

Session 2

*Identifying young
people's strengths,
assets & resources*

Resilience Theory & Strengths-Based approach

- Over recent years - a shift in research and service delivery from a deficits-based approach to an approach that highlights **strengths, resources** and **assets** that may enable positive outcomes.
- This focus on strengths-based approaches has led to a rise in research on resilience.
(<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/pubs/papers/a141718/08.html>)
- Although there are many varied definitions of resilience, most suggest that it involves children displaying competent functioning despite exposure to high levels of risk or adversity.
 - E.g. "Resilience is the happy knack of being able to bungy jump through the pitfalls of life." (Fuller, 1998, p. 75)

Resilience Theory & Strengths-Based approach

- A resilience-based approach to youth development is based upon the principle that all people have the ability to overcome adversity and to succeed in spite of their life circumstances.
- Resilience is a strengths-based construct, meaning its focus is on providing the developmental supports and opportunities (protective factors) that promote success, rather than on eliminating the factors that promote failure.
- Research has consistently shown that the presence of ***protective factors*** provide a better indicator of whether young people will grow up to become successful, well-adjusted adults than does the presence or absence of ***risk factors*** (i.e. poverty, drug-use, etc.)

Resilience Theory & Strengths-Based approach

- The strengths-based approach focuses on strengths (i.e. competencies, resources, personal characteristics, interests and motivations) of individuals, family or community (McCashen, 2005; Saleenbey, 1996).
- Strengths-based practice:
 - = moving from the more traditional focus on deficits to a focus on abilities, strengths and resources.
 - = recognising that everyone has the strengths to aid them towards healthy growth and development.

(Strengths Institute, n.d.)

This is in line with resilience theory that most people will do well despite exposure to adversity (Masten, 2001).

Resilience Theory & Strengths-Based approach



Why is this important in Youth Work???

- ***Resilience*** = the theory that identifies the importance of protective factors, competencies, assets and resources in a young person's life.
- ***Strengths-based approach*** = the practical application of this theory and relates to how we work with young people as well as what we do with them to build strengths, resources, assets and competencies.

40 Developmental Assets

Search Institute, Minneapolis

<http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>

External Assets

Support



1. Family support
2. Positive family communication
3. Other adult relationships
4. Caring neighbourhood
5. Caring school climate
6. Parent involvement in schooling

Empowerment



7. Community values youth
8. Youth as resources
9. Service to others
10. Safety

Boundaries & Expectations



11. Family boundaries
12. School boundaries
13. Neighbourhood boundaries
14. Adult role models
15. Positive peer influence
16. High expectations

Constructive Use of Time



17. Creative activities
18. Youth programs
19. Religious community
20. Time at home

What Teens Need to Succeed

40

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS!



Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning



21. Achievement motivations
22. School engagement
23. Homework
24. Bonding to school
25. Reading for pleasure

Positive Values



26. Caring
27. Equality and social justice
28. Integrity
29. Honesty
30. Responsibility
31. Restraint

Social Competencies



32. Planning and decision making
33. Interpersonal competence
34. Cultural competence
35. Resistance skills
36. Peaceful conflict resolutions

Positive Identity

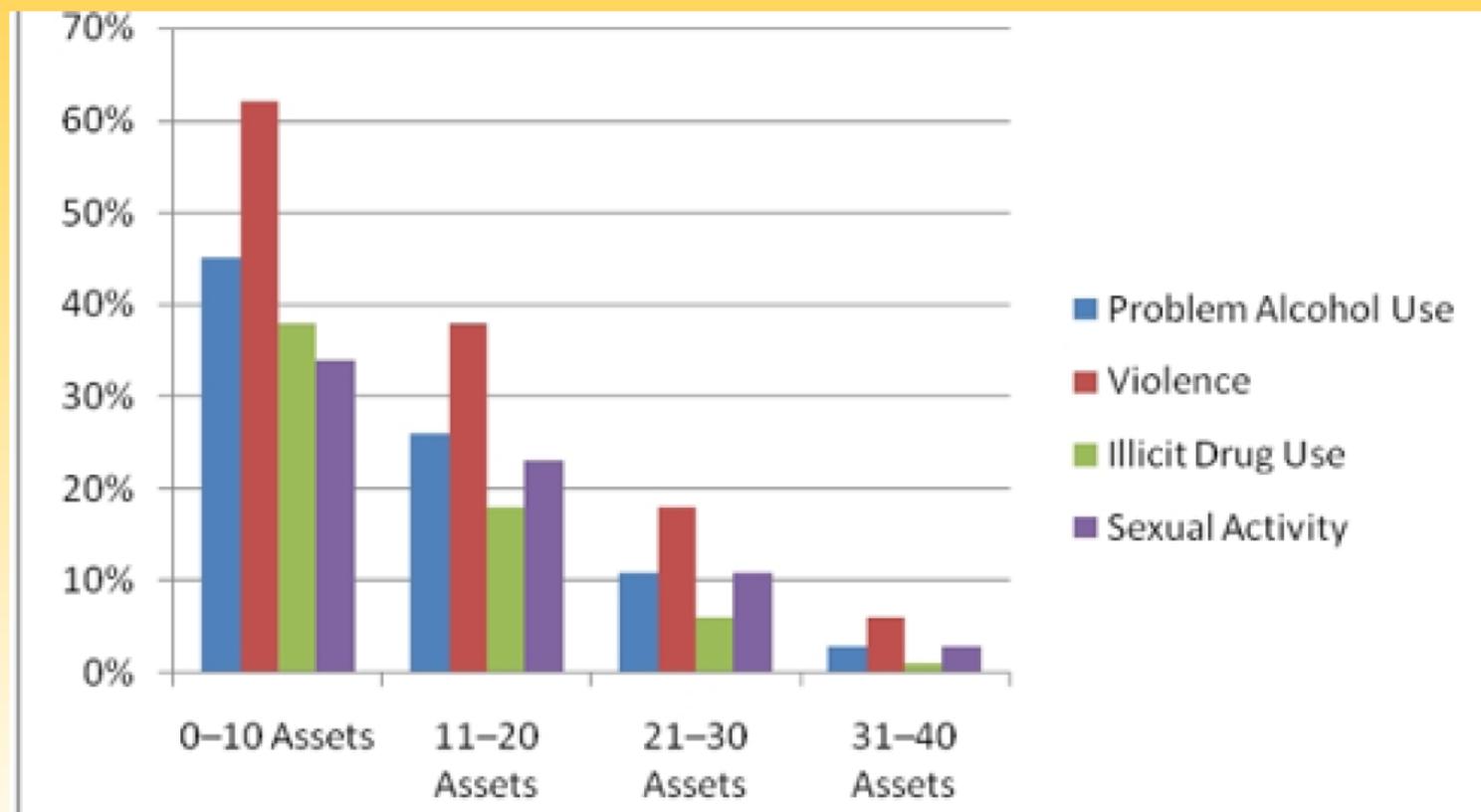


37. Personal power
38. Self-Esteem
39. Sense of purpose
40. Positive view of personal future

Source: Dale Blyth, University of Minnesota

Presentation at DCYA Symposium on Exploring Outcomes in Youth Work and Related
Provision, Dublin Castle, 24th July, 2012

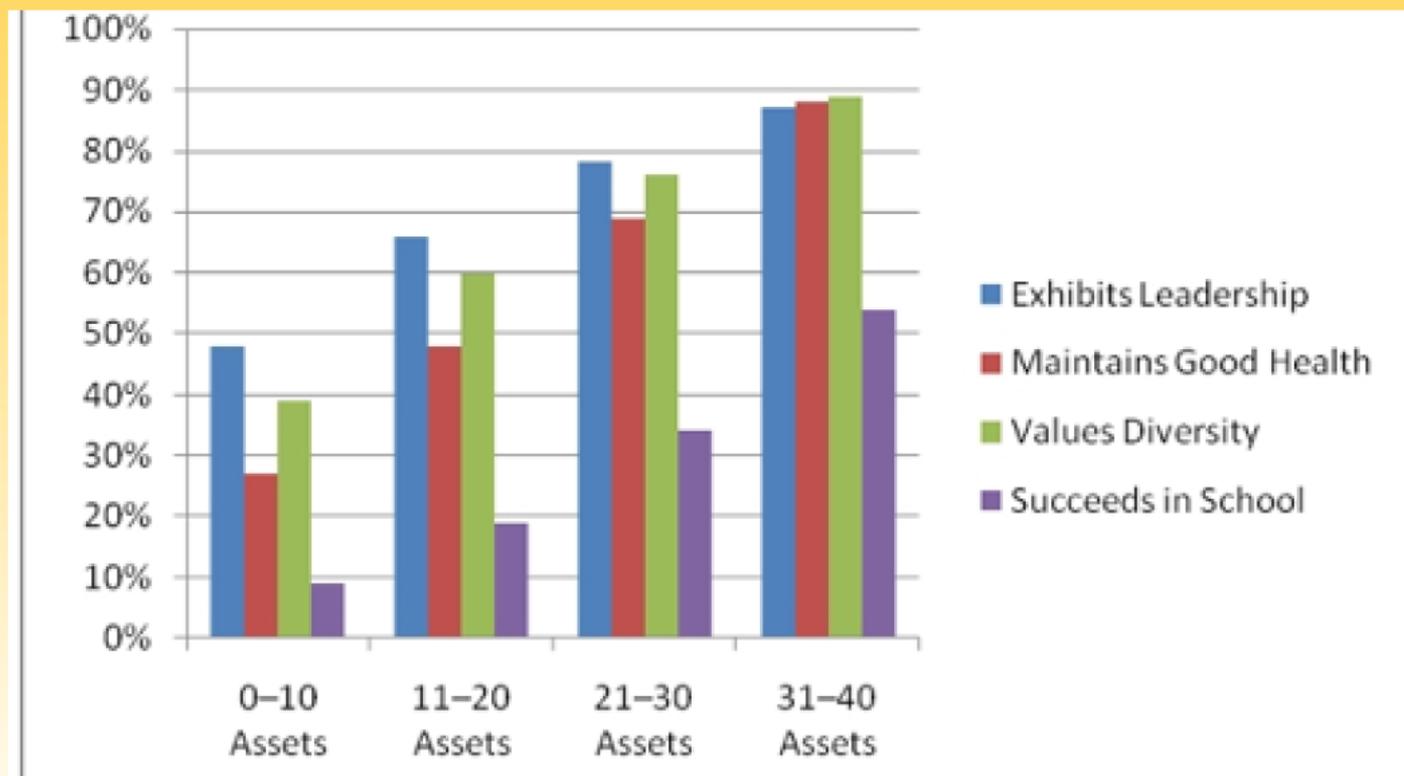
The Power of Assets to Reduce Risk Behaviors (Search Institute)



Source: Dale Blyth, University of Minnesota

Presentation at DCYA Symposium on Exploring Outcomes in Youth Work and Related Provision, Dublin Castle, 24th July, 2012

The Power of Assets to Increase Thriving



Asset Mapping with young people

- Derived from ABCD – Asset Based Community Development
- Asset mapping engages the target group to identify and provide information about the strengths and resources of a group /community and can help uncover solutions.
- Once strengths and resources are identified, documented and depicted in a map, you can more easily think about how to build on these assets to address group /community needs and contribute to social and personal development.
- Asset mapping promotes young people's involvement, ownership, and empowerment.

Steps in Asset Mapping with Youth People

- Define the boundaries – who to involve and where (geographical)
....individual or group asset mapping? Both?
- Identify and involve partners – other agencies, young people themselves, family, peers, experts, etc.
- Determine what type of assets to include e.g. economic or environmental resources, physical assets, knowledge, skills, abilities & interests of young people, access to educational and social opportunities, facilities and services for young people, etc (determined by the purpose of your asset mapping exercise) and linking with your needs assessment purpose and process.
- Engage young people in identifying and listing their assets, resources, strengths etc.
- Use creative methodologies to organise findings onto a ‘map’.

Photovoice, graphic harvesting, mind mapping, world café methodologies can all be useful in doing this.

<http://sustainablecities.net/our-work/youth-led-development/youth-led-development-projects/item/3-mapped-vancouvers-youth-asset-mapping-project>



References

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