

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS

The Role of Positive Youth Development in Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programming

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive. It recognizes, uses, and enhances young people's strengths and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.¹

Positive Opportunities + Positive Relationships + Support = Positive Youth Development (PYD)

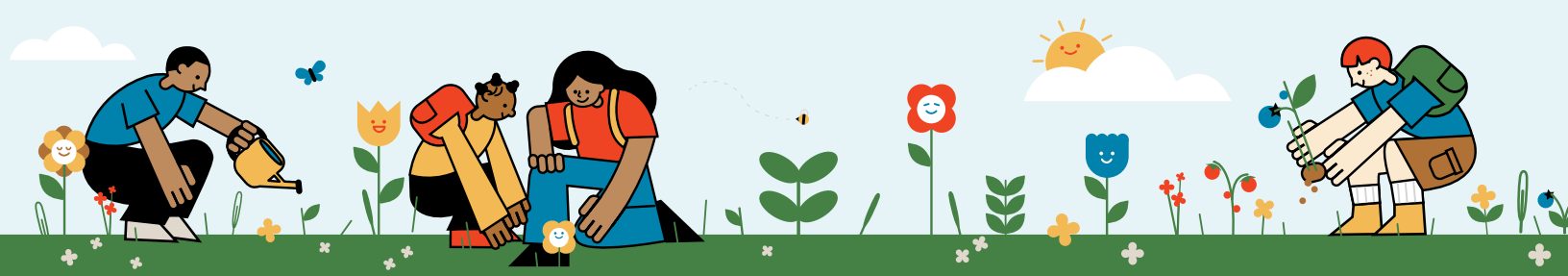
Research has shown that PYD has been associated with the following:

- Improved self-control, interpersonal skills and relationships²
- Improved mindfulness among emerging adults³
- Hopeful expectations about the future and life satisfaction⁴
- Improved problem solving, cognitive competencies, commitment to schooling and academic achievement²
- Decreased high-risk sexual behavior and drug and alcohol use²
- Decreased school misbehavior, aggressive behavior, violence, and truancy²

For strong youth-focused programming, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (APP) programs can⁵:

- 1 Create opportunities for youth to build skills.
- 2 Establish clear prosocial norms, rules of behavior, and consequences.
- 3 Connect youth to positive adult role models to establish healthy relationships and bonding.
- 4 Create spaces where youth belong and feel included regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or ability.
- 5 Engage youth in program implementation and allow them to make decisions. Help youth practice, engage, and learn creatively and collaboratively.
- 6 Provide access to age-appropriate and youth-friendly services and resources.





The 7 Cs

Research shows that integrating PYD into APP programs could promote development of seven psychological, behavioral, and social qualities that indicate youth are thriving⁴:

Competence

Successfully navigating complicated contexts such as schools, neighborhoods, families, and peer groups.

Confidence

Believing you can overcome obstacles and make a meaningful impact on the world around you.

Character

Building and following a well-developed sense of right and wrong, and recognizing social norms and expectations for behavior.

Caring

Showing sympathy and empathy for others and believing it is important to care for those around you.

Connection

Being valued by those in the community and having positive bonds with peers, family members, institutions, and others.

Contribution

Spending time helping those around you and providing services within your communities.

Creativity

Being able to generate novel and potentially useful ideas, insights, or solutions to problems.

Resources

Research has shown that PYD has been associated with the following:

- The Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center: [PYD 101 Online Course](#) ↗
- Family and Youth Services Bureau: [Positive Youth Development Approach](#) (webinar)
- Office of Adolescent Health: [A Checklist for Putting Positive Youth Development Characteristics into Action in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs](#) ↗
- Youth.gov: [Key Principles of Positive Youth Development](#)
- OPRE: [Integrating Positive Youth Development in PREP Programming](#)
- CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health: [Positive Youth Development](#)
- Youth Power: [Positive Youth Development Framework](#) ↗

References

- ¹ youth.gov. (n.d.). *Positive youth development*. <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>
- ² Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A. M., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203260102> ↗
- ³ Abdul Kadir N. B., Mohd R. H., & Dimitrova R. (2021). Promoting mindfulness through the 7Cs of positive youth development in Malaysia. In R. Dimitrova & N. Wium (Eds.), *Handbook of positive youth development: Advancing research, policy and practice in global contexts* (pp. 49-62). Springer.
- ⁴ Fernandes D., Fetvadjev V., Wium N., & Dimitrova R. (2021). The 5Cs of PYD model in New Zealand: Relations with hopeful expectations for the future and life satisfaction among emerging adults. In R. Dimitrova & N. Wium (Eds.), *Handbook of positive youth development: Advancing research, policy and practice in global contexts* (pp. 233-246). Springer.
- ⁵ Jessee, C., Kapangu, C., & Brady, K. (n.d.). *Examples of positive youth development program activities aligned with PYD features, mapped to a socio-ecological model*. YouthPower Learning. https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/files/resources/PYD%20Features%20Matrix_final%208.2019.pdf ↗

