

### ***Positive Youth Development***

Positive youth development (PYD) is an approach to working with youth that emphasizes building on youths' strengths and providing supports and opportunities that will help them achieve goals and transition to adulthood in a productive, healthy manner. PYD is not a specific curriculum but a model that can be used to enhance any youth-serving program. At its core, PYD focuses on cultivating qualities that help adolescents thrive through relationships and environments that provide supportive connections and help to develop needed skills.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Social-Emotional Learning***

Social-emotional learning is about the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills that assist students in identifying and managing their emotions, in communicating caring and concern for others, and in forming and sustaining positive relationships.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Social Connectedness***

Social connectedness is a key driver of well-being and resilience. Socially well-connected people and communities are happier and healthier, and are better able to take charge of their lives and find solutions to the challenges they are facing. Common components of social connectedness can be identified as Interacting/Socializing, Social Support, and Sense of Belonging.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Protective Factors***

Protective factors are conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies) in individuals, families or communities that assist people in adapting more effectively during stressful events, and mitigating areas of identified risk or concern. The promotion of protective factors is a key intervention strategy that can improve social and emotional well-being in children and youth, especially for those who have experienced significant trauma or loss.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Diversity***

In health and education settings, diversity may be conceptualized in terms of understating and valuing the uniqueness of the background, experiences and strengths that individuals bring to their relationships and interactions with others. These differences may be reflected in varied dimensions of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, age, ability, religious or political beliefs, or other ideologies. Diversity is the exploration, incorporation and inclusion of these differences to enrich learning, development and interpersonal relationships.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Mindfulness***

Mindfulness refers to specific practices used to focus a person's attention, such as meditation, breathing or single-pointed concentration on an object. When individuals pause and reflect on their thoughts and emotions, they are more likely to be open to a wider range of options, and are apt to discuss areas of concern before responding. Benefits of mindfulness include enhanced problem-solving skills, increased impulse control, stronger relationship building, decreased emotional distress and behavioural concerns, and greater capacity to manage stress.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Autonomy Support***

Children and youth possess inner motivational resources that may be supported or impeded by conditions that they experience at home, in school, or in the community. These resources include an inherent need to seek out and engage learning opportunities and challenges. Teachers and health professionals who adopt autonomy-supportive approaches plan strategies that engage and nurture these inner resources.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Self-Efficacy***

Self-efficacy involves people's beliefs about whether they are capable of successfully meeting personal, academic, health or social goals. People who have high self-efficacy are more likely to seek out more challenging tasks, and to persist when they encounter areas of difficulty, than their peers with low self-efficacy.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Optimism***

According to Seligman, learned optimism is about how people interpret the world, and is not a fixed trait or part of one's disposition. Rather, it can be seen as more of a strategy – an outlook that can be learned, cultivated and applied to challenge our automatic negative thoughts. Some studies provide evidence to suggest that optimism interventions can significantly impact aspects of psychological and physical health.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Generosity***

Generosity involves “giving good things to others freely and abundantly” and comes in many forms, from volunteering to helping a stranger, to caring for family members. Recent studies point to the possible positive consequences

# References

- <sup>1</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services. (2019). *Positive youth development*. Office of Population Affairs, accessed at <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/positive-youth-development/index.html>.
- <sup>2</sup> CASEL. (2020). *What is SEL?* Accessed at <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Government of New Zealand. (2018). *Social connectedness and well-being*. Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand. Accessed at <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/literature-reviews/social-connectedness-and-wellbeing.html>.
- <sup>4</sup> National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP). (2020). *Protective Factors*. Accessed at <https://friendsnrc.org/prevention/protective-factors/>.
- <sup>5</sup> University of Rhode Island. (2020). *Diversity and Inclusion*. Accessed at <https://web.uri.edu/teach/multicultural/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Government of New Brunswick. (2017). *Integrated Service Delivery Framework*. Fredericton, NB.
- <sup>7</sup> Alivernini, F., & Lucidi, F. (2011). Relationship between social context, self-efficacy, motivation, academic achievement, and intention to drop out of high school: A longitudinal study. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 104:241-252.
- <sup>8</sup> Moore, C. (2020). *Learned Optimism: Is Martin Seligman's Glass Half Full?* Accessed at <https://positivepsychology.com/learned-optimism/>.
- <sup>9</sup> John Templeton Foundation. (2018). *The Science of Generosity*. University of California (Berkley).