



## Self-Determination Theory

According to Self-Determination Theory, an individual's ability to reach their goals is dependent on how much they can fulfill three basic psychological needs: 1) autonomy, 2) relatedness, and 3) competence. In other words, youth can better reach their goals when they make their own decisions to reach for a goal (autonomy), when they connect and interact meaningfully with others (relatedness), and when they have skills to put their ideas into action (competence).

Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research in a variety of environments has confirmed autonomy, relatedness, and competence for motivating one's self.</li> <li>• Self-determined motivation is related to well-being. Environmental support fosters self-determination.</li> <li>• The approach focuses on developing young people's strengths.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough studies examine all three needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) at the same time.</li> <li>• There is no conclusive evidence about whether or not there are more than three needs.</li> </ul>

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### Resources

*Development frameworks in Youth Who Thrive: A review of critical factors and effective practices for 12-25 year olds* [PDF]