



## Autonomy Outcomes



### Learning

#### *Cognitive / learning outcomes*

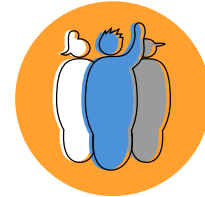
- When environments support autonomy, youth show improved school/activity performance and grades, greater motivation for learning, and deeper thinking and reasoning.
- When youth feel they have more autonomy in the classroom, they are more likely to participate in school activities, reducing the drop in student engagement that tends to occur with age.
- Support for autonomy from teachers and parents is critical for school achievement and competence, job exploration, and career commitment.



### Feeling

#### *Psychological / emotional outcomes*

- Youth are more likely to establish life-goals and experience well-being if their parents/guardians behave in ways that support autonomy.
- Youth who feel hopeful and are more emotionally competent are more likely to have positive emotions and life satisfaction.
- Young people are more likely to have high levels of self-esteem and vitality (i.e., sense of energy) if they have opportunities to make decisions and commitments of their own volition or will.



### Behaving

#### *Behavioural / social outcomes*

- Higher volition, or will, is related with reduced misbehaviour and alcohol use from early to late adolescence.
- Increased autonomy can be beneficial for some young people, but too much can be detrimental for others. For example, youth who have more autonomy and are living in situations that are risky or dangerous report higher delinquency.
- Youth are more likely to actively search for and accept social support if they receive autonomy support from their family.

Programmers who know their youth well, and know what the available research is saying, are able to use this combined knowledge to provide experiences of autonomy in positive, safe environments so that youth develop the skills to use autonomy more effectively in their riskier environments.

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#### Resources

[Summary table of outcomes associated with autonomy \[PDF\]](#)

[Autonomy chapter in Youth Who Thrive: A review of critical factors and effective practices for 12-25 year olds \[PDF\]](#)

