

Assist youth to thrive

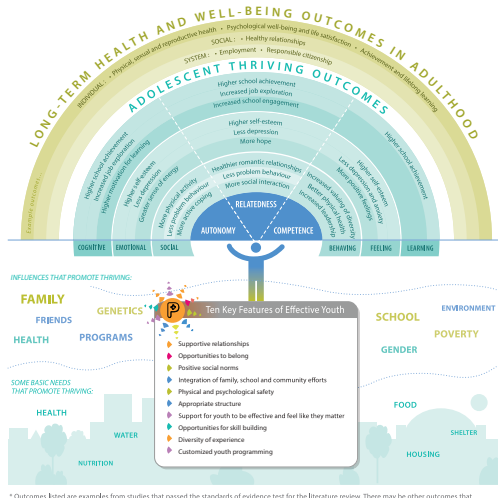


Success in adolescence leads to long-term health and well-being as an adult. If you are looking for a program that fosters autonomy, relatedness and competence look for a program that has these features:

Ten Key Features of Effective Youth Programs

- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms
- Integration of family, school and community efforts
- Physical and psychological safety
- Appropriate structure
- Support for youth to be effective and feel like they matter
- Opportunities for skill building
- Diversity of experience
- Customized youth programming

Youth Who Thrive

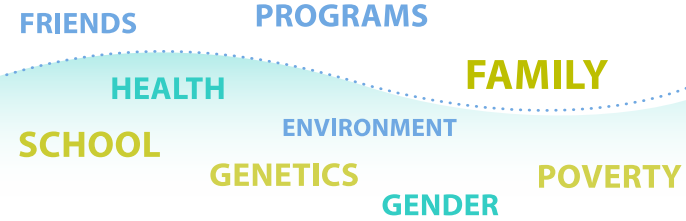


* Outcomes listed are examples from studies that passed the standards of evidence test for the literature review. There may be other outcomes that contribute to thriving in adolescence.

Youth Who Thrive



INFLUENCES THAT PROMOTE THRIVING:



SOME BASIC NEEDS THAT PROMOTE THRIVING:



* The information in this pamphlet comes from a review of the evidence published 2002-2013, called Youth Who Thrive, a review of critical factors and effective programs for 12-25 year olds, conducted by The Students Commission of Canada and the Social Program Evaluation Group at Queen's University for the YMCA of Greater Toronto and United Way Toronto. See www.youthwhothrive.ca for more information.



Youth Who Thrive

Are you challenged by teenagers? Do you have one who makes you shine with pride one day and despair the very next?

As young people move through the ages of 12-25 years, they experience many complex changes, some very obvious, some not. Their brains are “under construction” as psychologist Dr. Jean Clinton describes, experiencing both pruning and the most rapid growth since toddlerhood. Their bodies are fully forming, as is their sense of identity and sense of place in the world. As some experts say, “it’s a use or lose it” stage of life.

Parents, family, teachers, youth workers, and community members can assist youth to thrive during these important years by ensuring that they experience success, in three areas: learning, feeling and behaving.



Three critical factors contribute to success in these three areas: autonomy, relatedness, and competence.



AUTONOMY

Input, voice, or agency in determining one’s own choices and acting upon personal interests, values, and goals.

Autonomy builds self-esteem, confidence, more physical activity, a sense of purpose, increased job exploration, and shared values. Adults and programs that support autonomy include invitations and encouragement for adolescents to make decisions about what they want to do and how they want to go about various tasks, assisting them as needed.

RELATEDNESS

Belonging and connection with others.



Youth thrive with consistent, positive connection with others. Relatedness increases school engagement, decreases depression, and creates more positive social interactions. Look for inclusive youth programs that offer consistent adult-youth relationships for at least six months with frequent contact, involvement and closeness.

COMPETENCE

Skills to effectively achieve desired goals.



Competence assists with higher school achievement, reduced anxiety and depression, increased leadership, and valuing of diversity. Youth programs, volunteering, part-time jobs provide opportunities for skill-building and mastery of different types of competence over time. This includes opportunities to interact with youth with diverse perspectives and backgrounds to build emotional, social and cultural competences.