

VicHealth Roadshow 2018

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

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Mental Wellbeing Workshop

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We focus on...

Mental wellbeing

A dynamic state in which the individual is able to develop to their potential, work productively and creatively, **build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to the community.**

Resilience & Social connections

We know less about mental wellbeing than we do about mental illness

Why focus on young people?

Bright Futures

Megatrends impacting the mental wellbeing of young Victorians over the coming 20 years



1. Youth transitions to education & work will become more competitive
2. New & flexible work conditions in a globalised 24/7 economy
3. Greater exposure to social media, pornography, gambling, bullying, cashless economies & debt

Why focus on young people?

- young people in a world of work that is different from their parents, employers
- 1/3 not leaving school with the skills needed for future work
- 4.5 years between education & full time work (FYA 2016a; VicHealth & CSIRO 2015)
- precarious new work conditions are stressful & isolating
- stress, anxiety and loneliness are on the rise, particularly for those on lower incomes (Bor et al. 2014)
- *ADAPTABILITY AUTONOMY MATURITY INDEPENDENCE
SELF EFFICACY SELF CONFIDENCE PERSEVERENCE*

This is resilience



Ability to adapt, cope and bounce back from challenge & adversity

It's not inherent but develops over time through the **interaction between person and their social environment**

3 key protective assets are associated with the development of resilience

- **Personal life skills**
- **Supportive relationships**
- **Connection to cohesive communities**

Benefits people with and without a mental illness

Why else focus on young people?



- Youth & young adulthood are characterised by critical transitions
- 75% adult mental health conditions emerge by age 24 and half by age 14 years
- 1 in 4 young Australians currently has a mental disorder
- **1 in 4 report limited access to social support when needed (Victorian)**
- **1 in 8 are lonely (Victorian)**

Social connections

1. **Social support = protective factor (*perceived* more powerful than actual)**
2. **Social support can act as a ‘buffer’ to stressors**
3. **Social connection to communities emerging as an antidote to pressures on young people**
4. **Networks have a protective effect on mental health and help young people build resilience**

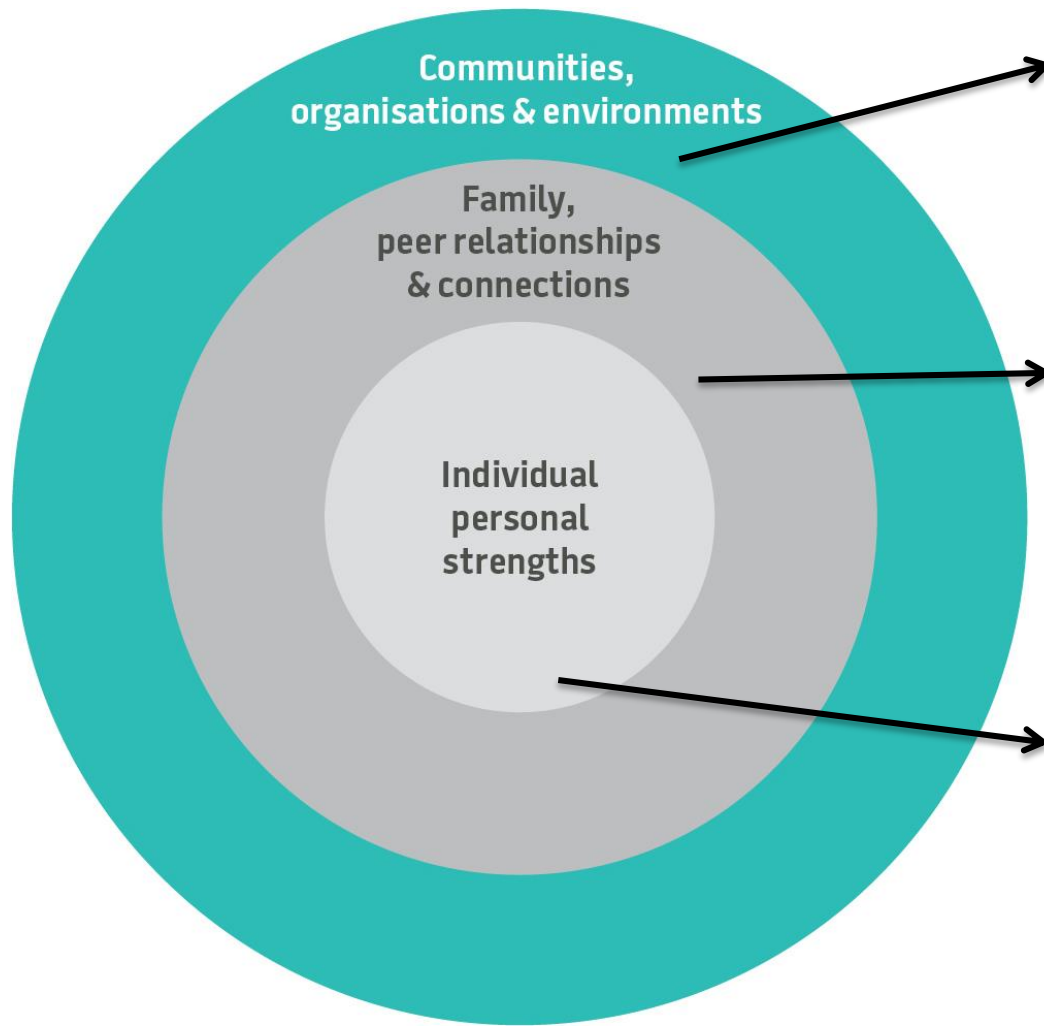
<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/young-victorians-resilience-and-mental-wellbeing>

Do young people feel connected to their local communities?

- Younger Victorians aged 15-34 years are **least likely** to feel they strongly belong to their immediate neighbourhood
- 30% of 15-34 year olds believe “most people in their neighbourhood could be trusted”

- Yet they are connected online- 79% of Australians aged 15 years and older (including 96% of 18–24 year olds) had accessed the Internet in the previous twelve months

- https://resilientmelbourne.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/COM_SERVICE_PROD-9944599-v1-100RC_Resilient_Melbourne_Report_FINAL_16-06-16.pdf



EVIDENCE GAPS:

- Connecting individuals to organisations, neighbourhoods, networks, and communities
- Positive school, sport, arts, work, education, digital environments
- Safe, cohesive & inclusive communities

SOME EVIDENCE EXISTS

- Secure attachment
- Positive parent-child relationships
- Positive family environment
- Friendships with pro-social peers
- Respectful relationships with others

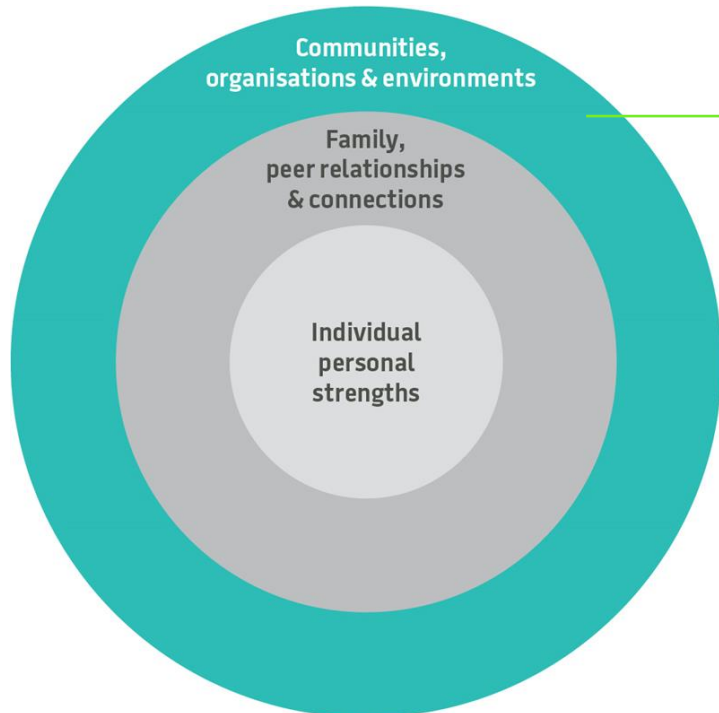
STRONG EVIDENCE EXISTS

- Self-esteem, confidence, self-efficacy
- emotion regulation, problem-solving
- social skills & perseverance

Implications of findings

1. Evaluations of practice in communities are often of a **poor quality** & unable to replicate good practice elsewhere.
2. **Community level protective factors are relatively under-studied**, in comparison with protective factors at other levels.
3. Only a **small number** of community protective factors were identified and all were in studies involving adolescents with none of these protective factors being common to more than one study.

We seek your help.....



If communities are crucial as they are key to building and maintaining a sense of belonging and contribute to our sense of support and self-worth. (Scanlon 2016)

then

What factors in the community enable or contribute to improved social connection?

Community factors that enable /contribute to social connection

Skills knowledge and expertise of locals

Social cohesion in the community : harmony amongst diverse groups

Organisations, businesses, schools, workplaces, churches, libraries, clubs, services/also known as settings

Characteristics of community environments:
e.g. safety

Inclusive practices: e.g. Co-designing with young people

Networks and partnerships



Key Question 1

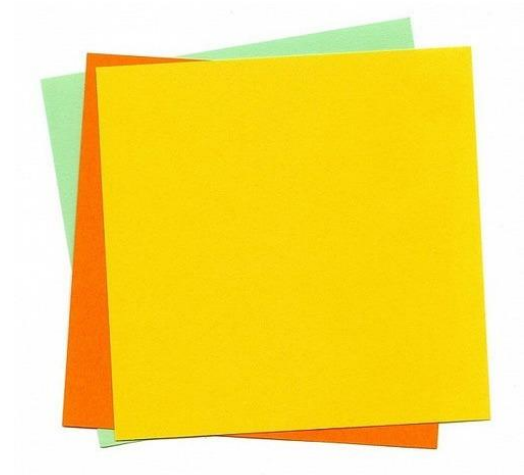
Think of a project or activity that you are involved with currently that focusses on building stronger social connections with community.

Discuss which community factors **enable/contribute to building these communities**



Key Question 2

Now discuss and note **how you measure change or success in these factors?**



***Case study:
Youth friendly employer project***

***Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley
Local Learning Employment Network***

2017

Wrap Up

- Mental Wellbeing for young people = social connection and resilience
- We need to learn more about community and organisation level actions that enable social connection and resilience to grow
- **But we need to discover and apply consistent measures**

- **Thankyou for your time!**

Upcoming publications/interventions

1. Resilience, connection, cohesion & wellbeing indicators review and framework (tbc)
2. Youth co-design resource kit (later this year)
3. Toolkit to increase youth literacy regarding pornography in social media (RFT opens in soon)
4. Sleep and mental wellbeing for young people (released on 24 March)
5. Backlash to gender equality initiatives review & guidance (21 March)
6. Young People's Mental Wellbeing Forum: research, practice & Policy initiatives May 2018
7. Mental Wellbeing Evidence summaries (April 2018)
8. Arts Strategy Updates