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Positive Youth Development

Yolanda Anyon, Jeffrey M. Jenson

Introduction

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a framework used to design and guide programs and services for children and youth. PYD emphasizes the relationship between young people's strengths and resources and their capacity to live healthy and productive lives. The underlying tenets of PYD suggest that healthy child and youth development is characterized by a sense of responsibility, connectedness, and positive values. Put into practice, key PYD strategies include identifying youth strengths, engaging and motivating young people to support positive growth through these strengths, working with youth as collaborators, and harnessing resources that exist in a young person's environment. PYD advocates assert that common risk-oriented prevention and intervention frameworks fail to consider the idea that preventing a problem from occurring does not guarantee that youth are developing and growing in a healthy manner. Thus, from a PYD perspective healthy development is not simply the absence of problem behavior but it also includes the cultivation of resources and strengths within a child and her or his particular context. Ultimately, PYD suggests that young people who have mutually beneficial relationships with other people and institutions will enter adulthood as positive and successful contributors. In this sense, individuals and their respective social ecologies—peers, schools, families, and communities—are active contributors to the developmental process and promotion of well-being. Today, on-the-ground proponents of PYD are social workers and other individuals who advocate for policy change and funding for interventions and community-based services aimed at promoting healthy youth development. The grassroots efforts of advocates and interdisciplinary research efforts of scholars have also contributed greatly to a recent proliferation in PYD programs for children and youth. The PYD model has much to offer practitioners, community and program planners, and administrators seeking to develop or improve interventions and program services for children and youth. The positive focus on healthy child and adolescent development that the framework embodies has stimulated a rapid increase in PYD programs since the turn of the 21st century. More important, positive outcomes garnered from participants of PYD programs have now begun to support the utility of the model in real-world contexts. Yet as the field has grown, so have challenges in characterizing what constitutes a PYD program, organization, policy, or set of practices. In part, these definitional issues reflect the diverse disciplinary, philosophical, and theoretical roots of PYD as a framework for understanding developmental processes, informing direct practice with youth, and guiding program, organization, and policy development. PYD approaches are implemented in and out of school settings, as well as through traditional youth service organizations and youth activism agencies, and they have been studied by scholars in education, social work, sociology, and psychology. To address the definitional challenges that are common in a young, interdisciplinary field of study, this bibliography parallels the typological approach taken in widely cited national reports and systematic literature reviews. It includes broad array of research, practice, and policy efforts that are aligned with PYD approaches to youth programming. More specifically, the following qualitative criteria were used to select organizations, interventions, and programs for inclusion in this bibliography: (1) they primarily focus on improving positive developmental outcomes, and (2) they employ many of the following practice and programmatic approaches: provide consistent structure; create safe spaces to bond and build relationships; offer inclusive opportunities for identity development; convey high expectations and rewards for positive behavior; support youth involvement and self-determination; provide opportunities to learn interactively and apply useful skills; and integrate family, school, and community efforts.

Introductory Works

Lerner and colleagues (Lerner, et al. 2005; Lerner, et al. 2009) describe the fundamental principles of PYD. They created the *6 C's* of PYD to describe the psychological, behavioral, and social attributes hypothesized to be characteristic of a thriving and well-adapted young person. They include *competence, connection, character, confidence, caring and compassion*, and *contribution*. The *6 C's* are also viewed frequently as outcomes by which attitudes and behavior can be measured and thus are the targets of many PYD

interventions. Benson 1997 and Benson 2003 describe how a developmental assets framework contributes to PYD principles and models. In subsequent work, Damon 2004; Eccles and Appleton 2002; Jenson, et al. 2013; McLaughlin 2000; and Roth and Brooks-Gunn 2003 show how an integrated approach that aims to combine principles of risk and PYD into a single, comprehensive intervention framework is effective in promoting positive development in young people.

Benson, P. L. 1997. *All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents*. **San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.**

Introduces an assets- or strengths-based approach to promoting positive behaviors in children and youth. Provides examples of individual- and community-level assets in young people.

Benson, P. L. 2003. Developmental assets and asset-building community: Conceptual and empirical foundations. In *Developmental assets and asset-building communities: Implications for research, policy, and practice*. **Edited by R. M. Lerner and P. L. Benson, 19–43. Norwell, MA: Kluwer.**

Provides a description of the conceptual framework for an assets or strengths model of understanding child and adolescent development. The assets model developed by Benson and colleagues at the Search Institute informed the early direction and development of PYD.

Damon, W. 2004. What is positive youth development? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* **591:13–24.**

Examines ways in which research on PYD has informed current understanding of the state of childhood, the interaction between children and environment, and moral development in young people.

Eccles, J., and J. A. Appleton, eds. 2002. *Community programs to promote youth development*. **Washington, DC: National Academy.**

Reviews data on community interventions that promote healthy adolescent development and identifies gaps related to developing a unified framework for interventions seeking to promote PYD. Provides an overview of key developmental outcomes and features of positive developmental settings.

Jenson, J. M., C. F. Alter, N. Nicotera, E. K. Anthony, and S. S. Forrest-Bank. 2013. *Risk, resilience, and positive youth development: Developing effective community programs for high-risk youth: Lessons from the Denver Bridge Project*. **New York: Oxford Univ. Press.**

Describes the *Integrated Prevention and Early Intervention Model*, an intervention framework for community-based programs that combines elements of risk, protection, resilience, and PYD. The model is applied to a case study of an urban after-school program.

Lerner, R. M., J. B. Almerigi, C. Theokas, and J. V. Lerner. 2005. Positive youth development: A view of the issues. *The Journal of Early Adolescence* **25:10–16.**

Describes the evolution of PYD and current issues confronting the advancement of the model. The utility and influence of the *5 C's* on programs for children and youth are discussed. Future steps necessary to advance PYD in practice are noted.

Lerner, R. M., J. V. Lerner, and E. Phelps. 2009. *Waves of the future: The first five years of the 4-H study of positive youth development*. **Medford, MA: Tufts Univ., Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development.**

Presents findings from a national evaluation of participation in 4-H programs. PYD measures are used to assess program effects across eight waves of data collection. Positive outcomes in key PYD constructs are reported by the authors.

McLaughlin, M. W. 2000. *Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development.* **Washington, DC: Public Education Network.**

Provides case studies and outlines promising practices employed by effective community-based youth development organizations, drawing on longitudinal qualitative research with adolescents and youth workers.

Roth, J. L., and J. Brooks-Gunn. 2003. Youth development programs: Risk, prevention and policy. *Journal of Adolescent Health* **32:170–182.**

Reviews forty-eight studies that described programs based on principles of PYD. Particular attention is made to describing programs and outcomes that focus on increasing the *6 C's* of PYD.

Centers and Institutions

A number of academic centers, policy institutes, and clearinghouses study and promote PYD. Many of these entities have created websites aimed at disseminating findings from PYD-related research. Other sources have developed tools that are helpful in advancing PYD practice and policy. Collectively, these centers and institutions offer resources that range from conducting and disseminating findings from systematic reviews of PYD programs to providing concrete strategies necessary to implement PYD principles in local communities.

ACADEMIC CENTERS

Academic centers tend to focus on conducting research and disseminating scholarly publications. The nature of the studies conducted by these centers is shaped by their relationships to specific PYD practice organizations and the academic department in which they are housed. The work of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development is grounded in developmental psychology, whereas the Social Development Research Group is housed in a school of social work, and the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities is based in a school of education. Interdisciplinary academic centers include the ACT for Youth Center of Excellence, which offers publications and presentations on efforts to promote adolescent sexual health in New York State, whereas the Extension Center for Youth Development conducts research and facilitates professional development for 4-H programs in Minnesota.

ACT for Youth Center of Excellence.

ACT for Youth Center of Excellence at Cornell University provides resources, technical assistance, and training in the areas of PYD and adolescent sexual health.

Extension Center for Youth Development.

The Extension Center for Youth Development at the University of Minnesota conducts research, provides training, and delivers youth development programs.

Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development.

The Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development conducts research to build the knowledge base in support of PYD programs, policy, and practice.

John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities.

The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University partners with communities to conduct research and support community change efforts that improve conditions for youth development.

Social Development Research Group.

The Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington conducts interdisciplinary research to understand and promote positive social development.

POLICY INSTITUTES

Policy institutes provide specific tools and resources for policymakers, practitioners, advocates, and program evaluators in the field. The Forum for Youth Investment emphasizes systems change and offers strategies for cross-sector partnerships that promote comprehensive PYD, whereas the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development focuses on organizational and program planning. The National Training Institute for Community Youth Work specializes in professional development curriculum to enhance the skills of providers working directly with youth. The Search Institute distributes a variety of products for use in direct practice, along with instruments to collect data from young people about their attitudes, behaviors, and assets.

Forum for Youth Investment.

The Forum for Youth Investment brings research, policy, and practice knowledge to leaders at all levels in order to ensure all young people are ready for college, work, and life by adulthood.

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.

The Innovation Center offers products and services to build the capacity of youth development organizations and practitioners.

National Training Institute for Community Youth Work.

The National Training Institute for Community Youth Work at the Academy for Educational Development provides products and services in support of youth workers' professional development.

Search Institute.

The Search Institute conducts research and evaluation, offers curricula and other products, and provides training for youth development organizations. The Institute is also known for identifying forty developmental assets associated with positive youth outcomes.

CLEARINGHOUSES

Clearinghouses focus much of their work on identifying effective youth programs and connecting practitioners to useful resources. Whereas FindYouthInfo maintains an inclusive and broad directory of youth development organizations across the country, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development disseminates information only about programs that meet strict criteria for demonstrating effectiveness in promoting positive outcomes. The National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth catalogues private and public funding opportunities for youth development organizations and maintains a searchable database of publications focused on youth.

Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development.

Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development offers a searchable database of evidence-based programs that reduce problem behaviors and promote PYD.

FindYouthInfo.

FindYouthInfo is is a federal interagency resource that aims to promote positive youth outcomes by providing tools and resources to support effective community-based services for young people. The website includes searchable registries of grants and effective youth programs, along with a directory of federally funded youth programs that can be mapped by ZIP code.

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth.

The National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth is a resource of the federal Family and Youth Services bureau that provides information about funding opportunities, research, tools, and training on a broad range of topics related to youth issues. The website includes a literature database of thousands of youth-focused publications.

Manuals and Guides

The following manuals and guides are available free of cost to youth development practitioners who work directly with young people, or who train adults to use PYD approaches in a variety of settings. Piha and Adams 2001 and Dotterweich 2006 focus on training adults, whereas Anyon, et al. 2007 and Innovation Center 2009 outline activities and tips for supporting youth leadership development and sustaining youth-adult partnerships. Additional manuals and guides to support direct services and professional development are available for a fee through the institutions, centers, and clearinghouses identified above.

Anyon, Y., K. Brink, M. Crawford, et al., eds. 2007. *Youth engaged in leadership and learning: A handbook for program staff, teachers, and community leaders*. **Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Univ., John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities.**

A year-long curriculum with activities for training middle or high school–age youth to conduct research or program evaluation, analyze results, present findings to local stakeholders, and advocate for change.

Dotterweich, J. 2006. *Positive Youth Development resource manual*. **Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ., Act for Youth Upstate Center of Excellence.**

Provides practical training activities and tools to introduce PYD theory, research, and practices to a variety of community stakeholders.

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. 2009. *Collective leadership works: Preparing youth and adults for community change*. **Takoma Park, MD: Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.**

Provides tips, activities, and tools to promote civic activism among youth and build their personal and leadership skills in partnership with adults

Piha, S., and A. Adams. 2001. *Youth development guide*. **San Francisco: Community Network for Youth Development.**

Provides exercises, tools, and lessons for practitioners to guide the design and implementation of PYD programs.

Journals

The field of PYD is relatively young, reflected by the fact that it is represented by only two primary journals. These are *New Directions for Youth Development* and the *Journal of Youth Development*. Five additional journals listed below frequently publish articles of interest to PYD researchers and practitioners: the *Journal of Primary Prevention*, Developmental Psychology, the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, the *Journal of Adolescence*, and *Applied Developmental Science*.

American Journal of Community Psychology. 1973–.

Focuses on ecologically oriented community-based interventions that prevent behavioral health disorders and promote child and youth well-being. The journal publishes original research, theoretical and conceptual works, literature reviews, profiles of innovative programs or policies, and stakeholder accounts of intervention implementation.

Applied Developmental Science. 1997–.

A multidisciplinary journal that publishes applied research studies with theoretical and practical implications for promoting PYD.

Developmental Psychology. 1969–.

This journal aims to advance theory and knowledge about human psychological development across the lifespan by publishing empirical, theoretical, and methodological manuscripts that address the many contexts of child and human development.

Journal of Adolescence. 1978–.

An interdisciplinary and international journal focused on adolescent development and the effects of interventions on children and youth.

Journal of Primary Prevention. 1980–.

Presents original research articles, field reports, literature reviews, and book reviews that address a wide range of topics related to preventing health problems and promoting well-being among children and youth.

Journal of Youth Development: Bridging Research and Practice. 1995–.

Focuses on interdisciplinary and applied research addressing a wide range of PYD topics. Includes original research articles, descriptions of promising programs, discussion of research and evaluation strategies, and reviews of youth development tools and resources.

New Directions for Youth Development. 1979–.

Publishes interdisciplinary manuscripts on PYD theory, practice, and research. Each issue focuses on a critical topic that is addressed by invited experts.

Federal Policy

Federal policy that explicitly supports PYD programming in schools and communities is managed by several different agencies.

Through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, the Department of Education provides funding and technical assistance in support of youth programs that promote students' social, emotional, and academic learning. The Department of Agriculture manages the 4-H Youth Development Program, which emphasizes youths' development of science and citizenship skills. Finally, YouthBuild is directed by the US Department of Labor and targets job readiness and entrepreneurial outcomes.

21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Established through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, this US Department of Education program provides funding for community learning centers in high-poverty neighborhoods and low-performing schools to offer enrichment activities outside of the school day.

Cooperative Extension Service: 4-H Youth Development Program.

Created by the Smith-Lever Act, this US Department of Agriculture program provides funding to provide and conduct research on 4-H youth development programs through cooperative extension services affiliated with land-grant universities.

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative.

Established through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, this federal grant-making initiative is supported by the US Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice. The initiative allocates funds to school districts in collaboration with local agencies to provide comprehensive youth violence prevention programs that strengthen healthy child development.

YouthBuild.

Created as part of the Workforce Investment Act, this US Department of Labor program provides funding for community programs that offer low-income young people ages sixteen to twenty-four the opportunity to work, earn their GED or high school diploma, complete community service, and learn leadership skills.

PYD Program and Practice Strategies

Although PYD programs range dramatically in terms of their size, scale, and focus, there is increasing consensus among researchers and practitioners that effective programs share similar approaches to promoting positive outcomes. Effective programs employ several of the following strategies outlined below: provide consistent structure; create safe spaces to bond and build relationships; offer inclusive opportunities for identity development; convey high expectations and rewards for positive behavior; support youth involvement and self-determination; provide opportunities to learn interactively and apply useful skills; and integrate family, school, and community efforts.

PROVIDE CONSISTENT STRUCTURE

Mahoney and Stattin 2000 illustrates the importance of providing structured and intentionally sequenced PYD program activities over an extended period of time on a consistent schedule. Walker 2006 provides guidance for practitioners about how to develop such programs.

Mahoney, J. L., and H. Stattin. 2000. Leisure activities and adolescent antisocial behavior: The role of structure and social context. *Journal of Adolescence* **23.2: 113–127.**

Discusses the results of a survey of 703 early adolescents and their parents. The study found that participation in highly structured

youth programs was associated with lower levels of antisocial behavior, whereas involvement in low-structure activities was related to higher levels of antisocial behavior.

Walker, J. A. 2006. Intentional youth programs: Taking theory to practice. *New Directions for Youth Development* **112:75–92.**

Presents a theory of developmental intentionality and applies these concepts to youth development program planning and implementation.

CREATE SAFE SPACES TO BOND AND BUILD SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Providing time and space within program activities dedicated to encouraging and developing social bonds, warmth, attachment, and connections between and among youth participants, program staff, family members, school personnel, and community members is a key PYD approach. Grossman and Bulle 2006 reviews the literature to identify specific techniques that facilitate bonding and relationships within youth programs, whereas Laursen and Birmingham 2003 presents youths' perspectives about what adults do to make them feel cared about.

Grossman, J. B., and M. J. Bulle. 2006. Review of what youth programs do to increase the connectedness of youth with adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health* **39:788–799.**

This article identifies key program and practice strategies to foster positive relationships between adults and adolescents in youth programs.

Laursen, E. K., and S. M. Birmingham. 2003. Caring relationships as a protective factor for at-risk youth: An ethnographic study. *Families in Society* **84:240–246.**

Based on ethnographic research with twenty-three youths regarding their perceptions of caring adults, this study delineated seven characteristics of caring relationships: trust, attention, empathy, availability, affirmation, respect, and virtue.

OFFER INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IDENTITY FORMATION

PYD programs create opportunities for youth to explore, form, and feel confident about their cultural identities (i.e., gender, ethnicity, race, religion or spirituality, class, sexuality, or disability) in an environment where diversity is valued. Romeo and Kelly 2009 offers approaches to facilitating youths' exploration of their sexuality in PYD programs, whereas Wilson 2002 illustrates how PYD practitioners incorporate spiritual development into their work with youth. In contrast, Watkins, et al. 2007 demonstrates how a youth program can address multiple, intersecting cultural identities among participants.

Romeo, K. E., and M. A. Kelley. 2009. Incorporating human sexuality content into a positive youth development framework: Implications for community prevention. *Children and Youth Services Review* **31:1001–1009.**

Provides a framework for embedding comprehensive sexuality education within PYD programs and demonstrates how sexuality education can promote healthy developmental outcomes.

Watkins, N. D., R. W. Larson, and P. J. Sullivan. 2007. Bridging intergroup difference in a community youth program. *American Behavioral Scientist* **51:380–402.**

A qualitative case study of the strategies used by a youth development program to improve relationships between diverse participants and change their attitudes about multiple dimensions of difference, such as race, class, religion, and sexual orientation.

Wilson, M. 2002. *Practice unbound: A study of secular spiritual and religious activities in work with adolescents*. Boxborough, MA: New England Network for Child, Youth and Family Services.

Through 191 interviews with youth-serving organizations, this study describes spiritually oriented activities implemented in youth development programs, highlighting the impact of these activities and implementation challenges.

CONVEY HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND REWARDS FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIORS

Messias, et al. 2005 reviews the literature demonstrating that effective PYD programs establish clear rules, expectations, consequences, and rewards for behavior that are enforced fairly and consistently. Yohalem 2003 describes how effective youth workers regularly recognize and reward youth for positive behavior and achievement, and encourage participants to engage in service to others.

Messias, D. K. H., E. M. Fore, K. McLoughlin, and D. Parra-Medina. 2005. Adult roles in community-based youth empowerment programs: Implications for best practices. *Family and Community Health* 28:320–337.

Identified the following best practices for adult roles in youth development programs based on interviews, field observations, and focus groups with program participants and staff: putting youth first; raising the bar for youth performance; creating the space and making things happen; being in relationships; exerting influence, control, and authority; and communicating and connecting with the broader community.

Yohalem, N. 2003. Adults who make a difference: Identifying the skills and characteristics of successful youth workers. In *Community youth development: Programs, policies, and practices*. Edited by F. A. Villarruel, D. F. Perkins, L. M. Borden, and J. G. Keith, 358–372. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2003.

Identifies the skills, characteristics, and belief systems of effective youth workers, including the belief that all youth have strengths, the strategy of holding young people to high expectations, and the characteristic of rewarding youth for prosocial behavior.

SUPPORT YOUTH INVOLVEMENT AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Hansen and Larson 2007 demonstrates that effective PYD programs provide youth with opportunities to think independently and critically when developing personal or program-related goals, take responsibility and work toward these goals autonomously, and contribute to their school, community, or family. Camino and Zeldin 2002, along with Noguera, et al. 2006, describes different program models that emphasize youth involvement, from youth organizing and activism to service learning, and their importance for civic engagement and long-term social change. Larson, et al. 2005 describes different power dynamics between young people and adults in PYD programs and outlines effective approaches for incorporating youth voice in program evaluation and decision-making.

Camino, L., and S. Zeldin. 2002. From periphery to center: Pathways for youth civic engagement in the day-to-day life of communities. *Applied Developmental Science* 6:213–220.

Describes five pathways through which young people develop civic engagement: public policy/consultation, community coalition involvement, youth in organizational decision-making, youth organizing and activism, and school-based service learning. Three characteristics of these pathways are also outlined: youth ownership, youth-adult partnership, and facilitative policies and structures.

Hansen, D. M., and R. W. Larson. 2007. Amplifiers of developmental and negative experiences in organized activities: Dosage, motivation, lead roles, and adult-youth ratios. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 28:360–374.

Presents results from a survey of 1,822 eleventh-grade students from nineteen high schools. Analyses revealed that the benefits of youth programs were higher when youth had leadership roles in program activities.

Larson, R., K. Walker, and N. Pearce. 2005. A comparison of youth-driven and adult-driven youth programs: Balancing inputs from youth and adults. *Journal of Community Psychology* **33:57–74.**

Drawing on in-depth qualitative data from four high-quality youth programs, this article compares "youth-driven" and "adult-driven" approaches to working with young people. The authors describe specific practices and techniques used by adults in these programs and the benefits of each type of approach for youth participants.

Noguera, P., J. Cammarota, and S. Ginwright, eds. 2006. *Beyond resistance! Youth activism and community change: New democratic possibilities for practice and policy for America's youth.* **New York: Routledge.**

This volume provides an overview of theories, research, and practice in youth activism, participation, and leadership, including analyses of PYD from a critical perspective, case studies of youth empowerment organizations, and multidisciplinary perspectives on youth policies and civic engagement.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN INTERACTIVELY AND APPLY USEFUL SKILLS

PYD programs explicitly target the development of competencies in one or more developmental domains (physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, social, and cultural). Larson and Angus 2011 uses qualitative data to demonstrate that interactive activities where youth learn and rehearse skills are the most useful approaches to advancing participants' personal, academic, and career goals. Pittman, et al. 2004 demonstrates how PYD programs increase resilience by developing youths' positive coping and mastery skills in the face of challenging life experiences.

Larson, R. W., and R. M. Angus. 2011. Adolescents' development of skills for agency in youth programs: Learning to think strategically. *Child Development* **82:277–294.**

Analysis of 712 interviews with 108 youths in eleven high-quality urban and rural arts and leadership programs found that the development of youths' skills was supported when youths had interactive opportunities to learn new skills, had control over work projects, and were provided nondirective assistance from adults when needed.

Pittman, K. J., M. Irby, N. Yohalem, and A. Wilson-Ahlstrom. 2004. Blurring the lines for learning: The role of out-of-school programs as complements to formal learning. *New Directions for Youth Development* **101:19–41.**

Applies general learning theories to the context of PYD programs. Drawing on case studies of youth-serving organizations, provides examples of interactive activities that create opportunities for skill building.

INTEGRATE FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Greenberg, et al. 2003 and Shinn 2008 draw on comprehensive and interdisciplinary literature reviews to demonstrate that effective PYD programs engage family members, teachers, and other community members in their activities. These studies illustrate the need to coordinate PYD programs and approaches across family, school, and community settings. Durlak, et al. 2007 describes the impact of such integrated efforts on systems-level outcomes, above and beyond their impact on individual youth participants.

Durlak, J. A., R. D. Taylor, K. Kawashima, et al. 2007. Effects of positive youth development programs on school, family, and community systems. *American Journal of Community Psychology* **39:269–286.**

Reviews studies of PYD programs that target systems-level change in families, schools, or communities. Documents medium to large effect sizes on system-level variables and discusses promising methodological strategies in this area.

Greenberg, M. T., R. P. Weissberg, M. Utne O'Brien, et al. 2003. Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist* **58:466–474.**

Describes the need for coordination, shared accountability systems, and staff development efforts between youth development programs and schools in order to improve program implementation, impact, and sustainability.

Shinn, M., ed. 2008. *Toward positive youth development: Transforming schools and community programs.* **New York: Oxford Univ. Press.**

This volume provides an overview of different strategies for improving youth-serving organizations using a PYD approach. Several chapters are dedicated to each setting: classrooms, schools, community organizations, and systems.

Effectiveness of PYD Programs

A growing body of research provides evidence that PYD programs are effective in reducing risk behaviors and increasing young people's sense of competence, connection, character, confidence, caring, and contribution across multiple developmental domains. Meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and individual studies that demonstrate the impact of PYD programs on specific developmental domains (physical, intellectual, emotional and behavioral, and social and moral) are summarized below.

MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS

In one of the most widely cited peer-reviewed articles on PYD, the authors of Catalano, et al. 2002 conducted a systematic review of the literature to identify the key attributes of effective PYD programs that improve a variety of psychosocial outcomes. Durlak, et al. 2010 and Durlak, et al. 2011 use meta-analysis methodology and find that two types of high-quality PYD programs, school-based and after-school, can have medium to large effect sizes on desired outcomes across multiple developmental domains.

Catalano, R. F., M. L. Berglund, J. A. M. Ryan, H. S. Lonczak, and J. D. Hawkins. 2002. Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *Prevention and Treatment* **5:1–111.**

Defines PYD programs as interventions that aim to (1) promote social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and/or moral competencies; (2) enhance bonding; (3) foster resilience; (4) increase self-determination, spirituality, and self-efficacy; and (5) provide recognition for involvement in positive behavior. Characteristics of programs that positively impact youth outcomes are identified.

Durlak, J. A., R. P. Weissberg, A. B. Dymnicki, R. D. Taylor, and K. B. Schellinger. 2011. The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development* **82:405–432.**

Presents results of meta-analysis of 213 youth development programs implemented during the school day to promote social and emotional learning. Documents effects on social and emotional skills, academic performance, emotional distress, attitudes, prosocial behavior, and conduct problems.

Durlak, J. A., R. P. Weissberg, and M. Pachan. 2010. A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology* **45:94–309.**

Presents results of a meta-analysis of sixty-nine after-school youth development programs that target personal and social skills. Documents program effects on positive social behaviors, grades and academic achievement, and school bonding. Identifies four characteristics associated with effective programs (SAFE: sequenced, active, focused, and explicit).

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

A growing number of studies have documented that PYD programs can have a positive impact on skills and habits that support health and wellness. The meta-analysis conducted in Beets, et al. 2009 illustrates the effects of PYD programs on physical activity and fitness, whereas two systematic reviews of the literature, Gavin, et al. 2009 and Robinson-O'Brien, et al. 2009, demonstrate the impact that PYD programs can have on reproductive health and nutrition, respectively.

Beets, M. W., A. Beighle, H. E. Erwin, and J. L. Huberty. 2009. After-school program impact on physical activity and fitness. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* **36:527–537.**

Presents results of meta-analysis of eleven after-school PYD programs focused on physical activity, demonstrating positive effects on participants' physical activity levels, fitness, body composition, and blood lipids.

Gavin, L., R. Catalano, C. David-Ferdon, K. Gloppen, and C. Markham. 2009. Positive youth development programs that promote adolescent reproductive health. *Journal of Adolescent Health* **44:S11.**

Review of thirty-one youth development programs that aim to improve adolescent reproductive health. Sixteen out of thirty-one programs improved at least one reproductive health outcome with moderate impact sustained over multiple years. Programs that did impact reproductive health outcomes were (1) more likely to improve the family, school, or community context; (2) supportive; (3) empowering of youth; (4) able to communicate expectations; (5) able to provide opportunities for recognition; and (6) stable and long-term.

Robinson-O'Brien, R., M. Story, and S. Heim. 2009. Impact of garden-based youth nutrition intervention programs: A review. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* **109:273–280.**

Reviewed findings from eleven studies of garden-based nutrition education programs for youth, demonstrating their impact on fruit and vegetable intake.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The following research illustrates the impact of PYD programs on cognitive skills and attributes necessary for school and career success. Lauer, et al. 2006 measures effects on content knowledge, whereas O'Hearn and Gatz 1999 focuses on academic-related skills like decision-making, goal-setting, and planning. Tucker and Herman 2002 describes how a program targeting intellectual development helped youth make gains on standardized tests and in their GPA and was responsive to students' cultural backgrounds.

Lauer, P. A., M. Akiba, S. B. Wilkerson, H. S. Apthorp, D. Snow, and M. L. Martin-Glenn. 2006. Out-of-school-time programs: A meta-analysis of effects for at-risk students. *Review of Educational Research* **76:275–313.**

Review of twenty-five studies of youth development programs delivered outside of the regular school day to support academic achievement. In general, out-of-school-time (OST) programs had statistically significant positive effects on reading and mathematics, with social skills components (recreational, cultural, or vocational focus) boosting effect sizes for math skills and not significantly detracting from effect sizes for reading programs.

O'Hearn, T. C., and M. Gatz. 1999. Evaluating a psychosocial competence program for urban adolescents. *Journal of Primary Prevention* **20:119–144.**

A randomized controlled trial of the Going for the Goal program demonstrated positive effects on 350 middle school students' goal setting and resilience to obstacles in meeting these goals. High school facilitators of the program also improved their knowledge of

life skills.

Tucker, C. M., and K. C. Herman. 2002. Using culturally sensitive theories and research to meet the academic needs of low-income African American children. *American Psychologist* **57:762–773.**

Reviews the results of multiple studies demonstrating the positive impact of The Research-Based Model Partnership Education Program on African American school-age youths' grade point averages and test scores.

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DEVELOPMENT

Psychosocial skills that strengthen resilience and positive interpersonal relationships such as emotion identification and regulation, impulse control, self-soothing, coping, frustration tolerance, communication, refusal and resistance, negotiation, and conflict resolution are a common target of PYD programs. The following studies provide overviews of interventions that have been proven effective in promoting youths' emotional and behavioral development using different approaches delivered in distinct settings. Frey, et al. 2000 details the results from a study of a social skills curriculum delivered in classrooms, whereas Pierce and Shields 1998 outlines the effects of an after-school academic enrichment initiative, and Vincent and Guinn 2001 describes a community-based health promotion program. Larson 2000 involved a variety of different organizations and provides an overview of strategies that PYD programs use to foster youths' initiative.

Frey, K. S., M. K. Hirschstein, and B. A. Guzzo. 2000. Second Step: Preventing aggression by promoting social competence. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* **8:102–112.**

Describes Second Step, a program that promotes social competence of children and early adolescents, and reviews findings from multiple studies that demonstrate program impact on participants' empathy, social problem-solving, and anger management skills.

Larson, R. 2000. Toward a psychology of positive youth development. *American Psychologist* **55:170.**

Reviews findings from several research studies indicating that adolescents experience the greatest intrinsic motivation and concentration when participating in structured voluntary activities. Discusses the implications of this body of research for conceptualizing the psychology of PYD.

Pierce, L. H., and N. Shields. 1998. The Be A Star community-based after-school program: Developing resiliency in high-risk preadolescent youth. *Journal of Community Psychology* **26:175–183.**

A study of 700 children participating in after-school programs. Compared to a control group, participants in the "Be A Star" program scored significantly higher on measures of self-esteem, emotional awareness, self-control, and social skills.

Vincent, V., and R. Guinn. 2001. Effectiveness of a colonia educational intervention. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* **23:229–238.**

Describes the effectiveness of community-based health promotion program for seven- to twelve-year-old Hispanic children. Results demonstrated that the program positively impacted youths' self-esteem and locus of control.

SOCIAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Investigators have assessed the impact of PYD programs on young people's connections with people or institutions that provide social capital and psychosocial support. Attachment to and identification with prosocial adults, peers, cultural groups, and institutions (e.g., school, church, youth programs) has been the focus of much of this work, as exemplified by LoSciuto, et al. 1999; Belgrave, et

al. 2000; and Oyserman, et al. 2002. Research findings from Ayotte, et al. 2003 and Leming 2001 also reveal the effect of PYD programs on character traits that are aligned with productive citizenship. These include integrity, personal responsibility, empathy, compassion, respect for social rules and norms, sense of right and wrong, cultural sensitivity and humility, commitment to civic engagement, public service, and elements of social justice.

Ayotte, V., J. F. Saucier, F. Bowen, M. C. Laurendeau, M. Fournier, and J. G. Blais. 2003. Teaching multiethnic urban adolescents how to enhance their competencies: Effects of a middle school primary prevention program on adaptation. *Journal of Primary Prevention* 24:7–23.

Evaluation of a school-based program for low-income urban youth that focused on cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills. Participants experienced improved social interactions and self-concept in the areas of honesty, reliability, and trustworthiness.

Belgrave, F. Z., G. Chase-Vaughn, F. Gray, J. D. Addison, and V. R. Cherry. 2000. The effectiveness of a culture- and gender-specific intervention for increasing resiliency among African American preadolescent females. *Journal of Black Psychology* 26:133–147.

Shares results from an evaluation of a culturally tailored after-school program for African American girls between the ages of ten and twelve. The program involved mentoring and small group activities focused on gender and cultural issues. Participants scored significantly higher on positive cultural values and racial identity than did a comparison group.

Leming, J. S. 2001. Integrating a structured ethical reflection curriculum into high school community service experiences: Impact on students' sociomoral development. *Adolescence* 36:33–45.

Study of 467 high school students revealed that students who participated in an ethical decision-making curriculum as part of their community service experienced significantly greater gains in agency, social relatedness, and moral-political awareness than a control group.

LoSciuto, L., S. M. Hilbert, M. M. Fox, L. Porcellini, and A. Lanphear. 1999. A two-year evaluation of the Wood Rock Youth Development Project. *Journal of Early Adolescence* 19:488–507.

Presents results of a randomized clinical trial of a school-based youth development program that positively impacted participants' school attendance and perceptions of race relations.

Oyserman, D., K. Terry, and D. Bybee. 2002. A possible selves intervention to enhance school involvement. *Journal of Adolescence* 25:313–326.

Reports findings from a study of a short-term after-school program focused on improving African American middle school youths' self-concept. Compared to a control group, participants reported greater school bonding, attendance, and concern about academic achievement.

Challenges and Future Directions

A number of challenges remain in the effort to advance PYD in the context of interventions and services for children and youth. These challenges include differing viewpoints about ways to operationalize conceptual models of PYD, inconsistency in measuring PYD constructs, workforce development challenges, and financial considerations.

CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES

Catalano, et al. 2002 describes the conceptual challenges for PYD in relation to its juxtaposition against risk and resilience frameworks for understanding, preventing, and treating child and adolescent problem behaviors that have dominated the prevention and early intervention fields These authors suggest that fully integrating principles of risk and resilience and PYD is a logical and important next step in improving the efficacy of interventions for children and youth. Pittman, et al. 2003 reinforces this idea by noting that risk factors such as lack of opportunity, discrimination, and poverty play an important role in a young person's healthy development. As noted by Pittman and associates, children live in homes, neighborhoods, and communities with unequal playing fields. Catalano, et al. 2002 and Pittman, et al. 2003 reinforce the importance of addressing social injustices associated with race, ethnicity, and social class that are so prevalent in many American neighborhoods and communities. The authors of Catalano, et al. 2002 conclude their analysis of PYD models by suggesting that cooperation between risk and resilience and PYD is essential to improving outcomes for children and youth.

Catalano, R. F., J. D. Hawkins, M. L. Berglund, J. A. Pollard, and M. W. Arthur. 2002. Prevention science and positive youth development: Competitive or cooperative frameworks? *Journal of Adolescent Health* **31:230–239.**

Reviews similarities and differences between risk-based and PYD approaches to preventing child and adolescent problem behavior. A position favoring the integration of these often-competing models is advanced and described.

Pittman, K. J., M. Irby, J. Tolman, N. Yohalem, and T. Ferber. 2003. *Preventing problems, promoting development, encouraging engagement: Competing priorities or inseparable goals?* **Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment.**

Discusses the recent paradigm shift in promoting youth development in community and school programs. The authors identify nine key ideas related to advancing positive and healthy development in young people.

MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

Geldhof, et al. 2013 highlights the fact that there is considerable variation in the way in which PYD is defined, operationalized, and measured. Yohalem, et al. 2007 reinforces this assertion by noting that PYD has come to mean many things to many people, a fact that places considerable pressure on practitioners and researchers to better define and conceptualize the constructs underlying PYD interventions. Granger, et al. 2007 reviews PYD instruments in the context of after-school programs for children and adolescents.

Geldhof, G. J., E. P. Bowers, M. J. Boyd, et al. 2013. Creation of short and very short measures of the Five Cs of positive youth development. *Journal of Research on Adolescence.*

Describes the process used to create a brief measure of the *5 C's* of PYD. Psychometric properties of the instrument are presented and interpreted.

Granger, R. C., J. A. Durlak, N. Yohalem, and E. Reisner. 2007. *Improving after-school program quality.* **New York: William T. Grant Foundation.**

Provides a review of measurement instruments available to assess the quality of youth programs. Demonstrates that instruments are reliable and have face validity, but they cannot yet predict youth outcomes. Instruments tend to focus on five core concepts: (1) staff and youth interactions, (2) social norms, (3) physical and psychological safety, (4) skill-building opportunities, (5) program routine or structure. The authors suggest that accountability systems should assess program outcomes and practices in order to improve service quality.

Yohalem, N., A. Wilson-Ahlstrom, S. Fischer, and M. Shinn. 2007. *Measuring youth program quality: A guide to assessment tools.* **Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment.**

A comprehensive overview of instruments that can be used to assess youth development program quality. The authors compare the

assessment tools, provide brief summaries of their characteristics and targets, and offer details about their structure, technical properties, methodology, ease of use, and available supports or training.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Fusco 2012 describes a small number of formal PYD training programs and certificate mechanisms that are housed in a variety of different academic departments, available only to students living in select regions of the United States. The author reinforces the need to design training protocols that will in turn increase awareness and implementation of PYD-based programs and interventions in community and school settings. Huebner, et al. 2003 describes a framework for aligning professional development opportunities with PYD principles. Finally, Vance 2010 outlines core competencies that can be used to guide training and assessment of youth workers.

Fusco, D. 2012. *Working in youth service organizations: The sphere of professional education*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota, Extension Center for Youth Development.

The author reviews the knowledge base and instructional strategies used to develop effective skills for practitioners working in youth service organizations. Conditions necessary to increase the professional capacity of youth service professionals are identified and discussed.

Huebner, A. J., J. A. Walker, and M. McFarland. 2003. Staff development for the youth development professional: A critical framework for understanding the work. *Youth and Society* 35:204–225.

Presents a framework for staff and practitioner practices that is based on PYD program principles and lessons. The authors emphasize the need to connect PYD program characteristics to staff development, activities, and tasks.

Vance, F. 2010. A comparative analysis of competency frameworks for youth workers in the out-of-school time field. *Child and Youth Care Forum* 39:421–441.

Provides an analysis and description of the characteristics of effective youth workers. Competing practitioner frameworks are reviewed and twelve common competency areas for effective youth service work are identified in the context of out-of-school time programs.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Gray and Hayes 2008 notes that funding PYD programs and assessing the cost-effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs for children and youth pose significant challenges to administrators and practitioners in youth service organizations. Newman, et al. 2001 indicates that cost issues also affect policymakers and researchers interested in promoting and testing PYD programs. Aos, et al. 2004 presents findings from cost-benefit studies of PYD and other prevention and early intervention programs for children and youth.

Aos, S., R. Lieb, J. Mayfield, M. Miller, and A. Pennucci. 2004. *Benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programs for youth*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Assesses the costs associated with implementing many well-known prevention and PYD programs. Findings reveal significant cost savings from programs that aim to prevent problem behavior and promote healthy development.

Gray, A., and C. D. Hayes. 2008. *Understanding the state of knowledge of youth engagement financing and sustainability*. Washington, DC: The Finance Project.

Provides a review of costs, financing, and sustainability of youth engagement approaches and programs. Several youth engagement programs are illustrated to demonstrate the financial challenges associated with developing, implementing, and sustaining youth engagement programs.

Newman, R. P., S. M. Smith, and R. Murphy. 2001. A matter of money: The cost and financing of youth development. In *Trends in youth development: Visions, realities, and challenges*. Edited by P. L. Benson and K. Johnson Pittman, 91–134. Boston: Springer US.

The authors estimate average hourly cost of PYD programs and assess the availability of existing federal and state funding streams for PYD efforts.

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