

# Positive youth development as an agenda for cross-domain prevention: a scoping review of concepts, methods, and effects



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LxAddictions22: Global addictions

# Disclosure of interest

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# Agenda

- Positive Youth Development - what does it mean and what is the potential for cross-domain prevention?
- How can a(nother) scoping review of PYD be useful?
- What do we know about PYD and its potential for cross-domain prevention – so far?

# Positive Youth Development

- Positive Youth Development aims to accurately capture the full potential of all young people to learn and thrive in the diverse settings where they live
- Lerner et al. (2011) characterize adolescence as an “ontogenetic laboratory” (Lerner et al., 2011; p. 43)



# Positive Youth Development

- Select positive goals (e.g., mirroring important life purposes)
- Using skills (such as executive function or resource recruitment) to optimize the chance of actualizing one's purposes
- When goals are blocked or when initial attempts at optimization fail, possess the capacity to compensate effectively and adaptively

# Positive Youth Development

## INTERNAL



## EXTERNAL

- Commitment to learning
- Positive values
- Social competencies
- Positive identity

- Support
- Commitment
- Boundaries and expectations
- Constructive use of time

# Positive Youth Development

## **15 developmental constructs of PYD (“assets”)**

bonding, resilience, social competence, emotional competence, cognitive competence, behavioral competence, moral competence, self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, clear and positive identity, belief in the future, recognition for positive behavior, opportunities for prosocial involvement, fostering prosocial norms

# Scoping Review

- The concept of Positive Youth Development covers protective factors and psychosocial variables that are important across many areas of prevention (e.g., depression, addiction, risk behaviors)
- Yet, previous research has often focused on single outcomes
- A scoping review can illustrate the current state of knowledge regarding a specific question or topic



# Scoping Review

- **Concepts:** How is PYD conceptualized? How does PYD describe cross-domain impacts?
- **Methods:** In what way does PYD capture cross-domain effects?  
What is missing?
- **Effects:** What do we know about PYD cross-domain effects? What are next steps?

# Scoping Review

- Data bases

PubPsych

APA Psycinfo

APAPsycArticles

OLC Psychologie

PSYINDEX

Cochrane Library

Embase

Medline

ERIC

- Following the PRISMA-ScR guideline
- ca. 30,000 results; 188 studies reviewed (so far)

# Scoping Review

- **Concepts:** How is PYD conceptualized? How does PYD describe cross-domain impacts?

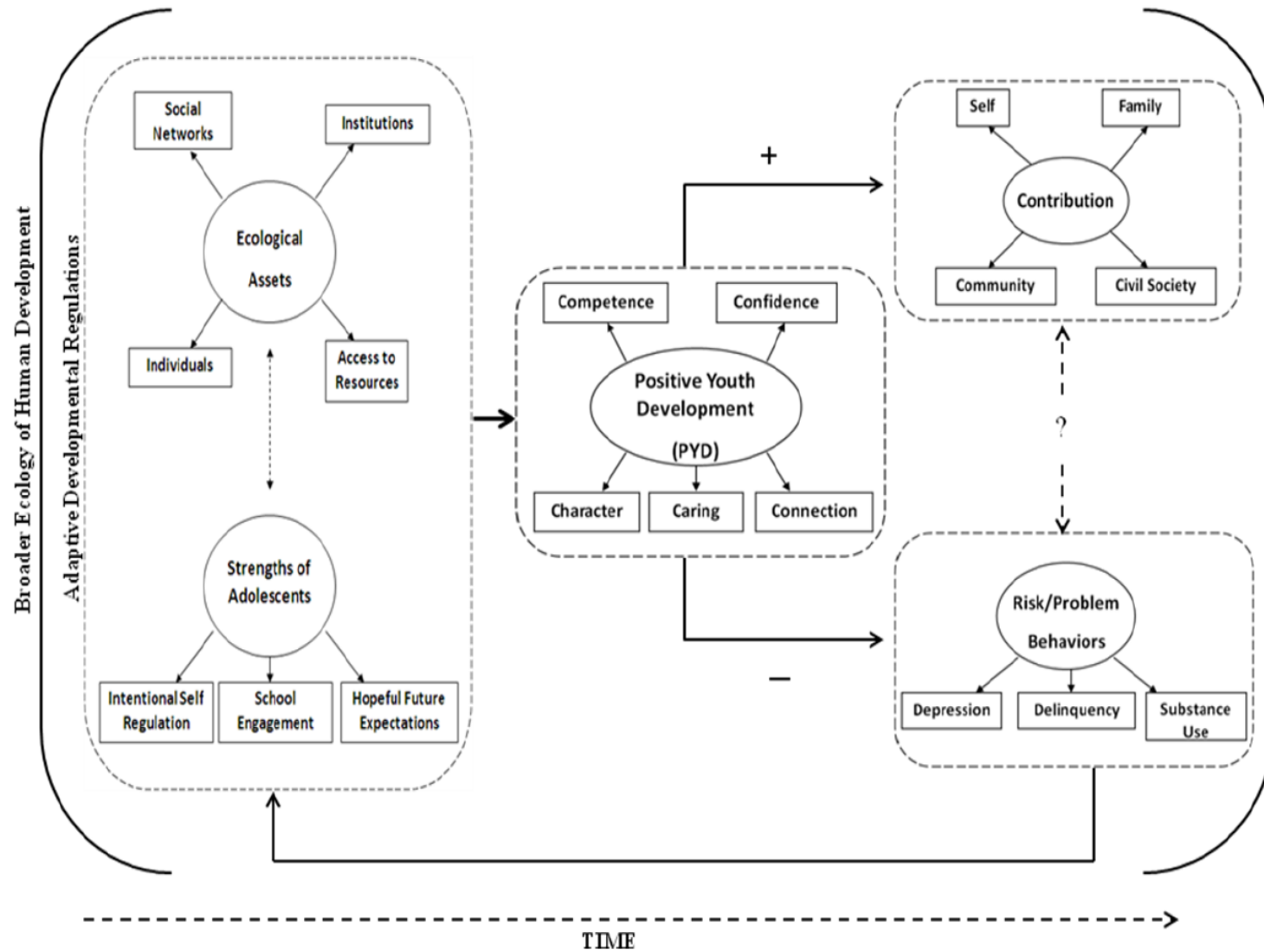
# Positive Youth Development – 5, 6, and 7 Cs?

- Competence
- Confidence
- Connection
- Character
- Caring/compassion
- *Contribution*
- *Creativity? Critical consciousness?*



e.g., Lerner et al., 2011

# Positive Youth Development



# Positive Youth Development

- 1. Individual-level:** Progress of a young person along a PYD path and individual processes and outcomes
- 2. Setting-level:** Resources and/or opportunities provided by a youth program or organization
- 3. System-level:** Policy context pertinent to youth and developmental infrastructure present in a neighborhood, community, state, or nation

# Positive Youth Development

| Dimensions   | Different approaches or versions of PYD   |   |  |                               |   |
|--|---|---|--|-------------------------------|---|
|  | 40 developmental assets   | 5Cs/6Cs models                                | 15 PYD constructs  | SEL                           | Character/spirituality                            |
| Theoretical orientation                                | Ecological perspective (lifespan developmental perspective); strength perspective | Ecological perspective (community emphasized) | Ecological perspective (prevention science: risk and protective factors) | Social information-processing | Humanistic, existential and strength perspectives |
| Emphasis on the role of community in youth development | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  | Not much                      | Not much  |
| Spirituality   | Yes   | Not much                                      | Yes  | No                            | Yes   |
| Character/morality                                     | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  | No                            | Yes   |
| Thriving continuum                                     | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  | No                            | Yes   |
| Being versus Doing                                     | Both  | Both  | Both   | Doing > Being                 | Being > Doing                                     |
| Origin   | Western   | Western                                       | Western  | Western                       | Western   |

# Scoping Review

- **Methods:** In what is PYD capturing cross-domain effects? What is missing?



# PYD mechanisms

Create positive expectations and environments

(e.g., meaningful relationships with adults, participation, develop positive assts)

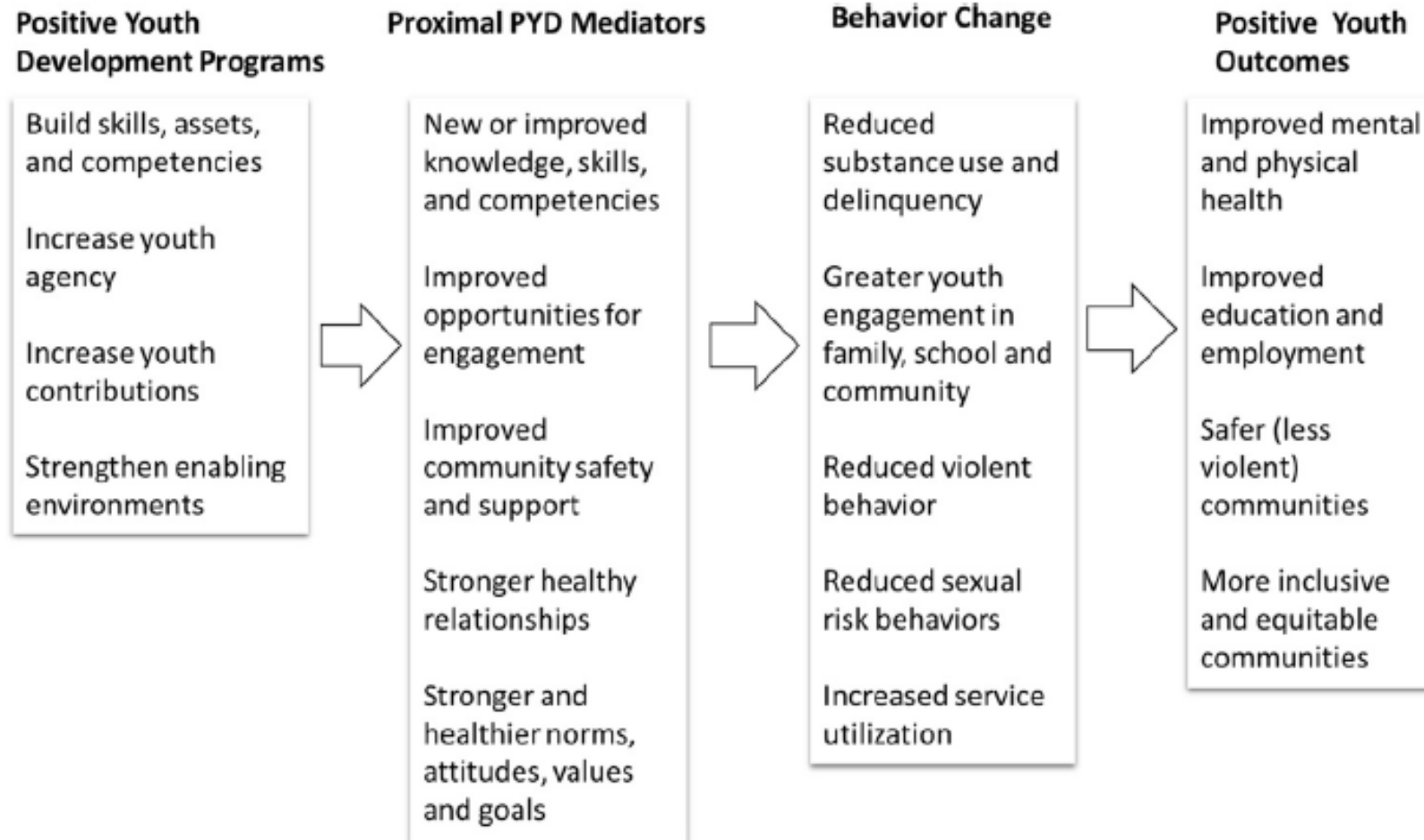
Offer “affordances” to empower internal self-regulation

(e.g., intention, selection, optimisation, and compensation)

Learn through positive experiences

(e.g., building assets, bolster and buffer negative experiences)

# PYD mechanisms



# Scoping Review

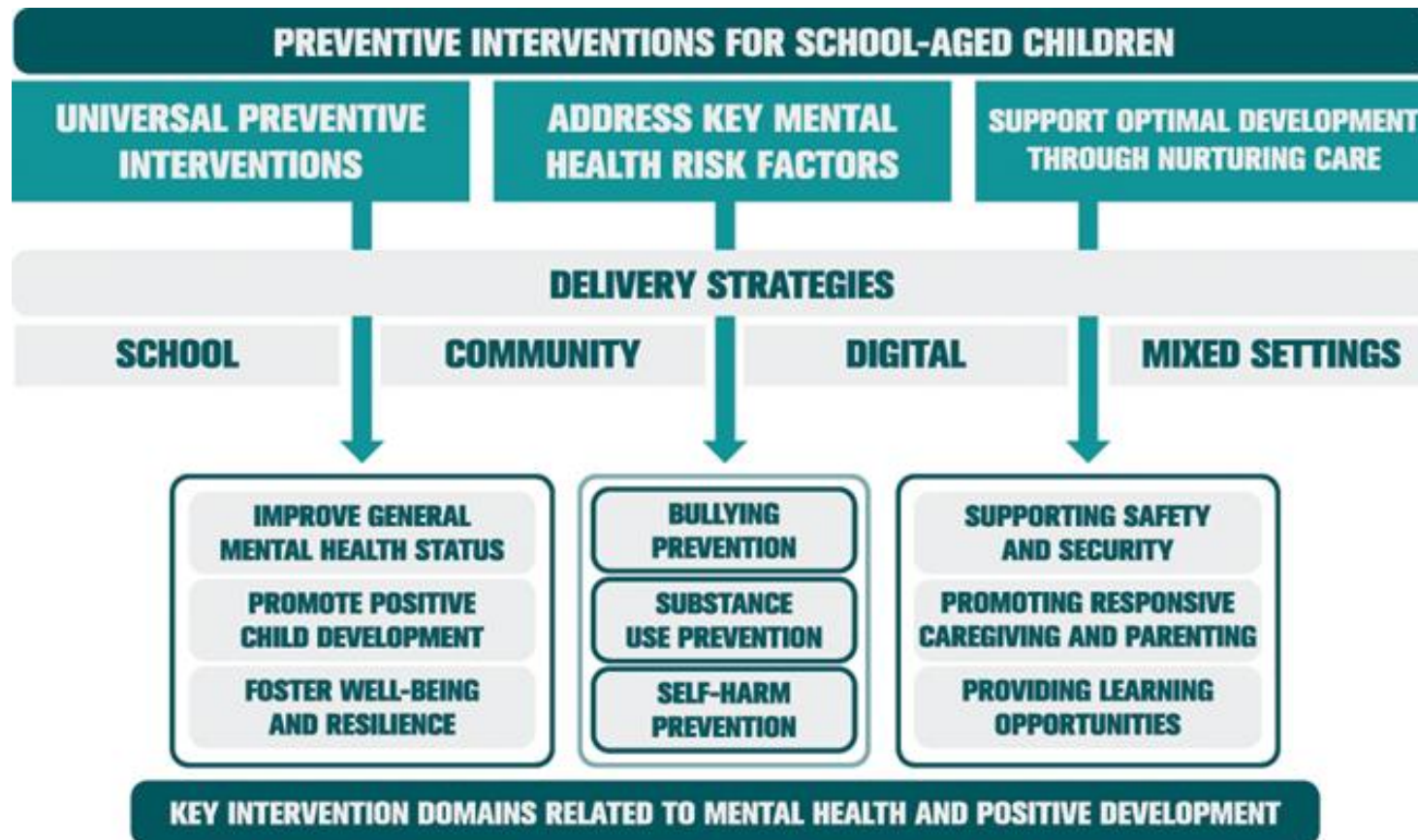
- **Effects:** What do we know about PYD cross-domain effects? What are next steps?

# Positive Youth Development

- **K=24 studies** (small effect on academic achievement and psychological adjustment. No effects for sexual risk behaviors, problem behavior or positive social behaviors; greater benefit for low-risk youth)
- **K=3 studies** (no consistent effects on either victimization or perpetration across all time points)

# Positive Youth Development

- K=162 reviews on PYD and mental health in a qualitative synthesis



# Positive Youth Development

- **Universal prevention:** k=61; positive effects on well-being (mostly exercise, mindfulness, and school-based interventions with sufficient training)
- **Bullying prevention:** k=14; positive effects for school-based interventions
- **Self-harm interventions:** k=2; not enough evidence for concluding statements
- **Nurturing interventions:** k=38; mostly parental interventions (e.g., Triple P)

# Positive Youth Development

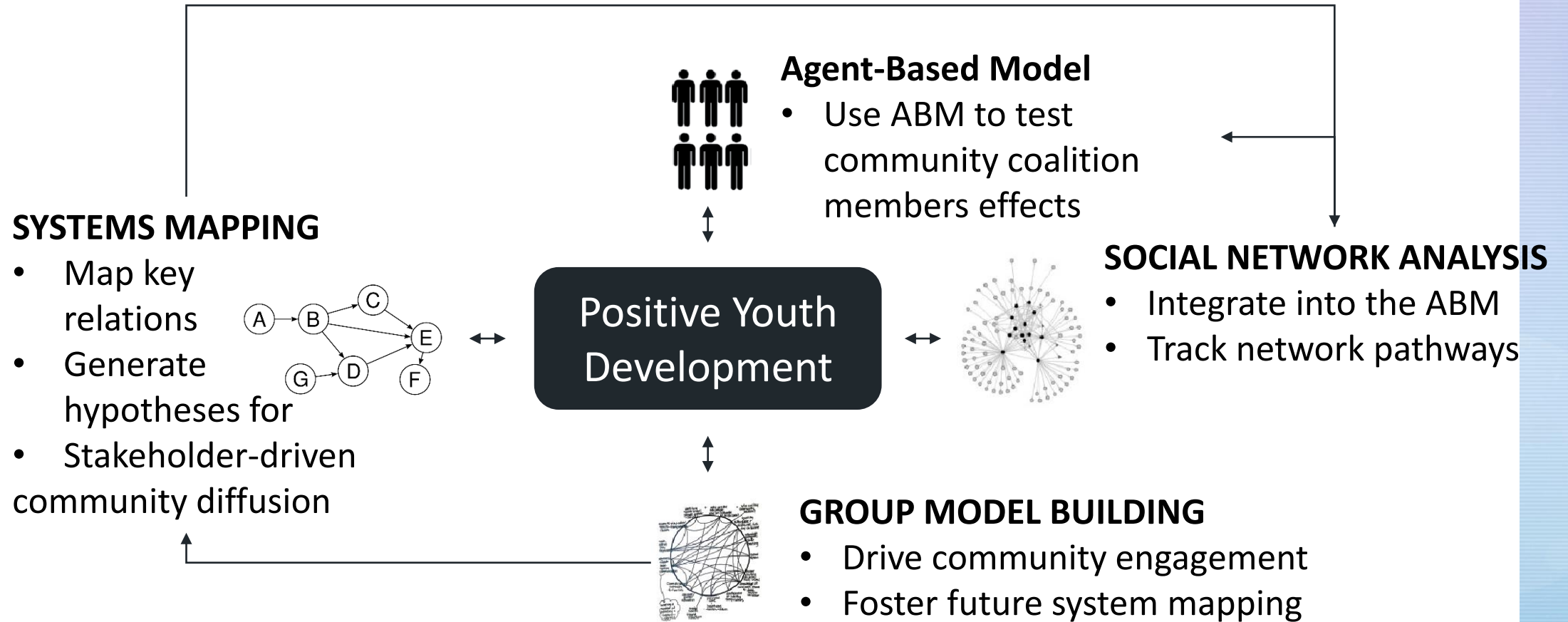
- **Substance use prevention:** k=22; positive effects for parental interventions (e.g., Triple P), promising effects for Youth Participatory Action (including community awareness + multicomponent interventions); small effects for school-based interventions on social skills + influence
- **Interventions in low- and middle-income countries:** k=8; promising effects of PYD, but currently few studies of partly low methodological quality

# Next steps: Implementation

- **Content:** Breadth (younger adolescents) vs. Depth (older adolescents)
- **Duration:** the longer the better (>1 year)
- **Target groups:** comparative studies with low-risk and high-risk populations
- **Contexts:** engaging schools and communities seems promising
- **Quality:** well-trained staff and staff retention foster efficacy



# Next steps: A Complex Systems Perspective



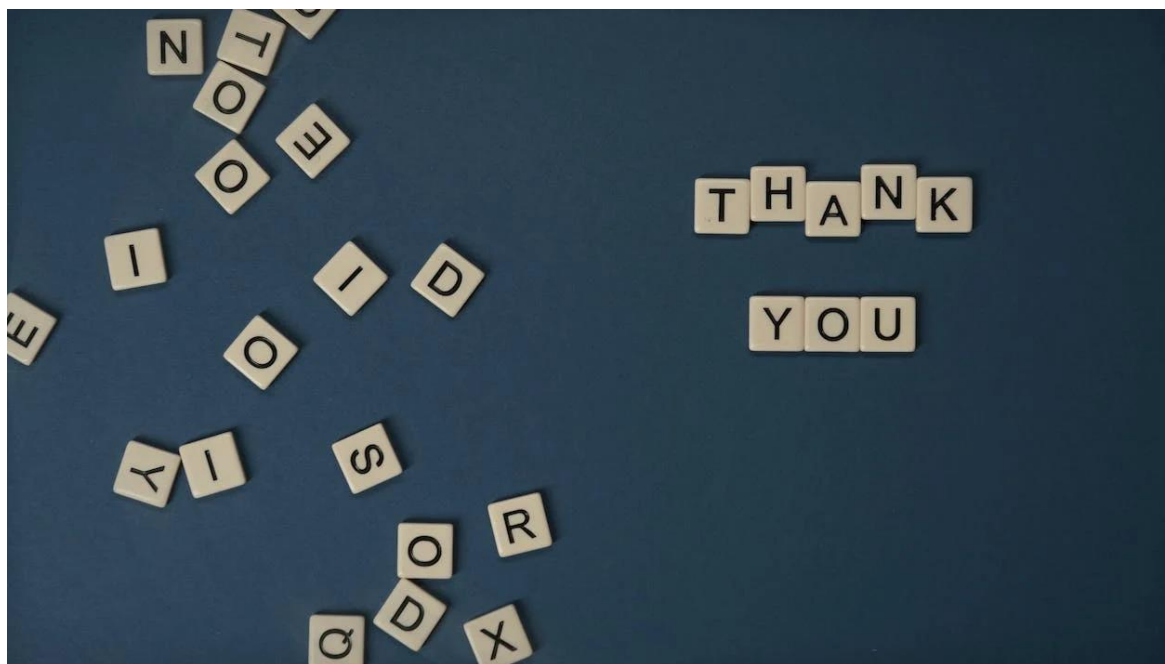
e.g., Hennessy et al., 2020

# Take-Home Message

- Positive Youth Development is an interesting framework for cross-domain preventive efforts (e.g., regarding mental health and risk behaviors)
- However, there is a lack of (testable) theories of change
- So far, PYD seems to have mostly small and nonsignificant effects for community samples, yet evidence for LMIC countries seems more promising
- Nevertheless, there is a lack of research in populations (e.g., young people with disabilities, sexual minority youth), explanations for nonsignificant findings in community samples as well as rigorous evaluations

# Thank you

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