals frequently reside in the household, and youth often identify them as an important member of the family (Kosonen, 1996).

Programs that use human–animal interaction as a context for youth development are increasingly prevalent (Mueller, 2014) and may include animal training and husbandry programs (such as those found in 4-H clubs), sports such as horseback riding, and animal-assisted therapies. Programs are even capitalizing on youth interest in animals by involving them in seemingly unrelated interventions, such as literacy programs in which children read to dogs.

Interacting with animals promotes hope by providing youth with opportunities to practice ISR skills, to think positively about their futures, and to develop a sense of connectedness. First, animals seem to feature prominently in the types of future

goals that young people select. Findings from a sample of youth from the 4-H Study of PYD indicated that a small but substantial proportion of adolescents from diverse backgrounds point to nurturing, caring for, and interacting with animals as a key purpose in their lives (Mueller, Geldhof, & Lerner, 2013). In other words, youth view animals as an important component of how they see themselves in the future, whether those future expectations involve a career choice (such as becoming a veterinarian or dog trainer) or a goal for maintaining a connection with animals over time through pet ownership or animal-related activities such as horseback riding.

In addition, developing a meaningful relationship with an animal requires intentional self-regulation skills. Animals, by nature, are relatively unpredictable, and any long-term relationship with an animal will certainly involve both challenges and setbacks. ISR skills, such as adjusting goal management strategies in the face of obstacles, are particularly important for youth who work with animals in different settings. In fact, among participants in the 4-H Study of PYD, youth who reported a meaningful relationship with animals demonstrated a more highly developed repertoire of ISR skills compared to those who did not report such a relationship (Mueller et al., 2013). Practitioners should consider whether animals can be involved appropriately in youth development programs, to spark the interests of young people and to promote ISR.

Finally, human–animal interaction provides young people with feelings of connectedness that are important for hope. For instance, interacting with animals helps youth develop nurturing behaviors that foster trust and connectedness. The type of physical and verbal dialogue that humans use when interacting with animals closely resembles the characteristics of nurturing behavior that exists between parents and young infants (Katcher & Beck, 1987). Caring for others is a fundamental aspect of human functioning, and caring for animals is an important component of maintaining this nurturing behavior (Katcher & Beck, 1987). There is even some evidence that young children develop knowledge about nurturing from care of domestic animals (Melson & Fogel, 1989).

The social nature of the relationships youth have with animals serves as a pathway to reciprocity and caring behaviors that are important components of moral development (Turiel, 1998). Socialization involving reciprocity is important as youth develop perspective-taking. In addition to interacting with peers, family, or other humans, engaging in social behavior with animals is a means by which youth can develop reciprocity skills, a key component of connectedness. Human–animal interaction therefore supports connectedness both through the positive emotions and caring behaviors that are associated with animals and by providing a conduit through which connectedness and trust translate to interactions with other people in the young person's life.

In sum, there are many pathways that youth can take to developing the three components of hope. Therefore, it is important to think creatively about how to help youth access the contexts that will be the most meaningful for them, to best optimize hope, positive development, and contribution. The example of human–animal interaction as a context for promoting hope illustrates how youth development programs can capitalize on the interests—or "sparks" (Benson, 2008)—of

young people and create opportunities within the program to foster positive future expectations, ISR, and connectedness.

As we discussed earlier, many programs may already have features that are designed to promote each of these hope ingredients, and these programs should consider evaluations that are designed to assess hope in order to contribute to the evidence about best practices for hope enhancement strategies and interventions. Other programs might contain features that promote one or two of the hope ingredients. Practitioners in these programs should consider how they could incorporate all three components, in order to support hope and promote PYD and contribution among the youth they serve.

Such practitioner recommendations also create priorities for policy, and we will discuss these in greater detail below. First, however, we point practitioners to research on hopelessness in the lives of youth, including how hopelessness develops and what can be done to intervene.

Recognizing Hope and Hopelessness

Given the importance of hope for working toward future goals, including the emotions, cognitions, and behaviors of navigating the future—as well as the interpersonal connections that are established through hopefulness—the absence of hope is a crucial problem. Thus, it is important for practitioners to know how to recognize hopelessness and its origins.

Psychologists have defined hopelessness as apathy and "inaction in the face of threat" (Lazarus, 1966, p. 263), and hopelessness is thought to be the result of feeling *help*less to control a difficult situation. Hopelessness, like hope, is tightly linked to a person's goals. In Martin Seligman's famous experiments on *learned helplessness*, when dogs received electric shocks that they could not control or escape, they were later not able to learn how to avoid the shocks, even when escape was made possible (Seligman & Maier, 1967). Therefore, helplessness occurs when people (or animals) learn that their goal success is not related to their behaviors. They learn that their actions are not effective in attaining what they seek, whether achieving a goal or avoiding punishment. Over time, they may give up trying to set and achieve goals altogether. Simply, helplessness is created by a lack of control over one's environment and leads to negative effects on motivation, cognition, and emotion (Maier & Seligman, 1976).

Helplessness can turn into *hopelessness* when people experience negative events that were outside of their control and when they perceived the events are the result of their own failures (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). Practitioners may recognize hopelessness in a young person who says things like "I might as well give up because I can't make things better for myself," "Things just won't work out the way I want them to," or "There's no use in really trying to get something I want because I probably won't get it" (Kazdin, Rodgers, & Colbus, 1986). Such statements show that young people believe that they are not able to achieve their goals,

and, because of their own shortcomings, there is no point in trying. These youth may have vague, negative, or unrealistic goals for the future.

A sense of hopelessness about the future may lead young people to engage in risky behaviors in the present (Taylor, 1990, 1993). Hopelessness among youth is associated with depression, violent behavior, substance use, suicidal ideation, teenage pregnancy, and other risk behaviors (Bolland, 2003; Spirito, Williams, Stark, & Hart, 1988; Stoddard, Henly, Sieving, & Bolland, 2011). In a study of almost 2,500 inner-city youth, about half of the boys and a quarter of the girls felt hopeless about their futures (Bolland, 2003). Youth who were hopeless endorsed survey questions such as "All I see ahead of me are bad things, not good things" and "I don't expect to live a very long life." Such statements can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Without intervention, it is possible that these youth might find themselves on pathways toward a bleak future.

Interventions to ameliorate hopelessness would therefore involve a two-pronged approach. First, practitioners should try to help youth to feel a sense of control over their environments, such as by practicing ISR skills. Practitioners may provide young people with opportunities for decision-making and leadership in school and out-of-school time activities. Second, practitioners can help youth understand that setbacks are sometimes challenges that they can use their personal strengths to overcome, but sometimes they are the result of outside influences.

Promoting a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) is one way that practitioners can help youth recognize their agency in attaining positive future goals. Growth mindset refers to the beliefs that intellectual abilities are not fixed but rather can be nurtured through practice. Practitioners also can work with youth to help them find meaning in failures and even tragedies. Such interventions are thought to promote posttraumatic *growth* (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Posttraumatic growth is a process by which a person reframes a tragic event by highlighting the wisdom that can be gleaned from it, such as a greater awareness of one's personal strengths and new possibilities for one's life. Ideally, this process happens in the context of supportive relationships, such as between a young person and his or her parents and peers and also the teachers, mentors, and other practitioners who can provide a trusting foundation for growth (see Chaps. 6 and 7).

There is no agreement in psychology research about whether hopelessness is the opposite of hope. In part, this uncertainty exists because hope and hopelessness are almost never measured in the same research study. Clearly, ISR skills, positive future expectations, and connectedness can all play important roles in alleviating hopelessness. However, researchers and practitioners should be aware that hope in one domain may not spill over into other domains. They can test this question by contributing to the evidence base about strategies for enhancing hope and reducing hopelessness.

For instance, practitioners and researchers can include measures of both hope and hopelessness in program evaluation assessments. Program evaluation concerns are just one realm in which policy-makers can set priorities for funding and legislation that can impact the hope enhancement strategies of practitioners and researchers. We turn to this issue in the following section.

Priorities for Policy

Policies can shape the funding priorities for youth programming that aims to promote hope among diverse youth. Funding may not only impact program design but also program evaluation, which is the tool that gives researchers and practitioners insight into evidence-based practices (Hamilton, in press).

Masten (2014) points to the need for multiple systems—for example, families, schools, community institutions, the media, and even the natural environment—to be aligned to promote positive outcomes for youth. Given the potentially diverse pathways to hope as well as the many predicted outcomes of hope (including, at least, PYD and contribution), it is important that researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers take a multidimensional, multisystem approach to program design and ultimately to program evaluation.

One implication for policy, therefore, is that funders and policy-makers must meet the needs of programs to support evaluation and implementation of multisystem youth programming. Policies should boost resources through collaboration across different points of intervention and promotion (Masten, 2014). Such support should include promoting rigorous measurement of program processes and outcomes that account for the complexities of promoting each of the different components of hope.

In addition to being multisystemic, evaluations of programs that seek to promote hope for youth must also be *developmental*. A developmental approach to youth program evaluation creates several priorities for funders and policy-makers. First, evaluations must be longitudinal, in order to understand the cascading or cumulative effects of program practices. For instance, hopeful youth are likely to show positive outcomes in the present, such as by selecting positive mentors who can help them achieve their future goals. However, hope is inherently future oriented, and so some outcomes of hope may not be immediately evident. It is therefore important that evaluations assess youth at multiple time points, and ideally across several years, to understand how a hope enhancement strategy works.

Second, evaluations are needed that help practitioners understand which individual or developmental assets are appropriate to promote among youth at different ages. For instance, one study we described above found that earlier positive future expectations (in 7th Grade) promoted later ISR skills (in 8th Grade), which in turn promoted PYD (in 9th Grade). Therefore, researchers and practitioners must consider whether their program design and evaluation design are developmentally appropriate for enhancing hope and measuring the effects of a hope intervention. Policies must provide resources to support such developmentally sensitive interventions.

Moreover, a developmental approach to program evaluation takes into consideration the particular contexts of diverse youth. Despite a growing interest in the role of hope in the positive development of youth, researchers know very little about the development of hope and PYD among youth from diverse cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Spencer & Spencer, 2014). Although hope is comprised of positive future expectations, intentional self-regulation skills, and

connectedness, the specific ways in which we assess these components among different youth may vary. For instance, family, culture, and society are all important for shaping a young person's positive future expectations (Nurmi, 1991). Spencer and Spencer (2014) note that racial and/or ethnic background can affect the development of trust between young people and the adults or institutions in their communities, and this mistrust may be particularly salient for minority youth. It is important, therefore, to understand how youth experience their world by understanding their perceptions of a particular program or institution. Evaluations of youth programs must pay attention to what is known as *ecological validity* (see Lerner & Callina, 2014)—that is, whether the practices of a hope intervention are appropriate for a given population of youth or whether assessments of those practices accurately reflect the perceptions and lived experiences of youth. Again, policies must provide resources to make such evaluations possible for diverse youth and communities.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we described how hope can direct youth toward positive developmental outcomes and also how hopelessness can lead to depression and problem behaviors. Fortunately, there is evidence that hope is malleable. Through a better understanding of the three ingredients of hope—intentional self-regulation skills, positive future expectations, and connectedness—practitioners can promote hope through their work with youth in community, school, and clinical programs. Because of the important role of hope in positive developmental pathways, including PYD and contribution, we believe that these hope ingredients should be a cornerstone of youth development programming.

Practitioners can promote hope by emphasizing program features such as the "Big Three": sustained mentoring relationships, opportunities for building skills, and engaging youth in leadership roles that promote civic hope. In particular, a focus on connectedness is a key ingredient for hope enhancement strategies. As we discussed, connectedness may come in the form of relationships with parents, peers, and mentors (including educators, coaches, and other practitioners). Even pets and other human–animal interactions provide a context for supporting hope among youth.

Hopeful youth are more likely to identify meaningful goals, or purposes, which actively engage and contribute to their families, schools, and communities. Civic hope is realized when diverse people align their actions and expectations to achieve end goals with mutual benefit. Practitioners can share the idea of civic hope with young people, helping them understand the ways in which their own futures may be shaped by the futures of everyone in their community. In this chapter, we described the importance of trust, in particular, for promoting contribution and civic hope among youth.

Future research should focus on the links between hope and youth outcomes in the context of youth development programs. Such programs can reduce hopelessness and promote hope among youth who are low on one or all of the components described here. On the other hand, programs can capitalize on hope, as hopeful youth may be more likely to form positive relationships with adults and peers and to be successful in a program focused on goal attainment.

Therefore, hope can be thought of as both a positive outcome of a youth program and also as a strength that a young person brings to the program. The three components of hope should be included in assessments before, during, and after program participation to help identify areas where a young person might need support and to capitalize on his or her hope strengths. Such assessments require that policy-makers allocate funding for programs and program evaluations that take a multisystemic, developmental, and ecologically valid approach to youth development programming. Only through rigorous evaluation can we identify which evidence-based practices are best able to enhance and maintain hope among diverse adolescents.

Acknowledgments This article was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Benson, P. L. (2008). *Sparks: How parents can ignite the hidden strengths of teenagers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Peter Benson describes a plan for awakening the spark that lives inside each and every young person, the feeling or idea that motivates them to engage their world—their families, peers, schools, and communities—in positive and productive ways. Sparks—when illuminated and nurtured—give young people joy, energy, and direction. They have the power to change a young person's life from one of "surviving" to "thriving." The book provides a step-by-step approach to helping teenagers discover their unique gifts and is applicable to *all* families, no matter their economic status, parenting situation, or ethnic background.

Damon, W. (2008). *The path to purpose: Helping our children find their calling in life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Drawing on the results of his innovative and important research, William Damon discusses one of the most pressing issues in the lives of youth today: why so many young people are "failing to launch," that is, living at home longer, lacking career motivation, struggling to make a timely transition into adulthood, and not yet finding a life pursuit that inspires them. The book provides creative ideas for parents and practitioners to use to promote purpose among youth and to engage them positively with their peers, schools, and communities.

Lopez, S. J. (2013). *Making hope happen: Create the future you want for yourself and others*. New York: Atria Books.

Lopez discusses how to measure, create, and share hope and the impact of hope on various aspects of life, including relationships and career. This book is recommended for people who want to understand hope as a choice and learn how to use it as a life tool.

Schmid, K. L. & Lopez, S. J. (2011). Positive pathways to adulthood: The role of hope in adolescents' constructions of their futures. In R. M. Lerner, J. V. Lerner, & J. B. Benson (Eds.), *Positive youth development: Advances in child development and behavior* (Vol. 41, pp. 72–89). New York: Academic Press.

Schmid and Lopez explore hope within a developmental systems framework and in relation to positive future expectations and thriving in adolescence. This journal article is recommended for people seeking a more in-depth explanation of the role of hope in positive youth development.

Seginer, R. (2009). *Future orientation: Developmental and ecological perspectives*. New York: Springer.

Seginer explores the concept of future orientation, specifically for adolescents. She takes a psychological perspective and relates future orientation to other constructs, such as identity and self-esteem. Future orientation is recommended for people who want to gain a deeper understanding of the psychology of future-oriented thinking and how it develops across childhood and adolescence.

Seligman, M. E. P. (1991). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. New York: Random House.

Seligman discusses the positive impacts of optimism and offers techniques to help enhance it. He also offers advice on how to inspire optimism at school and at work. This book is a resource for those interested in developing skills of optimism in themselves or others.

Snyder, C. R. (1994). *The psychology of hope: You can get there from here*. New York: Free Press.

Snyder explores what makes hopeful individuals hopeful and provides information on how to help foster hope in children and adults. This book is a resource for anyone who wants to understand the psychology behind hope and how to cultivate aspects of hope.

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Part II
The Contexts of Youth: Developmental Assets

Chapter 6
Youth–Adult Relationships and Positive Youth Development

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Over the past several decades, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers have designed, implemented, and evaluated countless studies, interventions, programs, and practices designed to promote the positive development of adolescents. These efforts are often derived from theories and philosophies of the positive youth development (PYD) perspective. PYD scholars posit that all young people have strengths and that the contexts around these young people can provide resources to them (called "developmental assets"; Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2011). When the strengths of the youth are aligned with the resources in their contexts, youth thriving is promoted. Therefore, PYD-derived efforts often aim to identify and engage the strengths of young people and the resources in their contexts (families, schools, neighborhoods, and out-of-school time programs) that are thought to lead to their success and well-being. For example, the 4-H Study of PYD sought to identify which developmental assets might promote young people's development of the Five Cs of PYD—competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, & Lerner, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015; see also Chaps. 1 and 9; Lerner et al., 2005).

Across contexts, relationships with committed, caring adults are one of the most important assets in adolescents' lives for promoting thriving or high levels of PYD and low levels of risk behaviors (Bowers, Von Eye, et al., 2011; Li & Julian, 2012;

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_6

Theokas & Lerner, 2006; see too Chap. 7). These relationships may be with parents, other adults who the youth encounter in their day-to-day lives (often called natural mentors), or formal mentors assigned to the youth through a mentoring program. Although these relationships differ in form and structure, they all have the potential to benefit adolescents in a multitude of ways. Realizing this potential, however, depends on the quality of the relationships themselves. Indeed, there are several characteristics of high-quality youth–adult relationships that are beneficial to adolescents, regardless of the type of relationship. Relationships that have these characteristics can be termed *developmental relationships* (Li & Julian, 2012).

In this chapter, we identify developmental relationships as the ultimate goal of youth–adult interactions, and we describe the characteristics that define these types of relationships. Next, we review research on young people's relationships with parents, natural mentors, and formal mentors, as well as how these relationships are associated with adolescent thriving. In particular, we highlight research from the 4-H Study of PYD, a longitudinal study of adolescents' strengths, resources, and thriving from fifth through twelfth grade (see Chap. 1). Then, we describe several exemplary programs in which youth–adult relationships are capitalized on as a way to promote adolescents' positive development. Finally, we provide recommendations based on this evidence for practitioners and policy makers, and we identify priorities for future efforts with parents and mentors.

What Are Developmental Relationships?

The adults present in adolescents' families, schools, and communities are most likely to serve as resources for PYD when they engage in *developmental relationships* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Li & Julian, 2012) with the youth. Developmental relationships are defined by four characteristics. First, these relationships are characterized by attachment, which means that the adult and young person are emotionally connected in a positive manner. Second, developmental relationships are reciprocal. That is, when the adult and youth take part in sustained and frequent joint activities, the adult provides guidance and support to the youth, and the adult adjusts this guidance and support to match the young person's development. Thus, the young person's characteristics influence the behavior of the adult who is influencing him or her. As such, the adolescent is a source of his or her own development (Lerner, 1982). Third, these relationships show progressive complexity. As the interactions and activities between the youth and adult continue, the youth engages in progressively more complex patterns of behavior, such as discussing personal problems and asking for advice. The final defining feature of developmental relationships is balance of power. As time progresses, the adult gradually drives less of the interactions and activities, and the power shifts to a balance of adult- and youth-driven interactions. Eventually, the young person takes the lead within the relationship. Again, this shift in influence reflects that the adolescent is a producer of his or her own development.

Although developmental relationships are the ultimate goal of youth–adult interactions, many relationships will not progress to this level. Nonetheless, the concept of developmental relationships is useful. That is, the four criteria that define a developmental relationship are important when considering the goals of program, practice, and policy decisions (Li & Julian, 2012). However, it is important to take into account how the characteristics of the youth, the characteristics of the adult, and the characteristics of the larger contexts in which the pair is embedded may affect the likelihood of developmental relationships forming. For example, young adults with insecure parental attachments have reported less security in subsequent mentoring relationships (Larose, Bernier, & Soucy, 2005). In addition, mentors who approach their relationships in a prescriptive fashion in which they exert a high degree of control over the activities are less likely to develop high-quality or long-lasting relationships (Morrow & Styles, 1995). Finally, mentor–mentor matches are affected by the different structures, missions, resources, and practices of the programs in which they occur. Therefore, the youth, the adult, and the context must always be considered when examining research and practice on youth–adult relationships (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008).

We now turn to findings from research and practice on the three primary types of youth–adult relationships: parents, natural mentors, and formal mentors. We highlight key findings from the 4-H Study as well as complementary work from other PYD scholars on each relationship type. We conclude the review by describing research that considers the joint contribution that these relationships make to youth development.

Youth Relationships with Parents

In this section, we review research findings regarding young people's relationships with their parents. First, we describe the parental behaviors that matter most for young people's positive development, and we then detail the positive youth outcomes that are associated with these parental behaviors. Finally, we describe how parents can play a role within youth development programs.

Which Parental Behaviors Matter?

Young people's first, longest-lasting, and most prominent relationship with an adult is most often with their own parents. It is commonly thought that as the youth go through adolescence, the opinions of peers and the desire to fit in replace parents as the primary drivers of youth decisions and outcomes (see Chap. 7). However, findings of the 4-H Study of PYD, along with other research studies, show that parents remain an important influence in adolescents' lives (Theokas & Lerner, 2006). In particular, three aspects of parenting are linked to positive outcomes for

adolescents: warmth, monitoring, and school involvement. These three aspects relate to youth–parent relationships across the contexts of family, peers, and school, respectively.

Parental warmth is gauged by behaviors reflecting the parent's acceptance, nurturance, and support for his or her child. This aspect of parenting is related to adolescent behavior and psychosocial adjustment in many important ways (e.g., Baumrind, 1991; Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993). For example, higher levels of parental warmth are associated with higher academic competence (Gray & Steinberg, 1999) and lower levels of externalizing and internalizing problems (Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, & Lerner, 2010).

Parental monitoring is measured by the ways and extent to which parents keep track of their child's whereabouts and acquaintances. Lower parental monitoring is related to higher levels of delinquency (Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller, & Skinner, 1991), substance use and alcohol misuse (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2006), and other externalizing behaviors (Brody, 2003). Conversely, very high levels of parental monitoring may impede adolescents' personal control, sense of self-efficacy, and independence (Peterson, Seligman, & Vaillant, 1988; Rodin, 1990; Syme, 1990). Thus, parents must find the optimal amount of monitoring for their child by taking into consideration the particular developmental needs of the child, including age. It is normal for the youth and parents to progress through a back-and-forth process across adolescence; as the youth obtain more control over their activities, parents reduce their level of monitoring (McElhaney, Allen, Stephenson, & Hare, 2009); this process illustrates the importance of developmental relationships.

Finally, parental school involvement is measured by the ways and the extent to which parents take an active role in their child's education. Examples of such involvement include parents helping with their child's homework, talking with their child about what is going on at his or her school, or attending events at school. High levels of parental school involvement are related to higher intentional self-regulation, future aspirations, academic competence, and student achievement (Bowers, Gestsdottir, et al., 2011; Hill et al., 2004; Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010). Although it is commonly thought that the influence of parental school involvement wanes as the youth mature, the positive influences of parental school involvement are consistent across adolescence (Bowers, Johnson, et al., 2014). As with monitoring, the type and extent of school involvement should be responsive to the desires and needs of the adolescent, as is the goal of developmental relationships.

Parenting Style and PYD

These three parenting behaviors—warmth, monitoring, and involvement—can be viewed jointly to define the type of *parenting style* that parents use to raise their children. In other words, the influence of one parenting behavior depends on whether the other behaviors are also present. For example, parents may have warm relationships with their children, monitor their children at a developmentally appropriate

level (i.e., not too much or too little), and be involved in their children's schooling. Some parents, however, may show warmth toward their children but do not monitor them and are not really involved in what happens at school. Still another group of parents may be cold, controlling (i.e., over monitoring), and uninvolved in school. These parenting styles influence adolescent's experiences and subsequent outcomes.

Parents in the 4-H Study of PYD showed several types of parenting styles, and these styles were related to their children's scores on measures of PYD (Bowers, Johnson et al., 2014). Parents who were engaged in their teenagers' lives by showing them warmth, monitoring their activities, and being involved in their schooling had children who reported the highest levels of the Five Cs, especially connection. In contrast, parents who were not involved in their children's lives in terms of warmth, monitoring, and education were most likely to have children who reported the lowest levels of PYD. In between these two extremes of parenting styles, parental warmth was the key ingredient for positive outcomes. Parents who either monitored their children at a relatively high level or were highly involved in their child's education, without also showing warmth, had children who reported relatively low levels of PYD, although these levels were not as low as those of the youth whose parents were not involved in any way.

Parenting styles are also related to young people's intentional self-regulation or the processes the youth use to select and pursue their goals (see Chap. 2). For example, Lewin-Bizan et al. (2010) found that positive parenting (defined as having both warmth and monitoring) was a major contextual asset that set off a cascade of positive effects for young people in fifth through eighth grades (i.e., a domino effect). Positive parenting predicted youth intentional self-regulation; in turn, intentional self-regulation predicted young people's scores on PYD. Finally, PYD scores were positively related to adolescent's Contribution scores (see Chap. 11 for a more in-depth discussion of the "sixth C" of Contribution).

The 4-H Study has provided consistent evidence for a link between positive parenting characteristics, intentional self-regulation, and positive youth outcomes, such as higher PYD and Contribution (see Chap. 11) as well as lower frequencies of problem behaviors across adolescence (Bebiroglu, Geldhof, Pinderhughes, Phelps, & Lerner, 2013; Bowers, Gestsdottir, et al., 2011; Bowers, von Eye, et al., 2011; Napolitano, Bowers, Gestsdóttir, & Chase, 2011). These results suggest that positive parenting—marked by high warmth, monitoring, and school involvement—is key to youth success and well-being. Positive parenting can be reflected in activities as simple as regularly eating dinner together as a family (Bowers, von Eye, et al., 2011). Shared meals are opportunities for parents to show support for their children and be involved in their children's lives.

Parents as Resources in Youth Development Programs

Given the importance of parents in adolescents' lives, it is essential for effective youth development programs to engage families (Deschenes & Malone, 2011). As such, innovative youth development programs are reconsidering the role that

parents play within programs. In the past, many programs worked with parents to increase youth participation; this approach is termed *program-centered*. Now, many programs are focusing on going beyond those strategies to empower parents to facilitate their children's learning and development both within and beyond program settings (Rosenberg, Wilkes, & Harris, 2014). This approach is termed *learning centered*. Several exemplary programs have adopted a learning-centered approach, such as the Techbridge program in Oakland, California. Techbridge has involved parents in many aspects of the program, which is designed to develop and broaden girls' interest and potential opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses and careers. In addition to STEM-focused programming, Techbridge works to engage families in supporting their child's STEM interests and activities by providing training to program teachers on parental engagement and providing guidebooks for parents on how to incorporate STEM-relevant projects in their daily family activities and support their daughters' interests.

As we have described, parent–adolescent relationship quality is strongly related to many youth outcomes (Theokas & Lerner, 2006). As such, it is not surprising that much of the work on youth–adult relationships from the 4-H Study specifically, and from research in general, focuses on youth–parent relationships. Youth development, however, takes place within a greater context that potentially involves many relationships with other adults. These relationships, in turn, may provide resources for young people (such as expertise) that are not as easily supplied by their parents. For example, the important influence these nonparental adult relationships have for STEM interest and efficacy is recognized in the Techbridge program. As the girls served by Techbridge often do not have any family members working in STEM careers, let alone female family members, female professionals from a variety of STEM fields are recruited to serve as role models to the youth participants. In a similar way, young people also often develop natural mentoring relationships with athletic coaches in order to learn the skills of a particular sport. Therefore, we now turn to research that supports the decisions of programs such as Techbridge to include nonparental adults into their programs as models and mentors.

Youth Relationships with Natural Mentors

Natural mentoring relationships refer to those relationships that happen between young people and adults they encounter within their daily lives through existing social networks; these relationships also are associated with positive development among the youth (Bowers et al., 2012; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a, 2005b; Greenberger, Chen, & Beam, 1998; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). These individuals may also be called important nonparental adults (e.g., Bowers et al., 2012), informal mentors (e.g., Kogan & Brody, 2010), or very important nonparental adults (VIPs; e.g., Greenberger et al., 1998). Regardless of the label given to them, natural mentoring relationships can occur in a variety of settings, from relationships with teachers, coaches, and community members to relationships with

older siblings, aunts, uncles, and other family members. Natural mentors are often instructors, advocates, and role models in contexts that are important to the youth, such as sports, hobbies, and other out-of-school time activities; therefore, youth relationships with such adults may serve as "developmental assets" that promote PYD outcomes (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Semsa, 2006; Bowers et al., 2012).

The influence of natural mentors may be especially important in adolescence, as the youth build identities outside their family life (Côté, 2009; Marcia, 1980; see too Chap. 10). The youth who have natural mentors in their lives report a range of better psychological, socioemotional, and behavioral outcomes across adolescence compared to the youth without these relationships (e.g., Bowers et al., 2012; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a, 2005b; Greenberger et al., 1998; Zimmerman et al., 2002).

Just as with youth–parent relationships, however, the quality of these relationships is important. When these natural mentoring relationships are marked by warmth, acceptance, and closeness, they are related to more positive outcomes for young people (Bowers et al., 2012; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005b). For example, the youth who reported having natural mentors were more likely to complete high school and attend college, were more likely to report higher levels of self-esteem, and were more likely to be physically active compared to the youth who did not report having such relationships in their lives (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a). In addition, the youth with natural mentors were less likely to take part in negative behaviors such as gang involvement and risk taking (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a). This pattern of findings is found consistently across diverse groups of young people, including rural African-American youth (Kogan & Brody, 2010), urban African-American youth (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Reischl, 2011), and European-American youth (Bowers et al., 2012).

Because young people may encounter many potential natural mentors over the course of their lives, parents and others who work with the youth may wonder whether having more natural mentors confers additional benefits. Oftentimes, youth connections to nonparental adults are supported based on the maxim that "It takes a village to raise a child." At the same time, it is often said that the "youth only need one adult who is crazy about them." Data from the 4-H Study have been used to compare the evidence for these adages (i.e., whether the quantity or quality of natural mentoring relationships matters more and for what outcomes). Specific outcomes of interest included intentional self-regulation (the way adolescents set and work toward their goals; see Chap. 2), hopeful future expectations (adolescents' hopes for the future; see Chap. 5), and the Five Cs of PYD (see Chap. 9).

The youth in the 4-H Study benefited from both the quantity and quality of mentoring relationships, but in different ways (Bowers et al., 2012). The quantity of natural mentoring relationships the youth reported was related to their hopeful future expectations, which in turn predicted the specific Cs of confidence, character, and caring. Young people's emotional closeness with a particular natural mentor (i.e., quality) also was related to their hopeful future expectations and, in turn, the specific C of confidence. Although both aspects of natural mentoring were important, quantity had a more extensive relationship with the Cs of PYD. Therefore, programs and policies can be aimed at community-wide initiatives that engage adult

community members with whom the youth are likely to enjoy spending time and who provide youth encouragement. The youth also benefitted, however, when one of these relationships reached a deeper level of interaction or emotional closeness. The youth who reported that they talked to their natural mentor about private matters, emotions, and problems with friends and family also reported higher self-confidence. This degree of intimacy with an adult is a fundamental aspect of a developmental relationship and only comes with time and sensitivity on the part of the adult.

Promising Programs That Incorporate Natural Mentoring

Natural mentoring relationships often emerge from youth connections to adults within their existing social network. Therefore, these relationships are more likely to be maintained as they are already in a context important to the youth, and they are likely linked to other youth relationships. Several youth development organizations have leveraged these aspects of natural mentoring relationships to design and implement programs to promote PYD. For example, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program (NGYCP) is an intensive residential program for youth ages 16–18 who are no longer in school due to expulsion or dropout and who are also unemployed (e.g., Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013). NGYCP uses an innovative model of mentoring termed youth-initiated mentoring.

In youth-initiated mentoring, young people nominate mentors from among the nonparental adults from their existing social contexts (e.g., a teacher, a neighbor, religious leader). If willing and approved, these adults are then trained and provided with ongoing support to be mentors to these young people. These mentors, in turn, support the youth as they progress through the program and transition back into the community. The program has been effective in enhancing young people's educational and vocational outcomes, including attainment of a GED or high school diploma, higher earnings, and longer length of employment (Millenky, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2014). The NGYCP draws on the strengths of natural mentoring relationships to promote positive outcomes; over the course of the program, however, these relationships change in structure to be more like formal mentoring relationships, which we next discuss.

Youth Relationships with Formal Mentors

As we have already described, youth–adult relationships—with parents as well as with other important nonparental adults—hold great potential for promoting youth thriving. Not all youth, however, have high-quality relationships with their parents or access to other adults who can serve as natural mentors for them. Even youth who already do have these types of relationships would most likely benefit from having

more of them (Bowers et al., 2012). For this reason, many youth policies and programs aim to connect youth with adults who can play this role in their lives. These connections take place through formal mentoring programs, in which an adult[1] (usually a volunteer from the community) is "assigned to" or paired with a young person (or a group of young people) for the explicit purpose of acting in a mentoring role or capacity.

Positive Effects of Formal Mentoring Programs

Consistent with the PYD perspective, research has demonstrated that formal mentoring programs—examples of which will be discussed below—are associated with a range of positive psychological, socioemotional, and behavioral outcomes for youth participants. The clearest evidence for these positive effects has come from a study by DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine (2011). These researchers used a technique called meta-analysis to combine the results of 83 different studies of formal mentoring programs. DuBois and colleagues found that, overall, these programs had positive effects for young people in several outcome categories, including attitudes/motivations, social/interpersonal skills, psychological/emotional competencies, reduction of conduct problems, academics/school achievement, and physical health. The magnitude of these effects, however, was relatively small: the average youth in a mentoring program scored approximately nine percentile points higher than the average youth who was not mentored (DuBois et al., 2011).

Characteristics of Mentoring Relationships and Programs That Matter

Although formal mentoring programs have the potential to affect the lives of young people in a variety of ways, positive results are not guaranteed simply by the act of pairing a mentor and a mentee. Certain characteristics of the mentees, the mentors, and the mentoring relationship itself are more likely to be related to positive outcomes, and particular program practices (i.e., things programs do) are more likely to support these high-quality mentoring relationships (which can be developmental relationships). In their meta-analysis of mentoring programs, DuBois and colleagues (2011) found a trend for mentoring programs to be slightly more effective

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[1] Some mentoring programs use a strategy called "cross-age peer mentoring" (Karcher, 2007, 2014), wherein older youth are paired with their younger counterparts (such as high school seniors paired with freshmen or fifth graders paired with first graders). Because the focus of this chapter is youth–*adult* relationships, we will not discuss cross-age peer mentoring. Interested readers are encouraged to consult other excellent resources on the topic (e.g., Karcher, 2014).

when they included a higher proportion (more than 50 %) of male participants and when they were directed at the youth who showed moderate levels of either individual risk factors (such as a history of conduct problems) or environmental disadvantage or risk factors (such as poverty), but not both. In other words, DuBois et al. (2011) note that most mentoring programs are not designed to help the youth with severe difficulties. This finding is echoed by a study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program, wherein the youth who showed moderate levels of difficulties when entering the program experienced more benefit when compared to the youth who were experiencing either severe difficulties or very few, if any, difficulties (Schwartz, Rhodes, Chan, & Herrera, 2011).

In regard to mentor characteristics, DuBois et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis showed that mentor's backgrounds, the way in which mentors are matched with their mentees, and the roles that mentors are supported in playing within the mentoring relationship all are related to positive outcomes for young people. Programs are slightly more effective when mentors are recruited based on an alignment between their backgrounds and the objectives of the program (DuBois et al., 2011), such as if a mentoring program focused on educational outcomes recruited teachers as mentors. Furthermore, program outcomes are stronger when mentors and mentees are paired based on common interests. For example, a mentee with an interest in robotics might be matched with a mentor with an engineering background. Finally, greater effects of mentoring are seen when mentors are encouraged, trained, and supported in playing an advocacy and teaching/informative role within the mentoring relationship.

In addition, the length of the mentoring relationship is important (Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2012; Rhodes & Roffman, 2003). When mentoring relationships last at least a year, mentees are more likely to experience positive outcomes. On the other hand, when the youth are in relationships that last for only between six and 12 months, fewer positive outcomes of mentoring are evident. When young people are in mentoring relationships that end relatively quickly, it appears that mentoring may actually be detrimental. Decreases in positive functioning have been reported in such circumstances (Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes & Roffman, 2003).

Exemplary Formal Mentoring Programs

According to one estimate (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2006), more than 5,000 mentoring programs currently operate in the United States, and these programs serve about three million youth. These programs vary widely in terms of the number and population of the youth they serve, the aims and activities of the programs, the types of individuals who serve as mentors, and the extent to which they follow recommended program practices (e.g., DuBois et al., 2011), as described above. In this section, we highlight several programs—large and small—that illustrate not only this variety of mentoring programs but also the potential for positive outcomes for youth participants.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is the oldest and most established mentoring organization in the United States (BBBS, 2014). BBBS operates both community-based and school-based mentoring programs and also offers programming specifically targeted for African-American, Latino, and Native American youth, military-connected young people, and children and adolescents whose parents are incarcerated. The BBBS evaluation study conducted in the 1990s (Grossman & Tierney, 1998) was one of the first large-scale and rigorous evaluations of a formal mentoring program. This landmark study showed that BBBS youth—between ages 10 and 16—were significantly more likely to experience several positive outcomes (such as feeling more confident about their school performance), and less likely to experience negative outcomes (such as skipping school), compared to similar youth who had not participated in BBBS. An evaluation of the BBBS school-based mentoring program showed that mentees experienced positive outcomes in some (but not all) of the areas that had been targeted by the program (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011), and BBBS has used such evaluation results to improve their programming (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007).

The 4-H Youth Development organization—one of the most well-known youth development programs in the U.S.—also sponsors formal mentoring activities through their 4-H National Mentoring program (4-H, 2014). Three 4-H mentoring programs were designated as Programs of Distinction by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and were selected for implementation across the country. These programs are being delivered to underserved youth populations with a goal of improving family relationships, increasing social competencies, increasing school attendance, and reducing juvenile delinquency and youth unemployment. The three programs are (a) 4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise, developed and originally implemented by Utah State University (http://extension.usu.edu/yfp/; Higginbotham, Harris, Marshall, & Lee, 2006; Riggs, Lee, Marshall, Serfustini, & Bunnell, 2006); (b) 4-H Tech Wizards, originally developed and implemented by Oregon State University (http://extension. oregonstate.edu/metro4h/techwizards; Hobbs & Sawyer, 2009); and (c) 4-H Living Interactive Family Education, from the University of Missouri (http://extension. missouri.edu/4hlife/home.aspx; Dunn & Arbuckle, 2002).

Though results from these programs have not yet been published in peer-reviewed research journals, initial results circulated through program reports (e.g., 4-H National Mentoring Program, 2011) are encouraging. For the Youth and Families with Promise program, for example, the youth and parents reported statistically significant gains in young people's school experiences, family experiences, and personal characteristics. This program also includes a component for parents, and parents reported statistically significant gains in self-perceived parenting abilities.

In addition to these two large providers of formal mentoring programs that serve many youth across the United States, countless other, smaller, programs exist. Many of these programs target specific groups of the youth and use innovative implementation methods. An example of one such program is the University of Virginia's Young Women Leaders Program (YWLP), which pairs college women with primarily ethnic minority middle school girls from lower socioeconomic status

backgrounds; the YWLP program uses a combination of one-on-one meetings and group sessions. Considerable evaluation research has been conducted to examine many aspects of this program, and initial results are promising. For example, research done by Henneberger, Deutsch, Lawrence, and Sovik-Johnston (2013) showed that YWLP participants had stable levels of overall self-esteem across the program period, whereas girls in a comparison group experienced declines. This finding suggests that mentoring may protect against declines in self-esteem that girls often experience across adolescence.

Integrating Youth–Adult Relationships: How Do Parents and Mentors Coalesce to Promote PYD?

Development occurs within a system of cross-context relationships; in other words, the youth interact with parents *and* teachers *and* mentors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Most research, however, has focused on just one of these relationships (e.g., parents *or* teachers *or* mentors) and their impact on adolescents' development. The integrative influence of parents and mentors is important, however, and a few researchers have examined the joint impact of parents and important nonparental adults, such as natural and formal mentors (Erickson, McDonald, & Elder, 2009; Hurd, Varner, & Rowley, 2013; Kogan & Brody, 2010). Several youth development programs also harness the resources that both parents and nonparental adults can provide to promote adolescents' PYD.

There are several possible ways in which parental and nonparental adult relationships can interact to influence youth development. The effects may be complementary, such that the combined positive influences both contribute to positive development. Perhaps the youth in positive relationships with their parents are able to learn the skills and knowledge needed to develop relationships with, and recruit resources from, other adults around them. The relationships may also be compensatory, in which a positive relationship in one area can buffer or lessen the effect of a poor relationship in another area. The potential of compensatory relationships for promoting PYD is the foundation for many formal mentoring programs. Finally, the joint influence may even be detrimental, if there is a combined negative influence of both relationships. This detrimental effect might be seen if the youth with poor family relationships also experience short-lived or negative experiences with mentors rather than positive ones.

Natural mentors most often serve as a complementary or compensatory resource for young people from diverse backgrounds. To illustrate a complementary effect, the youth with more contextual resources, including positive relationships with their parents, may also be more likely to report having a natural mentor (Erickson et al., 2009). The youth with natural mentors also reported higher levels of parental involvement than the youth without natural mentors (Hurd et al., 2013). In addition,

when natural mentors are strongly connected to the youth, they share socializing responsibilities with parents (Hurd et al., 2013).

For the youth with fewer contextual resources, however, the effect of having a natural mentor can be compensatory. For example, among the youth with natural mentors, those youth from low-resource backgrounds experienced a bigger increase in their educational success than the youth from high-resource backgrounds (Erickson et al., 2009). Similarly, among young black men from rural communities, support from natural mentors buffered the effect of conflicted and unsupportive youth–parent relationships (Kogan and Brody, 2010). Finally, mentoring may have the largest benefits for the youth who are neither very high nor very low in social resources (Schwartz et al., 2011). The youth with lots of social resources may experience no benefit from additional adult support in their lives, whereas those in extreme need may need more than what a mentoring relationship can provide. Young people who had satisfactory relationships with their parents, teachers, and peers benefited more from mentoring relationships in terms of academic performance and prosocial behavior than the youth who had either very positive or negative relationships (Schwartz et al., 2011).

The integrative role that parents and natural mentors play in promoting the Five Cs of PYD was also examined in a sample of high school students from the 4-H Study (Bowers, Johnson, et al., 2014). The youth with parents who were supportive and appropriately engaged in their lives were more likely to report having someone other than their parents to talk to about some or all of their problems. In addition, there was generally a positive effect of a natural mentor on the Five Cs, particularly for youth connection and character, regardless of the type of parenting style. This work illustrated that natural mentors can serve as both complimentary and compensatory resources for youth, depending on whether the youth reported positive or problematic relationships with parents. This general finding is consistent with Rhodes' (2005) contention that positive relationships with mentors may help the youth learn how to have more positive interactions with others.

Comprehensive Youth Development Programs

Several youth development programs have adopted a comprehensive approach to promoting PYD in which they incorporated the assets provided by both families and mentors. One such program is the aforementioned 4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise program (4-H YFP; Higginbotham, MacArthur, & Dart, 2010). 4-H YFP engages the adults in young people's lives in three different settings: the youth participate in a 4-H club, are matched with a formal mentor in a one-to-one relationship, and participate in a monthly Family Night Out activity with their parents. Parents of participants have reported significant improvement in young people's self-control, confidence, and positive outlook (Higginbotham et al., 2010).

Some programs have focused specifically on improving these cross-contextual relations to enhance the effects of mentoring programs. The parent engagement model (PEM) is a multicomponent mentoring intervention that includes orientation, guidebooks, and biannual events for families as well as additional training and support for mentors (Kaye, 2014). The aim of the PEM is to enhance the effect of mentoring by engaging parents more fully into the program and improving mentors' cultural competence. An evaluation of the program identified no improvements in youth outcomes but did identify several issues with the implementation of the program that are helpful to both academics and practitioners engaged in university–community collaborations. For example, some components were very successful, such as the parent orientation, but other components, such as the enhanced training for mentors, were not. Therefore, greater efforts to involve all stakeholders in the design and implementation of the comprehensive multicomponent interventions are needed to affect the youth in a holistic way.

Conclusions from Research on Youth–Adult Relations and PYD

The research we have discussed above, which links parenting relationships and mentoring relationships to PYD outcomes, provides several key points for youth-serving professionals:

- The presence and quantity of caring adults in adolescents' lives are the most important assets for PYD; therefore, it would benefit programs to engage adults from multiple youth contexts through coordinated program components or joint activities.
- Adults are most likely to be resources for PYD when they engage in developmental relationships (attached, reciprocal, progressively complex, and shared power) with the youth. Programs should be structured in order to maximize the likelihood of these relationships being formed through thoughtful matching as well as providing mentors with extensive training and ongoing support.
- The 4-H Study points to three parenting behaviors that are predictive of high PYD among adolescents: warmth, monitoring, and school involvement. In a developmental relationship, parents adopt a parenting style adapted to each individual youth.
- For natural mentoring relationships, emotional closeness is a key attribute of developmental youth-mentoring relationships. This type of relationship takes time and sensitivity.
- Mentoring programs are more effective when mentors' backgrounds align with the program, mentors and mentees are paired based on common interests, and mentors are encouraged, trained, and supported to be advocates for and teachers of the youth.

Recommendations and Priorities for Youth Policy and Practice

We have several recommendations for practitioners and policy makers who want to capitalize on the potential of youth–adult relationships to promote young people's positive development. Each of these recommendations is provided with the aim of increasing the likelihood that young people will have access to and participate in developmental relationships with adults from the many contexts in which young people participate.

Our *first recommendation* is that youth-serving programs should focus on promoting parenting practices that reflect warmth, acceptance, and support of their children. At the same time, parents should also be encouraged to be involved in their children's academic and social lives. That is, parents should engage with their children's teachers and schools and know where their children go and with whom they associate. Parental involvement in their children's academic life is only detrimental to young people when that involvement is the parents' *only* concern. Parental engagement in the multiple contexts of a young person's life is essential for comprehensive youth well-being as reflected by the Five Cs of PYD (see Chap. 9).

A key consideration for this effort is to improve practitioners' understanding of the socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of the youth and families with whom they work (Outley & Witt, 2006). Specific parenting styles and behaviors are understood differently by families from various cultural backgrounds (Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997). Therefore, practitioners must take care to understand these important differences and how they might affect their plans and efforts. However, practitioners and programs must be clear about their own discipline protocol as well as expectations for family behavior at program activities and on program grounds.

In turn, our *second recommendation for practice* is that programs should engage families more fully. This effort is essential for programs to promote PYD most effectively. Earlier, we highlighted Techbridge as an out-of-school time program that worked to engage parents in several ways. There are many activities that can encourage parental engagement, including (1) hosting a parent night to share information about the program, youth progress, or a family activity; (2) building a social media presence through posts by program staff and the youth; (3) extending personal invitations to family members to visit the program, if possible; and/or (4) hosting a community-wide event. In planning these types of events, practitioners should consider parents' schedules, to maximize participation and also empower parents to contribute to the planning and execution of these activities.

Our *third recommendation* is that youth development programs should include training and support for youth-serving professionals to learn the best ways to build developmental relationships with young people (Gettings & Wilson, 2014). In particular, mentors need the skills to develop an emotionally close relationship with young people in which mentors are seen as resources for a young person's private and difficult issues. Because developmental relationships take considerable time to grow, programs should also work with mentors to build commitment to the program

and to ensure that mentors feel invested in their relationships (Gettings & Wilson, 2014). In turn, programs should train and support young people in developing these same relationship-building skills, as well as help-recruiting skills, in order to optimize the resources provided by adults in their communities. The youth can then contribute to building supportive social networks composed of caring adults to enhance their well-being and success in life.

Our *fourth recommendation* is for practitioners in formal mentoring programs to consider the characteristics of the youth before assigning them to mentors. A thoughtful approach is essential when there are many more youth who want mentors than there are mentors available. Programs need to consider what interests and needs youth have before match decisions are made. Whereas high-quality mentors would probably benefit all youth regardless of background, some youth may already have enough social support and would thus benefit little from having a mentor. At the other end of the spectrum, some youth may have pervasive difficulties that require more intense intervention than a mentor can provide. In addition, findings from the 4-H Study showed that mentors were most beneficial for youth connection and character. Therefore, programs aiming to improve youth prosocial behavior or promote healthy youth relationships with families, peers, and adults in their communities should look to recruit mentors as a resource for youth in their program.

In regard to policy, research on youth–adult relationships compels us to make the following recommendations. Our *first policy recommendation* is for stakeholders in youth development to collaborate to create support systems for young people (Zaff, 2011). This recommendation is driven by research on the importance of both parental and nonparental adult relationships. One possibility is for school systems to implement family support programs (FSPs) within schools (Pullman, Weathers, Hensley, & Bruns, 2013). FSPs are a multicomponent and holistic approach to address the multidimensional needs of the youth and families. The aim of FSPs is to build partnerships with families, to increase family engagement in the school, and to address the nonacademic needs of the youth and families such as access to food, clothing, housing, and community resources such as mentors and parenting and career-building classes. For example, in the Seattle Public Schools, the key component of the FSP is the Family Support Workers stationed in the district's elementary schools. These individuals primarily work as a liaison between identified "at-risk" students, their families, and the schools to enhance family–school relations. In this role, they take on a broad range of tasks, as family needs arise, that include mentoring students, home visits, and organizing events. They also develop service plans and measure progress for these students. The FSP is promising initiative for youth–adult relationships to be supported through policies.

Our *second policy recommendation* is for researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and foundations to go beyond cross-contextual relations between two or three youth contexts. Rather, comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs; Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, & Dewar, 2010) may provide the best approach to capitalizing on youth–adult relationships to promote PYD. A CCI is a community-based coalition of institutions and individuals that is designed to pursue a common agenda and achieve a shared set of goals based on the unique strengths and needs of that

community. CCIs represent a sustained coordination of organizations based on an infrastructure that supports systemic, community-wide change. With a strong infrastructure in place, resources to develop positive youth–adult relationships can be sustained, or in instances when these relationships end, additional resources such as other mentors from the CCI can be identified and provided to the youth.

Within these comprehensive initiatives, our *third policy recommendation* is that young people should be able to work with adults in the overall initiative infrastructure as well as the individual youth-serving programs and organizations that are involved. Youth–adult partnerships provided an appropriate model for including youth voice in enterprises focused on their well-being (Liang, Spencer, West, & Rappaport, 2013; Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O'Connor, 2005). In youth–adult partnerships, young people and adults work collaboratively, learn from each other, and jointly contribute to the decision-making processes of the program. The ultimate aim of youth–adult partnerships is to contribute to positive change at the individual, community, and policy levels (Liang et al., 2013). Having young people included in the operations of institutions and organizations allows youth perspectives on how researchers, practitioners, and policy makers might best promote PYD.

To ensure the success of these initiatives, our *fourth policy recommendation* is that funding sources must also be allocated in ways that recognize and support the processes and aims of developmental relationships and CCIs. Funding sources must acknowledge the time and effort that are required to develop quality youth–adult relationships as well as the larger partnerships essential for promoting PYD. CCIs require the commitment and integration of many constituencies over several years to design and implement an initiative that is evidence-based, rigorous, and sustainable. Therefore, funding sources should prioritize integrated and comprehensive approaches among several contexts of youth development.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Youth–adult relationships provide key resources for PYD in the lives of many youth. More research needs to consider the diversity of young people and the diversity of the relationships that they can form with adults. What characteristics of these relationships might influence youth outcomes and which youth might be most affected? In addition, both researchers and practitioners need to acknowledge and address the joint influence that the adults in a young person's life have on his or her thriving. The findings we have reviewed point to the shared responsibility of adults for the positive development of youth in their community, and we have outlined recommendations for potential policies, programs, and practices that can enable communities and adults to uphold that shared responsibility.

Most of the research findings we presented addressed only how adults influenced youth development. Additional work should examine whether the characteristics of youth elicit different behaviors in their parents and mentors. By affecting those who aim to affect them, children are producers of their own development (Lerner, 1982).

Parent or adult rearing, as well as child rearing, exists (Lerner, 2004). Future work should examine the network of relations among the youth and adults and what the quality and number of these interrelationships mean for youth thriving.

Practice and research that address youth–adult relationships must also consider the rapidly changing definition of "family" and growing diversity of family structures. For example, with same-sex partnerships and marriages being recognized in the majority of states, it is important to examine what this means for relations among parents, mentors, and youth-serving programs. This substantial change in policy is added on to existing challenges that programs may face as they look to engage families from marginalized or minority populations.

Finally, more commitment to evaluate comprehensive program models is needed. The evaluation of the PEM (Kaye, 2014) did not identify any significant changes in the young people who participated; however, this evaluation did provide a model for identifying areas of strengths and areas of need for the program. The willingness of both practitioners and researchers to be open to recognizing their successes and areas where they might not be successful is a key component to developing programs that will ultimately benefit diverse young people across the United States.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

DuBois, D. L., & Karcher, M. J. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Research on youth mentoring has grown rapidly in the past decade. The Handbook of Youth Mentoring turns a critical eye to the research that has been done during this time. The handbook is a valuable resource for academics and professionals. The writing is very accessible and many practical applications are discussed. The handbook includes a historical look at mentoring, the current fashions of mentoring, how these have impacted and continue to impact development, different types of formal mentoring programs and their effectiveness, the different contexts in which mentoring occurs and how different youth populations can be uniquely understood, and an examination of policy issues related to youth mentoring.

Lerner, R. M. (2008). *The good teen: Rescuing adolescence from the myths of the storm and stress years*. New York: Random House.

The Good Teen aimed to dispel the overwhelming public opinion that teenagers are nothing but trouble. Using evidence from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development, an 8-year study of 4,000 teens from 25 states, Lerner lays out a case for the reframing of adolescence. The book explores the origins of "the

troubled teen," dealing with old myths and redefining normal adolescence. It then presents five attributes of teen behavior that foster positive development—competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. Envisioning adolescents as resources to be developed, not problems to be fixed, Lerner provides suggestions for parents and encourages new thinking, new public policies, and new programs that focus on the strengths instead of the deficits of teens.

Manza, G., & Patrick, S. K. (2012). *The mentor's field guide: Answers you need to help kids succeed*. Minneapolis: Search Institute Press.

Mentors come to mentoring with a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and assumptions. Whether you're new or seasoned, formal or informal, or volunteer or professional, *The Mentor's Field Guide* will provide both practical advice and needed inspiration. This thoughtfully assembled and easily used guide to mentoring information and resources provides answers to and understanding of the challenges of mentors using the latest research, evidence-based practices, and case examples.

The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring (http://chronicle.umbmentoring.org/)

Youth-mentoring program evaluations have shown that high-quality, enduring relationships can lead to a host of positive outcomes for young people. Formed in 2012 through collaboration between MENTOR and the Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring at University of Massachusetts, Boston, the Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring seeks to advance youth-mentoring research and bring findings to the field in order to enhance practitioner skill and knowledge through evidence-based practice. This online resource is designed to provide a forum for conversation, sharing, and the presentation of findings concerning the advancement of youth-mentoring practices and policies.

Equipping Quality Youth Professionals (E-QYP) (http://www.e-qyp.net/)

E-QYP provides real-time information for youth-serving professionals and volunteers through a variety of technologies. They have an iPad and iPhone app, a website, and a book (in print and electronic forms) which present practitioner-developed and academically credible resources for those people working with the youth of all ages. E-QYP has assembled high-quality youth development information so that it can be readily accessed and practiced in broad range of settings.

Harvard Family Research Project (http://www.hfrp.org/)

The Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) aims "to shape twenty-first-century learning opportunities so that all children and youth thrive." This online resource addresses issues around equity and accessibility of education as well as family and community engagement practices. Across a variety of settings, HFRP explores progressive perspectives on educational, programmatic, family, and community engagement research, practices, policies, and strategies.

MENTOR (http://www.mentoring.org/)

The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) develops quality resources to advance mentoring program effectiveness and innovation by sharing knowledge among mentoring programs. On a national scale, MENTOR advocates for public funding for quality mentoring programs, establishes evidence-based national standards for quality mentoring programs, and maintains the only national online Volunteer Referral System, which helps both adult mentors and the youth who are seeking mentoring programs to find appropriate resources.

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Chapter 7
Peer Relationships and Positive Youth Development

Alice E. Donlan, Alicia D. Lynch, and Richard M. Lerner

During adolescence, the importance of peers and the time youth spend with them increases dramatically (Brown & Larson, 2009; Wentzel, 2009). There is great diversity in the groups of youth that may be termed peers. Certainly, age similarity is one basis of labeling youth as peers of an adolescent. However, similarities in interests and activities are also a means to identify peers. Peers may be classmates, teammates, community members, and other same-aged adolescents who are connected by a setting such as schools, communities, or after-school programs. Friends are a subset of peers. Friends are people with whom an adolescent has close, reciprocal relationships characterized by trust, intimacy, and support (Bukowski, Motzoi, & Meyer, 2009).

Peers also exist in groupings of youth, such as crowds, cliques, or gangs (Brown & Larson, 2009; Taylor, 2003). Crowds are groups of youth who have the reputation of possessing similar interests (sports), activities (involvement in video games), or abilities (capacities for academic achievement) (e.g., Brown, 1990; Brown & Larson, 2009; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998, 2006; 2015). Labels exist for such adolescent crowds, for example, "jocks," "nerds," "populars," or "brains" (Brown, 1990; Brown & Larson, 2009). Cliques often exist within crowds and are usually composed of three or more youth who are in a tightly knit group (Henrich, Kuperminc, Sack, Blatt, & Leadbeater, 2000). Members of cliques typically see themselves as mutual friends and have a reputation among other youth as having common interests and identities, such as athletics, socializing, music, or academics (Rubin et al., 1998, 2006; 2015).

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_7

The term “gangs” has a negative connotation in contemporary social and behavioral science and in society more generally. Today, the term “gangs” is used to refer to groups of youth who engage collectively in illegal, violent, or antisocial behaviors (Taylor, 2003). However, sociologist Carl Taylor (2003), who has studied youth gangs extensively, points out that not all contemporary youth gangs engage in criminal or violent activities. Some youth groups that may be labeled as gangs are organized on the basis of mutual protection in dangerous or challenging living situations and/or exist for entrepreneurial purposes (Taylor, 2003).

It is perhaps not surprising that the diversity of peer relations that exist in adolescence is associated with a diversity of positive and/or problematic developments among adolescents (Rubin et al., 2015). Depending on the nature of the peer relations a young person has, and the focus of the crowds, cliques, or gangs in which a young person interacts, peer relations can be associated with both positive and negative development. It is generally the case that, across adolescence, youth spend increasingly more time with their peers and increasingly less time with their parents (e.g., Larson, 1997; Larson & Richards, 1991). Whereas parents remain highly influential during adolescence, the influence of peers—for good or for bad—increases.

Influences of Peers on Adolescent Development

Peers who spend time together in class, on teams, or in other settings tend to be similar to one another (Berndt, 1982; Veenstra, Dijkstra, Steglich, & van Zalk, 2013). One reason for this similarity is that young people tend to opt to spend time with peers who are similar to them. Girls tend to befriend girls, punks tend to befriend punks, and so on. In general, people are more comfortable seeking out others who seem to be like them. Once friendships and bonds are formed, adolescents may act to promote or discourage specific behaviors or values. Over time, adolescents learn what behaviors will win praise, and what will earn disapproval, and they tend to change their behaviors to satisfy the expectations of their peers (Veenstra et al., 2013).

The content of the messages adolescents receive from peers vary in relation to how to behave or what to value. Adolescents’ peers can promote positive development by socializing one another toward positive goals such as academic achievement and cooperating. Furthermore, peers can create a positive, supportive context that promotes well-being (Crosnoe, Cavanagh, & Elder, 2003). Alternatively, peers can also support negative norms such as disengagement, drug use, and truancy (Brown & Larson, 2009). Peers can also bully each other because they do not meet standards of physical beauty, athletic ability, or socioeconomic status (e.g., Garnett et al., 2014).

Peers from a variety of settings (e.g., friends, classmates, schoolmates)—including peers with whom an adolescent may have no direct interactions—can play a role in adolescent academic functioning. For example, using the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD) data, Lynch, Lerner, and Leventhal (2013) found that schoolmates play an important role promoting academic achievement and school engagement.

In schools where the student body is high achieving and actively engaged in school, youth tend to show increases in academic achievement and school engagement over time. The influence of peers is seen outside of the 4-H Study as well. One well-known study looked at the average level of school engagement of all of a school's 6th graders in the fall and found that the group predicted individual school engagement in the spring (Kindermann, 2007). That is, over the school year youth became more similar to one another—if they were less engaged than average, they were likely to improve, and if they were more engaged than average, they were likely to decline. Both studies indicate that youth tend to meet the expectations of their peer group; individual students are more likely to be interested in school when there is a peer climate of highly engaged academic achievers. In addition, students tend to do better academically when students report that peer relationships within school are positive and supportive.

However, supportive peers with disruptive goals can promote bad behaviors. For example, one study assessed an intervention program for deviant youth and found that although the youth had positive relationships with their fellow program participants, their delinquent behaviors increased following the program completion (Poulin, Dishion, & Haas, 1999). In short, participants encouraged each other's bad behavior and even taught each other how to push boundaries farther. This phenomenon, known as *deviancy training*, suggests that when youth feel they are liked and supported, they are more likely to change their behaviors in response to peer behaviors, regardless of whether the behaviors are positive or negative.

Optimizing positive peer influences and protecting against negative peer influences are important to promote positive youth development. There are several findings from the 4-H Study that confirm or extend the information derived from the broader literature on the role of peers in youth development, in general, and on PYD, in particular. The 4-H Study of PYD focused on peer relationships within schools and asked questions about the support and behavior of friends and, as well, about school-based peer bullying.

Researchers using the 4-H Study have assessed school-based peer relationships in studies of academic competence (Ma, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009a, 2009b), school engagement (Li, Lynch, Kalvin, Liu, & Lerner, 2011), and moral, performance, and civic character attributes (Hilliard et al., 2014). Furthermore, schoolwide peer culture has also been assessed in order to understand the role of school-based peer relationships in both academic achievement and school engagement (Lynch et al., 2013). After we review the findings about school-based peer relationships derived from the 4-H Study, we will turn to a discussion of the implications of these findings for applications to programs and policies.

School-Based Peer Relationships and PYD: Lessons Learned from the 4-H Study

Willie Sutton, the infamous bank robber of the 1930s, was reputed to have said in response to the question of why he robbed banks, "Because that's where the money is." In the 4-H Study a decision was made to study the role of peer relationships in

schools because, for about 8 hours a day, for about 10 months of the years, that is where youth and their peers are located. Consistent with the fact that peer relationships may be associated with both positive and problematic developments, a range of school-related variables were studied, including school engagement, academic achievement, delinquency, and bullying.

Peer Relationships and School Engagement

Several studies have used data from the 4-H Study of PYD to show important links between school-based peer relationships and school engagement. The concept of school engagement encapsulates the extent to which students participate in the academic and nonacademic activities at school, feel connected at school, and value the goals of education (Finn, 1989; Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007; Li & Lerner, 2011, 2013) There are at least three well-measured components of school engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Li, Bebiroglu, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2008; Li & Lerner, 2011, 2013). Behavioral school engagement includes involvement in academic activities, participation in school-based social activities, positive conduct, and the absence of disruptive behaviors (Fredricks et al., 2004). Emotional engagement involves a student's emotional reactions to the school, the teacher, and schoolmates (Stipek, 2002). The cognitive dimension of school engagement pertains to the extent to which students are thoughtful about their education and are willing to invest in learning (Marks, 2000).

Youth show different levels of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement in school throughout adolescence. Some youth begin and end their middle school and high school years at high levels of engagement for all three of the components. Other youth begin and end this period of life with consistently low levels of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement, and there are youth who maintain average levels of engagement across their middle-through-high school years. Still other youth wax and wane in their levels of engagement, being high, moderate, or low in their levels of engagement during some grades and showing different levels for some or all facets of engagement at other grades. Data from the 4-H Study of PYD indicate that peer relations are associated with all of these different pathways of school engagement (Li & Lerner, 2011).

For instance, the 4-H Study assessed the role of peer support, associating with "problem-behaving" friends and bullying in the development of behavioral and emotional school engagement among youth across Grades 6–8. Peer support for school-related activities was positively related to both behavioral and emotional school engagement. However, if the youth associated with problem-behaving friends, such as friends who engaged in delinquent behaviors and/or bullying involvement, then youth showed lower levels of behavioral and emotional school engagement (Li et al., 2011).

Moreover, the positive or problematic role of peers changed as youth progressed through high school. The positive influence of peer support on emotional engagement with school, as well as the negative influence of associating with problem-behaving

friends on behavioral engagement, was greater at higher grade levels. Interestingly, the influence of peer relationships on school engagement was not different for boys and girls or for youth with different family financial backgrounds That is, positive and problematic peer behaviors were equally influential regardless of whether youth were boys or girls from poor-, middle-, or upper-income families (Li et al., 2011).

These links between peer relationships and positive or problematic behaviors have been verified in other findings from the 4-H Study. For instance, engaging in delinquent behaviors with friends is an obviously problematic behavior during adolescence. Youth in the 4-H Study who showed decreasing behavioral engagement with school across Grades 5 through 8 were also the youth most likely to engage in delinquent behaviors. However, youth who remained behaviorally engaged in school throughout Grades 5–8 were the least likely to engage in delinquent behaviors. Similarly, youth who showed the highest levels of emotional engagement across Grades 5 to 8 had the lowest rates of delinquency, whereas those youth who showed decreasing emotional engagement showed the highest rates of delinquency (Li & Lerner, 2011).

Rejection and Bullying

Most adolescents want to feel included and accepted in their peer groups. Feeling connected to the peer group brings several benefits, including social support, opportunities to practice social and cognitive skills, and a sense of belonging in school, which all predict academic achievement and well-being. Alternatively, several severe disadvantages are observed when this goal is not met, and youth are isolated, rejected, or bullied. Youth who are rejected by their peers are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior (particularly among females; Lansford, Dodge, Fontaine, Bates, & Petit, 2014), spend time with deviant peers (Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller, & Skinner, 1991), and exhibit aggression (Sentse, Lindengerg, Omvlee, Ormel, & Veenstra, 2010), antisocial behavior (Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006), and depression (Platt, Kadosh, & Lau, 2013).

Why might adolescents reject a member of the peer group? Adolescents are likely to reject peers who are either aggressive and disruptive, or shy and withdrawn (Asher & McDonald, 2009; Rubin et al., 2006). Unfortunately, this rejection can lead to a downward spiral scenario wherein adolescents are rejected for being aggressive and become more aggressive as a result, leading to further rejection (Dodge et al., 2003). Furthermore, adolescents can be rejected based on racial, ethnic, or other forms of discrimination status (Killen, Rutland, & Jampol, 2009).

Peer rejection can take the form of neglect or victimization. As discussed in Chap. 13, being a bully or a victim of bullying predicts decreases in academic achievement (Li et al., 2011; Ma et al., 2009a, 2009b) and is associated with negative effects on moral and character development (Hilliard et al., 2014). A young person is being bullied when he or she is repeatedly exposed to intentional negative actions on the part of one or more other youth. The negative actions can include physical assaults, cruel teasing, being called "bad names," spreading rumors, and social exclusion. Usually, the youth who is bullied is unable to effectively defend

himself or herself from being physically and/or emotionally hurt by such negative actions (Olweus, 1993, 1999; Smith & Morita, 1999).

However, teachers can serve as a potential source of relief from victimization. The 4-H Study showed that teacher support predicts better grades for everyone, but it is a more powerful predictor of higher grades for victims of bullying than other students (Ma et al., 2009a, 2009b). However, at the same time peer support predicts lower grades among victims of bullying. Although speculative, perhaps supportive peers concentrate on providing victimized youth with emotional support, and support for academic achievement is not seen as immediately pressing. Furthermore, weakened attention and concentration may play a role in the problems of academic competence experienced by the victims of school bullying: It is hard for victims to focus on their schoolwork while trying to avoid being bullied (Hazler, 1994).

An assessment of the implications of school bullying among 4-H Study youth in Grades 5, 6, and 7 (Ma et al., 2009b) found that, across these grades, being a bully was associated with poorer academic performance (lower grades), especially for girls. Being either a bully or a bully victim was also associated with lower self-perceived academic competence. In addition, peer support for both bullies and for bully victims was associated with problematic academic functioning. Peer support was linked with lower grades among the victims of bullying and, once again, peer support for youth who were bullies was linked to lower self-perceived academic competence among bullies (Ma et al., 2009b).

Peer victimization in schools negatively affects both the bully and the target. Actual and perceived academic behaviors appear to be adversely affected. However, other facets of positive development—for instance, the "C" of character appear—may also to be associated with involvement in bullying, as either a perpetrator or a victim (Hilliard et al., 2014). Across Grades 7–10, and compared to youth not involved in bullying, youth who reported bullying behavior possessed lower levels of moral character (e.g., doing the "right thing"), performance character (e.g., self-discipline, diligence), and civic character (e.g., helping, or service to, others of the community). Similarly, bully victims showed lower levels of moral and civic character than did youth not involved in bullying (Hilliard et al., 2014).

In sum, the 4-H Study shows the important role that peers may play in both the positive or problematic development of youth within a key context of their lives: schools. Simply, peer groups present an important venue for socializing positive school-related behaviors, such as academic achievement and school engagement (Lynch et al., 2013). Peer relationships are also associated with variation in youth engagement in problematic behaviors, such as delinquency and rejection, and with differences in levels of character.

Aspects of all of the Cs of PYD (see Chap. 1) may be linked to the quality of the relationships youth have with their peers. Findings from the 4-H Study indicate that academic competence and confidence vary in relation to the nature of one's connections with one's peers. In addition, variation in one's connections with one's peers is associated with differences in character and, in the case of youth who perpetrate violence on their classmates, caring for other people may be affected by the quality of the peers with whom a young person is engaged.

In short, problematic peer relationships in school can tell a story of poor school engagement and performance. Peer rejection may be indicative of problem behaviors, problematic treatment of others, or the discriminatory, exclusive beliefs of the peer group. In turn, positive relationships with one's school peers can tell quite a different story, one of positive engagement, academic achievement, good behaviors, and desirable character attributes.

One key implication of these findings is that the school setting can foster a culture of peer relationships that provide the bases for competence, confidence, positive connections, character, and caring. Otherwise, schools can fall short of creating such a positive peer culture (Lynch et al., 2013). The existence and impact of such a *school-wide peer culture* has also been investigated within the 4-H Study (Lynch et al., 2013). If such a positive, school-wide peer culture were to exist, it may foster the acceptability of specific academic behaviors and attitudes that are linked to the quality of student interactions and relationships, that is, to an atmosphere that establishes the basis of positive developmental outcomes, as reflected in the Five Cs of PYD (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015).

One may conceive of such a peer culture as having two components. The first, relational component involves student perceptions of the nature or quality of peer interactions within the school. This component specifies what are regarded, or perceived to be, desired and acceptable peer relationships within the school. The second, behavioral component involves the influence of students' behaviors on the actual relationships, the behaviors, youth show in regard to school engagement and academic achievement.

In a study of fifth-grade 4-H Study youth enrolled in 30 schools across the United States, researchers assessed the impact of the relational and behavioral components of a school's peer culture (Lynch et al., 2013). School-wide peer culture was related to both students' academic achievement and school engagement. The behavioral component of peer culture was associated with individual student academic achievement. In addition, the school engagement of youth was related to both the relational and behavioral components of peer culture.

In essence, then, if schools can create a positive peer culture, the salutary influences of peer relationships on the positive development of adolescents can be promoted. Such a setting can foster the positive impacts of peers and, at the same time, act to diminish the presence and impacts of problematic peer relationships. This conclusion leads us to discuss the implications of what has been learned from the 4-H Study, and other investigations, about applying knowledge of peer relationships to promote PYD.

Implications for Applications to Programs and Policies

Peer relationships in adolescence can possess positive and problematic implications for PYD. In general, thriving youth have relationships with peers who are also thriving. In turn, the reverse is true. Although the direction of effects cannot be stated

with certainty, youth with problematic behaviors typically have friends with comparable behaviors. For instance, bullies may seek friends who condone bullying or a peer group that condones bullying results in youth who bully others.

However, the key point for application here is not what causes what. The challenge for the practitioner, then, is to work to maintain the relationships that thriving youth have with a supportive and positive set of peers and, as well, to work to support youth showing problematic developments—for instance, low levels of school engagement, low self-perceived academic competence, poor grades, and engagement in undesirable behaviors such as bullying or delinquent acts—to help shape their peer groups into positive contexts for development.

What, then, *is* the key point for practitioners to emphasize? Simply, it is that relationships matter. To maintain or to enhance positive youth development, the practitioner should focus on the relationships that youth have, or could have, with the important people in their lives. The essential point for applications to programs, and to policies as well, therefore, is to *capitalize on existing positive relationships in order to maintain and further promote PYD and to use such relationships as levers to enhance the development of youth showing problematic behaviors.* There are three examples we can offer to illustrate this point.

Strengthen the Connections Between Peers, Parents, and Schools

Peers and teachers fundamentally influence the academic achievement and well-being of youth (Wentzel, Donlan, & Morrison, 2012). In addition, considerable data indicate that the influence of parents not only remains strong but this influence also shapes and reinforces influences of peers on youth development. Although there is a decrease in the amount of total time adolescents spend with their parents, some research indicates that there are no changes in the proportion of time youth spend talking with parents about interpersonal issues, and this consistency is especially true for girls (Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck, & Duckett, 1996). Indeed, for both male and female adolescents, the single most powerful ecological asset predicting PYD among youth in the 4-H Study (Lerner et al., 2015) was consistent time spent with parents, for example, through eating dinner together on a regular basis (Theokas & Lerner, 2006).

Typically, parents who have character virtues that they wish to see in their children will see their wishes actualized (Bornstein, 2015; Douvan & Adelson, 1966), especially if parents consistently act in manners commensurate with their core values (Chaps. 1 and 6; Rhodes & Lowe, 2009). Parents may constitute the most important role models and mentors in the lives of their children (Bowers, Johnson, Buckingham, Gasca, Warren, & Lerner, 2014; Rhodes & Lowe, 2009; and see Chaps. 1 and 6). Therefore, greater communication between practitioners and parents could create a stronger safety net for youth. That is, if a teacher notices that a young person is having

trouble with peers, he or she could notify parents and discuss the best way to move forward as a united front. Furthermore, practitioners who notice problematic relationships among peers can learn the kinds of core values that parents are modeling for their children, and, assuming their values are positive (e.g., equality, empathy), they can use the same language parents use in their homes to reinforce these messages.

Of course, such family-school connections are difficult to implement, often requiring a transformation in the way schools understand and enact their relationships with the communities they serve (Zaff, 2011). However, if the goal is to maintain or enhance PYD—in regard to both the academic achievement-related outcomes and the social behaviors that develop within the school context—then school policy changes strengthening the alignment between parents and schools are necessary. For example, schools could host parent-teacher conferences in locations that are more convenient to parents' workplaces and homes, instead of always expecting parents to travel to schools. In addition, parent-based programs can be created, wherein parents can be asked to speak about their lives or interests in in-class, assembly, or open-school events.

At the least, these ideas are worth implementing and evaluating. Moreover, implementing this idea is consistent with the second example of relationship enhancement we offer.

Create a School-Wide Peer Culture

As a school embarks on building in-class curricular innovations and school-wide programs that focus on the core values youth use, in optimal situations, to organize their school-based peer groups, the relational nature of the school will be transformed. The relational component of school-wide peer culture involves how the student body, as a whole, perceives that quality, fairness, and general positive or negative character of peer relations throughout the school (Lynch et al., 2013).

As such, across students within a school, a culture will be created that fosters relationships—and channels the behavioral components of school-wide peer culture—that are marked by positive qualities such as fairness and support for good behaviors. Such a context should result in peers being both models and mentors of academic achievement and respect for diversity for other students, and such modeling and mentoring can lead to a diminution of support for or tolerance of negative student behaviors, such as delinquent acts of bullying.

In school settings, teachers are in a prime position to try to promote a positive peer climate because they work with youth every day, can model positive behavior, and can structure the classroom and schoolwork to promote acceptance. Teachers can provide emotional support, help, and safety to students experiencing social difficulties, which can help alleviate peer problems (Wentzel et al., 2012). For example, when teachers show that they like and support students who are otherwise rejected by their peers, often the rejection decreases and the students become more

accepted (Hughes, 2012). Furthermore, teachers can arrange classroom activities toward cooperative goals. For example, students could work as a team to solve a problem together, instead of racing to see who can solve the problem, individually, the fastest. Unlike competitive goals, cooperative goals foster helping, sharing, and cooperating behaviors that can lead to more positive relationships among peers (Roseth, Johnson, & Johnson, 2008).

Positive peer culture can involve peers acting as models and mentors for positive student-to-student relationships; such school-based programs, capitalizing on the power of peer mentors to enhance their classmates' behavior and development (Rhodes & Lowe, 2009; and see Chaps. 1 and 6), can be a key means for the promotion of PYD and for lowering the incidence of problematic behaviors in the school.

For instance, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC: www.militarychild.org) has developed a peer mentoring program—termed Student-To-Student (S2S)—that fosters positive and successful transition of new students (often from military families; Cozza & Lerner, 2013) to the school context. Appraisals of S2S indicate that the school-wide peer culture we have discussed is created through peer mentoring within a school context that is based on the core values of respect and support found in many military families (Cozza & Lerner, 2013).

Indeed, this role of value-based, in-school programs suggests that practitioners might explore the use of both in-school and out-of-school-time (OST) programs of character education (e.g., Berkowitz, 2012). This possibility raises the third example of relationship enhancement we discuss, involving the relationship between in-school and OST programs.

Strengthen Connections Between In-School Programs and Out-of-School-Time Youth Development Programs

Relationships matter. We have discussed the positive outcomes that can occur through strengthening the relationships that exist between families and schools and, as well, the relationships among peers within schools that create a peer culture in these settings. If homes and schools are the key contexts of youth development, then youth engagement in out-of-school-time (OST) activities may arguably be seen as the next most prominent setting for contemporary youth in the United States (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015).

Today, most youth who are enrolled in school also participate in one, and usually more, OST programs (Vandell et al., 2015). These programs are aimed at providing youth with useful and enjoyable ways to spend their OST hours and often enhance the capacities or skills of young people, for example, in regard to artistic or creative talents or interests, athletic pursuits, academic abilities, entrepreneurial goals, religious instruction, civic participation, or life skills (Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b; Vandell et al., 2015). When these OST activities provide safe spaces for youth and involve at least three, key program features (positive and

sustained relations with a caring and competent adult, life skill development, and opportunities for youth participation in and leadership of valued family, school, or community activities), then PYD is promoted (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b). Lerner (2004) has termed these three program features of OST activities “the Big Three” and notes that their presence operationalizes the activities involved in an effective *youth development* program.

Not only are such youth development programs linked to PYD (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a, 2003b) but youths’ fellow participants in such programs also constitute other instances of their peer groups. Therefore, the peer relationships present in OST activities provide another resource that may be used by youth development practitioners to enhance thriving. In other words, the positive peer relationships that may occur within the OST settings of youth development programs (programs marked by the “Big Three”) can contribute to the impacts of positive peer relationships occurring within schools. Simply, the idea here is that peer relationships in both the school-based and the community-based settings of youth can be used in concert to foster thriving among youth.

Again, this idea—of integrating the ecologies of youth in support of their positive development—merits instantiation and evaluation. We believe that theory, research, and the results of extant program evaluations involving peers and PYD (e.g., see discussions in Rubin et al., 2015; Vandell et al., 2015; and see Chaps. 1 and 6) indicate that if the positive relationships that youth have with family and peers can be successfully integrated in the service of promoting PYD, then the salutary outcomes of peer group relations can be maximized and the potential negative impacts of peer group relations can be minimized.

We believe there are several clear implications for policy innovations. The potential positive effects of integrating the ecology of youth development seem so clear that local, state, and federal funds should be invested in providing “glue” money (Zaff, 2011). That is, resources should be invested in creating bridges between families and schools and between schools and OST youth development programs. To establish such links, resources should first be allocated to generating different proposals for the creation of such bridges and for building rigorous program evaluations into the plans for such initiatives.

The outcomes of such investments would be the generation of evidence-based means for enhancing the relationships among the key settings and people in the lives of youth: parents and other family members, schools and the teachers and staff within them, OST programs and practitioners as well as other community-based adults (e.g., program leaders, coaches, faith leaders, and mentors), and the other young people—within schools and within the broader community—in the lives of youth. Policies to bring effective bridging programs to scale and to sustain them could then be enacted and funded. With such investments in the youth of our nation, young people’s PYD may best be optimized. Such policies can create settings devoted to maximizing the chances that—no matter where they interact—adolescents will have opportunities to thrive and the people needed to support their pursuing these opportunities.

Conclusions

Relationships between youth and their peers can act synergistically to maintain and further promote PYD among thriving youth and to serve as levers to enhance the development of youth showing problematic behaviors. Bridges can be built among youth, families, schools, and OST programs to promote a positive peer culture. Youth development professionals, working in in-school or in OST settings, including youth development programs and other community-based venues (e.g., faith institutions or businesses), can collaborate in supporting the positive development of all youth.

Each child is a member of the peer group of other children. Therefore, by enhancing PYD among each young person, we are also working to enhance the quality of his or her peer group. Across the families, schools, and other institutions in our communities, the relational quality of peer group relationships, and the positive behavioral character of youth engagement with their peers, can thereby be substantially enhanced. The use of the integrative approach we have discussed may enable actions that enable peer relationships and PYD to be productively linked across the adolescent years.

Acknowledgments The preparation of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Benson, P. L. (2008). *Sparks: How parents can ignite the hidden strengths of teenagers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Peter Benson describes a plan for awakening the spark that lives inside each and every young person, the feeling or idea that motivates them to engage their world—their families, peers, schools, and communities—in positive and productive ways. Sparks—when illuminated and nurtured—give young people joy, energy, and direction. They have the power to change a young person's life from one of "surviving" to "thriving." The book provides a step-by-step approach to helping teenagers discover their unique gifts and is applicable to all families, no matter their economic status, parenting situation, or ethnic background.

Damon, W. (2008). *The path to purpose: Helping our children find their calling in life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Drawing on the results of his innovative and important research, William Damon discusses one the most pressing issue in the lives of youth today: why so many young people are "failing to launch," that is, living at home longer, lacking career motivation, struggling to make a timely transition into adulthood, and not yet

finding a life pursuit that inspires them. The book provides creative ideas for parents and practitioners to use to promote purpose among youth and to engage them positively with their peers, schools, and communities.

Lerner, R. M. (2007). *The good teen: Rescuing adolescence from the myths of the storm and stress years*. New York: Random House/The Crown Publishing Group.

Richard Lerner presents findings from his research with the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD), explaining the Five Cs (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring) that constitute his conception of PYD. The findings he discusses dismantle myths about the inevitability of problems occurring during adolescence that adolescents break away from family and parental ties and that peer group relations move adolescents along problematic pathways. The book encourages new thinking, new public policies, and new programs that focus on teens' strengths. Lerner describes specific ways parents can foster the Five Cs at home, among peers, and in their communities.

Mascolo, M. (2015). *8 keys to old-school parenting for modern-day families*. New York: Norton.

Michael Mascolo uses his deep knowledge of contemporary scientific theory and research to provide clear and wise recommendations that will enhance parenting and positively impact the lives of children. The book is accessibly written, describes the pathways for effective parenting, and gives parents intellectual and behavioral tools they need to optimize their children's development in all arenas of their lives—their homes, peer groups, and communities.

Project SEALS: Supporting early adolescents' learning and social success. seals-ed.org

SEALS is an intervention program designed to create supportive classroom climates and positive peer relationships. The website gives an overview of the program and provides rigorous evidence that it can help improve the peer culture. Formal training on how to implement the program is available.

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Chapter 8
Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Youth Activity Participation: Lessons from Research

Jennifer P. Agans, Robey B. Champine, Sara K. Johnson, Karl Erickson, and Ceren Yalin

Every year, millions of American youth participate in sports and, on average, spend more time in athletic activities than in any other organized extracurricular activity (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). In addition, many youth participate in other movement activities, such as dance or exercise classes (Agans, Säfvenbom, Davis, Bowers, & Lerner, 2013). Given the amount of time that youth spend in these activities, they represent a key context for adolescents' development. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to explain how movement activity settings can contribute to young people's positive youth development (PYD) and continued participation in these types of activities throughout their lives. In the final section of the chapter, we highlight specific ways in which practitioners and policy makers can use these research findings to support young people's participation in movement activities that promote PYD and sustained participation across the life span.

It is important to understand the potential benefits and risks of movement activity participation for adolescent development and how activity contexts can impact cognitive, emotional, social, and health outcomes for youth. Deeper knowledge of how movement activities can contribute to the positive development of participants can help practitioners and policy makers provide maximally beneficial and effective opportunities for youth. These efforts to promote youth well-being reflect a PYD approach, which is based on the idea that all youth have strengths that can be supported by family and community resources to promote positive and healthy development (Lerner et al., 2005, 2013; Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015).

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_8

PYD was studied extensively in the 4-H Study of PYD and was defined using the "Five Cs" model (see Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, & Lerner, 2014; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015; and Chap. 1, for more details about the 4-H Study). The Five Cs are comprised of competence, confidence, connection, caring, and character (Lerner et al., 2005). When youth develop high levels of PYD, they are likely to show evidence of a "Sixth C": contribution to self, family, community, and civil society (for a more in-depth discussion of contribution, see Lerner et al., 2005; see too Chap. 11).

Findings from the 4-H Study (e.g., Agans et al., 2014; Zarrett et al., 2009) and other research studies (e.g., Vandell et al., 2015) support the view that programs that are based on a PYD model, and use movement activities as a platform to support positive outcomes, have the potential to positively impact the development of youth (Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009; Vandell et al., 2015; Zarrett et al., 2009). 4-H Study researchers examined the different types of activities in which young people may be involved and found that while participation in any activity is associated with more positive developmental outcomes than not participating at all, there are some combinations of activities that are associated with more positive outcomes (Agans & Geldhof, 2012; Zarrett et al., 2009). Specifically, youth participating in both sports and youth development programs show higher levels of PYD than youth participating in other combinations of activities or who participate in sports alone (Zarrett et al., 2009).

Thus, youth sports programs and other movement activities (such as dance, circus arts, martial arts, or exercise classes) can serve as important resources to promote PYD (Mahoney et al., 2009; Mueller et al., 2011). Although different organizations and programs use different methods, feature different activities, and are based in different contexts, they can share an underlying focus on using movement experiences to promote PYD among participants.

In addition to general PYD outcomes, participation in movement activities can influence the development of healthy active lifestyles, both among youth and across the life span (Telama et al., 2005). Although many programs focus either on sports or on youth development, the integration of movement into youth programs or the development of "sports-based youth development programs" illustrates the importance of connecting health and PYD (Perkins & Le Menestrel, 2007). Indeed, a key implication for practice in youth development programs is that collaborations between sports programs and programs aimed at promoting PYD (such as 4-H or the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America) could create synergies that would enhance youth thriving. The importance of these synergies is heightened by the fact that physical and psychological health are not two separate domains but, instead, are interconnected aspects of human thriving (e.g., Cohen & Herbert, 1996). Thus, in this chapter, we focus both on psychosocial well-being (represented here by PYD) and physical health. Moreover, in the concluding section of this chapter, we return

to our ideas about the importance of cross-program collaboration for promoting youth thriving.

Although movement activities *have the potential* to support PYD and to be beneficial to physical health, they do not always do so. Many parents, educators, and practitioners believe that participation in athletic activities is guaranteed to be beneficial for all youth. However, this “sport evangelism” has not been supported by research findings (Coakley, 2011). Instead, findings from the 4-H Study of PYD suggest a more nuanced picture, in which specific individual and situational factors need to be present for young people to benefit the most from their participation (e.g., Zarrett et al., 2009). For example, the individual characteristic of goal-pursuit skills (the ability to set and pursue goals and to navigate barriers to goal achievement) can help young people to make the most of the resources in their contexts (e.g., Urban, Lewin-Bizan, & Lerner, 2010). Programs should, therefore, help youth learn how to get the most out of opportunities (e.g., by teaching skills related to effective goal pursuit; Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008), rather than assuming that all youth will benefit equally simply from their attendance.

In addition, sports and other movement activities can provide opportunities for skill building, leadership, and positive and sustained relationships with adults. In fact, these three characteristics are so important that, in the context of being present within safe spaces for youth, they have been termed the “Big Three” characteristics of effective youth programs (Lerner, 2004). Accordingly, in this chapter we present research findings illustrating the importance of these three aspects of youth programming, and we discuss how they can be applied in movement activity settings.

For youth-serving programs that use movement activities to maximize their developmental impact, research findings should be used to inform the design, delivery, and assessment of activities. Such evidence-based programs will increase the likelihood of fostering positive and healthy outcomes among participating youth. Many potential benefits are associated with participation in movement activities, and program characteristics can affect the extent to which youth may gain these positive outcomes through participation. Knowing which factors are important for promoting PYD across diverse youth and contexts can help practitioners and policy makers to structure evidence-based programs around these practices (for instance, by incorporating the “Big Three,” described more throughout this chapter). It is also important to know why and how youth participate in movement activities in order to better encourage and maintain participation. Therefore, the following sections discuss each of these issues in turn: the potential benefits and risks associated with youth participation in movement activities, the “Big Three” characteristics associated with high-quality programs and how they apply to movement activity contexts, factors that serve as barriers to participation or promote participation in different contexts, and how knowledge of these issues can help promote PYD and sustained participation. Finally, we present priorities for policy and practice centered on the idea that positive development results from the integration of factors across all the contexts in which youth engage and that movement activities can play a key role in this process.

Potential Benefits and Risks of Participation in Movement Activities

More American youth are now more involved in organized athletic activities than ever before (e.g., Sabo & Veliz, 2008). However, despite a seemingly widespread belief that participation in sports is universally beneficial for young people, research demonstrates mixed outcomes for youth athletes (Coakley, 2011).

Benefits of participation in movement activities have been shown for physical and psychological health (such as reduced rates of obesity, reduced depression) and social outcomes (such as increased peer support and social skills; Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007; Le Menestrel & Perkins, 2007). Athletic participation has also been linked to increased educational attainment, higher grades, and decreased risk of school dropout (e.g., Le Menestrel & Perkins, 2007; McNeal, 1995). However, these beneficial effects are not universal, and they may also be combined with negative outcomes for youth.

Risks of athletic participation include higher rates of alcohol use for athletes, compared to their nonathlete peers (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001), and the potential for negative experiences, such as increased levels of stress and performance anxiety (Scanlan, Babkes, & Scanlan, 2005), reduced sense of self-worth (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002), decreased motivation for learning (Dworkin & Larson, 2006), disordered eating habits (Sundgot-Borgen & Torstveit, 2010), and negative group norms (Stattin, Kerr, Mahoney, Persson, & Magnusson, 2005). These findings suggest that, although participation in youth sports and other movement activities has the potential to promote PYD, participation also has the potential to be harmful. The likelihood of providing beneficial outcomes can be enhanced, however, if movement activity programs are designed to support PYD (for instance, through incorporating the "Big Three"; Lerner, 2004; and see too Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Characteristics of High-Quality Programs: The "Big Three"

Programs that provide safe spaces for youth and incorporate the "Big Three" elements of youth development programs may have a more positive impact on youth development than programs that focus only on teaching sport or movement skills. These three key elements—youth-adult relationships, skill building, and meaningful leadership opportunities—are discussed in more detail below.

Youth-Adult Relationships

Sustained, caring relationships with adults are the first and, perhaps, the most important of the "Big Three" critical elements of effective PYD programs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003), and these relationships

can be an important component of youth movement activities as well. The presence of supportive nonparental adults in young people's lives is strongly linked to PYD (Bowers et al., 2012), and these adults (including coaches, teachers, instructors) are a central element of most athletic activities for youth. However, although research has demonstrated the potential for these relationships to contribute to PYD, these relationships are not always positive (Erickson & Gilbert, 2013). Therefore, attention to the qualities and characteristics of effective relationships is key to ensuring that movement activities support youth development. Two primary aspects of youth-adult relationships are the direct interactive behaviors that adults have with youth and how youth perceive the social and psychological environment created by adults. Much of this research has been focused on sports coaches (Horn, 2008), but a smaller amount of research has considered other adults that youth may encounter within other movement activities (such as dance teachers; Mainwaring & Krasnow, 2010).

In regard to direct adult interactive behavior, supportive and instructive coaching behavior, such as providing positive reinforcement after successes and encouragement after mistakes, while emphasizing what went right or how it could be fixed, has positive effects on a range of personal and social outcomes for young athletes (e.g., Horn, 1985; Smith & Smoll, 1990, 2007). For example, higher levels of supportive and instructive coach behaviors are linked to increases in athletes' perceptions of their own competence over the course of a season (Horn, 1985), and the positive effects of such behaviors on self-esteem are particularly strong for youth with initially low levels of self-esteem (Smith & Smoll, 1990). In contrast, higher levels of punitive coach behavior are associated with negative sport experiences for youth (Erickson & Gilbert, 2013). Importantly, coaches can be trained to be more supportive and instructive and less punitive with young athletes. For example, youth participants who played on teams where coaches had received such training reported increased enjoyment and self-esteem and reduced performance anxiety. They were also more likely to return to the sport the following year when compared to youth participants on teams where coaches had not received the training (Smith & Smoll, 2007).

With regard to the way that youth perceive the environment created by adults, positive effects are noted when coaches create a setting where effort, self-improvement, and learning are valued and rewarded; such a climate is typically classified as mastery oriented (Roberts, 2012). When youth perceive a mastery-oriented motivational climate, they may gain a range of positive youth outcomes including higher self-motivation, sport enjoyment and satisfaction, persistence, self-perceived sport competence, and fair-play attitudes (e.g., Horn, 2008; Roberts, 2012). Other contexts may be performance or ego oriented, encouraging youth to compare themselves to others rather than focus on their own self-improvement (Roberts, 2012). Compared to these contexts, contexts with mastery-oriented motivational climates may foster more positive athlete-coach relationships and help coaches to incorporate the skill-building element of the "Big Three" through a focus on self-improvement.

In sum, nonparental adults play significant roles in organized movement activities for youth. Caring and sustained relationships with adults are one of the "Big Three"

components of effective PYD programs, and these relationships provide a foundation on which the other two elements of the "Big Three" (skill building and opportunities for leadership in valued activities) can be facilitated. Given this critical role of adults in youth programs, it is important for youth development researchers and practitioners to understand the ways in which these relationships contribute to PYD and the promotion of long-term healthy lifestyles both within and outside of movement activity contexts. The beneficial influence of these relationships can be enhanced when adult leaders are primarily supportive and instructive in their interactions with young people and avoid overemphasis on punishment, while actively fostering a supportive and mastery-oriented climate (e.g., Erickson & Gilbert, 2013; Horn, 2008; Smith & Smoll, 2007). With these supportive relationships in place, movement programs can then focus on the second component of the "Big Three" – skill building.

Life Skill Development

The second component of the "Big Three" is opportunities for young people to develop and practice life skills. Organized activities, such as sports and other movement activities, can provide these opportunities. Life skills, such as communication, decision-making, and goal-setting, can help youth to cope with challenges both within the movement activity context and in other areas of life, and these skills are important for positive development (Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008). Thus, in addition to teaching young people the physical skills necessary to participate in movement activities, teaching life skills can be a valuable aspect of movement-based programs.

Activity settings can offer *opportunities* for young people to learn life skills through interactions with peers and mentors within a supportive and challenging environment (e.g., Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt, Tamminen, Tink, & Black, 2009). Although movement activities have the potential to teach life skills, the structure, content, and style of the program affect adolescents' experiences and, thus, what they learn (Holt et al., 2008; Mahoney et al., 2009). Therefore, attention to the qualities and characteristics of movement programs is key to ensuring that these activities support PYD and help youth to build life skills.

How can movement programs ensure that they are helping their participants build these life skills? Coaches often do not provide direct teaching of these non-sport skills, but rather can create environments that require and encourage this skill building (Holt et al., 2008). Youth participants report learning initiative, respect, and leadership on teams where decision-making opportunities are shared, respectful conduct is reinforced, and athletes have time for peer interaction (Holt et al., 2008). In addition, youth social interactions with peers, parents, and coaches are all influential aspects of the activity context that enable young athletes to build life skills, whether directly taught or learned through experience (Holt et al., 2009). In short, young people can learn life skills in movement programs without direct instruction,

but the program needs to be structured in a way that facilitates these skill-building opportunities.

The life skills that youth learn in activity settings (such as communication, leadership, and decision-making skills) should be applied to experiences and situations that young people encounter both within and outside of these settings, to maximize their likelihood of positive and healthy functioning across diverse contexts (e.g., Lerner, Alberts, Jelicic, & Smith, 2006). In short, life skills need to be translated from the movement activity context to other situations in the adolescent's life. One potential way in which program or activity leaders may support this translational process is by facilitating discussion with youth about how life skills practiced in the athletic context may be meaningfully applied in different settings (Gould & Carson, 2008). For example, discussion of how communication and team-building skills that youth learn in a sport setting might be applied to effectively work with classmates in school or peers in other activity contexts and may help to enhance a young person's relationships and functioning in these different settings. Thus, the movement activity environment, with its emphasis on skill development and self-improvement and its role models and mentors, can be the perfect place to lay the groundwork for life skills if structured appropriately.

In sum, movement activities can serve as key venues for the development of life skills, as youth work with mentors and other important adults who can serve as role models. Developing these life skills is one of the "Big Three" components of effective PYD programs, and the skills learned in movement program contexts can be applied across the wide variety of situations in which young people find themselves. Given the importance of learning these skills, participation in movement programs that give youth the opportunity to practice and enhance these skills and capacities is extremely valuable. Furthermore, as youth develop these skills, they can take on meaningful leadership roles, the last component of the "Big Three."

Opportunities for Leadership

The final component of the "Big Three" is youth leadership, which activity settings can help to foster when they provide young people with opportunities to make meaningful decisions about issues that are important to them. Within structured movement activity settings, the coach or instructor is the leader, but there are often areas in which youth can exercise leadership and contribute meaningfully to the functioning of the group. Examples of such leadership opportunities include assuming the role of a team captain, engaging in peer mentoring, and facilitating group discussion of different issues. These opportunities for leadership allow participants to take responsibility for themselves and others and to apply their life skills to serve the team, troupe, or community.

Youth leadership in athletic settings can be formal (such as team captains) or informal (such as peer leaders), and these youth leaders help others to achieve goals by encouraging them, helping to make decisions, or serving as role models

(Price & Weiss, 2011). To develop such leaders, movement activity programs must provide not only opportunities for leadership but also explicit training and feedback so that adolescents can hone their leadership skills (Gould & Voelker, 2012). However, many sports teams do not provide these structural supports for youth leadership (Gould & Voelker, 2012), and, on average, few differences in leadership skills exist between athletes and nonathletes (Extejt & Smith, 2009). If movement activities are to promote PYD through the "Big Three," then they must provide and support youth leadership opportunities.

Peer leadership can enhance the functioning of a group, which can be especially important in team sport settings. Cooperation and teamwork can be improved when youth motivate and inspire their teammates, lead by example, set high standards, and work with teammates to provide support (Price & Weiss, 2011). Thus, coaches should encourage all youth to view themselves as potential leaders, and coaches should use their own leadership position to model good leadership and offer opportunities for youth to practice leadership skills.

There are several key ways in which the leadership practices of the coach, instructor, or program leader can serve to support youth leadership. Adult leaders should provide focused support to all youth in developing these skills and should explicitly educate them about what constitutes true leadership (for instance, encouraging and supporting others and being a good role model, not just yelling instructions or being called "captain"; Gould & Voelker, 2012). In addition, the adult leader of the team or program should model effective and empowering leadership by providing support for the youth, using a variety of different techniques to allow youth to learn leadership skills, and giving clear and supportive feedback to help youth leaders improve (Gould & Voelker, 2012). Finally, it is essential to remember that, for youth to lead, adults must step back and allow them to make decisions, contribute to conversations, and take on responsibilities. Youth at different points in development will benefit from different expectations for leadership (more responsibility can be offered to older participants) and different ways of teaching leadership (more concrete examples may be needed for younger participants). Nevertheless, at every level, adult leaders must patiently work with youth to allow them to make, and learn from, mistakes (Gould & Voelker, 2012).

In sum, youth can learn leadership skills through their participation in movement activities, but only if these activities actively support and promote youth leadership. Helping youth to develop leadership skills that enable them to make meaningful decisions that affect their lives, and the lives of others, is one of the "Big Three" components of successful PYD programs, and these skills also serve youth well in other contexts. Through the mentorship of supportive adults, and with the development of life skills and opportunities for leadership, movement programs can actively foster the "Big Three" and support the positive development of youth participants. However, not all youth participate in these programs, or continue to participate across adolescence, potentially forgoing these developmental opportunities. In the following section, we discuss research findings about the barriers to participation that some youth experience and the ways these barriers can be overcome.

Who Participates (and Does Not Participate) in Movement Activities and Why

High-quality programs that promote PYD and physical health offer valuable opportunities to young people. Although many youth do participate in movement activities (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001), such participation is not universal and dropout is common (Wall & Côté, 2007). Accordingly, in this section, we review research that describes some of the factors that promote youth activity participation, as well as discuss potential barriers to sustained participation.

Mastering certain fundamental motor skills (such as running, balancing, catching) is necessary before youth can effectively participate in most movement activities (Senne, 2013). Children who are highly competent in these skills are, therefore, more likely to be highly active as adolescents (Barnett, Van Beurden, Morgan, Brooks, & Beard, 2009) and as adults (Tammelin, Näyhä, Hills, & Järvelin, 2003). In general, prior levels of physical activity, as well as belief in one's ability to do well, are associated with higher levels of physical activity across adolescence, such that youth who have more experience in these activities tend to continue to participate (Craggs, Corder, van Sluijs, & Griffin, 2011). Involvement in developmentally appropriate movement activity contexts (that promote a variety of movement skills and enjoyment of physical activity) at a young age, therefore, seems to promote sustained involvement (Côté, 1999), which can lead to consistent activity across the life span and an increased likelihood of physical health and other developmental benefits.

Overall, young people participate in movement activities for a variety of reasons, including for fun; for the opportunity to express themselves, to keep fit, to enhance physical appearance and function, to experience competition and achievements; and for social networking and the opportunity to make and spend time with friends (Seippel, 2006). Given the motivation to participate, youth who are confident in their abilities show higher levels of physical activity in both physical education classes and in leisure time, as compared to their peers who have lower levels of confidence (Taylor, Ntoumanis, Standage, & Spray, 2010). In addition, the motivation to participate, and the confidence to be willing to try a new activity, must be paired with access to movement activities or the ability to overcome barriers to participation, which may vary according to the area in which the young person lives. Accordingly, the following sections explore potential barriers to activity participation that youth may encounter in rural and/or urban environments.

Barriers to Movement Activity Participation Among Rural Youth

Youth who live in rural contexts are less likely than their urban peers to engage in physical activity, and they are more likely to be overweight or obese (Yousefian, Ziller, Swartz, & Hartley, 2009). Given that rural youth are at greater risk than urban

youth for health problems related to physical inactivity (Yousefian et al., 2009), it is important to understand the features of rural environments that may function as barriers to youth activity participation. For example, some of the barriers to physical activity engagement among rural youth (some of which may also apply to suburban and urban youth) are (1) time and costs associated with transporting youth to and from activities, (2) adolescents' preference to watch television or play video games, (3) school policies that restrict adolescents' physical activity (older youth no longer get recess), and (4) concerns about safety (gunshots from hunters, fear of sexual predators; Moore et al., 2010; Yousefian et al., 2009).

Additional environmental factors have also been found to hinder rural adolescents' activity participation. Examples of such factors include a lack of sidewalks, unpaved road surfaces, few indoor youth recreation centers, lack of public transportation, and land use policy (such as the availability of public spaces; Hennessey et al., 2010; Yousefian et al., 2009). The low population density found in rural environments often results in a lack of socially unified "neighborhoods" or communities, which may deprive youth of access to others with whom to engage in physical activities (Yousefian et al., 2009). Despite these limitations, however, many rural youth still find ways to be active (for instance, through performing household chores such as mowing the lawn, taking care of livestock; Walia & Liepert, 2012). Thus, although barriers to participation in movement activities exist within rural settings, these contexts may also provide youth with opportunities for different types of physical activity. Programs operating within rural settings should, therefore, be aware of the participation barriers that local youth face and capitalize on the unique strengths of rural environments (such as ample outdoor space) in order to actively engage youth in movement activities.

Barriers to Movement Activity Participation Among Urban Youth

Although some barriers to movement activity engagement observed in rural settings have been found to overlap with those found in urban environments (such as distance and costs associated with commuting, school physical education policies, youth preference for television and video games; Moore et al., 2010), there are obstacles that are more often observed in urban contexts. For instance, the degree to which activities are culturally sensitive can impact youth engagement in both rural and urban settings; however, it may be especially challenging for programs to be responsive to participants' cultural backgrounds, values, and needs when programs serve larger and more culturally diverse populations of youth, demographic characteristics that may be observed more often in urban (as opposed to rural) settings (Moore et al., 2010). As such, programs delivered within urban areas need to take into account the experiences and preferences of the culturally diverse youth whom they serve (Moore et al., 2010). In some cases, young people's decision to not participate in activities may stem from feelings that program staff and content do not

relate well to the experiences of youth from their communities (Borden, Perkins, Villarruel, & Stone, 2005).

In addition, safety concerns among urban parents may inhibit their children's participation in physical activities, and these concerns differ from those expressed by rural parents. For example, urban parents may fear their children's potential exposure to gang activity and peer violence (Moore et al., 2010). Neighborhood disorder (as indexed by graffiti, abandoned buildings) and lack of neighborhood safety are also associated with low levels of activity participation among youth (Molnar, Gortmaker, Bull, & Buka, 2004).

Some movement programs have been specifically designed in response to the challenges of urban environments. One example is a youth cycling initiative in Philadelphia that focused on increasing physical activity and providing youth with a means of transportation (Hoffman, Hayes, & Napolitano, 2014). Youth in this program acknowledged the environmental and health benefits of cycling, but they also expressed concerns about crime (such as concerns about having their bicycles stolen), fear of injury, physical discomfort from exercise, competing school demands, and a preference for engaging in more sedentary activities such as watching television (Hoffman et al., 2014). Thus, although programs can be designed to address particular environmental demands and constraints, the potential overlap among these concerns should also be recognized so that programs can effectively overcome barriers to youth participation.

Encouraging Youth Movement Activity Participation Across Diverse Contexts

As part of efforts to promote positive and healthy developmental outcomes among *all* youth, researchers have sought to better understand how physical and social aspects of community environments can influence young people's access to, and participation in, movement activities (Moore et al., 2010). These findings can be used to help movement settings to more effectively serve youth and support their development. Given the obstacles and barriers to youth involvement in movement activities, it is also important to consider factors that encourage participation. For example, social activities may inspire more frequent participation. Some parents support their children's participation in movement activities because these contexts provide an opportunity to make friends and develop social skills (Moore et al., 2010). Similarly, some youth prefer to engage in movement activities with their friends and peers (such as in community centers), as opposed to engaging in more solitary activities (such as walking alone; Moore et al., 2010).

There are also environmental factors that can encourage young people's participation. Parents and youth have identified the need for more indoor spaces that offer diverse activity options (including bowling, skating, swimming) in one facility that is easily accessible and helps to facilitate supervised socialization with friends

(Moore et al., 2010). Because the perceived availability of recreational facilities, perceptions of safety, and support and engagement from parents and friends are key facilitators of youth movement activity participation (Hoffman et al., 2014; Walia & Liepert, 2012), an increase in accessible facilities that provide supportive programs could greatly enhance young people's involvement.

In light of the many benefits associated with participation in activities that involve healthy movement, it is important to understand why some youth show low levels of participation in movement activities and to explore how to facilitate these adolescents' engagement with movement activity contexts. Accordingly, the following section reviews potential facilitators of youth activity participation and how to promote PYD in movement activity contexts. We then turn to a discussion of suggested priorities for policy and practice, in light of what research suggests about factors that may inhibit or promote youth engagement and positive developmental outcomes.

Promoting PYD and Sustained Movement Activity Participation

Participation in movement activities during childhood and adolescence can potentially promote PYD and other positive developmental outcomes and contribute to continued participation in movement activities into adulthood (e.g., Tammelin et al., 2003; Telama et al., 2005). Because participation in movement activities can be beneficial to cognitive, emotional, and physical health, sustained participation in movement activities across adolescence and throughout adulthood can be a key facilitator of positive development across the life span.

In order to promote healthy engagement in movement activities across the life span, it is important for young people to have positive experiences in these activities during adolescence. Early experiences in school physical education classes and both in-school and out-of-school sport programs serve as a foundation for later involvement (Kirk, 2005). For example, young people should go through a "sampling phase" in which they participate in a wide variety of movement activities purely for enjoyment (rather than to increase performance) in order to learn about the different types of contexts in which they can participate without worrying about intense competition (Côté, Baker, & Abernethy, 2003). The fun of playing the game should be established before youth begin to specialize and focus on a more limited number of activities (Kirk, 2005). Otherwise, the likelihood of dropping out of athletics is higher (Wall & Côté, 2007), and dropping out prevents youth from reaping the possible benefits of long-term participation.

Because young people have unique interests and talents, finding an activity in which the skills or interests of the participant "fit" with the demands of the activity may also be an effective strategy for promoting continued participation. The "goodness of fit" between individual qualities and the demands of social contexts is

crucial for positive outcomes, as a mismatch is likely to lead to negative experiences (Lerner & Lerner, 1987). For some individuals, finding this "fit" may involve giving consideration to features such as a certain type of coaching, a particular activity, or the right level of competition that enables them to be challenged and engaged (Fredricks, Alfeld, & Eccles, 2010). Different activity contexts can offer unique developmental experiences and opportunities (Agans & Geldhof, 2012; Hansen, Skorupski, & Arrington, 2010), and individuals should, thus, be given opportunities to find the activities that best suit their needs and interests.

Participating in a wide variety of activities (such as sports, youth programs, school clubs), and maintaining a consistently high level of participation, is associated with positive outcomes across adolescence (Agans et al., 2014). However, changes in the number of different activities (particularly when the change involves a reduction in participation) have been found to be associated with higher levels of substance use and depressive symptoms (Agans et al., 2014). For youth sports participation in particular, different types of sports and patterns of participation can lead to different developmental outcomes (Agans & Geldhof, 2012). For instance, female athletes who participate in any type of sport consistently across high school, and athletes who participate in a combination of individual and team sports, showed the most positive outcomes (in regard to PYD and contribution to community), compared to youth who did not participate in sports (Agans & Geldhof, 2012). Therefore, each activity context may offer unique developmental opportunities for the particular individuals who choose to participate, and these effects may be better promoted when youth participate consistently across more than one season.

The wide variety of outcomes (both positive and negative) associated with sports participation reflects the complex role of these extracurricular activities in the lives of youth. For example, there are differences in the types of skills and relationships that youth gain from participation in different types of activities (e.g., between individual sports and team sports and among types of school clubs and performing arts activities; Hansen et al., 2010). With regard to movement activities, team sports have been found to provide more developmental opportunities than individual sports for certain characteristics, such as opportunities for identity exploration, developing emotional regulation skills, and cultivating relationships with peers and adults. In comparison, performance arts have been found to provide more opportunities for emotion regulation than other arts activities (Hansen et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important for program leaders to understand the ways in which their particular program or activity can best support the development of participants and to focus on this goal rather than only working to produce a winning season or elite performance. In addition to promoting PYD directly, an emphasis on promoting youth development in movement programs may also serve to encourage continued participation.

In sum, no single activity will be a good fit for every adolescent, so it is important to provide opportunities for participation in a variety of areas, especially for those youth whose low skill might otherwise exclude them from movement activity contexts. Recreational programs, in-school activities, and youth development programs incorporating athletics should ensure that the potential benefits of these contexts are

not reserved for the elite few. When the benefits of participation can only be gained by those who are admitted into the program (often by tryout or audition), failing to gain entry to valued activities can have negative effects on adolescents' self-worth and identity (Barnett, 2006). Of course, competitive teams and elite performance groups may still select players based on skill, but all programs should consider the long-term PYD and health consequences of participation and tailor their programming to maximally benefit the youth populations they serve.

Priorities for Policy and Practice

Movement activities can have positive outcomes for young people, especially when certain conditions are met, for example, when they feature the "Big Three." However, the potential for negative or maladaptive outcomes also exists, especially when programs themselves lack important features (such as supportive relationships and opportunities for skill building and leadership) or inadequately support the development of personal and social assets that are linked to positive and healthy youth functioning (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). Finally, there are individual and contextual factors that either limit or promote young people's participation in structured movement activities. Overall, it is critical that youth programs and relevant policies draw on existing evidence in designing and implementing opportunities for movement activity. The research findings we have presented in this chapter have important implications for youth policy and practice.

Toward this goal, we have distilled the research findings into one key lesson, with associated priorities for practice and policy related to young people's participation in structured movement activities. These priorities represent an important first step in suggesting how research findings can be incorporated into the policy and practice of youth movement activities in order to promote sustained participation in these activities and, as well, positive and healthy lifestyles across the life span.

The key lesson to learn from the synthesis of research findings on participation in movement activities, and the associations between such participation and positive developmental outcomes, is that development takes place within an integrated system of individual youth, the social relationships in which they are involved, and the multiple environments in which participation occurs (Agans et al., 2013). Just as the "Big Three" work together within safe spaces to facilitate PYD, sports programs, schools, and families all influence young people's participation in movement activities and their experiences in athletic contexts. Synergy among the various contexts in which youth spend their time can help to more effectively support all youth toward positive development and healthy, active lifestyles. Movement activities, as one such context, can therefore positively contribute to the developmental outcomes of young people if they are focused on promoting PYD.

As previously discussed, youth often participate in multiple programs, and those youth who participate in both sports and youth development programs tend to show

the most positive functioning (e.g., Zarrett et al., 2009). The diversity of programs in which each young person is a participant can be leveraged to further promote positive development, especially if there are opportunities for these programs to generate shared resources or common visions for youth outcomes based in PYD. Thus, one policy priority would be to fund collaborative efforts among youth programs, and give opportunities for program leaders, coaches, and youth workers to learn from each other. By capitalizing on the existing diversity within each community, young people can be supported in all sectors. Program providers can also work together to cultivate such collaborations across projects. For instance, leaders of different youth-serving activities (e.g., athletics, performing arts) could organize and participate in meetings or workshops to facilitate discussion of ideas in regard to how to promote positive development among diverse youth participants across activity contexts. Key questions for such discussions may include: What are leaders' goals for the youth in their care, and how do these goals compare and contrast across activity contexts? How do these goals align with developmental research? What are strategies and resources for achieving these goals, and how might they be leveraged across activity contexts? Such conversations around best practices can help all programs effectively promote the positive development of their participants.

In addition, it is important to remember that participation in movement activities (like involvement in any setting) occurs in relation to the cognitive, social, and physical development of the individual. Programs must, therefore, adopt practices that allow them to provide developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant experiences to their participants, rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. Furthermore, individuals' motives for continued physical activity participation differ. Whereas some youth seem to emphasize the importance of extrinsic rewards (such as the prospect of winning or gaining status or rewards), other youth indicate that the enjoyment and excitement inherent in participation in sports helps to sustain their involvement (Weinberg et al., 2000). As such, program leaders and facilitators should strive to be attuned to potential individual-level differences in motives that underlie young people's decision to join an activity, which may influence their continued engagement or disengagement.

Furthermore, practitioners can work to identify the ways in which their programs both facilitate and constrain youth participation, and they can think about ways in which their programs can address or, at the very least, work around these barriers. For instance, if obtaining access to transportation to/from an activity represents a challenge for youth, perhaps program providers could explore ways in which to organize and facilitate transportation (such as through arranging carpools or purchasing a shuttle van or bus).

Similarly, policy makers should prioritize assessments of how diverse individuals can gain maximum benefit from participation. Such assessments should examine how individuals and their contexts interrelate (what factors, for what individuals, with what characteristics, in what portion of development, in what settings, are associated with what outcomes? see Agans et al., 2013). In addition, it is recommended

that such assessments give consideration to the needs of diverse youth across diverse contexts and how to address gaps between current conditions and the needs and desires of these youth and other stakeholders (such as families and communities).

For instance, what types of activities are currently available to youth, and what are the corresponding participation and retention rates? What are young people's reasons for participating or not participating? Are there activities in which youth would like to participate that are not currently available? Policy makers can also identify the ways in which communities may both constrain and/or facilitate young people's ability to participate in various kinds of movement activities and promote policies that can enhance participation for all youth in their constituencies.

Finally, both practitioners and policy makers should pay attention to the "Big Three" characteristics of youth programs. Practitioners can evaluate their programming in regard to how their services align with each element of the "Big Three" and work to address any areas of concern. At the policy level, national youth movement activity organizations and recreational and high-school sports-governing bodies can support local organizations in addressing each of the components of the "Big Three." For example, to promote positive and sustained youth-adult relationships, certain types and amounts of appropriately targeted coach training could be provided (see the Suggested Additional Resources at the end of this chapter for specific programs that offer such training).

Conclusions

A considerable number of adolescents participate in movement activities, and important links exist between positive experiences in these activities and positive youth development (including the promotion of healthy lifestyles). In light of these findings, it is critical that youth-serving programs and policies be informed by research (such as the findings presented in this chapter), in order to maximize the likelihood of positive and healthy functioning among participants. To accomplish this goal, we have outlined research findings and suggested priorities for evidence-based changes in youth programs and the policies that are made by and for movement activity organizations.

It is important for all adults involved in structured movement programs to acknowledge that benefits do not accrue automatically to young people by simply participating in sports or movement activities. Although the potential for positive outcomes is significant, there is also the potential for negative outcomes, regardless of the type of activity in which youth participate. Practitioners and policy makers should acknowledge that individual experiences in movement activities, in relation to experiences in the various other contexts in which youth participate, are important in determining whether positive outcomes occur. Those who work with youth in structured movement activities should also pay attention to the reasons why youth participate (or choose not to participate) in these activities, as well as how long they

continue their participation and the enjoyment they experience during the activity. The “Big Three” characteristics of youth programs are particularly valuable in increasing the odds that youth have positive experiences both within and outside of structured movement activity contexts. In addition, these program characteristics maximize participants’ likelihood of positive and healthy cognitive, emotional and physical functioning, and continued participation across the life span. Accordingly, practitioners and policy makers should pay particular attention to these program characteristics (i.e., providing opportunities for positive adult-youth relationships, skill building, and leadership) and explore how to incorporate them into their initiatives. Furthermore, keeping in mind that all youth are embedded in multiple contexts, activities, and communities, programs and policies should develop and maintain an integrative focus on supporting youth development.

The ideas and research findings presented in this chapter should help those involved in movement programs for young people to optimize the developmental benefits these programs can provide. The key elements for promoting positive development and healthy active lifestyles can be achieved in any movement program and should be prioritized as essential program components. Through acknowledging individual needs and circumstances and incorporating the “Big Three,” movement programs can be both fun for participants and beneficial for their development.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommendations Additional Resources

Allen, L. R., & Barcelona, R. J. (Eds.). (2011). *New directions for youth development: Recreation as a developmental experience* (Vol. 130). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

This book features chapters from leading researchers that outline the importance of recreation for positive youth development. Chapters in this volume discuss leisure and recreation generally, as well as camp and outdoor recreation settings, and may be useful for practitioners to gain insight into ways these contexts can support youth development.

Holt, N. L. (Ed.). (2008). *Positive youth development through sport*. New York: Routledge.

This book brings together researchers from many fields to present chapters on organized sport programs, instructional athletic programs, and the promotion of positive youth development. Practitioners can use this book to gain an overview of the research findings on positive youth development in sport contexts.

Perkins, D. F., & Le Menestrel, S. (Eds.). (2007). *New directions for youth development: Sports-based youth development* (Vol. 115). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

This edited volume discusses the importance of out-of-school time sports for PYD, emphasizing how these "sports-based youth development programs" can promote positive youth development. Practitioners can use this book to learn more about how to integrate a PYD perspective into youth athletic programs.

Positive Coaching Alliance. (http://www.positivecoach.org/)

This national nonprofit organization works with coaches, athletes, and families to use sports as a venue for character building and positive development. They offer live workshops and books as well as a host of online tools for coaches, parents, athletes, and program leaders that help to teach character through sport.

The Aspen Institute's Project Play. (http://www.aspenprojectplay.org/)

This initiative aims to improve access to sports for all young people by supporting people (coaches and administrators), places (recreation facilities and parks), and programs (based in communities and accessible to all). Their website hosts reports that synthesize research findings around youth participation in sports and associated developmental outcomes that may be useful for program leaders.

Play Like a Champion Today. (http://playlikeachampion.nd.edu/)

This project, based at the University of Notre Dame, seeks to promote character development through sport using clinics, workshops, online courses, and an annual Summer Leadership Conference. They offer interactive clinics and resources for promoting character and preventing bullying in sports that practitioners can use to enhance their programs.

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Part III
Positive Youth Development: Indexing Adaptive Developmental Regulations

Chapter 9
The Five Cs Model of Positive Youth Development

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Adolescence is a period of pronounced physical, psychological, and social growth. Conventional wisdom suggests that young people have difficulties adapting to these changes and, as such, adolescence has been described as a period of "storm and stress" (Hall, 1904). Early psychotherapists viewed strife, angst, and discord as such inevitable characteristics of adolescent development that many went so far as to pathologize adolescents who remain "good children" (Freud, 1958, p. 264).

The assumption that adolescents experience inevitable storm and stress promoted the view that young people are problems to be managed (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Accordingly, policies and programs were designed to rein in juvenile crime, substance use, poverty, out-of-wedlock births, and other potentially maladaptive

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_9

outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). These "deficit-oriented" programs (i.e., that focused on what young people should *not* be doing) met little success, however. By the 1990s practitioners, policy makers, and researchers began to abandon strictly deficit-oriented perspectives, instead favoring programs that also fostered young people's strengths (Catalano et al., 2004). Rather than just telling adolescents what they should not do, the growing consensus was that we must also teach adolescents what positive things they can do and highlight the positive things they are already doing. By the end of the 1990s, these ideas had coalesced into the positive youth development (PYD) perspective.

The PYD perspective has since played an important role in both research and practice. The breadth of the PYD perspective's impact is perhaps best illustrated by Hamilton's (1999) description of PYD as including (a) models of human development, (b) philosophies that underpin youth programs, and (c) actual instances of youth development programs. Prominent resources provide detailed discussions of PYD based on this tripartite description (e.g., Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009; Lerner & Lerner, 2012; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015), and each of the many manifestations of the PYD perspective has something unique to offer. Among the theories of PYD, R. M. Lerner, J. V. Lerner, and colleagues' Five Cs Model of PYD has received perhaps the most consistent empirical support. Due to space constraints, and the scope of the present book, we therefore limit our discussion to this model (see Lerner et al. 2013, 2009 for discussions of alternative theories). In the present chapter we introduce the Five Cs Model, discuss issues related to its measurement (including a description of two PYD measures), describe how the Five Cs develop across adolescence, and provide key takeaways and concrete recommendations for policy makers and practitioners.

The Five Cs Model

Relying on accessible terms used by practitioners, parents, and young people when discussing positive development, the Five Cs Model emphasizes five "Cs" that characterize positive development:

- *Competence*: Young people live in complex environments that include, but are not limited to, their schools, places of worship, families, peer groups, extracurricular programs, and workplaces. Positively developing youth must competently navigate these contexts and make the most out of resources that these contexts provide.
- *Confidence*: Youth gain a sense of confidence when they are able to successfully navigate their contexts. Confident youth believe they can overcome obstacles and can have a meaningful impact on the world around them.
- *Character*: Positively developing youth internalize and respect social norms, appreciate standards of proper behavior, and have a well-formed sense of right and wrong. These youth act appropriately, even when nobody else is around.
- *Caring*: "Positive development" means more than just acting in one's own interests; thriving youth also show empathy and sympathy for the feelings and

experiences of others. Positively developing young people believe that caring for those around them is important.

- *Connection*: Positive development occurs when young people are valued, integral members of their communities. For instance, they must be positively connected to their peers, families, schools, and communities. These connections enable young people to improve their own lives and improve the lives of those around them.

Young people exhibit the Five Cs of PYD when their personal strengths align with the resources and opportunities afforded by their environments. Thus, promoting PYD requires policies and programs that build adolescents' skill sets (e.g., critical thinking, social skills), promote their ability to apply those skills [e.g., by improving adolescents' future orientation, increasing their optimism and hope for the future (Chap. 5), and enhancing their ability to self-regulate their actions to reach their goals (Chaps. 2 and 3)], and improve the contextual resources they have access to [e.g., quality schools, safe locations where they can interact with peers, mentors, opportunities of civic engagement (Chaps. 1, 6, 4, 7, and 8)].

Promoting PYD in this way has two consequences. First, youth who exhibit the Five Cs display lower levels of risk and problem behaviors, including substance use, delinquency, and depression. Promoting PYD, however, is not synonymous with preventing problem behaviors. Positively developing youth can, and often do, engage in traditionally "problematic" behaviors such as alcohol use and sexual activity. As such, programs and policies designed to support PYD can be implemented either alone or in tandem with prevention-oriented efforts. A community grappling with elevated levels of adolescent substance abuse might take a two-pronged approach that attempts to decrease substance use while simultaneously giving young people the personal and contextual resources they need to thrive.

The second consequence of promoting PYD is that youth will be more likely to contribute to their community, the "sixth" C. Positively developing youth tend to internalize an other-oriented ideology and act in ways that strengthen the families, schools, and communities in which they live. The development of PYD therefore represents a reciprocal relationship between young people and their contexts. Supportive communities foster PYD, which in turn leads youth to actively engage in and support the communities where they live.

As a theory, the Five Cs model is well suited for informing policies and programs during the planning and implementation stages. However, evaluating the effectiveness of such efforts requires a means for quantifying how strongly interventions, programs, and policies actually impact manifestations of the Cs, and in what ways. In other words, a program designed to improve the Five Cs is only useful to the extent that participating youth show increases in competence, confidence, character, caring, and connection.

Therefore, access to efficient, reliable measures of the Five Cs is paramount for the success of youth development programs. Accordingly, researchers have designed several measures of the Five Cs, two of which have been shown to be especially useful: a questionnaire designed as part of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (see the introductory chapter of this volume) and a set of "Growth Grids" designed to help adult mentors promote the Five Cs in their adolescent

mentees. In the remainder of this chapter, we focus specifically on these two tools. We first describe the measures and discuss how they have informed the field's understanding of how PYD develops across adolescence. We next describe how practitioners can use these measures in their own programs and discuss the key findings from this research. We then conclude the chapter by translating existing research into specific recommendations and priority applications for policy makers and youth practitioners interested in promoting PYD in their communities.

Measuring the Five Cs

Measuring PYD is important for basic research, evaluating youth development programs and policies, and for optimizing the day-to-day interactions between mentors and mentees. As such, one of the key goals of the 4-H Study was to develop and validate measures of the Five Cs of PYD that could be used when assessing the outcomes associated with community-based programs. The PYD measure was developed using an extensive literature review and revision process to ensure that the measurement tool accurately reflected the Five Cs model (Lerner et al., 2005).

The PYD measure used in the 4-H Study began as a compilation of items drawn from a variety of existing sources. Items came from the Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors (Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998), the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1983) and Adolescents (Harter, 1988), the Teen Assessment Project (TAP) Survey Question Bank (Small & Rodgers, 1995), the Eisenberg Sympathy Scale (Eisenberg et al., 1996), and the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983). Members of the research team independently categorized these items into each of the Five Cs and then compared and discussed their categorizations. When at least 80 % of the raters agreed that a question or set of questions represented a particular C, it was used as part of the measure (Lerner et al., 2005).

Members of the research team distributed the Five Cs questionnaire as part of the first wave of data collection of the 4-H Study (to youth in Grade 5; approximately 10 years old) and used these data to confirm that questionnaire items were optimally grouped according to the Five Cs. In other words, the team showed that the Five Cs model accurately represented the ways that youth responded to the questionnaire. These findings indicated that each C is a broad umbrella term that unites several related facets of PYD. For example, Connection was comprised of connection to family, neighborhood, school, and peers.

The Five Cs Questionnaire

Over the course of the 4-H Study, several forms of the Five Cs questionnaire were developed and evaluated for use in practical applications. The Five Cs questionnaire allowed researchers and practitioners to compute scores for each of the Five Cs as well as an overall score for global PYD. There are separate versions of the full Five

Cs measure that are appropriate for use in adolescence: an 83-item scale designed for use with early adolescents (up to age 13) and a 78-item scale designed for use in middle/late adolescence (teenagers). Scoring protocols for these measures are available online at http://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/.

The items in the two versions are largely interchangeable but are tailored to reflect age-related differences between early and middle/late adolescence. Some of these differences include wording of items, such as “Some kids feel that they are very good at their schoolwork” compared to “Some teenagers feel that they are just as smart as others their age.” Other differences involve how different characteristics represent the Cs. For example, for younger adolescents, physical competence (how a youth feels about his or her abilities regarding physical activities, such as sports) is part of Competence; however, these abilities no longer reflect competence in middle to late adolescence (Geldhof et al., 2014). On the other hand, a youth’s beliefs about his or her physical appearance are a part of Confidence only in middle and late adolescence. This change may reflect a developmental shift in how youth perceptions of physical appearance are different at various stages of development. For more information on how the PYD measure was developed and validated across Grades 5–12, see Lerner et al. (2005), Phelps et al. (2009), and Bowers et al. (2010).

The PYD Short and Very Short Forms

The full-length versions of the Five Cs questionnaire are useful for research purposes but are not practical for most applications. The full PYD measures provide a comprehensive understanding of youth thriving, but their length presents a serious limitation. Completing one of the full-length PYD questionnaires can exhaust many young people and therefore limits program evaluators’ ability to measure additional aspects of positive and problematic development (e.g., self-regulation skills, depression). Scoring the full measures also requires a substantial time investment, further limiting its practical usefulness in mentor-mentee relationships.

As the PYD perspective is adopted by more youth-serving practitioners and researchers, there is a need for user-friendly measures of youth thriving that are comprehensive but easy to incorporate into their work. Therefore, our team also developed short and very short versions of the Five Cs questionnaire.

Using data from the 4-H Study, we determined which items in the full questionnaires best captured the Five Cs. We then reduced the full item pool to a 34-item short form (PYD-SF) and a 17-item very short form (PYD-VSF). Although both forms are comprehensive enough to be used in advanced statistical analyses (e.g., structural equation models), their design allows for quick and efficient measurement by practitioners. The PYD-SF provides more precise measurement and is well suited for application in research and program evaluations. The PYD-VSF is a reduced subset of the PYD-SF and provides a more general measure of PYD. The PYD-VSF is therefore suited for preliminary evaluation work and use by practitioners. Both questionnaires are freely available to the public and are downloadable from http://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/.

The PYD-SF and PYD-VSF can be used to measure each of the Five Cs individually or can be used to obtain a global index of positive development. As discussed above, each C is itself a broad umbrella that encompasses many facets of positive development, but statistical analysis of the PYD-SF and PYD-VSF suggests that some items that measure the Five Cs are not good indicators of overall PYD. Although this adds complexity to the measurement tool, it illustrates that PYD is not simply an aggregation of the Five Cs. High scores on PYD indicate that youth are, overall, thriving. However, it is still useful to look at the individual Cs as domain-specific measures of well-being. For example, physical appearance is a good measure of the C of Confidence but is not an excellent measure of overall thriving. Although it may not be surprising that physically attractive teens feel more confident, it also is logical that feeling confident about one's physical appearance is not, on its own, what we mean by overall positive youth development. Detecting these nuances may be useful for practitioners who are targeting specific areas of development within their programs.

The appendix contains a version of the PYD-SF appropriate for use with teenagers, with items *not* included in the PYD-VSF highlighted in gray. Thus, practitioners can use copies of this appendix when administering either the short or very short versions of the questionnaire. The scoring columns allow mentors to quickly obtain scores for each C and for overall PYD. Items with an "X" in the PYD scoring column were good indicators of their respective Cs but were not related to overall PYD in the 4-H Study. As such, scores on these items should not be counted when computing scores for overall PYD.

The items that do not measure overall PYD generally correspond to four facets of the Cs: having a lot of friends (Competence), being athletic (Competence), physical appearance (Confidence), and knowing and being friends with people from diverse racial backgrounds (Character). The first three facets on this list will make intuitive sense to many practitioners—positively developing adolescents may be able to get by with a few close friends, do not necessarily have to be athletic, and do not have to be good looking. The fact that having diverse friends did not tend to represent PYD among participants of the 4-H Study is not as easily explained, but this finding may reflect the fact that a subset of our participants lived in relatively homogenous communities. For youth living in racially homogenous communities, the opportunity to have a diverse set of friends may not be available to them, and, thus, this component of character development may likewise not be available to these youth in the same way as it is for youth living in more diverse communities. These youth may, nevertheless, find alternative pathways to character development. More research is needed to understand these potentially different pathways to developing character for youth from different communities.

Limitations of the PYD-SF and PYD-VSF

The PYD-SF and PYD-VSF were developed using data from a single sample that was not nationally representative (i.e., the 4-H Study sample). This lack of diversity limits the applicability of these measures. The PYD-SF and PYD-VSF were

designed to capture broad aspects of the Cs relevant to most young people, but this goal also means that the measures may lack context specificity. Each C can mean different things to different people living in different contexts. As an extreme example, competence in hunting may be an important index of PYD in communities that rely heavily on subsistence hunting (e.g., Inupiat Eskimos living in Alaska; Brower & Hepa, 1998). These same skills may be unrelated to PYD for youth living in large urban centers. As discussed above, having a diverse set of friends may similarly mean something different for youth living in homogenous vs. diverse communities. Any application of the PYD-SF and PYD-VSF must therefore account for a young person's unique context, especially when examining populations that deviate from the relatively middle-class American sample obtained in the 4-H Study.

The need to consider contextual differences is especially important when measuring PYD outside of the United States. Although at this writing we have received requests for the measure from researchers representing 17 different countries, we know of no published research that examines the PYD-SF or PYD-VSF outside of the United States. Until such research is published (e.g., ongoing research examining the validity of the PYD-SF in some European and Central American contexts), we cannot recommend that practitioners use the PYD questionnaires in their present form to measure PYD outside the United States.

The relative homogeneity of the 4-H Sample also impacts practitioners' ability to interpret scores on the PYD questionnaires. National norms do not exist for these scales and it is unclear what scores indicate "high" versus "low" levels of PYD. Program and policy evaluations must therefore use these questionnaires to make relative comparisons. Such comparisons might ask whether youth display higher levels of the Five Cs after participating in a program. Similarly, a comparison might determine whether the young people impacted by a specific policy display higher PYD than those not directly impacted.

Individual practitioners can also use these questionnaires to help frame discussions with individual youth. A mentor might ask his or her mentee to complete the PYD-SF to determine which aspects of the Five Cs the mentee needs the most help developing (i.e., scores lowest on). However, the PYD-SF and PYD-VSF were designed primarily as research and evaluation tools and were not designed to facilitate such conversations. To fill this gap, members of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development (IARYD) developed the PYD Growth Grids.

The PYD Growth Grids

High-quality youth development programs are key resources for promoting positive development among adolescents (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Youth development programs based on youth mentoring may be especially effective in promoting PYD among participating youth, or "mentees" (Lerner, Napolitano, Boyd, Mueller, & Callina, 2014). Despite the many benefits that these mentoring programs can provide, today's competitive funding environment requires organizations to base their

practices on empirical research and to assess their impact on participating youth. Using measures such as the PYD-SF and PYD-VSF is one assessment option; however, having mentees complete questionnaires may reduce valuable mentoring time and interrupt scheduled activities. Thus, a research-based, empirically rich PYD assessment tool that can be quickly and flexibly deployed in a variety of mentoring settings could be a valuable addition to many mentoring programs.

To address the need for mentor-oriented measures of the Five Cs, members of the IARYD developed the *Growth Grids* rubrics as part of a study funded by the Thrive Foundation for Youth (GPS to Success; Bowers et al., 2013; Napolitano, Bowers, Gestsdóttir, & Chase, 2011; Napolitano et al., 2014). In this section, we first describe the Growth Grids and their use by both mentors and mentees to assess and promote PYD. We then conclude by describing the strengths and limitations of these tools.

Unlike the PYD-SF or PYD-VSF self-report questionnaires, the Growth Grids are arrayed as separate mentor-reported and mentee-self-reported rubrics. Widely used in education and other fields, rubrics are measurement tools that allow for quick ratings of complex behavior in incremental steps. Rated from 1 (low) to 5 (high), the criteria for the Growth Grids are "initiative" and "mastery." A mentee with a score of 5 displays "consistent initiative and skill mastery," while a mentee with a score of a 1 "lacks skill" and is "pre-aware or disengaged." The language of the mentee-self-reported rubrics is adjusted to be appropriate for youth ages 10 and above.

Consistent with the results of the 4-H Study, a mentee's PYD is assessed across six Growth Grids: one for each of the Five Cs of PYD, as well as a separate rubric for the "sixth C" of contribution. The Growth Grid for each C contains several independently assessed skills, based on empirical PYD research. For instance, mentors and mentees completing the Competence Growth Grid rate a mentee's academic, cognitive, social, and emotional competence, as well as the extent to which their mentee engages in healthy habits. A mentee's initiative and mastery in each domain of competence may vary, providing the mentor with an indication of where to focus his or her activities to maximize positive development. An example of a mentor-scored Growth Grid is shown below in Fig. 10.1.

Strengths and Limitations of the Growth Grids

Like the PYD questionnaires described above, a key asset of the Growth Grids is that they are freely available to mentoring organizations (downloadable from www.gps2success.org). In addition to their availability, there are three characteristics of the Growth Grids that make them useful tools for the mentoring context. First, as indicated earlier, both mentors and mentees can complete Growth Grids to assess the mentee's PYD. Convergent or divergent scores are opportunities for mentors to direct conversations and activities.

Competence Rubric

PROFESSIONAL LEVEL

Scoring Levels	Academic Competence	Cognitive Competence	Social Competence	Emotional Competence	Healthy Habits
5 Consistent initiative; skill mastery	Consistently shows initiative and mastery to develop academic skills and use personal and school resources for success. Consistently participates in school activities.	Consistently shows curiosity, and initiative to learn and enjoys learning during out-of-school time. Develops mastery in activities outside of school time.	Consistently shows mastery acting appropriately in different situations with peers and people of various ages and cultures.	Consistently shows mastery and initiative to identify and control or adapt emotions in most situations.	Consistently shows mastery & initiative in making healthy choices on a daily basis.
4 "On and off" initiative; skill competence	Takes initiative and shows competency – about half the time – to develop academic skills and use personal and school resources for success. Shows initiative – about half the time – to participate in school activities.	Shows curiosity and initiative – about half the time – to learn during out-of-school time. Competent in areas of interest, but may have difficulty staying committed.	Shows competency at acting appropriately in about half of social situations. May have difficulty with certain skills or situations.	Shows competency and takes initiative – about half the time – to identify and control or adapt emotions. May have difficulty in some situations.	Shows competency and takes initiative – about half the time – to make healthy choices. May struggle with commitment or consistency.
3 Emerging initiative; basic skill	Shows motivation to use personal and school resources to improve success. Needs mentor to point out opportunities to participate at school and encouragement in some classes.	Shows motivation and curiosity to learn during out-of-school time. Needs help to take full advantage of opportunities.	Shows motivation to improve acting appropriately in social situations. Needs mentor's help and modeling to improve skills.	Shows motivation to identify and control emotions. Needs mentor to "calm them down," or to model appropriate ways to express emotion.	Shows motivation to make healthy choices. Needs mentor to point out risks and healthy choices.
2 Low initiative low skill	Will try to work on academic skills or seek out resources and activities when mentor presses. With pressing, will do just enough to get by.	Typically just "hangs out" during out-of-school time. Will make attempts to pursue learning only when mentor presses.	Shows limited social skills in certain situations and only makes attempts to improve social skills when mentor presses.	Often lacks control of emotions. Shows ability to adjust emotions when mentor presses.	Often makes unhealthy choices or has unhealthy habits. Will make healthy choices when mentor presses.
1 Lacks skill; pre-aware or disengaged	Does not work to learn in school, take advantage of personal & school resources, or participate in activities.	Does not yet work to learn during out-of-school time.	Does not yet possess key social skills and seems unaware of need to develop these skills.	Does not yet control emotions or express them in a positive way.	Engages in unsafe behaviors and does not make healthy choices.

Fig. 10.1 An example Growth Grid from Project GPS

The second unique feature of the Growth Grids is their flexibility. Mentors can complete Growth Grids for all six Cs (the Five Cs, plus Contribution), a selection of Cs, or even a single subcomponent of one C. This flexibility is attractive to many mentoring organizations, which already have detailed curricula or programs in place.

The Growth Grids were designed as both measurement tools and mentoring tools. Thus, the third unique feature of the Growth Grids is their links to a collection of activities and videos designed to foster development in the Five Cs of PYD, as well as Contribution. Mentoring organizations that incorporate the Growth Grids into their program therefore have access to a suite of tools that, together, can both assess and promote PYD among their mentees.

There are two major limitations to the utility of the Growth Grids for some mentoring contexts. First, as with any measurement tool, accurate and reliable scoring on the Growth Grids requires training. In an initial study of the Growth Grids, members of the IARYD research team trained mentors or mentor coordinators in Growth Grid scoring, instructing them to relay this scoring training to their colleagues or, in some cases, their mentees. This indirect training, while economically feasible, can introduce variance into Growth Grid scores. Ensuring consistent training on Growth Grid scoring is a next step for the Growth Grid project.

A second major limitation to the Growth Grids lies in the balance between program fidelity (i.e., consistent use of the Growth Grids) and program flexibility (i.e., varied use of the Growth Grids to suit individual program or mentor/mentee needs). To best use Growth Grids as a metric for the development of PYD requires consistent scoring procedures for each youth within each mentoring program. However, day-to-day mentoring can vary widely for individual mentees across time, for different mentees within the same program, and across different programs.

Therefore, although the Growth Grids will remain free to use for mentoring organizations, future assessments of the project may rely on closer collaborations between researchers and practitioners to develop optimal program-specific training and scoring procedures.

What Do These Measures Tell Us?

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical and psychological change. When parents, educators, and youth development practitioners are observing these changes, they may wonder about the life path that a young person will take. We all have experience that tells us that some people who start from the same set of circumstances—siblings growing up in the same house, for example—might nevertheless end up taking very different life paths. On the other hand, individuals from very different backgrounds often find themselves on a similar path in adulthood, ending up in the same career, for instance.

For developmental scientists, the goal of research is to be able to *predict* such outcomes and, ultimately, to intervene in such a way as to *optimize* the life chances for all young people to be positive, productive members of their communities, no matter what their "starting point" in life (Maholmes & Lomonaco, 2010). First, however, we must *describe* what these pathways are. Using data from the 4-H Study, we examined pathways of positive and problematic outcomes across adolescence. Although we did not analyze these data for specific individuals who participated in the study, we were able to look at some trends at the group level. In the following section, we describe the course of PYD scores across the adolescent years and the nature of the relationship between PYD and other developmental outcomes, including risk behaviors, during this time period.

PYD Is Stable Across Adolescence

Data from the 4-H Study show that scores on PYD are, on average, high and stable across the adolescent period. That is, data from the 7,000 participants in our study show that youth are generally doing well on the Five Cs of PYD. Furthermore, scores on PYD (and each of the Five Cs) tend to be consistent across adolescence. For example, Geldhof and colleagues (2014) found that average scores on the PYD measure in early and middle adolescence (Grades 6–8) are strong predictors of average PYD scores in later adolescence (Grades 9–12). This finding was also true for each of the Five Cs of PYD. On average, youth who are doing well in middle school will most likely be doing well into their high school years. Of course, practitioners, parents, and policy makers should be aware that what is true for a group of adolescents may not hold for an individual; each young person's pathway can be shaped by the influences of adults, peers, and other individuals and institutions in

the person's life, as well as through the person's own agency to select goals and plan for the future.

To explore individual youth's developmental pathways, or *trajectories*, of PYD in Grade 5 through Grade 12, we used information from youth who participated in two or more years of the 4-H Study. Trajectory analysis uses longitudinal data (i.e., data collected over several time points) to estimate patterns of change (pathways) in an outcome of interest, such as PYD scores. In the final report of the 4-H Study of PYD (Lerner & Lerner, 2012), which was developed in collaboration with the National 4-H Council, we found four pathways that indicate relative stability in PYD across adolescence (described below). Then, we examined the general characteristics of different groups, such as the number of males versus females in each trajectory. It appears that fifth graders (approximately age 10 years, the beginning of adolescence) tended to maintain a relatively stable level of PYD through Grade 12.

The finding of such marked consistency suggests that the individual and contextual factors that place youth on a particular pathway may exert a continuous influence across adolescence. These factors might include adolescents' self-regulation skills, such as their ability to set and manage goals, as well as external factors such as the people and institutions with which young people are engaged. We believe interventions that seek to move youth from a lower level of PYD to a higher level will need to take into account the power and persistence of such individual and ecological factors. These interventions may need to take a holistic approach to promoting PYD. On the other hand, the stability of PYD across adolescence might indicate that youth who are high in PYD in early adolescence are resilient across the middle and high school years.

Trajectories of Positive and Problem Behaviors

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the youth development field has traditionally been dominated by a "deficit" approach, which means programs for youth were traditionally aimed at preventing problem behaviors. Initial ideas within the PYD perspective suggested that if parents, practitioners, and policy makers focused on the promotion of PYD, then the negative outcomes typically associated with adolescence, such as drug and alcohol use, unsafe sex, and delinquency, would also diminish (e.g., Benson, Mannes, Pittman, & Ferber, 2004; Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001).

Indeed, findings from the 4-H Study of PYD show that when we compare *average* scores on PYD with indicators of problematic development, this "inverse relationship" hypothesis appears to hold. Geldhof and colleagues (2014), for example, found a significant negative correlation between PYD and risk behaviors (including drug use and delinquent behaviors) and between PYD and depressive symptoms, across Grades 5 through 12. The researchers also found a significant positive correlation between PYD and Contribution across Grades 5 through 12.

When we examine different *individuals'* trajectories of PYD and problem behaviors across adolescence, a more complex pattern of positive and negative outcomes

emerges. For instance, Lewin-Bizan, Lynch, Fay, Schmid, McPherran, Lerner, and Lerner (2010) examined data from the 4-H Study and found that youth who were high on PYD were most likely to be low on problematic outcomes across early through middle adolescence; however, about 45 % of youth in the high PYD trajectory nevertheless showed increasing scores on risk behaviors, and about a third of youth in the high PYD trajectory showed increasing scores on depressive symptoms. The authors concluded that although the inverse relationship hypothesis held "more or less" for youth in the 4-H Study of PYD, "the [hypothesis] holds more for some youth, less for others, and even not at all for some youth" (p. 759). Schwartz et al. (2010) also used data from the 4-H Study to examine the relationship between PYD with specific risk behaviors, including tobacco use, alcohol use, marijuana use, hard drug use and sex initiation. The authors found that PYD was negatively related to hard drug use and positively associated with the probability of using condoms, but also found that young men with higher PYD were more likely to start using alcohol *earlier*. Practitioners should be aware, therefore, that while efforts to promote PYD—such as long-term, positive mentor relationships and opportunities for skill building and leadership—may buffer against negative outcomes, youth programming should also incorporate strategies for avoiding risk behaviors of concern to them.

In sum, the findings from these various studies, using data from the 4-H Study, provide strong evidence that the Five Cs of PYD measures are good indicators of positive development across adolescence. For the most part, we should be confident that young people who score highly on PYD are following positive pathways to adulthood. Moreover, these pathways tend to be consistent; youth who are doing well in middle school will most likely be doing well into their high school years. Of course, practitioners, parents, and policy makers should be aware that what is true for a group of adolescents may not hold for an individual; each young person's pathway can still be shaped by the influences of adults, peers, and other individuals and institutions in the person's life, as well as through the person's own agency to select goals and plan for the future. Nevertheless, PYD is a useful measure for practitioners to understand the effects of their programs on the developmental trajectories of the young people whom they serve.

Conclusions from Research on the Five Cs Model

The cumulative results from the eight waves of the 4-H Study of PYD suggest that the Five Cs Model of PYD is a useful and practical tool for measuring and understanding youth thriving. Using the Five Cs measurement model has practical implications for practitioners, and these benefits include:

- The Five Cs Model provides a useful framework for targeting content or curricula in youth development programs.

- The Five Cs measures can be used as evaluation tools for youth development programs.
- The Five Cs measures provide an opportunity to assess specific developmental areas (e.g., social skills/competence) as well as more general thriving (e.g., PYD).
- The various forms of the PYD measure provide an opportunity to use the tools that are most appropriate for specific youth programs with regard to age, length of survey, and content area.
- Because there is not a perfect inverse relation between PYD and risk/problem behaviors, practitioners should both act to promote PYD and prevent negative development.
- Due to the imperfect inverse relation between positive and problematic attributes of youth, every young person must be evaluated as an individual with his or her own pathway through adolescence.

Specific Recommendations for Youth Practitioners and Policy Makers

Based on the evidence base, we can make several recommendations to practitioners. However, we also include several considerations that programs and youth development leaders should also take into account for designing, implementing, and managing their PYD programs as well as when working with individual youth.

Our first recommendation is that for programs aimed at promoting PYD, evaluations should include a multidimensional and comprehensive measure of youth thriving such as the Five Cs measure of PYD. However, for programs with a focus on more specific youth outcomes, such as self-esteem or character, a subset of the Five Cs may be more appropriate. Taking the time and resources to make these decisions will benefit youth programs in the long run. Given that a theory of change and logic model for the program are in place, leaders should work to ensure that there is intentionality in the particular activities they engage in with young people and that young people are also able to identify the purpose and reason for particular activities. We recommend that programs develop activities that are sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE, Durlak & Weissberg, 2007) to promote each of the Five Cs of PYD.

Whereas we have provided several ideas for building particular Cs in young people in earlier work (see Lerner, Brittian, & Fay, 2007), *our second recommendation* is that programs consider youth-adult partnerships (Liang, Spencer, West, & Rappaport, 2013; Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O'Connor, 2005) as a potential program framework for ensuring that each of the Five Cs and Contribution are promoted. In youth-adult partnerships, young people and youth leaders work collaboratively, learning from each other and jointly contributing to the decision-making processes that affect the program itself and their community in positive ways. The principles and strategies entailed in youth-adult partnerships promote

young people's (1) Competence, as they build skills to reach goals they set and lead projects; (2) Confidence, as adults share authority and power; (3) Connection, as young people develop bonds to adults, fellow young people, and the community; (4) Character, as youth become more socially aware, shape norms, and make decisions with consequences; and (5) Caring, as youth have disagreements with partners and see issues and ideas from others' perspectives. Finally, the ultimate aim of youth-adult partnerships is to contribute to positive change at the individual, community, and policy levels (Liang et al., 2013).

Regardless of the positive outcomes of interest, our findings also indicate that programs should not assume that promoting PYD will automatically lead to a decrease in problem behaviors. In fact, programs should take care that their activities do not have a negative effect on young people (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999). Accordingly, *our third recommendation* is that programs should be designed to influence both positive and negative outcomes in the people with whom they work, and, as such, evaluations must measure both types of outcomes in youth. In regard to working with individual youth, youth leaders should help young people learn skills and set goals toward positive ends as well as learn skills and set goals to avoid negative consequences. For example, in programs aimed at reducing teen pregnancy rates, leaders can work with young people to set positive vocational or academic goals that would be adversely affected by a pregnancy in addition to setting reproductive health goals.

In the same way, practitioners must also recognize that bad behaviors are not the end of the world. Misbehaviors are often a part of normal development in adolescence (Baumrind, 1987; Dworkin, 2005; Maggs, Almeida, & Galambos, 1995). Youth leaders should work to distinguish more normative or experimental risk-taking behaviors that may lead to positive developmental opportunities for young people (Baumrind, 1987). However, more research and practical efforts need to take into account the individual and contextual factors that might lead to youth engaging in both positive and problematic pursuits.

For example, if a young person did engage in problematic or risky behaviors as a means to build relationships and improve his or her standing with peers, programs can focus on structuring positive social activities with the goal of promoting PYD (Dworkin, 2005). Developing a close relationship with a young person may help youth leaders and practitioners to determine the reasons behind youth misbehaviors (Bowers et al., 2012).

Our fourth recommendation is that programs and youth development leaders should take into account the unique strengths that each young person exhibits. It is not necessary to force or pressure youth into specific tracks or activities. Our findings indicate that, whereas the Five Cs frame applies to all adolescents, the specific levels of each C may differ across adolescents. These findings also suggest that all young people do not have to be the star athlete nor do all children need to be popular to report having high PYD. Youth can develop competence and PYD within their

own areas of interest. Youth leaders can help young people to identify their "spark" (Ben-Eliyahu, Rhodes, & Scales, 2014; Benson, 2008).

In a similar way, youth leaders could work with youth to identify what internal strengths the youth can build on as well as what contextual resources may be available to help them build on these interests. While this task could be accomplished through a simple list, we recommend several more creative and engaging options such as provided in GPS to Success activities (Bowers et al., 2013; Napolitano et al., 2014) or several suggestions provided by the Girl Scout Research Institute (2009), such as creating a map of resources, recruiting ideas for resources through social media, or connecting youth to resources through field trips or guest visitors. These opportunities may strengthen interests in areas already meaningful to some youth (Damon, 2008), but they may also ignite new interests in other young people. Therefore, these activities also expose youth to a greater diversity of people, cultures, and experiences.

Our work also provides *several recommendations for policy*. First, the personal interactions that are the bases of the mutual trust between young people and adults provide a model for the types of interactions essential for effective community partnerships (Hartley, 2004). Therefore, stakeholders in youth development (young people, parents, researchers, teachers, youth development leaders, policy makers) must work to build a support system to change youth policies and to facilitate a PYD agenda (Pittman, Yolahem, & Irby, 2003). Few political candidates' agendas address youth issues, and if they do, they revolve around reducing problem behaviors in youth. However, youth stakeholders' work can also extend to influencing how the public views and reasons about youth and youth issues through mass communication (Gilliam & Bales, 2003). For example, stakeholders could develop and maintain ties to members of the media to help reframe the public's view of young people and the definition of well-being and success in adolescence.

Currently, many federal funding priorities are aimed at science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) success. While STEM is essential to success in many areas, the definition of success from a PYD perspective must be broader. Making connections among influential stakeholders and applying pressure to raise awareness of youth issues from a PYD perspective is the primary recommendation for policy priorities.

With broader support for PYD policies in place, funding sources must also be allocated in an appropriate manner. Funding to promote PYD is present. However, the devil is in the details. That is, we recommend that these funding sources must acknowledge the time and effort needed to develop the complex partnerships essential for promoting PYD. These partnerships require the commitment and integration of each of the above constituencies over several years to design and implement a PYD program that is evidence-based, rigorous, and sustainable. Therefore, funding is needed not only for the provision of opportunities but also for capacity building, monitoring, and technology support.

The funding for PYD programs and research must also be stable and coordinated, as opposed to being transient and disjointed efforts from different funding sources. For example, the PYD perspective is consistent with a “whole-child” approach to development. Therefore, policies should support the integration of schools with out-of-school-time activities as complementary opportunities to promote PYD in a comprehensive manner (Weiss, Little, Bouffard, Deschenes, & Malone, 2009). In order to accomplish this integration successfully, funding should prioritize integrated and comprehensive approaches among several contexts of youth development.

We also recommend that young people be included in as many facets of youth-serving programs and organizations as possible. Having young people included in the decision-making processes of organizations is consistent with the principles of youth-adult partnerships. It also allows young people’s voices to be included in how researchers, practitioners, and policy makers measure PYD, as well as to how staff may be trained in the best practices to promote PYD.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The past two decades have seen a great increase in the number of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers using strength-based language or approaches to youth development, including the Five Cs model of PYD. To most fully capitalize on youth strengths, the next decade must turn toward enhancing the evidence base for these comprehensive models of youth development and, ultimately, toward increasing the number of research-informed policies and programs. Much of the work on the Five Cs of PYD did not take into account other ecological, individual, and demographic characteristics of youth that could have shed light into the differences among young people in regard to the Cs. Such work in this area will greatly benefit researchers, practitioners, and policy makers. In addition, it will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the efforts that need to be undertaken to align individuals and contexts to maximize the possibility of PYD among diverse youth.

These efforts must be guided at the legislative and policy levels by interdisciplinary partnerships involving communication among developmental scientists, practitioners, and politicians in order to spark innovative approaches grounded in research and accountable to best practices and scientific rigor. An example of this type of collaboration is the White House Social and Behavioral Sciences Team. In turn, these efforts must be matched by streamlined and coordinated funding streams that reward this integrated approach to youth development. Finally, as the heart of this work is the positive development of young people, this research must be translated into improving the regular daily contexts of youth and the common practices of youth-serving systems.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdóttir, S., et al. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 25*(1), 17–71.

This article provides a foundational overview of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development and an analysis of data from the initial wave of this study. The empirical analyses support the existence of the Five Cs of positive youth development and their relation to youth contributions. This study therefore provides an empirical basis to support future investigations to assess and refine the Five Cs of PYD as a useful theoretical model of adolescent development.

Lerner, J. V., Bowers, E. P., Minor, K., Lewin-Bizan, S., Boyd, M. J., Mueller, M. K., et al. (2013). Positive youth development: Processes, philosophies, and programs. In R. M. Lerner, M. A., Easterbrooks, & J. Mistry (Eds.), *Developmental psychology* (Handbook of psychology 2nd ed., Vol. 6, pp. 365–392). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Editor-in-chief: I. B. Weiner.

This chapter describes prominent theories of PYD and key features of the PYD perspective. The authors review key scholars, explore notable research contributions, and explain the importance of context and unique experience on positive youth development within a theoretical framework that places adolescent development within a system of mutually influential relations between individuals and their contexts (this approach to theory is therefore termed "relational developmental systems").

Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Bowers, E., & Geldhof, G. J. (2015). Positive youth development: A relational developmental systems model. In W. F. Overton & P. C. Molenaar (Eds.), *Theory and method* (Handbook of child psychology and developmental science, 7th ed., Vol. 1). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. Editor-in-chief: R. M. Lerner.

This chapter builds on J. Lerner and colleagues' (2013) chapter in the Handbook of Psychology, paying particular attention to the ways the positive youth development perspective aligns with theories involving the relational developmental system. The authors encourage the refinement and expansion of PYD as a developmental process, as well as utilizing both PYD and prevention science approaches in research and application of developmental science in order to maximize positive development across the life span.

Lerner, R. M., Napolitano, C. M., Boyd, M. J., Mueller, M. K., & Callina, K. S. (2014). Mentoring and positive youth development. In D. L. Dubois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.) *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd ed., pp. 17–28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

This chapter presents theoretical and empirical foundations of PYD and examines how mentoring programs may actively foster PYD through a positive and sustainable relationship with a mentor, life-skill-building activities, and opportunities for youth to engage with their communities. The chapter provides an example checklist for mentoring practitioners to enhance mentees' development of Five Cs of PYD and encourages the use of a PYD perspective in mentoring programs in order to promote the healthy development of adolescents.

Benson, P. L., Mannes, M., Pittman, K., & Ferber, T. (2004). Youth development, developmental assets, and public policy. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 781–814). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Benson and colleagues compare strength-based and deficit approaches to youth development and discuss the theoretical and empirical foundation of the Search Institute's developmental asset framework. The authors identify and consider the implications of social and cultural dynamics on youth development policy. They highlight the potential for developmental science to inform and shape public policy affecting youth.

Appendix: Adapted PYD-SF and PYD-VSF Scales for Practitioners

Competence

The following pairs of sentences are talking about <u>two kinds of kids</u>. We'd like you to decide whether you are more like the kids on the left side, or you are more like the kids on the right side. Then we would like you to decide whether that is only <u>sort of true</u> for you or <u>really true</u> for you and mark your answer.

FILL IN ONLY ONE CIRCLE FOR EACH PAIR OF SENTENCES.								Scoring (coder use only)	
	Really True for me [4]	Sort of True for me [3]				Sort of True for me [2]	Really True for me [1]	Competence	PYD
1.	o	o	Some teenagers feel that they are just as smart as others their age.	BUT	Other teenagers aren't so sure and wonder if they are as smart.	o	o		
2.	o	o	Some teenagers have a lot of friends.	BUT	Other teenagers don't have very many friends.	o	o		X
3.	o	o	Some teenagers think they could do well at just about any new athletic activity.	BUT	Other teenagers are afraid they might not do well at a new athletic activity.	o	o		X
4.	o	o	Some teenagers do very well at their class work.	BUT	Other teenagers don't do very well at their class work.	o	o		
5.	o	o	Some teenagers feel that they are better than others their age at sports.	BUT	Other teenagers don't feel they can play as well.	o	o		X
6.	o	o	Some teenagers are popular with others their age.	BUT	Other teenagers are not very popular.	o	o		X

Competence Sum:____________

PYD Page Sum:____________

Confidence

FILL IN ONLY ONE CIRCLE FOR EACH PAIR OF SENTENCES.								Scoring (coder use only)	
	Really True for me [4]	Sort of True for me [3]				Sort of True for me [2]	Really True for me [1]	Confidence	PYD
1.	o	o	Some teenagers are happy with themselves most of the time.	BUT	Other teenagers are often not happy with themselves.	o	o		
2.	o	o	Some teenagers think that they are good looking.	BUT	Other teenagers think that they are not very good looking.	o	o		X
3.	o	o	Some teenagers really like their looks.	BUT	Other teenagers wish they looked different.	o	o		X
4.	o	o	Some teenagers are very happy being the way they are.	BUT	Other teenagers wish they were different.	o	o		

How much do you agree or disagree with the following?	Strongly agree [4]	Agree [3]	Disagree [2]	Strongly disagree [1]	Confidence	PYD
5. All in all, I am glad I am me.	o	o	o	o		
6. When I am an adult, I'm sure I will have a good life.	o	o	o	o		

Confidence Sum:________________

PYD Page Sum:________________

Character

FILL IN ONLY ONE CIRCLE FOR EACH PAIR OF SENTENCES.								Scoring (coder use only)	
	Really True for me [4]	Sort of True for me [3]				Sort of True for me [2]	Really True for me [1]	Character	PYD
1.	o	o	Some teenagers hardly ever do things they know they shouldn't do.	BUT	Other teenagers do things they know they shouldn't do.	o	o		
2.	o	o	Some teenagers usually act the way they know they are supposed to.	BUT	Other teenagers often don't act the way they are supposed to.	o	o		

How important is each of the following to you in your life?	Not important [1]	Somewhat important [2]	Quite important [3]	Extremely Important [4]	Character	PYD
3. Helping to make the world a better place to live in.	o	o	o	o		
4. Giving time and money to make life better for other people.	o	o	o	o		
5. Doing what I believe is right even if my friends make fun of me.	o	o	o	o		
6. Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake or get in trouble.	o	o	o	o		

Think about the people who know you well. How do you think they would rate you on each of these?	Not at all like me [1]	A little like me [2]	Quite like me [3]	Very much like me [4]	Character	PYD
7. Knowing a lot about people of other races.	o	o	o	o		X
8. Enjoying being with people who are of a different race than I am.	o	o	o	o		X

Character Sum:________________

PYD Page Sum:________________

Caring

					Scoring (coder use only)	
How well do each of these statements describe you?	**Not well [1]**	**[2]**	**[4]**	**Very well [5]**	**Caring**	**PYD**
1. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I want to help them.	o	o	o	o		
2. It bothers me when bad things happen to any person.	o	o	o	o		
3. I feel sorry for other people who don't have what I have.	o	o	o	o		
4. When I see someone being picked on, I feel sorry for them.	o	o	o	o		
5. It makes me sad to see a person who doesn't have friends.	o	o	o	o		
6. When I see another person who is hurt or upset, I feel sorry for them.	o	o	o	o		

Caring Sum:__________________

PYD Page Sum:________________

Connection

					Scoring (coder use only)	
How much do you agree or disagree with the following?	**Strongly agree [5]**	**Agree [4]**	**Disagree [2]**	**Strongly disagree [1]**	**Connection**	**PYD**
1. I get a lot of encouragement at my school.	o	o	o	o		
2. Teachers at school push me to be the best I can be.	o	o	o	o		
3. I have lots of good conversations with my parents.	o	o	o	o		
4. In my family I feel useful and important.	o	o	o	o		
5. Adults in my town or city make me feel important.	o	o	o	o		
6. Adults in my town or city listen to what I have to say.	o	o	o	o		

How true is each of these statements for you?	**Always true [5]**	**Usually true [4]**	**Sometimes true [2]**	**Almost never true or never true [1]**	**Connection**	**PYD**
7. I feel my friends are good friends.	o	o	o	o		
8. My friends care about me.	o	o	o	o		

Connection Sum:________________

PYD Page Sum:________________

PYD Total Sum:________________

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Chapter 10
Identity Development in Adolescence: Implications for Youth Policy and Practice

Kuan Xing, Emilia Chico, Danny L. Lambouths III, Aerika S. Brittian, and Seth J. Schwartz

Upon entering adolescence, people generally experience several changes involving physical growth and development, advances in cognitive abilities, and increased expectations regarding contributions to society. In light of these developmental experiences, youth begin to explore and understand their place in the social world. At the same time, young people are not only passive recipients of the social environment—they also interact actively with it (choose activities, associate with friends and social groups). Therefore, they engage not only in a process of self-exploration and discovery but also in a process of creation. This dynamic process is commonly referred to as *identity development*. Because developing a positive sense of identity is important for adolescent development, it is similarly important to consider in regard to positive youth development. In this chapter, we summarize research, offer recommendations, and provide practical resources for youth development practitioners, educators, and policy makers who seek to use research on identity development to help young people to thrive.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, we describe several identity theories. In the next section, we review what we have learned from research regarding ways that youth outcomes are related to adolescent identity development. Next, we discuss implications of identity research for youth practice and policy, highlighting one federal youth initiative and one youth program that may facilitate adolescents' positive identity development. Finally, we provide recommendations for youth practitioners.

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_10

The Importance of Adolescent Identity Development

Adolescence is a developmental period that bridges childhood and early adulthood. During this age period, young people experience intense biological changes, advancements in their cognitive and perspective-taking capabilities, and shifts in their interpersonal relationships. Physical changes such as the onset of puberty and rapid changes in body composition (height, weight, secondary sex characteristics), which are typically observed among early adolescents, can prompt adolescents to engage in greater degrees of self-exploration (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003). Advances in cognitive abilities, such as perspective taking, allow adolescents to engage in more symbolic thinking and to understand abstract ideas, such as identifying oneself with a set of goals and ideals and contemplating how one's ideas align with societal norms and values (Kuhn, 2009; Steinberg, 2005). Importantly, society demands a greater level of psychosocial maturity and expects greater adherence to social norms from adolescents compared with children (Eccles, Brown, & Templeton, 2008). The range of social groups to which adolescents can potentially belong to encourages them to find their place in the society (family, school, community, neighborhood, country).

Erik Erikson, a developmental scientist, described identity development as a young person's quest to understand "who am I?" and "who am I in this particular social setting?" (Erikson, 1959). Consider the following examples:

> Dante is a 13-year-old African American boy from the South Side of Chicago. He is deeply religious and generally enjoys school, playing soccer with friends, and art classes.
>
> Isabella is a 16-year-old Latina living in Houston. She is the oldest child in her family, is involved in track and field at her local high school, and considers herself an average student.
>
> Michael is a 15-year-old Caucasian boy from Seattle. He is actively involved in school- and community-based Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning activism, and enjoys online gaming.

Given these examples provided, it is not difficult to imagine that finding one's "place" within a diverse society could be a complex task for American youth because differences in social class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or cultural values are common in U.S. society and may complicate a young person's search for an adaptive, overarching sense of identity. In fact, American youth define themselves in regard to any number of social attributes and characteristics, including race/ethnicity (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Umaña-Taylor, 2011), gender (Egan & Perry, 2001), and sexual orientation (Johnston & Bell, 1995). Importantly, identifying with each of these different social categories may hold varying implications for youth's attitudes and behaviors. Essentially, each person is charged with finding a set of self-definitions (values, beliefs, awareness) that fit with who she or he is and within the various social contexts in which he or she lives.

In some instances, aspects of adolescents' identities may be adaptive or valued in one social setting but devalued in other social settings. For example, being a member of an ethnic group may be valued around other members of the same group, but

perhaps less so around people who are from other ethnic backgrounds. It is similarly possible that some aspects of adolescent's identities may be in conflict with one another, such as religious and sexual orientations (Schachter, 2002). In addition, at different times in a young person's life, aspects of his or her identity may take on different social meanings (Côté, 2009). For example, being "cool and uncommitted" may be viewed as desirable at age 16, but less so at age 25. However, identity exploration is equally important for young people during the transition between adolescence and adulthood, especially among youth attending college or university (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). Because establishing a positive sense of identity is a critical developmental process for all youth, it is important for individuals who work with young people to be aware of the various issues that may impact identity development, as well as the challenges that diverse groups of adolescents may encounter during the process of forming a positive sense of identity.

Theories of Adolescent Identity Development

Developing an understanding around "who I am" may seem to be a simple task, but it is complex in many ways (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). For this reason, researchers have approached studying identity from different perspectives. Among these approaches, *ego psychology* and *self-psychology* are two common perspectives used to understand identity formation (Côté, 2009). The ego psychology approach stems from Erikson's psychosocial perspective on human development (Erikson, 1959), whereas the self-psychology approach originates from social psychology (James, 1948/1892; Mead, 1934). Both of these approaches are important to consider because they highlight different information about how identity develops among adolescents and what it means for their positive development.

The Ego Psychology Approach

Erik Erikson (1959) pioneered research on "identity of the ego." Within this perspective, identity was understood as a "sameness and continuity of a person's psychological functioning, interpersonal behavior, and commitments to roles, values, and beliefs" (Erikson, 1959, as referenced in Côté (2009, p. 267). In other words, a young person who has developed a strong sense of identity may describe the "core" of him- or herself as being the same over time and across social settings (Côté, 2009).

Following Erikson's perspective, Marcia (1966) developed the identity status model to empirically examine identity development among adolescents and young adults. He proposed two core processes underlying identity formation—exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966). Dividing each of these processes into presence (a young person has explored or committed) versus absence (a young person has not explored or committed) and crossing those dimensions creates four identity statuses.

These statuses are called *diffusion*, *foreclosure*, *moratorium*, and *achievement* (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Each status is taken to represent a different way of approaching identity issues. Diffusion refers to a lack of interest in identity issues or to an inability or unwillingness to sustain exploration long enough to establish lasting commitments. In this case, an adolescent has made no commitments to a particular set of values and shows no interest in doing so. Foreclosure refers to commitments enacted with little to no prior exploration. In this case, a young person identifies strongly with a set of beliefs or values, but these ideas are often received from authority figures (parents, teachers, community) without the young person questioning them. Moratorium refers to an active search for an identity coupled with low levels of commitment. In this case, a young person may try on several "hats" or identities but chooses not to select any particular set of beliefs at that time. Achievement refers to enacting commitments following a period of exploration. In this case, an adolescent has thought about or actively pursued his or her beliefs and values and commits to a specific societal role or roles. However, this is not to say that adolescents will not go back and forth between commitment and exploration. In fact, new life experiences and significant events may cause a young person to engage in new explorations and redefine his or her identity. From this perspective, when an adolescent develops an achieved identity, he or she should be able to successfully navigate the demands from different social contexts and maintain his or her core set of beliefs. This view suggests that an adolescent's established sense of identity holds significant implications for her or his ability to successfully interact with and adapt to various social settings, including family, school, and community.

The identity statuses are differentially related to patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. For example, the statuses are related to greater understanding of one's meaning in life, better psychological well-being, and fewer health-compromising behaviors (Schwartz et al., 2011). In addition, adolescents with identities described as diffuse often experience feelings of emptiness and meaningless (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). In contrast, adolescents with an achieved sense of identity generally demonstrate themselves as stable and report experiencing greater levels of focus and purpose in their life compared with adolescents in the other statuses (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Ideally, a consolidated (fully developed) sense of identity in early adulthood is assumed to represent a synthesis and transcendence of one's childhood identifications, mutual relationships between the youth and social institutions, and a sense of sameness over place and time (Kroger & Marcia, 2011).

Researchers have found that some individuals (~50%) remain relatively stable in regard to identity status over time, with individuals characterized as achieved and foreclosed expressing the highest levels of stability (Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010). However, some people regress in their status, specifically people who are achieved become diffuse, achieved becomes foreclosed, achieved moves to moratorium, moratorium becomes diffuse, moratorium becomes foreclosed, and foreclosed moves to diffuse. To date, few longitudinal studies on identity status and change exist (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, 2011). Therefore, more

research is needed to examine the developmental progression of identity status among individuals from adolescence to adulthood. It is also important to note that this perspective has been generally supported by research on Western populations (often from the United States and Europe). Further research involving adolescents in other national contexts (such as African and Asian youth) is still needed.

The Self-Psychology Approach

Another approach to studying identity development, the self-psychology approach, has described the self in regard to consciousness, reflective awareness, and stimulated self-regulation (Baumeister, 1998; Côté, 2009). These scholars recommend that identity is a "self-organizing, interactive system of thoughts, feelings, and motives that characterizes an individual" (as described in Côté, 2009, p. 267). From this perspective, Baumeister (1998) identified three subcategories in his research: *reflexive consciousness*, the *interpersonal self*, and the *executive functions of the self*. Reflexive consciousness involves self-reflection or reflexive cognition activities, including self-knowledge (Baumeister, 1998), self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1986), and possible selves (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). The interpersonal self involves how other people's perceptions of one's self influence one's self-concept (Baumeister, 1998). Executive functions of the self reflect the management of an individual's cognitive processes. For example, self-regulation refers to an individual's capacity to oversee his or her behaviors (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

Although researchers using the self-psychology approach are less likely to discuss statuses (compared with the ego psychology approach) of development (Côté, 2009), some researchers have investigated developmental differences among adolescents using this perspective. Differentiated self-concepts generally increase during adolescence, meaning adolescents tend to feel more competent and confident in their various abilities over time (Shapka & Keating, 2005). For example, adolescents' self-concepts about friendships, romantic relationships, job competence, and overall competence increased over time, but their self-concepts about athletics, physical appearance, and overall self-worth did not (Shapka & Keating, 2005). Academic, social, and athletic self-concepts declined from Grade 8 to 9, but then increased from Grade 9 to 10 (Bowers et al., 2010).

These patterns of self-concept development among early adolescents may be due to the contradictory nature of self-concepts (e. g., being a good friend, but not as good at being a romantic partner; being a good student in Math but not being a good student in History), and these contradictions are more likely to appear in early adolescence compared with later adolescence (Harter, 1986). Late adolescents in general may feel more comfortable with themselves and their place in society compared with early adolescents. In sum, adolescents do experience several changes among many aspects of their identities, but they generally move toward a mature, adaptive, and integrated sense of self.

An Integrative View of Identity and Self

Some scholars suggest that the contemporary approach to studying identity development is fragmented and lacks a theoretical foundation to tie together the various aspects of this multifaceted and dynamic developmental process (McLean & Syed, 2014; Schwartz, Luyckx, & Crocetti, 2014). In other words, different streams of identity research have been pursued separately and with little overlap, creating an impression that different aspects of an individual's identity are unrelated. Côté (2009) proposed that the study of identity within the social sciences would benefit from a return to overarching theories of identity development or at least with an eye toward integrating theories of identity development (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Weisskirch, 2008). Whether from an ego psychology or a self-psychology perspective, each line of identity research has its own strengths and limitations. Vignoles et al. (2011) highlighted the need for identity researchers to pool their strengths and unique contributions to bridge the gaps between different identity literatures. This particular limitation may be addressed by what today is at the cutting edge of developmental theory: *relational developmental systems theories*.

Relational developmental systems (RDS) theories (Overton, 2015) provide an interactive, dynamic framework for understanding youth development in context. From this perspective, all levels of organization, from the biological through the individual, behavioral, and sociocultural, are seen as interrelated, and as such, the individual is both a producer (making choices) and a product (a receiver) in his or her development. This multiple-systems approach to development is not only at the cutting edge of current theory in developmental science (Overton, 2015), but it also has been used to frame the view of identity development put forth by some scholars (Lerner, Freund, De Stefanis, & Habermas, 2001; Spencer, Swanson, & Harpalani, 2015). For example, Spencer and colleagues use developmental systems theory to discuss the complex relationships that exist between diverse adolescents and their social settings as it relates to identity development and youth outcomes, more specifically among adolescents of color. In addition, Lerner's conceptualization of positive youth development (PYD), as comprised of Five Cs, is framed by a RDS approach (see Chap. 9, for more information about the Five Cs model). In the next section, we discuss links between PYD and identity development.

Positive Youth Development and Identity

Although research on adolescence still overwhelmingly focuses on problematic development (such as delinquency, risk-taking behaviors, pregnancy), studies on adolescents' positive development have increased substantially since the 1990s (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015). Since the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been growing interest in understanding the relationships that exist between the strengths of individuals and resources within communities in order to identify pathways for healthy development and to understand how to promote thriving

among adolescents. This line of thinking is commonly described as the PYD perspective (Lerner et al., 2015). In the following sections, we describe some aspects of well-being and health that are related to identity development.

Academic Achievement

Adolescents' identity development is linked with their school and educational experiences (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Possible selves related to academics ("I will pass this subject," or "I will go to college"; Oyserman & Markus, 1990), as well as a young person's affiliation with other important social selves ("My group of friends also enjoy school"), are strongly predictive of academic attainment and achievement (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006). Moreover, academic-focused identities are particularly important for low-income adolescents' performance in school (Oyserman, Johnson, & James, 2011). Ethnic identity, involving feeling positively about one's ethnic group (ethnic identity affirmation) and understanding the history of one's ethnic group, is also linked to higher academic achievement among ethnic minority youth (Nasir, McLaughlin, & Jones, 2009; Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006).

Mental Health

Several mental health challenges, such as depression and anxiety, become more common in adolescence (The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003). Identity development, specifically identity commitments, may lead to more stable and clear self-concepts, which are associated with lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms (Schwartz, Klimstra, Luyckx, Hale, & Meeus, 2012). Moreover, identity development is generally associated positively with mental health, and this positive relationship is often observed into adulthood (Steiger, Allemand, Robins, & Fend, 2014). Individuals reconsider aspects of the self when self-concepts are not clear or stable, and this reconsideration is often associated with increased depression and anxiety over time (Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999; Schwartz et al., 2012). Ethnic identity is associated with lower levels of withdrawn/depressive symptoms (Rogers-Sirin & Gupta, 2012) and with higher levels of daily happiness (Kiang, Yip, Gonzales, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006), particularly among ethnic minority adolescents (Latino and Asian American).

Substance Use

Similar to mental health issues, increased experimentation with illegal substances and substance use become more common in adolescence (Chassin, Hussong, & Beltran, 2009). Researchers have found that identity development is also associated

with substance use (Jones & Hartmann, 1988). Mainly, adolescents with diffused identities report higher frequencies of substance use, including cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol, compared with adolescents in the achieved and moratorium statuses (Bishop, Weisgram, Holleque, Lund, & Wheeler-Anderson, 2005; Jones & Hartmann, 1988). Adolescents with foreclosed identities report the lowest frequencies of substance use compared with the other three statuses (Jones & Hartmann, 1988). Adolescents with diffused identities are more likely to engage in alcohol misuse or abuse compared with adolescents in the other statuses (White, 2000). College students with consolidated identities are less likely to engage in binge drinking and risky driving (Schwartz et al., 2010), and adolescents' self-image is related to substance use (Mouttapa, Weiss, & Hermann, 2009). For example, a positive self-image (high self-esteem) is negatively related to drug experimentation and substance use (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005). Adolescents who identify with high-risk peer groups (a group vs. an individual identification) are more likely to report higher levels of substance use (Sussman, Unger, & Dent, 2004).

Delinquency

Increased engagement in delinquent behaviors is common during adolescence (Kann, Kinchen, Shanklin et al., 2014). The increase in delinquency observed among adolescents may be, in part, due to youth's changing identities (Oyserman & James, 2011). Balanced possible identities (having both positive and negative identities) are linked with less delinquency (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). In one longitudinal study, male and female adolescents who demonstrated high-risk behaviors also reported lower levels of commitment and higher levels of reconsideration of commitment (Crocetti, Klimstra, Hale, Koot, & Meeus, 2013). Another line of research indicated that a concept described as *possible identities* is associated with delinquent behaviors (Oyserman & James, 2011). This concept refers to "what individuals could be, would like to become, or are afraid of becoming" (Oyserman & Markus, 1990, p. 112). In this case, a young person may say that he or she wants to avoid joining a gang and focus on finishing his or her schooling.

Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

An integrative view of development is particularly useful for understanding adolescents' identity development. One such empirical example is the 4-H Study of PYD (see Chap. 1). The 4-H Study of PYD was a longitudinal investigation of young people and their parents, and it sought to examine the youth and environment relationships linking PYD, adolescent contributions to society, and participation in youth development programs. Based on this relational, PYD framework, Brittian

and Lerner (2013) examined the complex nature of adolescents' sense of fidelity (a product of an achieved identity, as described below).

Erikson (1959) proposed that failure to develop a stable sense of identity in adolescence would create difficulties in leading a productive life, such as the inability to form intimate relationships in young adulthood and to become generative in middle adulthood. *Fidelity*, according to Erikson (1965), becomes relevant in adolescence, as social expectations increase for youth. Also described as "the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems" (Erikson, 1964, p. 125), fidelity emerges as a virtue at the end of the identity development period in adolescence and indicates that a stable identity has been achieved. Fidelity is comprised of both an ideological commitment to one's beliefs and values and a behavioral demonstration of one's value to people and social institutions (giving back to society or volunteerism). When adolescents develop a sense of fidelity, they are more apt to become active citizens in society, and this commitment to beliefs and values should follow a person into his or her adult life (Côté, 2009; Markstrom & Marshall, 2007).

In the 4-H Study of PYD, adolescents followed three pathways of fidelity development: *high and increasing*, *moderate and increasing*, and *low and decreasing* (Brittian & Lerner, 2013). The *high and increasing* group reported high levels of fidelity, which remained consistently high through the tenth grade. The *moderate and increasing* group reported lower fidelity compared with the *high and increasing* group at the beginning of the study, but they also increased in commitment to their values through tenth grade. The *low and decreasing* group of adolescents reported lower levels of fidelity compared with the other two groups and decreased in their commitment through tenth grade. Adolescents' fidelity group membership (which of the above groups they fit into) was associated with important social relationships (mainly parents and adult mentors) and several youth outcomes. Youth in the highest fidelity development group reported having more positive relationships with their parents and more supportive adults in their lives, compared with youth in the other two fidelity groups. Furthermore, youth with higher fidelity reported more instances of community contribution (volunteering) and fewer risky and problem behaviors (substance use and delinquency).

Summary of Research Findings

In sum, prior literature shows that identity development is linked to youth outcomes, including academic success (achievement and attainment), mental health, substance use, delinquency, and contribution. Unfortunately, although researchers have demonstrated the relationships between identity development and adolescent outcomes, few prevention and intervention efforts incorporate identity development into their programming. Given the literature that we have reviewed, more youth development programs should include identity development work in their curricula, and youth

policies should consider youth's identity development as a central goal. In the next section, we provide specific recommendations for accomplishing these goals.

Implications of Identity Research for Youth Practice and Policy

In this section, we review how the multidimensional aspects of identity, specifically social identity categories (race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality), provide implications for youth practice and policy. The implementation of quality youth programming and effective youth policy must consider the inclusion of positive identity development as a central feature of youth development. Addressing youth outcomes (social, emotional, and behavioral) can be challenging, particularly when outcomes are connected to adolescents' identities. However, alignment of youth's identity development with a strengths-based approach provides a framework for practitioners and policy makers to focus on youth's assets.

Supportive adults/adult partners (mentors, tutors, coaches) and their commitment to positive youth development are a key feature of programs and initiatives that also facilitate youth's positive identity development (see Chaps. 1 and 6). For example, within the field of social justice youth development, research on the role of adult partnerships has demonstrated that positive identity development is strengthened when adults and youth work together to challenge, resist, and negotiate the misuse of power in their lives (Ginwright & James, 2002). For example, Ginwright, Noguera, and Cammarota (2006) observed that local campaigns led by youth, in partnership with adults, have been successful in advocating for educational reform, specifically for the inclusion of culturally relevant curricula in schools, as well as for resisting gentrification. Researchers have also demonstrated the innovative and productive synergy that is fostered when adults and youth work together to create a climate that is rooted in honesty, reflection, and ongoing learning (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000).

As we noted earlier in this chapter, American youth must define themselves and evaluate their beliefs and values while also navigating multiple social settings and social institutions. This emphasis on the self has influenced youth development programming (shifting from deficit reducing to strengthening assets) to highlight the lived experiences of diverse populations and encourages practitioners to rely on reflective practice as an effective tool. In this section, we highlight the *My Brother's Keeper Initiative* and the *Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health* as examples of how youth and adults can work together to strengthen adolescents' positive identity development by engaging youth in self-reflection, consciousness raising, and supporting opportunities for youth decision-making.

My Brother's Keeper Initiative

President Obama's administration has emphasized the importance of supportive adults in the lives of children and adolescents, specifically the importance of adult mentors for the positive development of African American and Latino young men. In 2014, the President signed a presidential memorandum to support the My Brother's Keeper Initiative, which works with local organizations, businesses, and foundations to connect young people to mentors. Relationships with supportive adults should strengthen young people's skills, enhance their self-image, and prepare them for a successful life. The initiative outlined a series of recommendations for local policy makers to use in order to inform local program models. These recommendations included:

- Launch a public-private campaign to actively recruit mentors for youth and improve the quality of mentoring programs.
- Make the status and progress of boys and young men of color and other populations more visible by improving data collection and transparency.
- Support locally driven efforts that are more comprehensive—addressing the educational, physical, social, and emotional needs of young people—and that span multiple life stages from cradle to college.

As stated by the White House (Office of the Press Secretary, 2014), specific recommendations that were intended to encourage organizations and individuals to engage in this nationwide mentoring model included eliminating school pushout (including harsh and punitive discipline in schools, such as suspension and expulsion), promoting alternative discipline strategies, increasing literacy rates, improving employment opportunities, and employing methods to address racial and ethnic bias. This federal initiative is aligned with positive identity development because it seeks to engage young men in programs and activities that encourage them to reexamine their self-definitions by exploring their lived experiences and the impact that various social contexts have on their identity development.

Related to this federal initiative, Becoming a Man (B.A.M) is a Chicago-based youth program that was developed to combat violence and reduce school dropout rates through the intentional practices of consciousness raising and self-reflection (Heller, Pollack, Ander, & Ludwig, 2013). This program was specifically developed to serve boys of color. B.A.M. connects young men to supportive adults and engages them in group and individual dialogue sessions aimed at promoting the organization's five values: integrity, accountability, self-determination, positive anger expression, and visionary goal setting. Adult male mentors work with African American and Latino boys to address the issues that form road blocks along the boys' pathways toward success. These issues are often connected to racial and ethnic bias (racial profiling or "stop and frisk" by law enforcement).

By focusing on gender identity development and the intersections of race and ethnicity, B.A.M. attempts to facilitate positive meaning-making experiences through which young men commit to an integrated positive identity, one that is

rooted in values and beliefs that enhance a positive self-image. Integration of a positive self-image across contexts (family, school, neighborhood) increases fidelity (as defined above, an ideological commitment to one's beliefs and the ability to apply one's values across settings) and increases the likelihood that African American and Latino boys both engage in less risky behavior and become active contributors in their communities. For example, through exploring the value of *integrity*, young men can begin to form a sense of self-efficacy and acknowledge their ability to be reliable and honest, thus enhancing their self-confidence. By learning to be *accountable*, they take ownership of their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, which can strengthen their social, academic, health, and vocational competence as well as their self-confidence. In addition, through reflective and consciousness-raising activities, youth may learn positive ways to tackle potentially harmful situations that exist across multiple settings and how to manage their emotions and negative consequences. By explicitly addressing *positive anger expression* and encouraging young men to understand the depths of their psychological well-being, they are in turn strengthening their self-image. The research evaluation of this specific program supports many of these assertions (Heller et al., 2013).

The My Brother's Keeper Initiative and the B.A.M. program provide concrete examples of how to implement positive identity development though a strengths-based approach that relies on reflective practices. By examining the negative forces that may exist in youth's lives that have prompted them to engage in problematic behaviors, young men can develop critical thinking about societal issues that are linked to gender, race, socioeconomic status, and sexuality (such as gun violence and educational disparities), issues that often leave them feeling powerless. In addition, through exploration of values we described above, young men of color learn to explore their possible selves in relation to the demands and expectations placed on them by various social institutions (such as school, family, community).

The Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health

The Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH) is a "network of empowered youth and allied adults who transform public consciousness and increase the capacity of healthcare, family, and school systems to support the sexual health, identities, and rights of youth" (http://www.icah.org/content/about-icah). In order to address the needs of pregnant and parenting youth, as well as advocating for policy reform and systemic transformation, ICAH takes a multipronged approach to prevention that situates youth voice at the center of their work. In addition, ICAH has adopted a youth-led model and supports their Youth Leadership Council (a decision-making body of youth) to partner with local advocacy groups, schools, and collaborators to improve programs, policies, and procedures that directly impact youth's lives. By participating in decision-making and leadership opportunities, youth are able to strengthen their perceptions of self, build relationships with peers and adults, and develop new skills and knowledge. To support their mission and achieve their goals,

ICAH has outlined the following strategies: *youth leadership development*, *grass-roots organizing*, *youth and adult training*, *policy analysis*, *and development and legislative advocacy.*

What is significant about ICAH's approach is the integration of program and policy. Specifically, their focus on increasing positive youth outcomes occurs through program implementation and policy reform. ICAH emphasizes that it is necessary to intentionally shift the public discourse away from deficit-framing language that positions youth as "at risk" of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy toward a strengths-based approach that addresses the critical health issues affecting young people as well as their ability to advocate for their rights. Through this paradigm shift, public consciousness can be raised, which in turn affects policy decisions that support the health and well-being of youth. To address this goal, ICAH utilizes *hashtags*, which are words or phrases used on social media sites (including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) to classify messages and group their content. These hashtags are designed to spark public debate and provide pathways for change. Hashtags also serve as guiding principles that align the organization's work to positive identity development. These hashtags, and the following descriptions, include (http://www.icah.org/content/about-icah):

- *#YouthVoice*: Increase opportunities for youth decision-making and leadership within family, school, and healthcare systems
- *#AdultAllies*: Increase the capacity of adult and youth allies to foster mutually respectful relationships
- *#SexEdSaves*: Increase access to sex-positive, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate information around sexual health, identity, and rights of youth
- *#HealthAccess*: Increase access to sexual healthcare, information, and resources in a culturally relevant and youth-friendly way
- *#SafeSpace*: Increase access to safe relationships and environments that support health and positive self-perception
- *#NoShame:* Reduce stigma and shame around youth sexuality and sexual decision-making

ICAH's investment in youth-adult partnerships is a fundamental feature of their organizational model, one that drives programming and policy efforts. As mentioned earlier, facilitating healthy bonds between youth and adults is a salient feature of positive identity development, a feature that also strengthens fidelity. Young people work with adults to cocreate and implement statewide health reform based on the shared beliefs and values held by youth and their adult partners. For example, members of the Youth Leadership Council develop their own training curriculum and design custom trainings for specific target population, such as training nurse professionals on youth-friendly home visits. Furthermore, ICAH's peer health educators facilitate youth-led, medically accurate, and developmentally appropriate sexual health trainings across multiple settings, including schools, communities, after-school programs, and conferences.

Finally, by highlighting youth voice, ICAH encourages young people to reflect on their lived experiences and identify the sexual health issues that are of central

importance to them. Self-reflection, specific to health and well-being, can promote identity development. For example, young people are asked to explore the multidimensional aspects of the self (gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status) that are affected by societal issues (social class, neighborhood context), in order to address challenges related to adolescent health, including teen pregnancy, access to adequate healthcare, healthy sexual relationships, and sexually transmitted infections. The #NoShame hashtag focuses on the stigma that is often related to addressing issues of sex and sexuality with youth in contemporary society. This process of identity development can also strengthen youth's fidelity in that youth are asked to demonstrate their ideological commitments, beliefs, and values in schools and communities and within their family structures. Furthermore, by developing youth's self-confidence, specifically related to sexual identity development, youth develop a positive self-image that has the potential to be associated positively with youth outcomes (mental health, academic achievement, and substance use). By adopting what is termed a sex-positive framework (see Chap. 12) ICAH enhances their program model by aligning their values with a strengths-based approach.

Recommendations for Youth Practice and Policy

In this section, we provide practical recommendations for youth practitioners and policy makers.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Many successful youth development programs seek to foster a clear and positive sense of identity among adolescents (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). Below, we describe strategies that can be used by youth development practitioners who want to incorporate identity development into their programming:

1. *Encourage Adolescents to Explore Social Issues.* Many youth development programs attempt to increase adolescent's social consciousness by educating them about the structural and societal issues inextricably tied to their age, race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Watkins, Larson, & Sullivan, 2007). Adolescents often become engaged in social issues and compelled to action through a unified goal (Cammarota, 2007). In addition, adolescents can learn to see themselves as agents of change, both in their personal lives and in their surrounding communities. In this case, youth practitioners can seek to unify young people around various social issues central to the most salient aspects of their identities. For example, young people can research various social issues that affect their community and plan local campaigns (with the

support of a youth leader) to tackle an issue that is of importance to them, such as creating a community mural with local graffiti artists or advocating for affordable day care for young parents.

2. *Encourage Adolescents to Reflect on Their Experiences*. Utilizing elements of the self-psychology approach (Baumeister, 1999; Côté, 2009) mentioned earlier in the chapter, self-reflection activities underscore the lived experiences of youth and involve the feelings, thoughts, and motives they experience. By asking young people to intentionally reflect on multiple aspects of their lives, including race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexuality, for instance, a young person can enter a process that potentially affirms their sense of self. However, simply asking them to explore their identities in relation to society does not ensure an affirming process (e.g., youth may find that their group is misrepresented in the media; Stevenson, 1997). Therefore, practitioners should implement structured learning opportunities for youth to engage in this process in a safe and positive way. Some activities that are particularly supportive of identity development include photography, storytelling, journal writing, role-playing, emotional thermometer "check-ins," arts and crafts, music, and focused dialogue. The outcome of these various forms of expression is twofold. First, these activities can give young people both voice and choice to reflect on and express, in their own way, their lived experiences and how they interpret life experiences. Second, the expressions conveyed through these activities serve as useful information to practitioners, by allowing them to tailor their program activities to the needs and interests of the youth. These outcomes constitute some of the best practices in positive youth development programs (Quinn, 1999).
3. *Give Adolescents Opportunities to Engage in Decision-Making*. Youth develop democratic habits, such as tolerance, healthy disagreement, self-expression, and cooperation, through meaningful participation in organizations and community groups (Hart, 1992). Meaningful participation goes beyond simply assigning trivial tasks to youth in programs. It involves sharing power with them by inviting youth to make important decisions and taking ownership of other important tasks. Active youth participation engages and empowers youth, as well as affirms their identities through increased competence and confidence (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005). In addition, adults in youth programs benefit from increased awareness and knowledge of youth development principles by involving youth in the decision-making process (Zeldin et al., 2000). Offering youth opportunities to engage in decision-making has tremendous benefits for youth development programs because of the assets that youth can contribute to the program and the relationships that youth build with caring adults, both of which have positive implications for youths' identity development. For instance, asking young people to cocreate curricula with program staff (such as workshops about race and ethnicity or gender policing) affirms their expertise and knowledge, strengthens youth-adult partnerships, and provides opportunities for decision-making. In addition, engaging youth in participatory program planning and curriculum development may create experiences that are meaningful, engaging, and relevant to adolescent participants.

Recommendations for Policy

Public policies can directly impact federal and state initiatives that guide local program objectives and influence program activities. These policies inherently affect young people's lives and, by extension, the contributions they make to society. To date, federal funding is overwhelmingly awarded to programs that target problem behaviors. For example, programs aimed at supporting the healthy development of lesbian and gay youth often focus on ways to reduce negative health outcomes (such as depression, victimization, substance use) and mitigate risk by monitoring sexual behaviors (Russell, 2005). Similarly, targeting young women of color from low-income communities for pregnancy prevention programs makes assumptions about their sexuality and sexual behaviors. This approach tends to target problem behaviors based on group membership, often ignoring the social conditions that youth exist in, and offers little opportunities for positive identity development. By not incorporating identity exploration practices that encourage young people to see themselves as active contributors to their own healthy development, youth programs and policies run the risk of maintaining deficit approaches that view particular youth as "at risk" or "inferior."

The examples we mentioned in the previous section provide recommendations for implementing positive identity development in out-of-school time settings and through federal policies. The following recommendations for policy highlight the complex nature of adolescent's identity development and the need to support this developmental process in a variety of contexts. First, public policies for youth must move beyond merely identifying targeted populations of youth (such as at-risk adolescents) in need of intervention. Policy makers should advocate for and support holistic program models that also seek to enhance positive identity development, which, as we have discussed in this chapter, is a developmental task for *all* adolescents. As the United States becomes increasingly diverse, youth programs will have to consider the developmental needs of a diverse American youth population. For instance, how do low-income youth navigate their socioeconomic status and social class? How will program models shift to address the needs of young women, transgender youth, undocumented youth, and their families? How can programs actively involve these adolescents' families and communities? Second, policies for youth should provide standards or benchmarks for youth development practices that facilitate identity development. These practices can include raising youth's consciousness and reflective activities and providing opportunities to engage in decision-making (see Recommendations for Practitioners). By implementing these practices across multiple contexts, particularly in schools and out-of-school time programs, youth are provided with many opportunities for positive identity development in a variety of settings. Third, policy makers can raise public awareness about the importance of youth-adult partnerships (as in the case of My Brother's Keeper). Connecting youth with supportive adults who are aware of issues affecting diverse populations (race, immigration, sexuality, gender equality) can play a critical role in developing a young person's sense of social justice and commitment to community engagement.

Conclusions

Although researchers have made substantial contributions to understanding young people's identity development and have made recommendations for practitioners and policy makers to enhance the lives of America's adolescents, youth policy and youth practice that integrate identity development among diverse youth are still lacking. It is imperative to consider and understand that youth are negotiating multiple social settings that all place demands and expectations on their identities. By identifying standards for program implementation and connecting youth with skilled adults who are capable of addressing positive identity development in a safe and affirming way, the field of youth development can move toward a more holistic approach that speaks to the diverse experiences of all youth. It is essential that programs also create an environment through which diverse adolescents can develop positive identities and in turn become active contributors to their communities and to society.

Acknowledgments Dr. Brittian's work on this chapter was supported in part by a Scholar Grant from the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago and National Institute of Health grant HD077128. Dr. Schwartz's work on this chapter was supported by National Institutes of Health grants DA026594 and AA021888.

Recommended Additional Resources

Free Child Project Youth Engagement Workshop Guide (http://www.freechild.org/FPYEWG.pdf).

This resource is a practical tool for youth development practitioners aimed at engaging youth in meaningful conversations and activities to establish healthy youth-adult partnerships, address social issues, and enhance positive identity development. The guide offers a framework for creating "safe spaces" where youth set ground rules, participate in critical dialogue, and establish trusting relationships with adults and peers. Workshop templates are available.

Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research (www.tandfonline.com/loi/hidn20).

This resource is recommended for youth development practitioners who want to learn more about cutting-edge research on identity development. This international and interdisciplinary academic journal publishes research papers on identity development across a range of cultures and cultural settings. Some free-access resources are available from Taylor & Francis Online.

Miami Youth Development Project (YDP) (http://w3.fiu.edu/ydp/).

The Miami YDP fosters positive youth development by developing refining and implementing programs for promoting positive development. This online resource provides resources for intervention and implementation strategies aimed at empowering youth to change their lives in a positive direction.

Race Matters: An Instructional Module for College Faculty (http://www.umsl.edu/services/ctl/files/pdfs/diversitymodule_williams05.pdf).

This resource is recommended for educators and youth development practitioners who are interested in addressing race and healthy identity development among diverse racial groups of adolescents and young adults. The activities are aimed at provoking issues surrounding diversity, discussing racial identity, and promoting strategies to develop a healthy racial identity. Writing prompts, work sheets, and relevant readings are available.

Society for Research on Identity Formation (SRIF) (http://www.identitysrif.org).

This website is for practitioners who are interested in learning more about identity research. SRIF is a multidisciplinary, international organization for promoting knowledge about identity issues through research and dissemination, such as providing resources for educators and tools for evaluation.

Young Chicago Authors (YCA) (http://youngchicagoauthors.org/).

YCA is an organization that provides youth with opportunities to explore their identities through poetry and performance. YCA encourages youth to cultivate their voice through writing, the examination of historical context, and performance education. This resource offers examples of writing prompts and how to create opportunities for youth to participate in "slam poetry."

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Part IV
Outcomes of PYD: The Impact of Adaptive Developmental Regulations

Chapter 11
Promoting Contribution Among Youth: Implications from Positive Youth Development Research for Youth Development Programs

Rachel M. Hershberg, Sara K. Johnson, Lisette M. DeSouza, Cristina J. Hunter, and Jon Zaff

The positive youth development (PYD) perspective views young people as assets to their families, their communities, and society. This perspective also suggests that when young people are provided with the necessary resources to become competent, confident, connected, and caring members of society with high character, they can become agents of social change and contributors to their life contexts (Lerner, 2004; see also Chap. 1). In PYD research, young people's contribution has been defined as forms of contribution to the self, others, and community (e.g., Lerner et al., 2005). Examples of youth contribution that have been assessed in contemporary PYD research include helping parents at home, holding a leadership position in student government, or volunteering at a homeless shelter. Contribution may also involve youth participating in social media campaigns to promote an issue of importance to them, such as animal rights, or participating in a protest to bring about some form of political change, such as immigration reform (e.g., Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Zaff, Hart, Flanagan, Youniss, & Levine, 2010). Contribution is important to study and promote in young people because it is a central marker of healthy development, or thriving, across the life span (Flanagan & Christens, 2011; Zaff, Hart et al., 2010).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information, research-based recommendations, and practical resources for youth development practitioners, educators, and policymakers who want to better understand and enhance contribution among

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_11

diverse groups of youth across the United States. Although all forms of contribution ultimately benefit adolescents' personal development and promote their well-being, in this chapter, we focus on young people's contributions to others and to their community because these forms have received the most attention in the research. We specifically focus on implications from PYD research regarding young people's engagement with and contributions to their communities and society. That is, we focus on what has been learned from PYD research about young people's contributions primarily in the form of civic engagement, and we discuss how such engagement can be promoted by invested adults within the context of youth development programs (also see Flanagan & Levine, 2010).

First, we discuss what has been learned about promoting these youth contributions from the 4-H Study of PYD (Lerner et al., 2005; see also Chap. 1). This research provided important evidence about how positive development occurred among participants, most of whom were engaged in youth development programs around the nation. When discussing the study's relevant findings, we review what has been learned about some of the individual and contextual factors that may encourage youth to engage in contribution, as well as the other positive outcomes that may accrue for youth when they are engaging in contribution behaviors.

In addition to its direct results, the 4-H Study also informed PYD research involving groups of youth and in settings that were not represented in the 4-H Study. In particular, there was a limited representation of youth of color—and, specifically, youth of color from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities—in the 4-H Study. However, over the last decade, PYD researchers have built on the strength-based perspective generated in part from the 4-H Study and conducted studies of contribution among youth of color (Chan, Ou, & Reynolds, 2014). Researchers have also expanded these investigations to include alternative ways of thinking about and measuring contribution among youth of color and different groups of marginalized youth in the United States. These models include social justice youth development (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002), sociopolitical development (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Watts & Flanagan, 2007), and critical consciousness (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2014). Accordingly, after reviewing contribution-related findings from the 4-H Study of PYD, we review research on contribution, and on some of these alternative formulations of contribution, among youth of color and in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities (Chan et al., 2014; Diemer & Li, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). We conclude this chapter with suggestions for practitioners, educators, and policymakers who are committed to fostering contribution among the diverse youth they serve.

A PYD Perspective on Contribution Within the 4-H Study of PYD

The PYD perspective is a strength-based approach to the study of youth development in context (J. Lerner et al., 2013; Lerner et al., 2005). There are several ways to approach promoting positive development; we focus on the Five Cs conception of

PYD advanced by Lerner and Lerner in the 4-H Study of PYD (see Chaps. 1 and 9). This approach suggests that when youth are competent, confident, connected, caring, and have character, then they will be on a pathway toward thriving, and they may exhibit a sixth C—contribution (Lerner et al., 2005).

According to this perspective, a thriving young person's identity should include a commitment to contribution predicated on a sense of moral and civic duty (Dowling et al., 2004; Lerner, 2004; and see Chap. 10). Consequently, we understand contribution as both adolescents' ideological commitment to support the context around them and behaviors (actions) that reflect this ideology. In the 4-H Study, young people's contribution ideologies and actions were assessed in several ways. First, we discuss studies of youth contribution ideologies and actions specifically in reference to civil society, which were conceptualized as active and engaged citizenship (AEC). Second, we discuss other studies that have examined contribution more generally.

Active and Engaged Citizenship

Active and engaged citizenship (AEC) was the focus of much of the research on contribution among 4-H Study youth (Lerner, 2004; Zaff, Boyd, Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010). Like contribution, more generally, AEC is conceptualized as an integration of ideology and action, but is assessed by four components that are specific to contribution to civil society: (1) civic participation (young people's contribution-related behaviors specific to civil society), (2) civic skills (young people's abilities to effectively engage in these behaviors), (3) civic duty (young people valuing contribution to their community as an important part of their lives), and (4) neighborhood connection (young people's sense that they are important members of their community whose voices and desires are heard and respected) (Lerner, Wang, Champine, Warren, & Erickson, 2014; Zaff, Boyd et al., 2010).

Research on AEC among 4-H Study youth has generally found that youth who are civically engaged in early adolescence remain engaged throughout their development (Zaff et al., 2011). Similarly, youth who show low levels of civic engagement early in their adolescence may continue to be disengaged as they grow up. However, involvement with community-based institutions and programs was positively associated with AEC (Zaff, Kawashima-Ginsberg et al., 2011). Thus, it is possible that through engaging with community-based programs, young people in the 4-H Study became more engaged in society and, therefore, more engaged in contributing to their social worlds (Zaff, Kawashima-Ginsberg et al., 2011). These findings are consistent with other studies of civic behaviors. For example, youth who had access to opportunities for engaging in community-based programs and leadership initiatives in their schools and neighborhoods were more likely to remain civically engaged in young adulthood (see Flanagan & Levine, 2010 for a review of this research).

In addition to the benefits of participating in community-based institutions and programs, youth engagement in school-based activities was also associated with AEC. Youth in the 4-H Study who were highly engaged in school also had high levels of AEC, whereas youth who had low engagement in school reported low levels of civic behaviors (Li & Lerner, 2011; Zaff, Li, & Lin, 2011; see also Chap. 4). Thus, school is a significant context in which AEC develops, and it can also be promoted within a school, for example, in a curriculum, or through school-based civic activities (such as participating in student government). However, if youth are disengaged from school programs and activities, they may also be disengaged from civic activities. Therefore, practitioners and educators cannot rely solely on the school context for promoting AEC and other forms of contribution. Other contexts of contribution, such as community-based or neighborhood programs, should be available to youth who may have low engagement in school.

Contribution

In addition to findings regarding contextual influences on AEC (e.g., community-based programs and school-based activities), research with 4-H Study youth has also focused on contribution more generally. Some studies have highlighted direct and indirect associations between contribution and individual strengths, such as hopeful future expectations. For example, hopeful future expectations, or positive expectations for the future, were a strong predictor of contribution, beyond other individual strengths (Schmid & Lopez, 2011; see Chap. 5). Potentially, facilitating conditions in which young people are hopeful can promote youth contribution. This idea is consistent with the view that when young people are developing within a context that is nurturing, supportive, and growth promoting, they will contribute to the institutions and people in this context (Lerner, 2004).

Intentional self-regulation skills and youth program participation also play an important role in young people's contribution behaviors (Mueller, Lewin-Bizan, & Urban, 2011; see Chap. 2). Among 4-H Study participants, self-regulation skills alone predicted their PYD scores, but self-regulation and youth program participation together predicted young people's contribution behaviors. In other words, youth who had high self-regulation skills and participated in youth programs were likely to make contributions to their communities and societies. This finding suggests that although a person's characteristics (such as self-regulation skills) are important factors in youth contribution, it is also critical to take into account the access that youth have to community resources (such as youth development programs) and the extent to which they take advantage of such resources.

The 4-H Study data have also been used to examine the role that supportive adults play in promoting contribution (see Chaps. 1 and 6). For youth in Grades 5 through 8, having a parent who was warm and nurturing, and who also appropriately monitored the behavior of the youth, predicted their self-regulation skills

(Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, & Lerner, 2010). These self-regulation skills were also related to overall PYD and, subsequently, to their contribution behaviors (Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010). These findings indicate the combined influences that individual and contextual factors can have on young people's contribution.

Another finding from the 4-H Study is that young people who contribute may also simultaneously display indicators of risky or problematic behavior across different portions of adolescence (Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010; Phelps et al., 2009). This finding is important because it suggests that young people can experience challenges while still being positively engaged with the world around them. More importantly, this finding suggests that contribution is an outcome that can be effectively promoted for all youth and not just those who refrain from engaging in problem behaviors. Similarly, research using data sets other than the 4-H Study has shown that promoting contribution and civic engagement among youth who experience potent risks in their lives and engage in some problem behaviors promotes their well-being in early adulthood (Chan et al., 2014; Flanagan & Levine, 2010).

In another investigation, Hershberg, DeSouza, Warren, Lerner, and Lerner (2014) reviewed open-ended responses from a small sample of youth in the 4-H Study about the activities and aspects of their day-to-day lives that they found most meaningful. The researchers sought to explore potential nuances in the kinds of contribution behaviors in which these youth engaged and found value. These data also included youth responses to questions about what they imagined their future ideal selves to be like. Youth in this study provided responses to these questions of interest when they were in Grades 6, 9, and 12. Analyses of these responses showed that young people's descriptions about what was most important to them in their present lives differed from what they envisioned for their future selves, especially in regard to contribution. In particular, few youth described engaging in contribution activities and finding value in those activities at Grades 6, 9, or 12, but the majority of youth in the sample described hoping that their future selves would "give back" in some way to their communities and society (Hershberg et al., 2014).

The responses of these youth suggested that some of them may not have been engaged in daily acts of contribution that were of much value to them, despite having ideological commitments to contribution and life goals related to contributing to society and others (Hershberg et al., 2014). Moreover, participants varied greatly in their descriptions of the most meaningful aspects of their day-to-day lives. Some youth described their relationships with others and/or serving others as most meaningful to them, whereas other youth described an individual focus (e.g., receiving good grades in school). Despite potential differences in youth orientations to self, others, and community, all youth in this selected group had consistently high levels of PYD. The variations in youth responses, including in their descriptions of what they valued most at Grades 6 compared to when they were in Grades 9 and 12, support other 4-H Study findings that indicate that 4-H Study youth took multiple and diverse paths to healthy development and contribution to others and to their communities (Hershberg et al., 2014; Zaff, Kawashima-Ginsberg et al., 2011).

Studying Contribution Among Youth of Color

PYD research highlights the importance of accounting for diversity both in regard to the potential pathways to contribution that are being studied and to the characteristics of research participants (Hershberg et al., 2014; Spencer & Spencer, 2014). There is considerable geographic variation in the 4-H Study; however, there is limited racial, ethnic, and economic diversity. Therefore, some of the 4-H Study findings may not be as relevant to the youth who are not represented among 4-H Study participants, that is, youth from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds and, in particular, youth of color from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds (Spencer & Spencer, 2014). The 4-H Study findings may also be limited in their relevance to the youth development programs that serve these youth.

For these reasons, it is important for practitioners and researchers committed to promoting PYD among all youth in the United States to draw from studies of PYD and contribution that have, as well, been conducted with youth of color (e.g., Chan et al., 2014; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Travis & Leech, 2014) and other groups of marginalized young people who are, likewise, underrepresented in the 4-H Study sample (e.g., LGTBQ youth and youth with special needs) (Gorter, Stewart, & Woodbury-Smith, 2011). Through partnerships with youth development programs and community-based organizations serving youth with different experiences of marginalization, researchers have developed alternative conceptualizations of contribution for practitioners and researchers to use in their work with youth. These conceptualizations may be useful for practitioners serving youth from both majority and minority racial and ethnic backgrounds in the United States as well as youth from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Christens & Kirshner, 2011). These conceptualizations of contribution include youth organizing, youth activism, and a "social justice youth development" (SJYD) approach (see Christens & Kirshner, 2011 and Ginwright & James, 2002, respectively). In the next section, we provide a brief review of some of this research, specifically with youth of color, and describe how these forms of contribution may be promoted within youth development organizations. We also describe tools that have been developed for assessing these instances of contribution among youth (Diemer et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2014).

PYD Research on Contribution with Youth of Color

The Five Cs model of PYD has been used in research with diverse populations of young people, including rural African American young men (Murry, Berkel, Simons, Simons, & Gibbons, 2014), youth living in urban public housing communities (Lopez, Yoder, Brisson, Lechuga-Pena, & Jenson, 2014), and urban youth exposed to community violence (McDonald, Deatrick, Kassam-Adams, & Richmond, 2011). In addition, researchers have worked to integrate culturally and contextually appropriate approaches to youth and community development within

the Five Cs approach to PYD (Evans et al., 2012; Murry et al., 2014, Travis & Leech, 2013; Williams, Anderson, Francois, Hussain, & Tolan, 2014).

Research on contribution among youth of color has also increased since the start of the 4-H Study. Some research has focused on the development of civic knowledge and skills among youth of color. Youth of color have been found to have lower civic knowledge and civic skills, including debate and conflict resolution skills, than their white and more affluent peers (Levinson, 2007, 2010). Some scholars have called attention to the inequitable distribution of civic education classes as one potential reason for this "civic gap" (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2007, 2010). Specifically, youth of color in lower-socioeconomic status neighborhoods often have less access to civic education classes than their peers in more affluent neighborhoods (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Other scholars have argued that it is not simply the case that youth of color have fewer civic skills or are engaged in society at a lower rate than their white peers but, rather, that these youth may engage in their communities and society differently than their peers from more privileged backgrounds. This variation may be due to experiences of being marginalized from particular sites of civic engagement (e.g., schools, local government) (see Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). These scholars also suggest that there may be forms of civic engagement that could be promoted among marginalized youth, such as youth activism, that are more reflective of their lived experiences and that, therefore, may resonate with these youth more strongly than examples of contribution that serve to maintain the status quo (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Youth activism includes behaviors that aim to influence policy or change institutional practices (Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; Kirshner, 2007). Youth activism has been described as critical civic engagement, in which youth question the status quo and begin working toward better alternatives for themselves and their peers, both in the contexts of institutions, such as schools, and in the broader society (Kirshner, 2007; Watts & Guessous, 2006). Research on youth activism has examined how primarily marginalized youth may come to engage in these forms of contribution, and the outcomes that may be associated with such contributions (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). We now turn to discussing some of this research. We provide an example of one partnership between youth development researchers and community-based organizations that illustrates how these forms of contribution may be promoted within youth development organizations (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

Promoting Youth Activism and Social Justice Youth Development

Youth of color, and, particularly, youth of color in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, may have negative experiences with authority figures (such as teachers, principals, police officers) and institutions (such as schools, local government),

including being excluded from these institutions (Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Spencer, 2006). From these experiences of marginalization, youth could develop feelings of distrust toward institutions, including skepticism about traditional government or school policies and if and how they may benefit them and their communities (Flanagan, 2003; Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Lerner, 2004). These feelings could then influence youth attitudes regarding engaging in different kinds of civic activities, such as voting or volunteerism (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Flanagan & Christens, 2011). It could therefore be argued that the "civic gap" found in the civic skills of white youth and youth of color could more accurately reflect limitations in the ways in which contribution has historically been conceptualized, promoted, and measured among these youth.

Youth organizing and activism, rather than activities such as volunteering, may more accurately reflect the contribution behaviors of marginalized youth and/or the kinds of contribution behaviors to which these youth may be drawn (Christens & Kirshner, 2011). Indeed, over the last decade, organizations that promote this type of youth contribution have been especially effective in high-poverty and urban communities in supporting the contributions of young people to their communities (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, 2007). These organizations embrace social change strategies that differ from traditional approaches to youth contribution (such as community service through volunteering at shelters in low-income communities), and they give voice to youth experiences of marginalization (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Flanagan & Levine, 2010).

Social justice youth development (SJYD) is an example of one framework that has been implemented in youth development organizations to promote youth organizing and activism (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; for descriptions of other approaches, see Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). The idea that youth can be actively engaged with promoting their own positive development in contextually relevant and meaningful ways is consistent with a PYD approach to optimizing outcomes for youth (Lerner, 1982, 2004). The focus of SJYD on the lived experience of youth is sometimes overlooked in PYD research but provides an important challenge and complement to more mainstream research.

An SJYD approach is informed by the belief that marginalized youth may feel low levels of agency and, thus, may feel unable to effect change in their worlds due to their experiences of marginalization (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Ginwright & James, 2002). An SJYD approach aims to increase young peoples' self-efficacy in promoting change in their communities and society, through developing their awareness of how power operates in society (Ginwright & James, 2002). In community-based organizations that draw from an SJYD framework, youth may be given opportunities to reflect together on how they, their families, and their communities have suffered particular social ills and, through this healing, develop ideas for taking action to redress injustices (Ginwright & James, 2002). In the SJYD framework, youth develop sociopolitical awareness, which been referred to elsewhere as critical reflection (Freire, 1993). As youth develop sociopolitical awareness and problem-solving skills, they also develop and implement plans for action

with the support of their peers and adult leaders engaged in these community-based and youth-serving organizations (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

This SJYD approach to working with youth is consistent with a PYD perspective, as well, because it is a contextualized approach to understanding young people and focuses on their ability to impact change in ways that are relevant to their experiences in their communities. Much like PYD, this approach views young people are active in understanding their context and capable of influencing their own outcomes (Lerner, 1982, 2004). Furthermore, an SJYD approach to working with youth may foster the Cs of PYD. In turn, youth who participate in organizations that take an SJYD perspective are likely to engage in meaningful contributions that are relevant to and reflective of their own lives and, simultaneously, directed at improving their communities and society.

As an example of how this process may operate, we provide details from a study of two youth development organizations that approached working with marginalized youth from an SJYD perspective (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). These organizations were observed by two youth development researchers, Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota, who documented how an SJYD approach operates in practice (see Ginwright & James, 2002 for a description of all the components of SJYD). We provide details from their study to encourage practitioners to consider embarking on SJYD work. We then describe additional tools that are available for practitioners who wish to promote youth contributions in the form of youth activism and organizing and assess their progress in doing so.

Social Justice Youth Development in Practice

Young Black Leaders and El Pueblo Community Center are two community-based organizations in Oakland, California, in which program leaders implemented aspects of an SJYD approach (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). At these organizations, adult leaders facilitated the development of sociopolitical awareness or an understanding of some of the root causes of problems in their communities and society (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Youth participated in workshops with adults where all members of the group were encouraged to speak and articulate how experiences in their families and communities, as well as their personal experiences of poverty, could be related to larger economic forces (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

In workshops at El Pueblo Community Center, for example, Latino/Latina youth expressed their frustrations at the low quality of their neighborhoods and their limited options for postsecondary school (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Through college preparatory activities sponsored by the center, these youth also learned that they were not being offered the high school classes they needed to become competitive applicants to postsecondary school. Eventually, these youth organized among themselves to confront their schools about the limited preparation they were receiving. The school, upon recognizing these students' desire to take advanced classes, began making those classes available to them (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

Within this SJYD framework, sociopolitical awareness is viewed as critical to promoting youth thriving. Even confident youth, who have strong relationships and supportive parents (in other words, connection), are generally kind and honest in their interactions with others (in other words, are caring and have character), and are academically achieving (in other words, competent), are not viewed as thriving if they do not have sociopolitical awareness. Promoting sociopolitical awareness may be one way in which youth development practitioners can facilitate youth becoming not only engaged citizens but also justice-oriented citizens, who contribute to their communities while continuing to critique those same communities and think about how to best work toward creating a just society (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

SJYD may also be an effective approach for promoting contribution in youth because it is consistent with PYD and AEC. According to the SJYD perspective, within community-based and youth development organizations, youth must be engaged in supportive relationships with adults, and these relationships should be "horizontal" or have more of a balance of power than typical youth-adult relationships (Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Spencer, Tugenberg, Ocean, Schwartz, & Rhodes 2013). Through these relationships, youth build a sense of collective efficacy and sense of community. Through supportive youth-adult relationships and a sense of collective efficacy, youth may develop confidence in and ideological commitments to their abilities to effect change and act on this confidence (Camino & Zeldin, 2002).

Youth may resist participating in community-based organizations when they feel they are not being taken seriously by the adults with whom they interact at these organizations or that their voices are not being heard (Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Zeldin, Christens, & Powers, 2013). Within an SJYD-oriented youth development program, authentic opportunities for youth-adult partnerships may be one way in which thriving can be promoted for all youth.

However, youth-adult partnerships in community-based organizations may be insufficient for promoting youth contribution if adults in these organizations are not facilitating an analysis of inequalities in the United States, as well as providing experiences of healing for the marginalized youth they serve (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). That is, an SJYD framework suggests that marginalized youth need to be provided with tools for analyzing the systems of power that play a part in their lives as part of the process of promoting their contributions to community and society and as essential to their well-being (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

Other work on civic education also describes how important sociopolitical awareness is for the health, positive development, and civic development of diverse youth in the United States (Rubin, 2007; Rubin & Hayes, 2010). Teachers can be resources for youth to promote their sociopolitical awareness in addition to their civic knowledge (see Rubin, 2007; Rubin & Hayes, 2010). For example, Black youth who had civic education classes were more likely to be civically engaged than Black youth who did not have civics education; as well, their civic engagement was positively associated with their feelings of efficacy in their abilities to participate in politics and effect social change (Hope & Jagers, 2014).

In addition to community connectedness and political efficacy, many other positive individual- and community-level outcomes have been associated with sociopolitical awareness. The development of sociopolitical awareness was associated with healthier sexual decision-making among South African youth of color (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002), academic and community engagement among African American youth (Torre & Fine, 2011), political participation among poor and working class youth (Diemer & Li, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007), and the attainment of higher-paying and more prestigious occupations in early adulthood for youth of color in the United States (Diemer, 2009). This pattern of findings suggests that promoting sociopolitical awareness cannot only promote young people's contribution but also can have wide-reaching effects on their positive development more generally.

Assessing and Promoting SJYD and Contribution Among Marginalized Youth

Drawing from these findings, Diemer and colleagues (2014) developed an assessment tool that can aid in promoting and assessing sociopolitical awareness, as well as contribution behaviors that may be connected to sociopolitical awareness (such as youth organizing and activism). This scale is a measure of critical consciousness.

The development of this measure (as well as the SJYD framework) was largely influenced by the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1993). Paulo Freire (1993) first defined critical consciousness as a concept and pedagogical method that guided his own work with Brazilian peasants. He aimed to facilitate their learning to "read the word" as well as "read the world," through fostering literacy and their capacities for thinking critically about inequitable social conditions (Diemer et al., 2014; Freire, 1993). Freire also aimed to facilitate these peasants taking actions to change the social conditions on which they were reflecting. Specifically, Freire (1993) defined critical consciousness as "critical reflection and action on the world in order to transform it" (p. 51).

One part of Diemer and colleagues' (2014) measure assesses young peoples' *critical reflection,* or their perceptions of social inequalities, including racial/ethnic, gendered, and socioeconomic constraints on educational and occupational opportunities. This measure also assesses critical reflection in terms of endorsing egalitarianism or, more specifically, values about equality. The second component is *critical action* and assesses the participation of individuals in actions aimed at producing sociopolitical change (Diemer et al., 2014).

In addition to Diemer's measure, clinical psychologist Anita Thomas and colleagues (2014) developed a critical consciousness inventory that is explicitly designed for youth practitioners and interventionists to use to assess critical consciousness among the youth with whom they work. This measure has been used with youth from diverse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in Chicago, Illinois. The measure was specifically developed for assessing changes youth may

experience through their participation in youth development programs that aim to enhance their critical consciousness development and civic engagement (Thomas et al., 2014). Thus, there are resources available for youth-serving practitioners who are committed to promoting contribution, including youth organizing and activism, among the diverse youth they serve.

Recommendations for Practitioners and Policymakers

In this section, we provide some recommendations, based on the research discussed above, for practitioners who serve diverse youth in the United States and who aim to promote young people's contributions to community and society. We also provide recommendations for policymakers who are, as well, interested in promoting youth contributions to society.

Various facets of contribution have been conceptualized and measured with different populations of youth, including community service, helping behaviors, civic awareness, sociopolitical awareness, active and engaged citizenship, sociopolitical efficacy, and critical consciousness (critical reflection and actions). All of these components of contribution are associated with well-being for youth and their communities. A focus on the multiple aspects of civic engagement, whether knowledge, skills, or community connection, will help practitioners to elucidate meaningful participation among diverse youth.

If youth programs provide more opportunities for the many examples of youth contributions described here, youth may develop commitments to contribution and participate in these forms of contribution as they grow up (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). This long-term outcome of contribution could be especially important for marginalized communities, as adults of color in particular have also been found to engage in civic behaviors (e.g., voting) at a lower rate than white adults (Chan et al., 2014).

Partnerships between youth-serving organizations and researchers may be an effective means of promoting contribution among youth served by these organizations. In addition, youth participatory action research (Y-PAR) has become an increasingly popular way to facilitate youth contributions to society and to research. In Y-PAR, youth are part of the entire research process, from asking research questions about an issue of concern to them and their communities, to collecting and analyzing data, to presenting and sharing the data with policymakers, educators, and practitioners. In Y-PAR, youth gain critical thinking and research skills and play a part in actions that result from their research. Accordingly, practitioners should consider working with the youth they serve to reach out to educators and academics at universities in their communities to initiate Y-PAR projects of relevance to these youth (see Cammarota & Fine, 2010 for more information).

Promoting more horizontal relationships between youth and adults in community-based organizations is a central part of the PYD perspective, and it may be an especially beneficial strategy for organizations that are committed to promoting youth organizing and activism within their communities (see Zeldin et al., 2013).

Practitioners should identify leadership roles within their organizations that could be taken on by the youth themselves.

Research on the civic gap between youth of color and white youth in their access to high-quality civic education classes suggests that our Department of Education should emphasize the importance of these courses for all youth, and they should make them available to all youth (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Policymakers should ensure that youth have opportunities for authentic participation in institutions of civil society. For example, they should consider potentially lowering the voting age so teenagers can more actively contribute to the sociopolitical landscape (Hart & Atkins, 2011). In addition to providing legal protections for the rights of young people—that is, ensuring their safety, access to resources, proper nutrition, appropriate housing, and freedom from harassment—policymakers should look to young people as sources of knowledge and active participants in their own development. To this end, individuals involved in setting policy agendas should engage young people as part of advisory councils for public office holders (such as governors, council members, mayors, or senators).

Conclusions

The array of youth experiences related to contribution, as well as barriers youth may experience to contributing to society, should be part of researchers' and practitioners' thinking about contribution and how to promote it among youth. In addition, youth experiences of marginalization, as well as instances where youth come together around these experiences to redress injustices, should be part of how youth contributions to self, others, and society are assessed.

Youth have engaged in these various forms of contribution throughout history. Examples include youth in South Africa protesting against the Bantu education system and youth of color in California protesting against Proposition 21, a ballot initiative that sought to try incarcerated minors as adults (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, 2007). The student immigration movement is another example of youth coming together to effect change related to immigration policies in the United States, including the opportunities children of immigrants have to attend postsecondary institutions (Seif, 2011).

Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) suggest that young people are at the vanguard of social movements (see also Youniss, Barber, & Billen, 2013). However, youth continue to experience marginalization within United States institutions that may discourage such forms of contribution (Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Rubin, 2007). Moreover, for youth engaged in community-based organizations, research suggests that some young people may believe that their views are not of value to the adult leaders in the organizations in which they are engaged or to the larger communities of which they are a part (Zeldin et al., 2013). In addition, high-quality civic engagement resources continue to be inequitably distributed to youth throughout the United States (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2010). Researchers and practitioners

alike need to do more work to promote meaningful contribution among all youth in the United States and throughout important contexts of their lives.

Questions also remain about how various components and forms of contribution discussed here develop in youth; through continued partnerships between researchers and community-based organizations, some of these questions could eventually be answered. For example, researchers have only begun to examine why youth goals regarding "giving back" to society are not reportedly reflected in the aspects of their day-to-day lives that they experience as meaningful. Youth development researchers have also only given limited attention to examining when and why ideological commitments to contribution are not reflected in the actions and activities in which youth are engaged (Hershberg et al., 2014; Zaff, Boyd et al., 2010). In addition, more research is needed that examines how civic engagement that includes some form of sociopolitical awareness can be promoted for all youth.

Finally, there should be more of a focus on promoting contribution among youth with different constellations of relationships of power and privilege in the United States and on whether paths to contribution may vary between groups based on these relationships. Practitioners and researchers alike have infrequently examined what types of contribution are meaningful, for what groups of youth, and in what contexts. Thus far, much of the research on critical consciousness and related concepts, for example, has been conducted with youth of color. There is a need for more research and research-community partnerships that examine the development of critical consciousness among different populations of marginalized youth, as well as among youth from white and affluent backgrounds (Diemer et al., 2014).

These are some of the questions and research-community partnership goals that should be on the agendas of youth practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Answering these questions will contribute to creating a more equitable world and one wherein all youth have opportunities to place themselves on pathways toward contribution and thriving.

The 4-H Study of PYD has contributed to the development of some of these questions. Through the 4-H Study, researchers learned about important precursors to contribution (namely, access to community-based programs and ecological resources, including parents, that promote civic knowledge and engagement) for specific groups of youth. In addition, the study has identified individual strengths associated with contribution (such as self-regulation and hopeful future expectations). Findings from the 4-H Study have also informed more recent instantiations of research on youth contribution, some of which focus directly on promoting contribution among youth of color and youth from other marginalized communities. The research reviewed here, thus, directs our attention to thinking about differentiating, in both research and practice, among the many types of contribution that are meaningful to various groups of youth and, as well, the many pathways these youth may take to developing commitments to contributing to self, others, and society.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

The resources below provide more details about the development of civic engagement among young people (Flanagan, 2013), demographic and social trends related to civic life (CIRCLE), and forms of youth civic participation aimed at redressing social injustices (Cammarota & Fine, 2010; Ginwright et al., 2006). These resources are useful for direct service providers (educators or practitioners), as well as individuals who influence the broader contexts of youth development in the United States (policymakers).

Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (Eds.). (2010). *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion*. New York: Routledge.

This book presents five examples of youth participatory action research (Y-PAR) projects by leading activist academics who are committed to facilitating youth contributions to social change. This book is a resource for educators, researchers, and youth development practitioners who are interested in engaging with youth in meaningful contributions to their communities and to research.

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) (http://civicyouth.org).

CIRCLE has a variety of resources about civic life and education of young people. Their website includes fact sheets, tools for practitioners, and topic-specific research conducted nationally.

Flanagan, C. A. (2013). *Teenage citizens: The political theories of the young*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

This book connects theories about youth development, and the study of youth development, to youth political behavior. Flanagan focuses on young peoples' views of political life and their relationship with their social worlds.

Ginwright, S. A., Noguera, P., & Cammarota, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Beyond resistance!: Youth activism and community change: New democratic possibilities for practice and policy for America's youth*. New York: Routledge.

This book is a collection of essays about civic engagement in the form of activism, focused on urban youth, and includes work by some of the leading youth development scholars and research practitioners.

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Chapter 12
Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health in Youth Programming: Implications of a Positive Youth Development Perspective

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Sexuality development occurs in the context of a plethora of changes that come with adolescence—changing bodies, changing relationships, and changing social roles (Moore, 1999). Young people's experiences with sex, sexuality, and sexual relationships in adolescence shape how they transition into adulthood and the social, emotional, and cognitive skills they have (or do not have) to make healthy decisions and to engage in fulfilling relationships (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2009). Through promoting positive youth development (PYD), youth development programs can take an active role in improving adolescent (and, by extension, adult) sexual health nationwide. Strengthening PYD overall can improve young people's sexual development and, as well, there are many specific steps that youth development programs can take to intentionally target important aspects of adolescent sexual health.

In this chapter, we explain the relevant research on PYD and sexual health. We also offer specific suggestions for how youth development programs can directly and indirectly work to promote adolescent sexual health and wellness. In doing so, we first discuss sexuality as relational development; specifically, we emphasize the importance of reframing adolescent sexuality according to its positive potential rather than solely reducing it to an area of risk. We introduce a framework through which to consider adolescent sexuality development within the multiple layers of a young person's social and sexual context. Next, we review findings from the 4-H Study of PYD that indicate ways in which sexual behavior can be part of youth thriving. Then, we review related findings from other research that addresses youth

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_12

development programs, PYD, and sexual health. We then build on the research presented in order to share specific ideas about what aspects of youth development programs can help promote adolescent sexuality development. We specifically explore the "Big Three" aspects of youth development programs: youth–adult relationships, skill building, and opportunities for leadership (Lerner, 2004). Finally, we discuss the next steps for research, policy, and practice in addressing sexual health and PYD. Specifically, we provide additional suggestions for how youth development programs can go beyond traditional approaches to support both PYD and sexual health in integrated ways. In order to lay the foundation for the rest of the chapter, we now turn to presenting our theoretical framework for understanding the positive potential in adolescent sexuality development as a relational, dynamic process.

Sexuality as Relational Development

Historically, sex during adolescence has been characterized as a risk behavior. Adolescent sexual behavior is discussed in terms of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, both of which are meaningful risks that youth may encounter. But when programs commit their efforts to discouraging sexual activity, young people do not learn about condoms, contraception, and other skills that could help them have healthy sexual experiences (Brückner & Bearman, 2005). Therefore, in this chapter, we focus instead on what programs can do to support adolescents in making healthy decisions and in building fulfilling relationships.

Sex and sexual activity are normative aspects of adolescent development and come with possibilities of risk, pleasure, and positive outcomes (Tolman & McClelland, 2011). Young people experiencing positive sexuality development may build positive understandings of themselves and respectful connections with others in such a way that may contribute to other aspects of their positive development. In turn, having and/or developing aspects of PYD such as confidence, competence, character, caring, and connection (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015) may strengthen young people's engagement with their own sexuality. This dynamic interplay between PYD and positive sexuality development will take place in different ways for different individuals, depending on personal histories and developmental stage (including age and pubertal status).

The study of human development is characterized by addressing the ongoing dynamic relations between individuals and their contexts throughout the life course (Elder & Shanahan, 2006; Overton, 2015). Sexual health, therefore, is not only a characteristic of the developing individual but is moreover an aspect of the developmental system that includes an individual, the sexual and romantic partners of that individual, and other salient aspects of the environment, such as educators, healthcare providers, friends, family, and the media. Sexuality development occurs as an individual thinks about and perhaps interacts with other people in sexual ways, is approached in sexual ways by other people, and is exposed to sexual messages.

Within a PYD framework, young people are understood as active producers of their own development (Lerner et al., 2015). Therefore, a key component of promoting adolescent sexuality development is supporting young people in thinking of themselves as sexual and relational and as active agents of their own sexual/relational development. Sexuality development is also dyadic: it is something that happens between two people, therefore implicating relational (interpersonal) health more broadly in addition to sexual health (Liang, Tracy, Kenny, Brogan, & Gatha, 2010). Despite these clearly relational aspects of sexuality development, sexual health is frequently measured as pertaining solely to individuals (instead of to specific dyadic sexual relationships). We first report on the current research on the associations between PYD and sexual health within individuals before discussing the role of youth programs in promoting adolescent sexuality development through interpersonal skill building and strengthening other aspects of the relational system in which young people develop.

Sexual Health in the 4-H Study of PYD

The 4-H Study of PYD was designed to assess indicators of positive development in adolescents from Grade 5 through Grade 12. The study was not specifically designed to address issues of sexual health. Nevertheless, there are some things we can learn from analyzing sexual activity in the context of PYD. Data on sexual health were collected starting in Wave 5, when participants were in Grade 9, and the same items remained on the questionnaire through Wave 8 (Grade 12). Participants were asked if they had ever had sex (y/n), their age at first sexual intercourse, and whether they used protection or contraception during sexual activity (always, sometimes, or never). No questions were asked about consent or whether the participants wanted to be having sex at these times, and no questions were asked pertaining to history of sexual violence or coercion. Furthermore, no information was collected regarding whether youth were having sex in the context of ongoing sexual and/or romantic relationships and thus no interpersonal data is included in analyses from this study.

Higher PYD was significantly predictive of delayed sexual initiation for Grade 9 and 10 girls but not for boys (Schwartz et al., 2010). In addition, PYD was positively associated with the use of protection or contraception in Grades 9 and 10. Reasons for the difference between boys and girls found in this study are unclear, and it may be connected to the myriad ways in which boys and girls receive different and sometimes contradictory messages about whether they "should" be having sex and about how to judge their own sexual feelings and experiences (Fine & McClelland, 2006; Kim et al., 2007). Despite these factors remaining unmeasured, this study began to outline a pattern of association between PYD and sexual health behaviors.

Further analyses were conducted after all waves of data had been collected, Waves 5–8 (Grades 9–12). These data were used to differentiate among three groups of young people (Arbeit, Bowers, & Baldi, 2014):

- Youth who were not having sex
- Youth who were having sex with consistent use of protection or contraception (always)
- Youth exposed to sexual risk through having sex without protection (sometimes or never using protection or contraception)

These groups of youth were compared on each of the Five Cs of PYD (competence, confidence, character, caring, and connection) and contribution (an outcome of PYD). In Grades 9 and 10, youth who were not having sex demonstrated significantly higher levels of PYD than sexually active youth. In Grades 11 and 12, youth who were having sex with consistent use of protection or contraception (always) demonstrated significantly higher levels of PYD than youth who had sex without protection. Furthermore, youth who were having sex with consistent use of protection had comparable levels on some indicators of PYD to youth who were not having sex. As adolescents get older, it is important to assess whether they are avoiding unprotected sex, but not necessarily whether they are avoiding sex in general. It is important, therefore, to expand the notion of promoting adolescent sexuality development beyond the goal of simply seeking to delay sexual initiation for young people. In this way, sexual behavior is perhaps not always/only a risky behavior, an idea that was assessed in the study described below.

Risky behaviors assessed within the 4-H Study include substance use, delinquency, mental health, and sexual activity (Arbeit et al., 2014). Using a variety of these youth-reported indicators of risky behaviors, participants were grouped into different profiles, or patterns, of risky behavior. Youth in each profile were also compared on their self-reported scores for each of the Five Cs of PYD. Participants categorized in the "low-risk" profile reported minimal substance use, no involvement in delinquent behaviors, and few symptoms of mental health challenges. In Grades 11 and 12, the adolescents in the "low-risk" profile were somewhat likely to report sexual activity with the consistent use of protection, as compared to a minimal likelihood of their reporting sexual activity without protection. In other words, protected sex did not fall into the pattern of other risky behaviors and stood out as a behavior that may be a part of the repertoire of the youth with the lowest engagement in risky behaviors and the highest scores on PYD. The distinguishing factor appeared to be the use of protection. Youth in the low-risk profile would not have sex without protection, but they might have sex with consistent use of protection. This finding in Grades 11 and 12 suggests that as teens get older and sexuality becomes normative, sexual activity may be less related to negative developmental outcomes than it is when adolescents are younger. Indeed, sexual activity may be part of the overall behavioral repertoire of many positively developing young people.

This research can reframe adolescent sexuality in the following ways:

- Sexual behavior comes with the potential for risk, pleasure, and positive development.
- Sexual activity becomes increasingly normative as adolescents become older.

- When young people demonstrate the consistent use of protection, sexual activity can be part of an overall pattern of positive development and does not need to be thought of as a risk behavior.

Rather than focusing efforts on discouraging youth from discussing or expressing their sexual feelings, youth programs can instead play an active role in supporting young people in building skills and accessing resources to engage in healthy sexual behaviors, such as using protection or contraception during sexual activity. Indeed, promoting adolescent sexuality development can be an integrated part of promoting PYD. Additional studies have further elaborated upon this connection between PYD and sexual health in adolescence.

Additional Research on Sexual Health and PYD

A series of articles reviewed the associations found throughout the research literature between specific aspects of PYD and specific aspects of adolescent sexual behavior. Connection (i.e., bonding and emotional attachment) was related to factors such as parent–adolescent sexual communication and partner connectedness (Markham et al., 2010). Confidence (i.e., in relation to educational aspirations) was associated with girls being less likely to have sex at a young age and to report unwanted pregnancy (Gloppen, David-Ferdon, & Bates, 2010). Indicators of cognitive, social, and behavioral competence were all associated with the use of contraception (House, Bates, Markham, & Lesesne, 2010). In assessing character, personally approving of sex, believing that peers are having sex, and believing that peers approve of having sex were associated with using contraception and reporting positive intentions to use condoms (House, Mueller, Reininger, Brown, & Markham, 2010).

Elements of PYD such as autonomy, self-esteem, and empathy have been found to be positively related to reports of both physical pleasure (i.e., orgasm) and emotional pleasure (i.e., enjoyment) during sex with a partner (Galinsky & Sonenstein, 2011). Self-esteem, specifically, is also related to positive attitudes about sex (Chapman & Werner-Wilson, 2008). Youth who spent more time in out-of-school time activities have been found to demonstrate more negative attitudes about sex compared to their peers (Chapman & Werner-Wilson, 2008). The difference between youth who participate in after-school programs and youth who do not indicates that youth development programs could have a meaningful impact on young people's attitudes about sex. Thus, this result reinforces the importance of program staff focusing on a positive approach to sexuality in order to avoid reinforcing pervasive negative attitudes. Programs that do address sexuality in positive ways are likely to have other positive effects as well, such as delivering activities in a supportive atmosphere and strengthening the school context (Gavin, Catalano, David-Ferdon, Gloppen, & Markham, 2010). Looking more specifically at the elements of youth development programs that may be relevant to promoting adolescent sexuality

development is an important first step in planning future research and in improving youth development programs.

This research has several implications for youth programs considering their impact on adolescent sexuality development:

- Positive attitudes towards sex, and positive experiences such as feeling sexual pleasure, may be integrated with PYD.
- Youth programs have the potential to shape young people's attitudes towards sex.
- Programs that promote adolescent sexual health have the potential to influence young people and their contexts in many other positive ways, as well.

The studies discussed in this section and in the previous section mostly involve rudimentary measures of sexual health, such as whether youth engaged in sexual activity or whether they reported condom use. However, clear patterns emerge indicating a relationship between PYD and sexual developmental outcomes and, in some of the studies, a relationship between youth development programs and sexual health. Therefore, while more nuanced and more holistic research on adolescent sexuality development is still needed, it is possible to move forward in exploring the implications of this research for youth development programs and practice.

Expanding Youth Development Practice to Address Sexual Health

Staff and administrators in youth development programs already address many different aspects of young people's lives, such as academics, social development, and physical wellness. Some youth programs choose to directly address sexual activity and dating relationships in their work with young people, perhaps through informal discussions, planned lessons, or by inviting in visiting sexuality educators. However, even programs with other areas of focus, such as academics, athletics, religion, or service, already incorporate many practices that may be connected to promoting adolescent sexuality development.

In this section, we provide specific examples and suggestions of what youth development programs can do, in small but meaningful ways, to create a context in which positive sexual and romantic development can occur. To organize these suggestions, we use the "Big Three" characteristics of PYD programs (Lerner, 2004):

1. Facilitating strong youth–adult relationships
2. Supporting youth in building life skills
3. Providing youth with opportunities for leadership

In the following sections, we discuss how youth development programs can promote sexuality development while promoting overall PYD in these ways.

Facilitating Relationships Between Youth and Adults

The first component of the "Big Three" characteristics of youth development programs is facilitating relationships between youth and adults (Lerner, 2004). These relationships are opportunities for youth to experience emotional safety and comfort, explore their own identities and self-expression, and receive specific messages and information relating to sexual health. Youth who report having a mentoring relationship are more likely to report the use of contraception during sexual activity (Dubois & Silverhorn, 2005). Mentoring relationships can promote positive outcomes in other aspects of sexuality development as well.

Bonding between youth and adults can contribute to the development of young people's trust in themselves and their ability to trust others (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). As youth learn to trust themselves and learn to develop trust with partners or identify when someone should not be trusted, they may be more likely to feel comfortable, to feel bonded, and to communicate with confidence. Close youth–adult relationships also facilitate learning and a sense of belonging, which is integral to young people's ability to internalize positive messages delivered through such programming (Jones & Deutsch, 2011). Talking about a death in the family is an example of a conversation that youth may benefit from having with a nonfamilial adult (Catalano et al., 2004). Talking about sex may also fall into this category.

Some youth may not have a parent or family member that they talk to about sexuality and may prefer to talk to mentors or other adults in their out-of-school time programs. Other youth may still benefit from additional perspectives or opportunities to share their thoughts. Currently, research on sexual communication has focused on parent–child relationships and peer relationships (Lefkowitz & Stoppa, 2006; Lefkowitz, Boone, & Shearer, 2004) and has not addressed sexual communication with other caring adults (e.g., mentors). When youth and adults do talk about sex and sexuality, it is important that youth feel safe, that youth receive non-shaming messages about their sexual desires and experiences, and that youth receive accurate information.

Facilitating close youth–adult relationships in the context of a youth development program can contribute to adolescent sexuality development in a number of ways, including:

- Trust: Youth learn to trust themselves and learn what it feels like to trust someone else.
- Support: Youth have access to an adult outside of their family who will listen to their feelings and answer their questions about sex and sexual health.
- Learning: Youth receive positive messages and accurate information about sex.

Facilitating close youth–adult relationships is an ongoing process throughout all aspects of youth programming. Such opportunities may be formally structured or may occur during informal, open-ended moments. As these close relationships

strengthen young people's awareness of the positive potential in their own sexuality, building life skills can provide them with the tools to explore the positive potential in sexual connections with other people.

Building Life Skills

The second component of the "Big Three" characteristics of youth development programs is building life skills (Lerner, 2004). Teaching both knowledge and skills is the focus of new efforts in health and sexuality education nationwide (Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards, 2007) and can be reinforced directly and indirectly through skill-building processes in youth development programs (Arbeit, 2014). Life skills, like close relationships with adults, can help youth engage with sexuality in ways that are not only safe but also fulfilling. In this section, we discuss goal pursuit skills, consent skills, and communication skills as three examples of life skills relevant to promoting adolescent sexuality development.

A burgeoning body of research indicates the importance of goal pursuit skills in practicing risk management and achieving sexual health (e.g., Catania, Kegeles, & Coates, 1990; Hacker, Brown, Cabral, & Dobbs, 2005). Having specific goals, and living a goal-oriented life, may be related to sexual health outcomes such as comfort, satisfaction, communication, and avoiding sex while intoxicated (Moore & Davidson, 2006). Using contraception is one way of pursuing a goal of physical safety through protecting oneself and one's partner from pregnancy and sexually transmitting infections (STIs). When two people use protection during sexual activity, it shows that one or both of them selected a strategy, accessed resources, and likely communicated with others, all of which represent the use of goal pursuit skills (Catania et al., 1990; Hacker et al., 2005). Youth who are intentionally not having sex name fear of STIs and pregnancy as a major reason for making that choice (Abbott & Dalla, 2008); it is possible that they are pursuing the same goals as youth who use protection during sex. Young people can practice risk management skills in the context of other activities, as well, such as athletics.

Emotional protection and managing emotional risks are also important in the context of sex and sexual activity. Giving and getting consent at each step of sexual activity is one way of reducing the risk of perpetrating sexual violence (Beres, 2007). Consent serves a dual function of preventing sexual violence and facilitating the achievement of mutually desired sexual activity (Arbeit, 2014). Practicing consent is not limited to explicitly sexual contexts—if youth are encouraged to ask each other before engaging in friendly forms of touch such as hugs, massage, or fixing each other's hair, they are building consent skills. Engaging in negotiation to determine mutually desired activities (e.g., art, athletics) also builds consent skills.

Youth who learn to identify what they want, communicate that to others, and give and receive feedback may, thus, be increasing both their sexual health and their overall positive development. Sexual communication includes conversations about sexual histories, sexual fantasies, and sexual likes and dislikes (Widman, Welsh,

McNulty, & Little, 2006). Overall verbal ability (e.g., vocabulary) and nonsexual communication with parents are both associated with young people's reports of initiating communication about pregnancy and STIs before they have sex for the first time (Ryan, Franzetta, Manlove, & Holcombe, 2007). Sexual communication with partners is, in turn, related to protection use (Noar, Carlyle, & Cole, 2006), emotional satisfaction (Cupach & Comstock, 1990), and sexual satisfaction (Mark & Jozkowski, 2013). Practicing open, honest, and respectful communication about sex and sexuality-related topics can help adolescents increase comfort and fluency in such conversations, which in turn may strengthen their skills for communication with potential sexual partners.

Young people can develop many sexuality-related skills in the context of youth programs, including:

- Goal pursuit skills: recruiting resources and managing one's own behavior in pursuit of a specific personal goal
- Consent skills: giving and getting consent throughout an interaction, to determine what shared activities may be mutually desired
- Communication skills: speaking with clarity about one's personal feelings, listening to another person with respect, and asking and answering questions

These skills can be learned and strengthened through any kind of activity, even without directly discussing sex and sexual relationships. As building life skills strengthens young people's ability to engage in sexual relationships, opportunities for leadership can strengthen young people's ability to engage with the broader sexual/social world.

Providing Opportunities for Leadership

The third component of the "Big Three" characteristics of youth development programs is providing opportunities for leadership (Lerner, 2004). Leadership includes opportunities to be a role model, to mentor other youth, to take collective action, and to create change (Mortensen et al., 2014). Leadership allows youth access to personal, interpersonal, and strategic empowerment while building awareness with similar others and taking action towards change (Bay-Cheng, 2012; Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, & Laub, 2009). Opportunities for leadership will ideally involve both analysis (building knowledge and awareness) and advocacy (taking action).

Analysis skills help youth understand how their feelings, behavior, and experiences are influenced by the world around them, politically, culturally, and socially (Diemer & Li, 2011; Elder, Shanahan, & Jennings, 2015). When youth have the ability to analyze the many complex and contradictory messages they receive about sexuality, they are better equipped to resist the influence of negative messages and internalize the significance of positive messages (Diemer & Li, 2011). For example, youth can discuss what they see in music, advertisements, and other media and

collaboratively assess how gender, race, class, and sexual orientation shape the different ways in which sexuality is represented (Kim et al., 2007). Awareness of power and an understanding of the ways in which young people are repeatedly disempowered can inform the ways in which youth develop and enact strategies for advocacy and action (Bay-Cheng, 2012).

With advocacy skills, youth initiate changes within their own developmental contexts. Even through advocacy around issues that are not directly related to sex and sexual health, youth can strengthen their ability to shape social norms and contribute to building resources in their communities (de Vreede, Warner, & Pitter, 2014). Advocacy is a way for young people to articulate their goals for transforming society and to connect with others in addressing shared goals (Akom, Cammarota, & Ginwright, 2008). Accepting and encouraging young people's potential interest in sex and sexuality-related issues are important when youth development programs provide opportunities for youth leadership. Engaging in advocacy that does address sex and sexual health can enable young people to build healthy communities and play an active role in facilitating positive sexuality development for themselves and for others.

Youth programs can provide many different opportunities for leadership, including:

- Analysis: Talking to each other about how their feelings, behavior, and experiences are influenced by the world around them, for example, through discussing sexualized media
- Peer leadership: Educating each other about issues they care about, including but not limited to sexual health and healthy relationships
- Advocacy: Taking steps to transform the world around them in ways that would be supportive to their own development overall and to adolescent sexuality development in particular

Some youth may be drawn towards analysis and advocacy that specifically involve addressing issues related to adolescent sexuality development, such as sexism, homophobia, or sexual violence. Other young people may prefer to take leadership around issues such as racism, poverty, or health inequity. Youth working to address any of these issues may find ways to integrate discussion and action around sexual health and wellness. In addition, any discussion about power and privilege is part of making youth programs a safer space for diverse youth. In the next section, we present ideas for how youth programs can consider the needs of specific groups of youth who might have a harder time accessing and enjoying safer spaces.

Next Steps in Research, Policy, and Practice for Addressing Sexual Health and PYD

Focusing on the "Big Three," as described above, can help a program build a foundation through which to support many young people in pursuing the positive potential in sexuality and mitigating sexual risk. However, youth development

programs can go above and beyond these three program aspects in order to further enhance sexuality development for all youth. In this section, we present steps that youth development programs can take to address the needs of systematically marginalized youth, including youth who may not be immediately identifiable. We provide ideas about how to promote adolescent sexuality development through the pursuit of queer-inclusive, racially just, and trauma-informed approaches to PYD.

A Queer-Inclusive Approach

A queer-inclusive approach to promoting adolescent sexuality development has the potential to support both heterosexual and sexual minority youth (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2009), who all grow up side by side, in a shared cultural context, feeling the negative impact of gender stereotypes and sexual pressure (Tolman, 2006). Therefore, working to make a youth program accessible to and inclusive of queer youth is likely to change the program in ways that benefit all of its participants.

We use the term "queer" to refer to all youth whose experience of sexuality does not fit within traditionally gendered, heterosexual expectations (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2009):

- Youth who experience same-sex desires and attractions
- Youth who question their sexual orientation
- Youth who explicitly identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer
- Transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming youth

The experiences of queer youth must be considered when designing and implementing youth programs, to address homophobia and to promote sexuality development for all young people.

Although many sexual minority youth now grow up in contexts in which their identities are affirmed and their behaviors are supported (Savin-Williams, 2005), many also suffer from minority stress, lack of access, and alienation from family and community (Meyer, 2003). Sexual minority youth report higher levels of depressive symptoms and suicidality than heterosexual youth (Marshal et al., 2013) and face unique barriers to accessing sexual healthcare (Mayer et al., 2008). There is no uniform queer experience. Even young people growing up in the same cultural context may have different risk factors, different systems of support, and different coping mechanisms (Diamond, Bonner, & Dickenson, 2015). Taking steps towards queer inclusivity can improve the developmental context for diverse sexual minority youth as well as for their heterosexual peers, by raising awareness, building empathy, and developing a positive peer climate.

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network defines an inclusive program based on the following criteria: (a) sexual minority youth have the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the program content and activities, and (b) all students have the opportunity to understand the world in a more complex way, which can

reshape both their interpersonal behavior and their thinking about social justice (GLSEN, 2012). Such inclusive programs can reduce homophobic slurs, increase students' perceptions of available support, and strengthen students feelings of connectedness (Black, Fedewa, & Gonzalez, 2012; Szalacha, 2003). Programs that communicate acceptance of queer youth also have the opportunity to connect them to sexual health resources (Mayer et al., 2008). Even if none of the youth in the program openly identify as queer, it is possible that some of them *are* queer or are questioning their identities (Diamond et al., 2015).

Youth development programs can take steps towards queer inclusivity in a variety of ways, including professional development for staff, education for youth, and opportunities to discuss incidents of homophobia. Youth and staff may first need to develop fluency in discussing issues of gender identity and sexual orientation, which includes learning key vocabulary words and practicing the use of gender neutral language (Green, 2010). Furthermore, program staff and peer leaders need the knowledge and skills with which to consistently address homophobic and transphobic language and behavior (Frank & Cannon, 2009). In these ways, youth programs can develop a culture in which youth and adults alike are held accountable for what they say and do and have responsibility for the impact they have on the people around them. It is important for all these efforts to also include people of color, emphasizing the intersectionality of different identities and presenting alternatives to the white, middle-class narrative of queer experiences (Fine & McClelland, 2006).

Intersectionality and Racial Justice

Adolescent sexuality development is shaped not only by gender and sexual orientation but also by other cultural and historical structures of power, such as race, ethnicity, class, and geography (Elder & Shanahan, 2006; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Tolman, 2006). Extensive research documents that youth of color, and Black youth in particular, experience poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes in comparison to their White peers, even controlling for socioeconomic status and education (Collins et al., 2004). These discrepancies in health outcomes are likely related to the impact of systemic discrimination and the trauma of oppression, which can have both biological and psychological impacts (Krieger, 2005). For example, Black and Hispanic youth are more likely to be exposed to sex-negative, sexualizing, and shaming images of other people of color (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Positive sexuality development for diverse youth thus requires "enabling conditions" that do not yet exist, such as access to resources and exposure to positive images (Tolman, Striepe, & Harmon, 2003).

For youth development programs to promote sexuality development for all young people, it is important to take into account the ways in which racism, a system of advantage based on race (Wellman, 1993), shapes young people's experiences. Program staff need training not only in developing cultural competence but also in

developing racial humility (awareness of their own racial identity in relation to that of the youth) and a commitment to racial justice and health equity. Staff dedicated to this process can benefit from an analysis of sexuality that considers young people's experiences at the intersection of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class (Crenshaw, 1991). Helping youth understand the root causes of social problems can mitigate the impact of oppression and support youth-driven projects to combat racism and promote positive sexuality development for themselves and for other youth in their communities (Bay-Cheng, 2012; Ginwright & James, 2002).

Not all youth development programs may be adequately prepared to explicitly address issues of race and racial justice. However, programs can take even small steps to learn about, critique, and combat individual, interpersonal, and institutional racism and to promote racial justice. In these ways, programs can begin to acknowledge young people's complex experiences. Experiences of racism and racially motivated violence may also include or intersect with experiences of sexual violence and sexual trauma.

Trauma-Informed Practices

Youth development programs may have participants who they know to be trauma survivors and also may have unidentified trauma survivors participating in their programs. Many youth may not yet have identified the trauma, they may actively keep the trauma a secret, or they may choose not to inform program staff as a privacy concern. In this section, we consider the safety of youth who have had past or present violations of sexual safety (e.g., child sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, and teen dating violence). Trauma-informed practices can also make youth development programs a safer space for all young people. Because the status quo is one in which unsafe attitudes regarding the physical and emotional aspects of sexuality are normalized, extra awareness and intentionality are needed to create a space in which safe and supportive attitudes about sexuality are upheld (Gavey, 2005).

A trauma-informed approach to promoting adolescent sexual health would consider the fact that throughout the course of program participation, an individual may experience, be reminded of, remember for the first time, or disclose an experience of trauma. Risks to be aware of include direct physical or emotional violation by staff or by other youth; shaming youth for their bodies, for their feelings, or for their own experiences of victimization; and triggering symptoms of posttraumatic stress. Trauma survivors may be particularly reactive to incidents such as boundary violations and abuse of power, by staff or by other youth (Brown, 2013).

The basic principles of PYD affirm that all young people have strengths and have the potential to build upon those strengths to achieve positive developmental trajectories (Lerner et al., 2015). Trauma-informed practices thus include affirmation of individual strengths, investment in caring and connected relationships, and holding both youth and adults responsible for respecting each other's physical and emotional boundaries (Cole et al., 2005). It is paramount, when speaking with youth

about sexuality, to eliminate any assumptions about what sexual experiences, by choice or by force, the youth have had. For example, a young person may be exposed to sexually transmitted infections as a result of making a decision to have sex without protection, but many other young people may have contracted a sexually transmitted infection as a result of sexual violation or coercion. Taking a PYD perspective, however, a person who has been victimized can still regain access to positive sexuality (Fava & Bay-Cheng, 2013).

Some programs may decide to address the issue of sexual violence directly with their participants. For example, they could bring in a guest speaker or educator from a local rape crisis center. Each specific program can review its policies on discipline, reporting, confidentiality, and communication with families, through a trauma-informed lens (Cole et al., 2005). Youth may choose to participate in trauma-related advocacy and action, for example, Take Back the Night. Staff facilitating these activities will need to take steps to mitigate potential triggers and to create space for recovery, including advanced notice about the content of planned activities, ability to opt out of the activity, and specific adults available to talk to during and after the activity.

There are many barriers to addressing the needs of sexual trauma survivors within the context of youth development programs. Not every program, and not every staff member, will have the knowledge and skills to be a survivor advocate, nor is that necessary (Cole et al., 2005). At minimum, adults working with youth need to be able to identify potential signs of sexual trauma, to address safety needs, and connect youth to further resources and support (Fava & Bay-Cheng, 2013).

Table 12.1 Specific suggestions for implementing queer inclusivity, racial justice, and trauma-informed practice in youth development programming

Queer inclusivity	Racial justice	Trauma-informed practice
Stickers, posters, and other physical markers of space Inviting queer speakers or educators Responding directly to homophobic comments and issues Learning and practicing vocabulary Allowing youth to identify personal pronouns Providing safe access to gender neutral bathrooms Providing sexual health information and referrals relevant to youth who engage in same-sex sexual behavior	*Cultural competency and racial humility*: youth program staff and administrators consider how their own racial identity shapes their ability to relate to others *Health equity*: young people talk about their sex education in school and think about how different kinds of information about sex may be delivered in different communities *Intersectionality*: analyzing how sexuality may be experienced differently for youth from particular experiences of race, class, and culture	Affirming that talking about sex can be difficult Practicing active consent and reinforcing personal boundaries for all touch, such as asking for a hug Support for coping with anxiety and other triggered responses Structure, clear expectations, and knowing what to expect ahead of time throughout Acknowledging that not all sexual experiences are consensual Professional development for staff Referrals to mental health professionals

See Table 12.1 for specific suggestions for implementing queer-inclusive, racially just, and trauma-informed approaches in youth development programming. Furthermore, queer inclusivity, racial justice, and trauma-informed practice are actually integrated needs in the lives of young people. As such, youth development programs could benefit from implementing all three of these approaches together, in an integrated manner. Further research, policy, and practice guidelines are needed to integrate these approaches and to develop professional development training, tools for curriculum and activities, and methods for raising awareness that can be used by youth development programs and practitioners.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we provided a framework for considering adolescent sexuality development in terms of risk, pleasure, and positive potential. We presented current research connecting PYD to positive sexual health outcomes. We then explored possible ways in which the "Big Three" characteristics of youth development programs could be leveraged to promote adolescent sexuality development: facilitating youth–adult relationships, building life skills, and providing opportunities for leadership (Lerner, 2004). In addition, we specified three ways in which youth development programs can challenge themselves to address the needs and experiences of marginalized youth: using a queer-inclusive approach, pursuing racial justice, and implementing trauma-informed practice. In these ways, we hope that this chapter provides both useful recommendations for youth development programs and a call for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to collaborate in advancing our understanding of how youth development programs can play a pivotal role in promoting adolescent sexuality development for diverse youth.

The present work has both significant strengths and notable limitations. The vast majority of the existing research on sexual health and PYD focuses on behavioral measures framed in a deficit perspective. Focusing on age at first intercourse and the use of protection implies that sexual activity should be avoided and, when sexual activity does occur, that the best one can hope for is to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. Positive sexuality development can encompass many other goals, as well, such as preventing sexual violence, strengthening young people's capacity for physical and emotional pleasure, and supporting young people in forming fulfilling sexual relationships.

Therefore, the strength of the present chapter is in expanding a discussion of adolescent sexuality development beyond the limits of the extant research, to imagine what it would mean for youth development programs to be holistically involved in promoting positive possibilities for young people. Further research is needed to address how youth development staff can build relationships with young people in which to communicate directly about sex and sexuality, how young people can build sexuality skills such as consent and communication within the context of a youth development program, and how opportunities for leadership can empower young

people in analyzing their social worlds and in advocating for social justice. In addition, interdisciplinary research and cutting-edge practice need to integrate queer inclusivity, racial justice, and trauma-informed practices into youth development approaches, overall, and into approaches for promoting adolescent sexuality, in particular. In these ways, the strength-based promise of PYD research and practice can be leveraged towards sexual health and sexual justice for young people and for the adults they will become.

Acknowledgements The preparation of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Answer. (2015). http://answer.rutgers.edu/

Answer is a national organization that provides online trainings, lesson plans, and resources for teens in support of access to comprehensive sexuality education for young people and the adults who teach them.

Advocates for Youth. (2015). http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/

Advocates for Youth is an organization that provides resources to support youth sexual health, with specific resources for working with youth of color and LGBTQ youth. This program supports youth activism for young people to take their health and rights into their own hands.

Scarleteen. (2015). http://www.scarleteen.com/

Scarleteen provides information tailored to youth on a wide variety of sexual health issues. Direct services for youth on the website include messages boards, advice columns, text, and live chat.

SIECUS: Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (2015). http://www.siecus.org/

This council, founded in 1964, provides access to information, knowledge, and skills for educators and youth workers, including fact sheets, lesson plans, advocacy, and other resources.

Start Strong. (2015). http://startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/

The Start Strong website provides resources for youth on dating violence prevention, including insights that can guide important decisions about which strategies to use and how to execute them.

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Chapter 13
A Positive Youth Development Approach to Bullying: Promoting Thriving and Reducing Problem Behaviors

Lacey J. Hilliard, Milena Batanova, and Edmond P. Bowers

When working through difficult situations with young people, parents, practitioners, and policy makers often wonder how adolescents ended up the way they are or behave the way they do. Many of these adults fall back on the belief that adolescence is just a time of "storm and stress" (Hall, 1904), a period in which young people experience many difficulties and are "problems to be managed" (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This "deficit-focused" approach can lead parents, practitioners, and policy makers to identify ways to prevent or minimize these problems. In contrast, the positive youth development (PYD) perspective focuses on promoting youth thriving by aligning the strengths of youth with the resources found in their environment (families, peers, schools, out-of-school time activities; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015).

Strength-based approaches such as the PYD perspective are framed by relational developmental systems (RDS) models of human development. RDS models view development as the result of complex interactions between the person as a whole and all of the contexts in which he or she lives (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Therefore, to promote thriving, practitioners and policy makers must take into account the characteristics of the young people with whom they work, including their strengths and needs; where they come from, and what resources and risks can be identified in those contexts; and what new resources can be provided to enhance the likelihood of healthy positive development.

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© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2015

E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_13

An initial assumption of the PYD perspective was that if parents or educators promoted aspects of a young person's positive development, such as their academic achievement, self-esteem, social competence, and character, then problematic or risk behaviors such as substance use and delinquency would decrease (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001). However, young people are much more complex than that assumption entails, as most youth engage in both positive and problematic behaviors (see Chap. 9). In fact, risk-taking and testing boundaries are often a part of normal adolescent development; therefore, many positively developing youth sometimes break rules or do things that warrant concern from their parents, teachers, and other adults. The key task is to recognize that problem behaviors do not exist in a vacuum and that all youth have assets and resources to be identified and nurtured. A whole-child, or holistic, approach to development would recognize the existence of both positive and challenging aspects in every young person. Based on a strength-based PYD perspective, parents, educators, and youth-serving professionals can capitalize on the strengths of youth and align them with positive resources from different contexts, to promote positive behaviors and minimize the negative ones.

Traditionally, bullying is identified as a negative behavior that has been linked to several problematic developmental outcomes and thus viewed from a deficit perspective. In prior decades, bullying was often viewed as a defining feature of "the storm and stress" of adolescence, as many young people had to survive or avoid the insults and aggression of antisocial bullies. More recently, the recognition of the pervasive and long-term adverse effects of bullying for both the bully and the victim has motivated the implementation of anti-bullying programs and "zero tolerance" policies in schools and out-of-school time programs. However, many schools increasingly recognize that programs and policies need to go beyond punitive sanctions against negative behaviors to recognize the complexities inherent in bullying. Such recognition may create truly positive and meaningful behavior change. A reframing of bullying from a strength-based PYD perspective may be an innovative and effective way of approaching bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

In this chapter, we present evidence to support a strength-based PYD perspective for thinking about the complex nature of bullying. Based on this framework, we contend that youth who engage in negative behaviors also have internal strengths to be encouraged and further cultivated in meaningful ways. We will discuss findings from research and give examples of programs that strive to address these complexities. More specifically, we will first define bullying from the PYD perspective as compared to a deficit perspective. Next, we will describe the characteristics most commonly associated with bullying at the individual, peer, and school levels. Then we will describe strength-based programs that show promise in bullying prevention and intervention. Finally, we will provide recommendations for practice and policy to address bullying based on this evidence.

A Positive Youth Development Approach to Bullying

All adults in the lives of youth have a role to play in creating a positive climate in schools, youth programs, and the broader culture. We think this climate will occur with a shift from being against negative behaviors toward promoting positive behaviors. In this chapter, we propose a strength-based, PYD approach to preventing and intervening with bullying-related behaviors. Our approach capitalizes on youth assets and resources. In doing so, we provide practical strategies and discuss innovative curriculum for encouraging prosocial behaviors and promoting social contexts that build positive, meaningful connections for young people. We propose moving beyond prior definitions of bullying that led to labeling youth based on some facets of their behavior and toward a PYD-driven education model that will help educators and practitioners create effective learning environments to support the development of the whole student.

Some recent studies on bullying have taken a PYD perspective and have emphasized that the reduction of bullying needs to occur simultaneously with the ongoing promotion of positive assets and resources (e.g., Hilliard et al., 2014; Ma, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009a, 2009b). This framework can inform program development and evaluation tools for bullying prevention efforts, including comprehensive bullying assessments that need to take into account the individuals and contexts in which the behaviors occur. In taking a strength-based approach, researchers and practitioners can strive to identify and understand the potential strengths of youth who bully, and build on these strengths as a means to reduce and prevent bullying. Specifically, through this approach, we could better understand the reasons behind negative or problem behaviors beyond those traditionally found among youth involved in bullying, such as poor coping skills, negative peer influences, and lack of support from parents, teachers, and other adults. The PYD approach thus requires that professionals identify what strengths might be lacking but, also, what strengths might be present, so as to capitalize on them by engaging the child with positive resources and contexts (e.g., by providing opportunities for involvement in out-of-school time activities and meaningful connections to adults in their communities; see Chaps. 1 and 6).

Defining Bullying from a PYD Perspective

Bullying has been widely defined as repeated aggressive behavior in which an individual or group of individuals intend(s) to hurt another person who is physically or psychologically less powerful (Olweus, 1994). This definition remains useful in highlighting that an imbalance of power is inherent in bullying and that bullying occurs over a period of time; however, it can be limiting in terms of

categorizing individuals into static labels of "bullies" or "victims" (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Rather, bullying is a dynamic social process involving various types of aggression and statuses that can change based on different developmental periods, such as through middle school or transitions to high school. Bullying also involves relational, social experiences, including interactions, biases, and treatment based on social status, gender, and racial groups. These experiences are also embedded within a variety of settings, such as peer groups, teacher-student relationships, and after-school programs. Understanding bullying from a PYD perspective will require examining the characteristics that are related to bullying behavior at these different levels.

Attention to school bullying has expanded across the globe (e.g., Jimerson, Swearer, & Espelage, 2010), with many countries (or individual states in the United States) legally requiring schools to implement anti-bullying programs (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Srabstein, Berkman, & Pyntikova, 2008). A major challenge is getting educators and practitioners to adopt comprehensive evidence-based programs (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). In addition, when evidence-based programs are adopted, only about half of them produce even *short-term* reductions in bullying and victimization (Evans, Fraser, & Cotter, 2014). Compared to other countries, U.S. programs fare worse in seeing desirable outcomes, which remain largely focused on reducing bullying and victimization and not necessarily on promoting meaningful positive behaviors (Evans et al., 2014). The lack of a PYD approach to bullying may explain the limited effectiveness of many of these programs. From a PYD perspective, effective programs must be comprehensive and include programming aimed at youth and at the multiple contexts in which youth live, such as classrooms, schools, families, and, as part of these contexts, in their interactions with social media. They must also focus on building upon the strengths found in both the youth and these contexts.

Characteristics Associated with Bullying

Given the multidimensional nature of bullying and the many challenges associated with comprehensive programming, there is a need to identify how a PYD perspective can help in understanding the complexity of bullying more deeply and across contexts. Although much of the evidence that will be discussed comes from research in schools, the information is intended for use outside school settings as well. It is important to understand relationships between individuals and their contexts and to apply what we know from PYD research and existing programs to not only reduce youth problem behaviors but also to enhance youth well-being. Therefore, we turn now to the individual-, peer group-, and system-level characteristics that have been linked to bullying behaviors.

Individual Characteristics

Youth directly involved in bullying are typically identified as bullies, victims, and individuals who exhibit both bullying and victimization, also known as bully-victims (Nansel et al., 2001). Because of the many problems these youth experience, it is not surprising that many studies have approached the study of bullying from a deficit perspective. Across age groups, for instance, victims and bully-victims have been described as experiencing serious psychosocial problems, including psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., feeling tired and tense), loneliness or social isolation, having poor relationships with peers, poor coping strategies, and manifesting feelings of depression or anxiety (Cowie, 2000; Gini & Pozzoli, 2009). There is also some evidence to show that being depressed or anxious during the beginning of a school year can place youth at risk for becoming *new* victims of bullying later in the year (Fekkes, Pijpers, Fredriks, Vogels, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2006). Although bullies can also show depression or anxiety, studies have mostly associated bullying with anger, conduct problems, and expressing little or no empathy for others (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Menesini, Modena, & Tani, 2009).

Bullies and victims also possess strengths or assets that could be cultivated for positive ends, however. Victims may be especially empathic and concerned for the well-being of others, given that they know what it is like to be victimized; they thus may show a willingness to help others (Batanova, Espelage, & Rao, 2014). Some bullies are also socially intelligent but use their perspective-taking abilities as an effective means of bullying others in order to get what they want (Caravita, Di Blasio, & Salmivalli, 2009). Many bullies feel good about themselves and their interactions with others.

Peer Group Characteristics

Indeed, many bullies enjoy high social status because of the social feedback they get from their peers. Whereas many bullies may be disliked, they are still considered powerful among their peers (Estell et al., 2008). Bullies often possess positive qualities that afford them power, such as being good leaders, athletic, and physically attractive and wearing stylish clothes (Juvonen & Galvan, 2008; Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2003). In turn, it is difficult for other students to support victims at the risk of not fitting in or themselves getting bullied (Juvonen & Galvan, 2008). Some students thus reinforce the bullying by passively watching or ignoring what is happening, some join in and assist the bully, and only a small number intervene or defend other students (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996).

Students who defend others tend to feel a sense of personal responsibility to intervene or have empathy for the victim and do not blame them for their plight (e.g., Barchia & Bussey, 2011; Pöyhönen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2010). It is important, however, for students to have friends who share in their sense of responsibility and for students to be able to resist peer pressure to not intervene (Pozzoli, Gini, & Vieno, 2012). Unfortunately, the older students get, the less popular it becomes to help others, particularly among boys (Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010). Older girls have been found to employ indirect intervention strategies, such as talking to other students about the bullying or trying to distract the bully; these approaches are likely to preserve their relationships and social standing. Among younger, elementary-aged students, direct strategies are more likely, such as telling the bully to stop, helping or comforting the victim, and talking to an adult (Trach et al., 2010).

Either type of strategy can be difficult for youth to enact because of peer pressure. In general, bullies tend to affiliate with peer groups comprised of bullies, or students become influenced by such peer groups over time (Espelage, Green, & Wasserman, 2007; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Particularly during the transition to middle school, when students may become increasingly self-conscious and want approval from their peers, initial perceptions can determine what roles students play in the bullying. For example, students who think bullies hold a high status are more likely to start bullying. If students want to hang out with bullies but are then rejected, they also tend to increase their bullying behavior (Juvonen & Ho, 2008).

Another characteristic of bullying behaviors is that they are more frequent in middle school. This occurrence may be because this time is characterized by an increase in the importance of peers and time spent developing within peer groups (see Chap. 7). In the transition to middle school, students have also been found to become more supportive of relational aggression (Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2004; Werner & Hill, 2010). By definition, relational aggression captures indirect and oftentimes covert, manipulative behaviors, such as threatening to withdraw one's friendship, purposefully excluding a peer from social activities, and spreading gossip about a peer (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Vaillancourt et al., 2003). Contrary to common assumptions, girls are not necessarily more relationally aggressive than boys; they simply use more covert rather than physical tactics for hurting others (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006). Moreover, relationally aggressive youth have been found to show internalizing problems, such as anxiety, but also good social skills, such as cooperation and leadership (Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008).

School Characteristics

There are also school-level characteristics linked to the prevalence of bullying. In short, if schools promote positive and prosocial norms, then students are more likely to adopt these norms and act accordingly (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). At the school level, students who feel a sense of belonging or

bonding to their school have fewer problem behaviors and less involvement in bullying (Catalano et al., 2004; Goldweber, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2013; Waasdorp, Baker, Paskewich, & Leff, 2013). This bonding is often a reflection of feeling safe at school and close to classmates and teachers. Students and staff in elementary schools are more likely to feel a sense of belonging than those in secondary schools, where less structure and adult support have been linked to higher levels of bullying and victimization (Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001; Vaillancourt et al., 2010; Waasdorp et al., 2013).

Other school processes are also linked to higher incidences of bullying. For example, students and staff are less likely to report witnessing bullying in schools where bullies are perceived as popular (Waasdorp et al., 2013). Popular bullies may employ more indirect ways of bullying, which could explain why some educators and administrators fail to consistently identify and respond to bullying in their schools. Teachers can also perpetuate relational forms of aggression when they have preferences for certain students over others (Moore, Shoulberg, & Murray-Close, 2012). Moreover, teachers are not likely to intervene when they view the bullying as acceptable or when they believe victims should be able to assert themselves (Hektner & Swenson, 2011). In some cases, school staff may even contribute to bullying directly, given that up to 30 % of students get ignored and verbally harassed by teachers (James et al., 2008; Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, & Brethour, 2006).

Cyberbullying

In general, this chapter describes some of the key issues related to bullying and illustrative programs promoting a strength-based approach to bullying behaviors. We do not directly address cyberbullying in particular, but we recognize the added complexities that take place when considering issues of cyberbullying and want to identify characteristics of this context of bullying as well. The definition of cyberbullying is very much the same as for bullying in general (e.g., there is an imbalance of power, and it occurs repeatedly with the intent to hurt or harm someone), but the difference is that it occurs via electronic means, including texting, video messaging, and social media online (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

Cyberbullying is yet another context or medium through which bullying can occur, and it can be particularly effective because of its instant and pervasive nature. After all, youth can relentlessly and even anonymously attack, 24 hours a day, for the whole world to watch. Because this "world" is still very much inclusive of the victim's school, peers, and classmates (or their family, neighborhood, community, etc.), there has been increasing controversy surrounding the extent to which schools (and youth-serving professionals) can monitor, regulate, and deal with cyberbullying (Goodno, 2011). For instance, when can schools legally respond to something that happens off-campus? How can they respond in ways that are not invasive of students' rights but also proactive rather than reactive?

In 2014, the *New York Times* hosted an online debate featuring opinions about cyberbullying and posed the question, "Should Schools Regulate Student's Off-Campus Behavior?" (http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/10/28/dealing-with-online-bullies-outside-the-classroom; October 28, 2014). In the responses, some believed that school had no role in regulating online behavior. For example, one commenter said, "The domain of school stops after the last bell rings. Unless the Internet activity is being done on school time or in the classroom as an extracurricular activity, the school has no authority with what students do outside of school." In contrast, one commenter's remark focused on the role of education in developing citizens, and it is important (and often imperative) for schools to address issues of cyberbullying (emphasis added):

> Although off-campus behavior is not typically the responsibility of the school, it is crucial that we educate our students on how to be *good digital citizens*. Understanding how to conduct oneself online and within social media is vital to both their academic and social-emotional success, so there is no question as to whether educational institutions have an obligation to address this topic. Additionally, if a *social conflict takes place off-campus, but the repercussions bleed into school interactions, the school still has a right and responsibility to take action, even if it is simply support or education on how to handle the situation*. At the heart of every decision should be what is best for the child and anything we can do to guide them through a difficult circumstance is key to developing happy, well-adjusted and productive citizens.

Cyberbullying is one context by which children and adolescents show negative treatment of others; the actions and consequences of online bullying mirror other types of bullying behaviors and often reflect issues that occur in school or within after-school programs. It is important, as the second commenter expressed, for adults to encourage and model positive citizenship in behaviors, both in person and online, and to promote open dialogue about how individuals are treated.

Integrating Prevention and PYD Perspectives on Bullying

Recent efforts have been made to bridge the divide between research on problem behaviors and research on PYD, with the goal of contributing to effective interventions that may address challenging behaviors in youth, including bullying (e.g., Bowers et al., 2011; Hilliard et al., 2014; Phelps et al., 2007). Much of this work comes from the 4-H Study of PYD, a 10-year longitudinal study of adolescent strengths and their social environments (see Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, & Lerner, 2014; Lerner et al., 2005; Chap. 1). The primary focus of the 4-H Study was to define and assess youth assets and resources; however, the 4-H Study also assessed problematic behaviors, including bullying peers and being bullied by peers in school.

In one of the studies to address bullying, Ma et al. (2009a) examined if being a bully or being a victim was related to an adolescent's academic competence or how well they felt they did at school. Being a bully or a victim did have negative consequences for how competent students felt academically. However, bullying involvement

did not have negative consequences on student academic competence, if students were interested and invested in school. This relation was especially true for students with positive expectations about their future educational opportunities, such as going to college. Having teacher and parent support also helped students feel competent and perform well in school, thereby showing how positive resources (e.g., adult support) could align with youth assets (e.g., positive school expectations and commitment to schoolwork) to prevent and reduce bullying involvement.

The nuances in the connections between these patterns of bullying experiences support the need to examine the diverse ways in which positive and problematic attributes may be linked. For example, in subsequent work with the 4-H Study sample, Hilliard et al. (2014) studied how students' character developed alongside their bullying involvement from grades 5 to 7. The types of character examined were moral character (such as being kind, empathetic, and respectful toward others; having an ethical compass), civic character (a sense of responsibility to the communities of which one is a member), and performance character (such as persevering on a task).

Youth who reported engaging in bullying behavior reported lower initial levels of moral, civic, and performance character as compared to those not involved in bullying. Victims of bullying did not differ from other students who were not directly involved in bullying on their initial levels or changes in either type of character. In prior work, victims have been seen as lacking in competence, whether it involves general social skills, coping skills, or not having the assertiveness or ability to defend themselves. Yet, the Hilliard et al. (2014) study points to important assets that can be identified within victims. Youth who reported that they have been bullied possess character virtues related to kindness, ethical responsibility, and diligence that could be supported and encouraged. More research is needed to understand these processes further (e.g., how these strengths can be applied inside and outside of bullying situations). However, this work shows the importance of taking an individual, holistic focus and considering how all youth can view themselves as competent and able to make changes in themselves and in their communities.

Comprehensive Approaches to Bullying

In addition to some of the concerns regarding school-based bullying incidents, bullying is considered both a serious social problem and public health issue throughout the United States. Although there have been advances in our understanding of bullying as it is embedded within various social contexts, many anti-bullying programs throughout the nation continue to target bullies and/or victims without considering the strengths and challenges of bullies and victims (Evans et al., 2014; Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006). Whereas these programs often do take into account individual-, school-, and family-level characteristics related to bullying, they do not aim to build from youth strengths nor promote prosocial behavior. We suggest that the narrow and deficit-oriented approach to bullying intervention and prevention programs may, in part, explain why these programs have been met with limited success.

Nevertheless, we recognize that some of the more recent bullying programs that consider and include the complex ecologies of a young person's lives in the interventions themselves are moving in the right direction. For example, more and more schools have begun adopting "whole-school" initiatives that recognize that school staff and students all play various roles in the prevention or perpetuation of bullying behaviors (e.g., Richard, Schneider, & Mallet, 2011). Some of these initiatives are also tailored to the unique components of each school context, reflecting an awareness that what works for one school might not necessarily work in another school, especially considering the increasing diversity of youth in many, but not all, schools throughout the United States (Coll, 2015). Relatedly, nearly 40 % of participants in one bullying study reported that they had been bullied within the past year, and 75 % of all bullying was described as coming from some type of social group bias, such as those based on race, gender, and sexual orientation (Russell, Sinclair, Poteat, & Koenig, 2012).

Thus, bullying experiences and, therefore, bullying interventions may impact youth differently based on their social group membership, and the complex dynamics and characteristics of the student populations in different schools must be accounted for as part of developing and implementing such programs. For example, one study of a bullying prevention program found that reductions in peer victimization were found only for European-American students and not for Asian or Black students (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007). Therefore, effective programs need to go beyond basic outcome investigations of whether a program works or not. Researchers and practitioners need to consider what works, for whom, and under what circumstances.

Although researchers have begun examining bullying from more complex and strength-based approaches, programs and interventions are still largely focused on the deficits or problems of youth who bully. Accordingly, we describe findings from reviews of bullying programs and research. In doing so, we highlight the positive results of those programs that have taken a strength-based approach to bullying prevention.

Reviews of Anti-bullying Programs

One of the earliest reviews of research on anti-bullying programs found small reductions in bullying and victimization and, in some cases, negative influences of these programs on the schools in which they took place (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004). In their review, Smith and colleagues (2004) found, for example, that some students reported experiencing more bullying in their school as a result of their program exposure. Although increases in bullying may reflect increases in awareness and therefore better knowledge of what constitutes bullying behavior and how to report it, they do bring up two concerns: (1) certain programs might inadvertently increase bullying behaviors by making students more knowledgeable and thus better equipped to hurt others effectively, and (2) the assessment and evaluation

of bullying behaviors are often limited to student self-reports, without the corroboration of other sources.

Subsequently, a review by Vreeman and Carroll (2007) distinguished different types of interventions into four main categories: (1) classroom curriculum, (2) whole-school or multidisciplinary programs, (3) social and behavioral skill group trainings, and (4) other programs, including a social worker support program and a mentoring program for “at-risk” children. The whole-school or multidisciplinary anti-bullying programs were found to be most effective, including those with school-wide rules and consequences for bullying, teacher training, and conflict resolution strategies. However, of the 10 studies evaluating whole-school programs, two studies examined the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in Norway and reported very mixed results. Whereas Olweus (1993, 1994) reported decreases in both bullying and victimization, Roland (2000) reported increases. The OBPP is considered to be one of the few promising anti-bullying programs in the United States, but studies in the United States also show inconsistent results (Bauer et al., 2007).

Merrell and colleagues (2006) found very conflicting results of 16 studies that evaluated the effectiveness of bullying programs. Although all studies showed small to negligible effects, the authors reported that some interventions enhanced students’ social competence, self-esteem, peer acceptance, and increased teacher knowledge and efficacy in implementing interventions. However, the authors also found that programs were less effective in reducing actual bullying and victimization rates. In fact, programs did not consistently measure important outcomes, including bullying and victimization, as well as factors related to the school climate, teacher attitudes and beliefs about bullying, and students’ positive attributes *beyond* social skills.

Components of Successful Programs

According to another review by Farrington and Ttofi (2009), effective programs specifically target teachers’ competence in responding to bullying, provide both teacher and parent trainings, and use multimedia to enhance the lessons they provide. Programs involving parent meetings, firm disciplinary methods, and improved playground supervision worked best, whereas those involving work with peers showed increases in victimization (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). In response, however, Smith, Salmivalli, and Cowie (2012) pointed out that *disciplinary methods* and *work with peers* are multifaceted concepts, and their effectiveness can only be judged based on other elements of a program and the contexts within which the program is implemented.

In regard to disciplinary methods, for instance, an evaluation of the KiVa program in Finland found that both nonconfronting (where the bully is not blamed and asked to share the concern of the victim) and confronting (where the bullying child is told that the behavior is not tolerated) methods can be effective, depending on the age group and frequency of bullying (Garandeau, Ahn, & Rodkin, 2011).

The nonconfronting approaches worked better with younger children and especially when handling long-term bullying cases, whereas confronting approaches had some positive effects on adolescents but generally worked for more short-term cases. In another evaluation paying attention to peer group dynamics, the program was only effective in reducing bullying for students with medium or low levels of popularity, but not for the highly popular bullies (Garandeau, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2013).

Thus, the authors suggested that one approach to effective programming is to promote a school culture that minimizes the importance of status hierarchies and encourages more equal relationships among peers. Such environments may be created especially by giving youth a myriad of options for building relationships *outside* of existing peer groups and friendship networks.

Social-Emotional Learning and Character Initiatives

Given the limited effectiveness of traditional anti-bullying programs that target problem behaviors, schools are increasingly incorporating other educational models, such as social-emotional learning and character education that are more reflective of strength-based approaches. Specifically, social and emotional learning (SEL) programs focus on teaching the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003). These competencies reflect those intentional self-regulation skills assessed in the 4-H Study (see Chap. 2). The SEL competencies should lead youth to enact more prosocial behaviors and engage in fewer risky and problem behaviors, such as bullying and victimization (Greenberg et al., 2003).

SEL is defined as the processes by which children acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to recognize and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions and constructively handle challenging social situations (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003; Elias et al., 1997). Similarly, many character education initiatives focus on interpersonal relationship buildings and include a range of concepts including moral education, civic education, and positive school culture (Lickona, 2006).

Social and emotional learning-based initiatives continue to gain support as they are seen as both effective and cost-effective approaches to promoting positive development in youth (Lickona, 2006). For instance, schools that have instituted efforts to specifically foster character-based attributes have seen a reduction in violence and discipline referrals, as well as improved attendance and higher academic performance in their schools (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Moreover, schools that have implemented empirically based character education curricula have seen major improvements including increased academic achievement for all learners, greater development of global citizenship, improved attitudes, and improved job satisfaction and retention among teachers (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

As more evidence emerges on the value of these programs, researchers have begun to identify the specific characteristics of these programs that have made them effective. These analyses contribute to the scholarship on best practices for practitioners who wish to initiate similar programs. In a rigorous review of character education programs, Berkowitz and Bier (2005) identified 54 evidence-based programs and found that the most effective in-school efforts define character to include promoting core values, providing students with opportunities for moral action, and offering a learning community that adheres to the same values and lessons that they teach. Moreover, the most effective in-school efforts that positively affect students involve the whole school staff, students, parents, and community members (Theokas & Lerner, 2006).

By creating an inclusive learning environment that supports all students, educators maintain a space that is intolerant of bullying and makes the message clear that all students need to be supported and encouraged. Everyone in the youth context (including administrators, teachers, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, assistants, substitute teachers, parents/guardians, and students) has a role to play in creating an anti-bullying climate in schools, youth programs, and broader culture, with a shift from thinking about being "anti" or against certain behaviors toward being for a positive approach.

Illustrative Programs Beyond "Anti-bullying"

In this section, we highlight programs developed with this shift in mind that also focus on SEL. These selected programs are examples of approaches aimed at developing the whole student and promoting positive peer and classroom community relationships. Although approaches to bullying prevention vary, we identify two programs that can serve as models for empirically driven efforts that go beyond traditional anti-bullying models and take a social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention: Second Step (Thornton, Craft, Dahlberg, Lynch, & Baer, 2000) and Roots of Empathy (ROE) (Schonert-Reichl, Smith, Zaidman-Zait, & Hertzman, 2012). We then describe a program developed through research teams led by the chapter authors that is designed to take a PYD approach to addressing individual-, peer-, and school-level factors through digital media and technology-based curricula.

Second Step

Second Step is an education curriculum that addresses the social and emotional skills of children and youth in grades prekindergarten through middle school. The program aims to enhance the social environment by providing students with social cognitive skills that enable them to negotiate situations of interpersonal conflict in a nonviolent manner (Thornton et al., 2000). Each grade level has its own program

that focuses on developmentally appropriate content such as empathy, emotion regulation, bullying prevention, and problem-solving.

The Second Step program also offers a six-lesson, video-based program for families who are taught the same skills that their children learn in order to further enforce the lessons such as impulse control, problem-solving, and anger management. The family guide includes an overview video, three skills training videos and 25 sets of problem-solving, and anger-management skill-step magnets.

Roots of Empathy

ROE is an evidence-based classroom program that reaches children from kindergarten through eighth grade. Founded in Canada in 1996, ROE is a 9-month classroom-based program founded upon developmental science research and theory that looks at how emotion processes and social experiences influence children's social behaviors (e.g., Shipman, Zeman, Penza, & Champion, 2000). With an effort to foster empathy, the program activities revolve around an infant and the infant's parents, who visit the students once a month. The baby is central to the delivery of the ROE program and is considered the teacher.

Participating classrooms "adopt" the infant and learn about the baby's growth and development through interactions and lessons with a trained ROE instructor who visits the classroom three times a month. The instructor teaches bimonthly lessons on empathy, emotional understanding, and problem-solving and uses the infant-parent visit as the focal point for discussions and application of the lesson. While the infant-parent interaction is part of ROE across all grade levels, there are four different curriculums scripted to be developmentally appropriate for all grade levels. Throughout the lessons and across all grade levels, students are engaged in stories, art projects, and other interactive activities intended to allow them to share and reflect on their own experiences, emotions, and thoughts related to the topics. ROE also works with the teacher and students to help recreate the classroom to reflect the caring and collaborative styles introduced by the ROE program.

In short, ROE uses developmentally appropriate methods to focus on social relationships as the teaching tool. The inclusion of the infant and his or her parents, as well as the constant discussion and interactions in the classroom, demonstrates a unique and active approach that engages all members of the classroom. Furthermore, the inclusion of various supplemental activities and materials, introduced by the teacher or instructor, creates more opportunities to instill lessons.

Arthur Interactive Media Study

The Arthur Interactive Media (AIM) Study is a program designed as a digital media- and technology-based intervention that seeks to promote character development in elementary school students through collaborative learning (Bowers et al., 2015).

The intervention uses interactive digital features in classrooms built on episodes from the popular children's television series, *Arthur*, which is designed to help children understand and reflect on their feelings and choices by modeling positive responses to various emotional and social challenges. Storylines focus on forgiveness, generosity, honesty, humility, empathy, and love. Children engage with these features within cross-aged peer dyads and through a full activity-based curriculum that is designed to also promote the virtues of creativity, future-mindedness, and joy. Strengthening these attributes is intended to increase prosocial behaviors such as inclusion and conflict resolution, with the intent of strengthening relationships and decreasing bullying.

The AIM curriculum encourages youth to examine different character perspectives and make choices for the characters and affords them opportunities to develop and practice social and emotional skills. This curriculum is developed in a multifaced approach to prevent problematic behaviors by building on and strengthening individual attributes (e.g., empathy, generosity), peer relationships (through collaborative learning and mentorship), and classroom climate (via teacher-led discussions and shared class experiences).

Recommendations for Future Research, Practice, and Policy

The evidence that we have discussed provides several key points for youth-serving professionals and policy makers on bullying when viewed from a PYD perspective. Specifically:

- A PYD perspective, which aims to align youth strengths with the environment, enhances the likelihood of success in anti-bullying efforts by focusing not only on reduction of problematic behavior but on the promotion of youth thriving.
- These efforts must identify and align individual youth strengths and resources from multiple contexts such as families, peer groups, and schools.
- Importance is placed on taking an individual focus of experiences and on considering how all youth can view themselves as competent, able to make change, and have the agency to pull from their contexts.
- In programming, schools, practitioners, and researchers need to go beyond basic outcome investigations of whether a program works or not, but rather consider "what works, for whom, and under what circumstances."

Priority Applications for Policy and Practice

In this section, we provide specific examples and suggestions of what educators and youth development programs can do to create a context in which positive personal strengths and peer relationships can be supported. We discuss how schools and programs can promote preventative approaches to bullying while promoting overall positive development in youth via strength-based approaches, as well as issues and recommendations for policy makers.

Educators, Youth Practitioners, and Policy Makers

It is important to have commitment and investment in schools and programs to incorporate evidence-based, ongoing, school and community-wide, community efforts toward the prevention and intervention of bullying. We have several recommendations for teachers and youth-serving professionals.

Recommendation 1: Address Peer Group, Program, and School Norms. In order for a program to be truly effective, often it is necessary to change the deep-seated norms within the peer group and across the school regarding bullying and bystander responses to bullying. Social norms and peer influence have to be considered in developing and evaluating prevention and intervention programs. Some ways to target and shift peer, classroom, and school norms include:

- Ensuring that there is common language or understanding about bullying prevention and the importance of promoting positive assets and resources.
- Putting into place specific procedures for reporting incidents but also responses and ongoing processes need to be clearly communicated and made readily accessible.
- Having youth actively involved in school reform practices (see Cohen, 2014 for a discussion of school climate policy and practice trends).
- Addressing the extent to which demographic variables (such as gender and race) and biases impact efficacy. Targets of bullies are often from a group marginalized because of a certain characteristic about which others hold prejudiced assumptions (e.g., regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, religion, ethnicity, gender expression or identity). Be aware of and be ready to address sexual harassment and homophobic language.
- Being flexible and adaptive to how students engage with the programs and identify, document, and observe patterns about *which* components of *which* programs work for *which* children and adolescents.

Recommendation 2: Promote Social and Emotional Learning. Taking a whole child, strength-based, and relational approach is foundational to fostering positive individual development, peer group functioning, and school climate. As illustrated in the descriptions of the programs we have described, it is critical for preventative bullying efforts to aim to build social and emotional processing skills (such as labeling, managing, and communicating emotions about oneself as well as recognizing and responding appropriately to the emotions of others).

At the time of writing this chapter (in early 2015), there are no federal mandates for bullying curricula or staff training. However, 49 states in the United States have passed school anti-bullying legislation and require some sort of bullying-focused programming. StopBullying.gov provides a list of policies and laws that have been enacted to prevent bullying across the United States. The federal government also provides a list of 11 key components (such as identifying the purpose, scope, communication plan, training plan, and monitoring plan of preventative and intervention bullying efforts) that may be useful to those who are creating or improving

anti-bullying policies or laws in their states. In addition to the federal recommendation, other organizations have advocated in front of the courts on behalf of students facing bullying. The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) created its signature legislation, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, to require all public K-12 schools to enact an anti-bullying policy that includes specific protections for bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity, along with other categories such as race and religion.

Social and emotional learning, and the need to teach skills beyond academic achievement, has also come to the attention of policy makers. Two bills supporting social and emotional learning were introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 113th congressional session. Supporters of these bills pushed for SEL programs to be research based and funded on an ongoing basis, recognizing the need to integrate SEL skills into the school curriculum and culture. As Sen. Tim Ryan said, "Social and emotional competencies aren't 'soft skills.' They are the foundation for all other skills. If we want a tolerant society, a compassionate society… we need to teach the skills that create the society—the social and emotional" (Hart, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2015).

It is promising to have political attention and to have policies focused on these issues. It is important in moving forward to think critically about the programs that are adopted in schools and that policies and laws consider the unique needs of the schools and children.

Recommendation 3: Involve Parents in Anti-bullying Efforts. Schools can set the stage for meaningful parent involvement, ensuring that they feel valued and are given opportunities to contribute their expertise (Zaff, 2011; see also Chaps. 1, 6, and 7). To sustain parent and youth involvement, schools need to provide meaningful roles for them. School staff can keep parents informed, make them feel welcome, and treat them as partners. Schools can consider identifying a school coordinator to support parent and youth engagement strategies. In addition, schools can set meeting times that are convenient for parents and youth and may consider additional incentives, such as providing dinner or child care. Parents can contribute to a positive school climate through the parent teacher association, volunteering, and school improvement events. Schools should also work to implement policies and practices to involve parents in their children's education. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) identified several ways that schools with effective character education programs have involved parents. In basic collaborative actions, schools worked to include parents in preventative and intervention bullying programs by:

- Providing parents with information about events at the school through newsletters and emails
- Working with parents as partners in designing, implementing, and delivering curricula to young people
- Training and meetings with families on topics such as bullying, discipline, and positive youth development

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to extend traditional approaches to defining and addressing bullying toward a strength-based, positive youth development approach. To this end, we described commonly accepted bullying characteristics, presented recent findings from the PYD literature to reframe thinking around bullying, discussed reviews of bullying interventions, described programs with promise, and discussed the complexity of youth experiences with recommendations about how to address issues of bullying.

Although involvement in bullying has been linked to a number of problematic developmental outcomes, it is possible and imperative to promote programs and policies that go beyond punitive actions against bullying behaviors and acknowledge and respond to the complexities involved in bullying. In this chapter, we approached bullying from a strength-based, PYD perspective. In doing so, we provided an overview of the individual- and system-level factors related to bullying and discussed the need to take the whole child—and his or her contexts—into account when developing frameworks to prevent and intervene with bullying. We provided strategies and recommendations for educators and policy maker based on this approach. Specifically, we recommended that program leaders and educators are provided with the tools they need to first, address peer group, family, and program/school norms; second, to promote social and emotional learning as foundational to individual development, peer group functioning, and school climate; and third, to involve families in anti-bullying and positive behavior promotion efforts. Promoting these goals, and having systems in place to implement these goals, will help to develop healthy individual growth and relationships by helping students feel a sense of connection to their programs and schools.

Acknowledgments The preparation of this chapter was supported in part by grants from the National 4-H Council, the Altria Corporation, the Thrive Foundation for Youth, and the John Templeton Foundation.

Recommended Additional Resources

Teaching Tolerance. (2015). www.tolerance.org

Teaching Tolerance is a program of the Southern Poverty Law Center. It provides resources for educators, including: *Mix It Up*, a project that encourages educators and students to promote interaction between different social groups; *Best Practices*, which provides guidelines for educators such as creating inclusive school climates; and *Perspectives for Diverse America*, a complete antibias education curriculum for varying ages and grades.

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. (2015). http://www.pacer.org/bullying/

PACER provides age-appropriate information and resources for bullying prevention efforts, emphasizes the need for creative strategies and programs, and features innovative approaches being conducted across the U.S. PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center founded the National Bullying Prevention Month campaign, which is held during the month of October and seeks to educate and raise awareness of bullying prevention.

Committee for Children. (2015). http://www.cfchildren.org/

The Committee for Children is a nonprofit organization that creates programs such as *Second Step*, *Bullying Prevention Unit*, and *Child Protection Unit*. These programs provide research-based social-emotional learning materials (including training and webinars for educators as well as resources and information for students and families) to help children succeed in school and in life.

GLSEN—Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network. (2015). http://www.glsen.org/

GLSEN provides information and resources to ensure that students feel safe at school, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. The network promotes policies and programs that specifically outline how students, teachers, and other allies can make change happen, and provides a forum for active participation. In addition, the network compiles school climate surveys to assess student experiences and perceptions of their schools.

Espelage, D., & Swearer, S. M. (2010). Bullying in North American Schools (2nd Ed). New York, NY: Routledge.

In this book, Dorothy Espelage and Susan Swearer provide a compilation of research on bullying in school-aged youth conducted across the United States by a representative group of researchers, including developmental, social, counseling, school, and clinical psychologists. It presents the complexity of bullying behaviors and offers suggestions for using data-based decision-making to intervene and guidance for schools. The book provides a comprehensive look at the individual and systemic variables related to bullying, as well as practical considerations for prevention and intervention planning.

Common Sense Media: Cyberbullying. (2015). https://www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying

For issues specific to issues of online bullying, Common Sense Media is a helpful resource for finding guidelines, videos, and articles. The Common Sense Media's Cyberbullying Topic Center provides concrete and age-appropriate ways that parents and educators can initiate conversations with children about cyberbullying. In addition, it offers comprehensive guides about cyberbullying, organized developmentally by age and stage.

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Chapter 14
Afterword: On the Contributions of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

Suzanne Le Menestrel

It is fitting that I am writing this afterword in 2014, the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. This act created the Cooperative Extension Service and provided funding to support the outreach efforts of the nation's land-grant universities. Specifically, the act was designed to "aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information" that "shall consist of practical applications of research knowledge…" (Smith-Lever Act, 1914).

Since its creation, the 4-H youth development program of Cooperative Extension has been devoted to this practical application of research knowledge. The program has had a strong emphasis on youth leadership development, youth-adult partnerships, citizenship, community service, and the acquisition of life skills. This emphasis is evidenced by work by Scholl and Paster (2011), who documented 3,556 studies on 4-H conducted between 1911 and 2010. Less than 1 % of these studies were conducted on subjects related to livestock, foods, or cooking, dispelling the common myth that 4-H is primarily focused on "cows and cookin'." In turn, the number of graduate and professional studies produced each year has averaged about 20 since 1952. Moreover, 4-H Studies have been conducted on a very broad and diverse range of topics, ranging from a trend toward studying the impacts of 4-H on personal/social development in the 1950s and 1960s to teen alcohol use, psychosocial development, and families in the early 1980s, and most recently on after-school programming, social networking, and environmental literacy (Scholl & Paster, 2011).

Cooperative Extension member organizations actively support four refereed journals: *Journal of Extension*, *Journal of Youth Development: Bridging Research and Practice*, the *Journal of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences*, and the *Journal of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents*. The *Journal of Youth Development* was founded

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E.P. Bowers et al. (eds.), *Promoting Positive Youth Development*, Advancing Responsible Adolescent Development, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_14

by the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents in 2006 to provide a peer-reviewed publication outlet for applied research and evaluation studies on youth development.

Despite this rich body of research literature produced by graduate students and professionals in the 4-H youth development organization and through Cooperative Extension more broadly, published studies on positive youth development have still been lacking in the peer-reviewed literature. Barcelona and Quinn (2011) conducted an in-depth review of articles published in five top-tier scholarly journals that had the words "youth" or "adolescent" in their titles. The authors examined manuscripts published between 2001 and 2010 and found that only 19 % of the research articles focused on positive youth development. Of those articles focused on positive youth development, 60 % focused on processes and outcomes or benefits from participation in youth development programs. Most of the studies focused on positive youth development in the context of school or after-school programs and not positive youth development in relation to community-based organizations (Barcelona & Quinn, 2011).

Barcelona and Quinn (2011) concluded that, in general, articles published about youth in the major top-tier journals do not focus on a strength-based approach but rather on a problem-based view of youth. This deficit focus may be due to research funders' priorities, as Barcelona and Quinn (2011) suggest, or to the emphasis that doctoral programs place on publishing "theoretically important (often basic) specialty-focused research that results in peer-reviewed articles in tier one research journals," as Bialeschki and Conn (2011, p. 300) note in their commentary. It is useful to place the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development into the context of the relative absence of strength-based approaches to youth noted by Barcelona and Quinn (2011).

Importance of the 4-H Study to the 4-H Program

The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development is the first major longitudinal study of its kind conducted with youth engaged in 4-H programming. Among the more than 7,000 youth who participated in the 4-H Study, there were more than 2,500 participants from 4-H. Although a positive youth development approach has been an essential component of the 4-H program since its creation over 100 years ago, what this approach has meant for 4-H professionals and volunteers in practice, and how the 4-H experience impacted youth, was mainly understood through anecdotal "success stories" or retrospective 4-H alumni studies. Accordingly, it is useful to highlight the four major impacts that the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development has had on the 4-H youth development organization.

Clear Articulation of Positive Youth Development

First, the research that has resulted from the 4-H Study has given the 4-H youth development organization a clear framework, or "4-H formula for success." That is, 4-H, both as an instance of a youth development program *and* as a national system for promoting positive youth development, is supported by findings from this multiyear study (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015; see too the opening chapter of this volume). Examples are (a) the evidence-based identification of the "Big Three" components of effective youth development programs—(i.e., positive and sustained youth-adult relationships; opportunities to build life skills; and opportunities for participation in and leadership of valued family, school, and community activities (Lerner, 2004; Lerner et al., 2015; and see Chaps. 1 and 6)); (b) the conceptualization and measurement of the Five Cs of Positive Youth Development (see Chap. 9; Lerner et al., 2005); and (c) the processes of individual-context relations involving intentional self-regulation (see Chap. 2).

There are many examples of the impact of these areas on 4-H as a national system. One is that a national team comprised of national 4-H staff, state 4-H staff, and county 4-H staff included the Five Cs in a national 4-H logic model. In addition, through this research, there are now ways for 4-H youth development professionals and extension researchers and evaluators to reliably measure what were previously thought of as "fuzzy" or "soft" outcomes.

Moreover, the 4-H program has deep agricultural roots as well as a tradition of exhibiting and competing at county and state fairs. However, as one Cooperative Extension director noted in his remarks accepting an award from fish and wildlife professionals on behalf of one of his university's 4-H youth development programs, 4-H is no longer just "about the fish." Rather, the results from the 4-H Study support the efforts of 4-H to promote positive youth development to the agricultural extension community and other partners and stakeholders.

Improving the Quality of 4-H Programming

The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development has also been informing the development, implementation, and evaluation of 4-H programming and the training of 4-H professionals and volunteers. An excellent example of how the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development is aiding in improving the quality of 4-H programming involves the research conducted within the 4-H Study on the processes of intentional self-regulation that I noted earlier.

Using the 4-H Study findings about the processes of intentional self-regulation youth use to select and pursue positive goals, researchers at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University (Bowers et al., 2013; Napolitano, Bowers, Gestsdóttir, & Chase, 2011; Napolitano et al., 2014; see too Chap. 2), in collaboration with the Thrive Foundation for Youth, developed rubrics (and other tools)

to enhance such processes among youth. These tools have been used in online training of 4-H youth development professionals or volunteers. The tools provide youth with a standardized and validated way to enable them to select goals, to optimize their chances of attaining these goals (e.g., by strategic thinking, resource recruitment, or executive functioning), or to effectively “shift gears” and either to find other means to reach a blocked goal or to identify a new goal if attempts to reach an initial goal fail. Comparable rubrics were developed for the Five Cs and for youth contribution. Youth from 4-H programs in North Carolina and Oregon were assessed in order to establish the evidence base for the use of these tools.

Articulation of Impacts: The Power of Longitudinal Research

The 4-H Study marks the first time in the history of 4-H that such a long-term longitudinal study has been conducted. Important and powerful findings about 4-H youth have been derived from this study, findings that could not have been possible without longitudinal research. For instance, based on the results of the 4-H Study, 4-H professionals are able to say that 4-H youth are (Lerner et al., 2013):

- Four times more likely to make contributions to their communities (Grades 7–12)
- Two times more likely to be civically active (Grades 8–12)
- Two times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering, and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time (Grades 10–12)

As such, the findings from the 4-H Study have had an enormous impact on the 4-H program and on the national 4-H system. In addition and as one colleague of mine commented, this longitudinal study has “raised the bar” with regard to the types of studies 4-H should be conducting in the future.

Raising More Questions

For many 4-H professionals, volunteers, Extension evaluators, and researchers, the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development raises more questions than it can answer. We still need to know about those particular program processes that create the optimal outcomes for youth. We need to know more about how to keep older youth engaged in an organization that some youth feel they have outgrown. We also need to understand how high quality programmatic content intersects with an optimal context to promote positive youth development.

In addition, how does positive youth development serve as a protective factor for youth as they move into young adulthood and beyond? How do prevention-focused programs complement or enhance positive youth development-focused programs? What is the ideal duration and dosage of participation in order to promote positive youth development?

These and many other unanswered research questions still await the work of future researchers. As Larson, Kang, Perry, and Walker (2011) noted in the special issue of *Journal of Youth Development* focused on 100 years of research in youth development, "What we—at least those of us who are researchers—know little about is what happens inside programs. What are the developmental processes through which youth change? How do front line staff best support these processes? Expert youth practitioners have a rich fund of practical wisdom on these practices. Yet our field has not yet found a way to capture and codify this expertise in ways that can be evaluated or easily passed on to the next generation of practitioners" (p. 141). Using the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development as a model, I am optimistic that future strength-based research about youth will answer these questions.

Conclusions

The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development has contributed mightily to putting positive youth development on the map in the research community. In a search of the key words "positive youth development" in Google Scholar that I conducted at the time of this writing, there were only 1,150 results before 2001. Since 2002, the start of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development, the same search yielded 14,500 results. Similarly, a search in the *Journal of Extension* for "Five Cs of Positive Youth Development" resulted in 42 articles.

As observed in the chapter by Geldhof and colleagues in this volume (Chap. 9) and by many others (e.g., Blyth, 2011; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Le Menestrel & Lauxman, 2011; National Research Council, 2002), there has been a significant shift in both the research and practice community toward the promotion of positive youth development rather than a deficit-oriented focus to youth programming. The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development has provided a strong baseline from which positive youth development research can continue to grow as youth development professionals strive to exemplify the 4-H motto: To Make the Best Better.

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