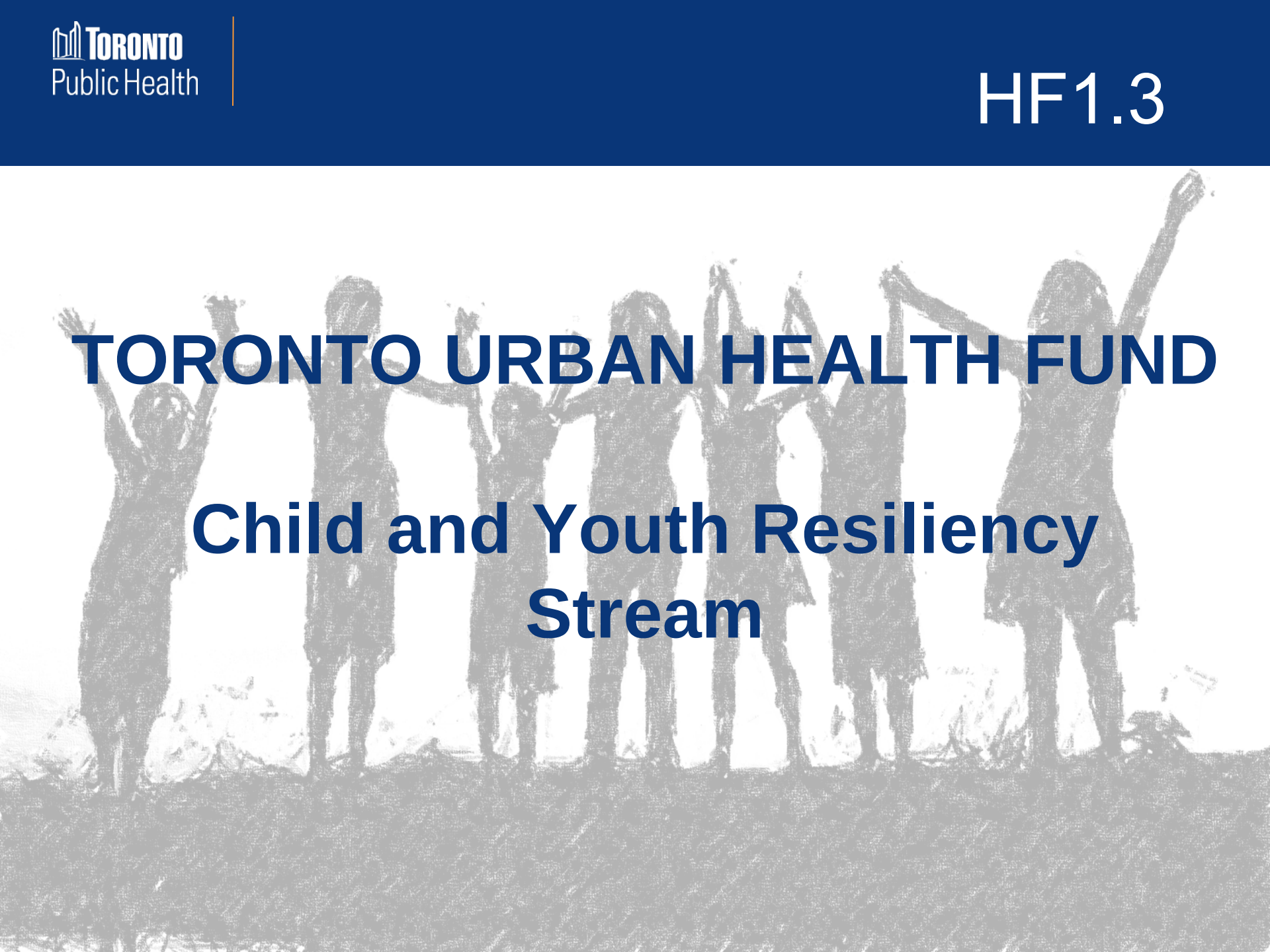




TORONTO URBAN HEALTH FUND

Child and Youth Resiliency Stream

This stream supports community-based prevention interventions for marginalized and vulnerable children and youth with programming that builds protective/resiliency factors, with the aim of preventing or delaying the onset of risky behaviours

This stream supports community-based prevention interventions for **marginalized and vulnerable children and youth** with programming that builds protective/resiliency factors, with the aim of preventing or delaying the onset of risky behaviours

Priority Population

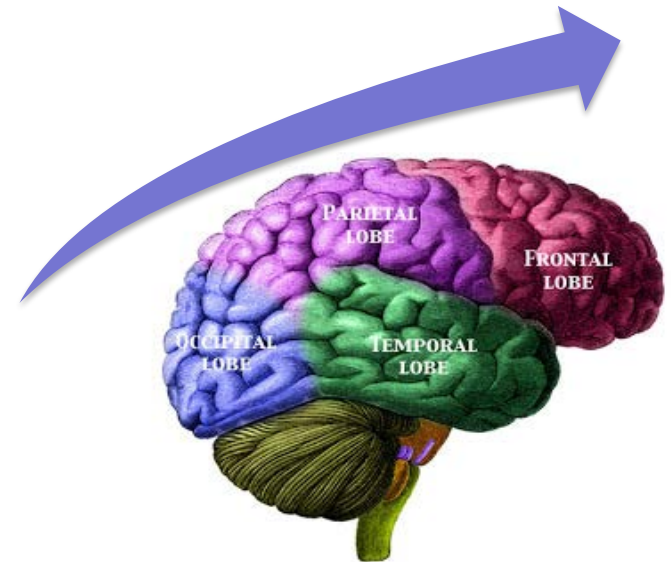
Children and youth who

- Have family members and/or caregivers with a history of alcohol or other substance use
- Have behavioural, mental health, and/or social challenges
- Are excluded from school or have poor school engagement
- Have been involved with the criminal justice system
- Are in care under protection services or foster care
- Are from racialized groups residing in designated Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA)s or those facing extreme socio-economic disadvantage
- Face challenges related to their identity including (but not limited to) race, sexuality, gender identity and gender expression
- Are First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

This stream supports community-based prevention interventions for marginalized and vulnerable children and youth with programming that builds protective/resiliency factors, with the aim of preventing or delaying the onset of risky behaviours

Why do we want to prevent/delay onset of risky behaviours?

- Brains of children and youth are still developing, especially areas (i.e. prefrontal cortex) responsible for decision-making, judgment, impulse control, etc . Explains period of exploration, identify formation, experimentation, and influence of pressure to conform
- The earlier they start using psychoactive substances, the more likely they are susceptible to neurological damage and subsequent health issues later in life

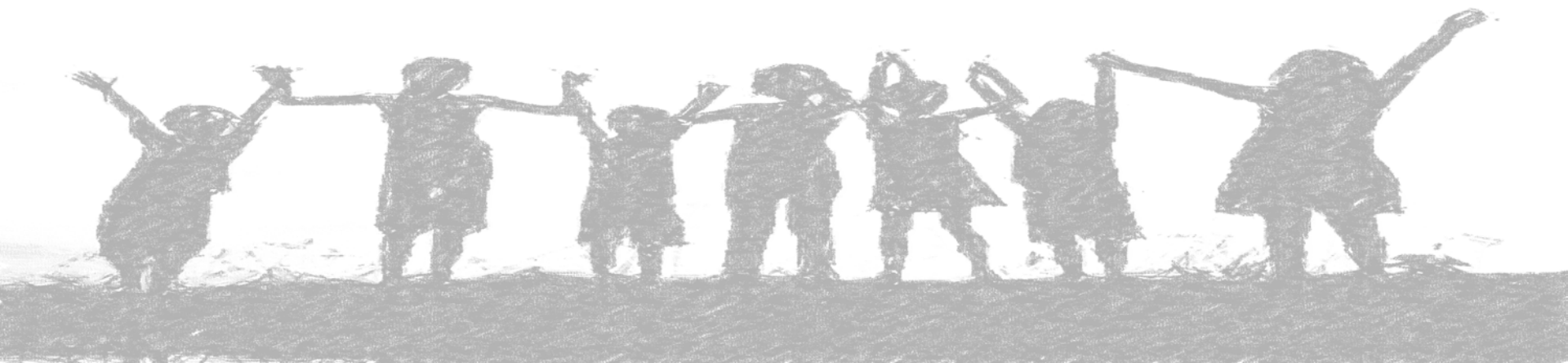


Why do we want to prevent/delay onset of risky behaviours?

- Early initiation of sexual activity and substance use contributes to negative health/social/behavioural outcomes (i.e. unplanned pregnancies, STIs, emotional trauma, substance misuse, mental health issues, violence)
- High rates of STIs amongst youth and injuries/deaths attributed to substance use amongst youth



This stream supports community-based prevention interventions for marginalized and vulnerable children and youth with programming that builds protective/resiliency factors, with the aim of preventing or delaying the onset of risky behaviours



What do we mean by **RESILIENCY?**

Dictionary definition:

- The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties
- The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape



RESILIENCY As an Approach to Prevention Interventions

In developmental and social-psychology:

Resilience is the capacity of individuals to **navigate** their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well being and their capacity individually and in groups to **negotiate** for these resources to be provided in **culturally** meaningful ways

Focus on Protective Factors vs Risk Factors



**Protective
Factors**

=

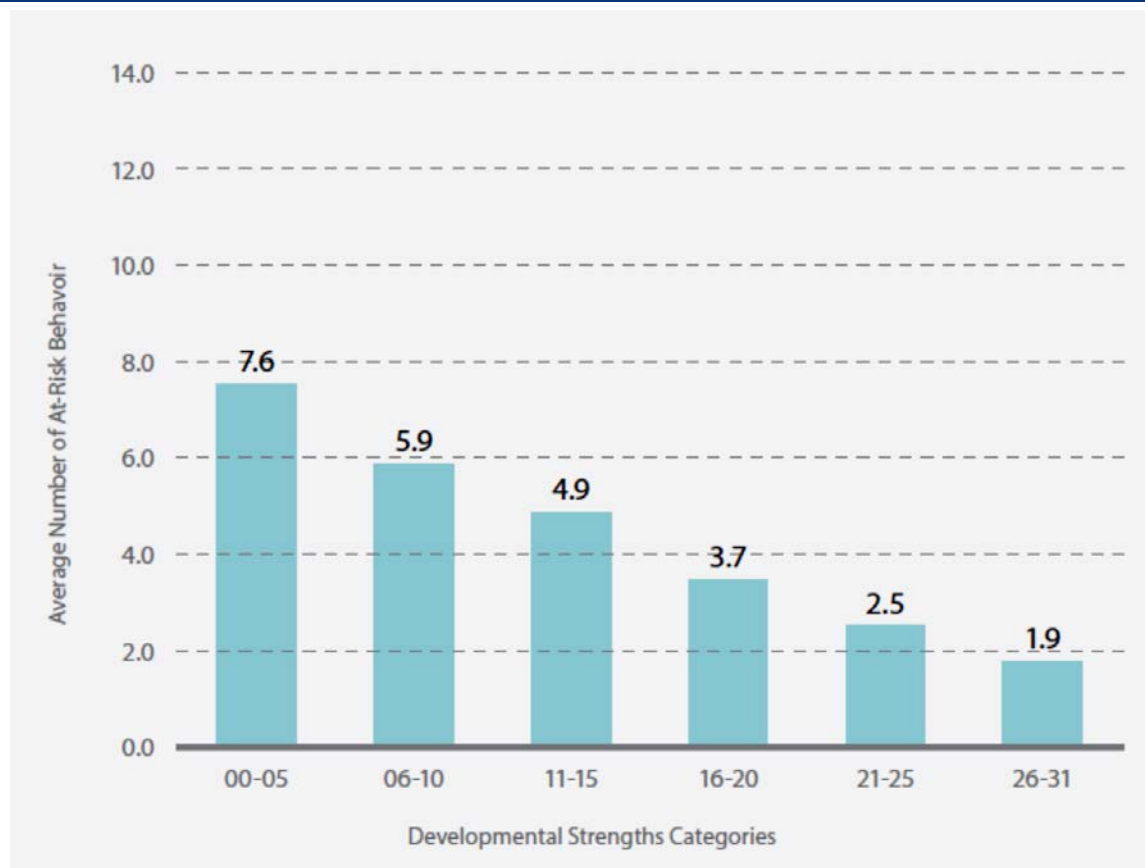
Strengths

**Risk
Factors**

=

Deficits

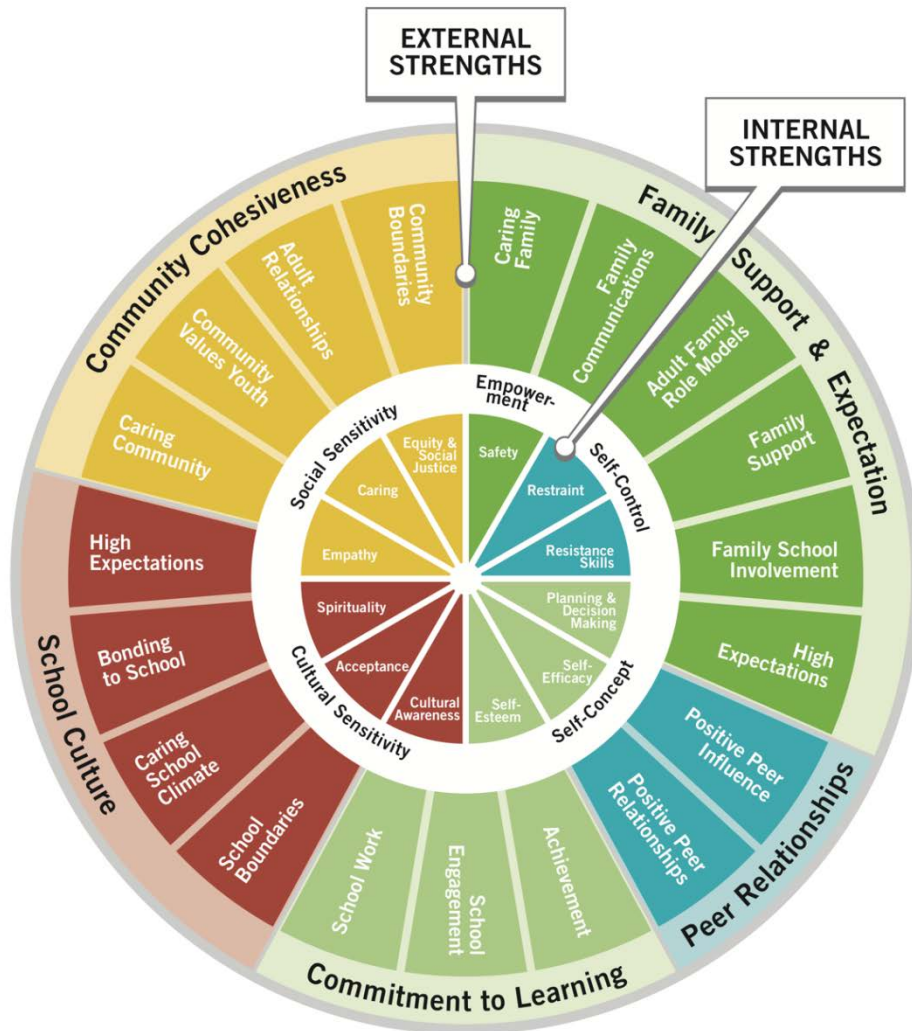
Strengths-based approach reduces risk taking behaviours



-Resiliency Initiatives

Children and youth that have developed and accumulated resiliency factors/strengths are less likely to engage in a number of risk taking activities

Youth Resiliency Framework



Internal Factors

- Empowerment
- Self-Control
- Self-Concept
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Social Sensitivity

External Factors

- Family
- Peers
- Learning at School
- School Culture
- Community

Internal Developmental Strengths

Empowerment

Safety – Youth feels safe and in a non-threatening environment

Self Concept

Decision Making – Youth is capable of making purposeful plans for the future

Self Esteem – Youth feels positive about self and their future

Self Control

Resistance Skills – Is able to avoid or say “no” to people who may place them at risk

Cultural Sensitivity

Spirituality – Youth’s strong spiritual beliefs/values play an important role in life

Social Sensitivity & Empathy

Equity & Social Justice – Believes in equality and fairness to others

-Resiliency Initiatives

External Developmental Strengths: Relationships and Connections

Community

Community Values Youth – Adults in the community respect youth and their opinions

Adult Relationships – Adults try to get to know the youth and are viewed as trustworthy

Peers

Positive Peer Influence – Friendships are trustworthy and based on positive outcomes

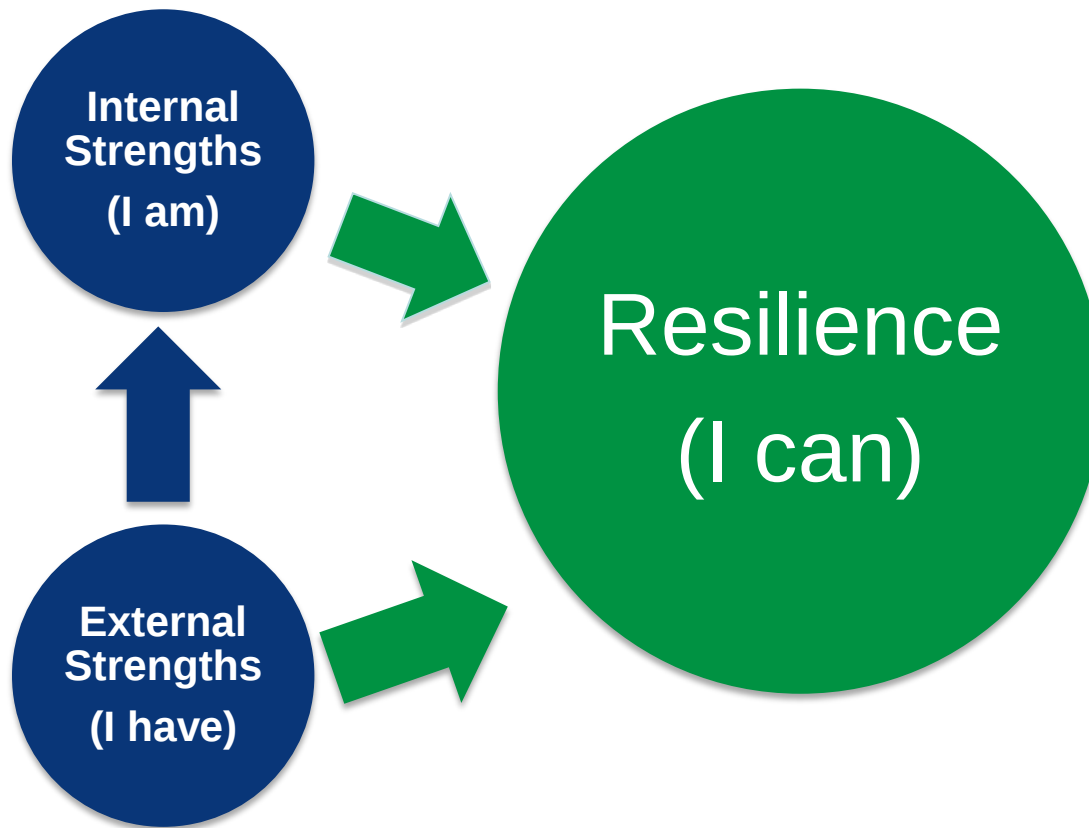
Family

Family Communication – Youth can communicate with family openly about issues/concerns

School Culture

Bonding to school – Youth cares about and feels safe at school

Relationship between Internal and External Strengths



- Internal strengths influenced by external strengths
- **Cumulative** effects of both internal and external strengths results in more resilient youth

I am + I have = I CAN

What kinds of interventions have worked?

- 1) Leadership, mentoring, and community engagement opportunities to cultivate life/social skills (e.g. communication skills, conflict resolution, coping strategies, problem solving, decision making)
- 2) Youth led or peer-to-peer interventions that use arts, sports, dance, music, theatre, cooking, gardening, etc to promote health and enhance life skills
- 3) Family-based interventions to strengthen parent-child communication, improve cohesion and cooperation, and help children/youth develop authentic relationship and attachment with adults



Child and Youth Resiliency Projects should...

- Reach vulnerable and marginalized children and youth
- Be adapted to the needs of the specific group of children and youth
- Have meaningful participation of the target group in all aspects of programming
- Enhance protective factors (i.e. internal and external strengths)
- Equip children and youth with skills to navigate and negotiate

