

ORGANISED BY:



IN SUPPORT OF:



MENDAKI SYMPOSIUM 2025

**CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE:
MOBILISING COMMUNITIES, EMPOWERING FUTURES**



PROGRAMME

- 0915** Start of Segment 1
- 0920** Opening of MENDAKI Symposium
- 0925** Presentation on Mindful Parenting and Child Well-being
- 0945** Opening Remarks by GOH
- 1005** Panel Discussion: Mobilising Communities around Families
- 1105** Tea Break

PROGRAMME

- 1135** Start of Segment 2
- 1150** Presentation on Positive Youth Development
- 1215** In-table Discussion
- 1250** Panel Discussion: Igniting Youth Potential
- 1330** Lunch & Networking
- 1430** End of Programme

Panel Discussion 1: Mobilising Communities around Families



Panellist

Ms Indraneel Rajah

Minister, Prime Minister's Office

Second Minister For Finance and National Development

Ms Indraneel Rajah is the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office. She is also Second Minister for Finance and Second Minister for National Development.

In the Prime Minister's Office, Ms Rajah assists Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong in the National Population and Talent Division and oversees the Marriage & Parenthood portfolio.

Under her Finance portfolio, Ms Rajah is involved in the development of the Government's fiscal policies, including chairing the Green Bond Steering Committee, which looks at Singapore's Green Bond Framework. As Second Minister for National Development, she is involved in the formulation of Singapore's housing and development policies.

Panel Discussion 1: Mobilising Communities around Families



Presenter and Panellist

Dr. Fannie, Khng Kiat Hui

Deputy Centre Director and Senior Education Research Scientist

Centre for Research in Child Development

National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University (NTU)

Dr. Fannie, Khng Kiat Hui is Deputy Centre Director and Senior Education Research Scientist at the Centre for Research in Child Development, NIE, NTU, Singapore. Interfacing developmental cognitive psychology, education, and science of learning, her research interests include: the role of executive functions (EF) and self-regulation in learning, performance, and well-being; their longitudinal development; and mind-body integration interventions such as breathing-, movement- and mindfulness-based activities that enhance EF, self-regulation and well-being in educational settings. She is also interested in how child environmental sensitivity interacts with environmental contexts, including mindfulness in caregivers (i.e., mindful parenting and teaching), and the co-development and interaction between early EF and motor skills.

Panel Discussion 1: Mobilising Communities around Families



Panellist

Dr Xander Ong

*Chief Executive Officer
Centre for Fathering*

Prior to joining Centre for Fathering, Dr Xander Ong held various roles at ECON Healthcare Group, including Head of Development and Head of Strategy. Dr Ong has a PhD in International Business and a Bachelor of Business with First Class Honours from Monash University, Australia. He is married to Chloe and they have a son, Samuel born in January 2023 and another baby due in November 2025. Dr Ong has strong convictions about the importance of the active engaged role of the husband and father in families and is excited to be at the forefront of the DADs for Life and MUMs for Life movements to inspire dads and support mums to strengthen their families.

Panel Discussion 1: Mobilising Communities around Families



Panellist

Ms Jane Lee

Director

Service Management Division

KidSTART Singapore Ltd

Ms Jane has worked with the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) and government and local government agencies in New Zealand for over 20 years. She has experience in policy development, programme planning and implementation in social assistance, health promotion, community development. She is passionate about poverty related issues and making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families. In the last few years, she has been involved in the conceptualisation, implementation and scale up of KidSTART nationwide and is currently with KidSTART Singapore Ltd.

Panel Discussion 1: Mobilising Communities around Families



Moderator

Ms Noretta Jacob

Founder, Safar Training and Consultancy

Assistant Lead, MENDAKI Professional Network for Early Childhood Education

Ms Noretta Jacob has been an early education educator (ECE) for the last 15 years working with very young children, parents, and fellow passionate ECE educators in both the commercial and community sectors. With a deep interest to excel in this industry, she decided to pursue her bachelor's degree, under a local scholarship with SIM University in 2012, majoring in early childhood with management.

Panel Discussion 2: Igniting Youth Potential



Panellist

Mr Eruandee Prayitna

*Head, Engagement and Outreach
Centre for Fathering*

Mr Eruandee "Wan" Prayitna is a passionate advocate for active fatherhood, both in his personal life and through his work in the community. As the Head of Development & Outreach at the Centre for Fathering – Dads for Life (CFF DFL), Wan plays a key role in advancing the organisation's mission to encourage involved and nurturing fatherhood across Singapore. Beginning his journey as a volunteer in 2015 and joining the staff in 2016, he has since become a driving force in engaging fathers, especially within the Malay Muslim community, to build stronger family connections.

Grounded in a "shared responsibility" parenting model, Wan walks the talk at home—taking charge of school routines, discipline, and household tasks in partnership with his family. He's known for creating meaningful bonding moments through simple, intentional practices such as weekend adventures, bedtime storytelling, and stargazing chats with his children. Through community outreach and media engagements, he champions the belief that when fathers are present and engaged, families and societies thrive.

Panel Discussion 2: Igniting Youth Potential



Panellist

Dr Chung You Jin

*Associate Professor, School of Social Work and Social Development
Singapore University of Social Sciences*

Dr Chung You Jin is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work and Social Development of the Singapore University of Social Sciences. Her research area covers community mental health, cultural/social identity and integration, workplace resilience and social work education.

Panel Discussion 2: Igniting Youth Potential



Panellist

Mr Zuldaniel Zulkarnain

Lead Data Analyst

Research and Programme Evaluation Office, Growth Group

Yayasan MENDAKI

Mr Zuldaniel Zulkarnain is a Manager in the Research and Programme Evaluation Office in MENDAKI, serving as the Lead Data Analyst. He has over 6 years of experience conducting research and consulting for both commercial and public sector clients locally and internationally. Before joining MENDAKI in 2024, he was an Analytics Lead at a Fortune 500 company. He was also an Anugerah MENDAKI recipient in 2010.

Panel Discussion 2: Igniting Youth Potential



Panellist

Mr Hilal Iman

Law Student

National University of Singapore

Mr Hilal Iman is a rising third-year law undergraduate at the National University of Singapore and a recipient of the Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship to Encourage Upgrading (LKY-STEP) Award. In 2023, he received the Anugerah Gemilang MENDAKI (MENDAKI Pinnacle Award) in recognition of his achievements. He had earlier graduated top of his cohort with a Diploma in Business Management from Nanyang Polytechnic. Before that, he completed a Diploma in Culinary Skills at SHATEC Institutes and worked in the culinary industry. His academic journey began with setbacks, having failed his O-Levels twice.

Panel Discussion 2: Igniting Youth Potential



Moderator

Mr Johann Johari

Assistant Director

Planning, Vital Group

Yayasan MENDAKI

Mr Johann Johari is the Assistant Director of Planning where he oversees the organisational development of Yayasan MENDAKI. Prior to that, he was the Assistant Director of Future Ready, to develop youth and young professionals and equip them with relevant skills. Mr Johann has served in MENDAKI for 17 years. Mr Johann holds a Masters in Non-Profit Management from the Singapore University of Social Science. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Political Science from the University of Western Australia (UWA).

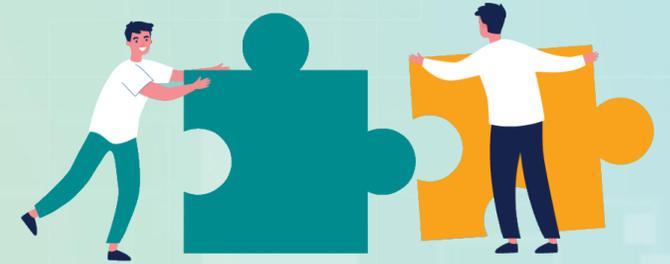
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Mindful Parenting and Child Well-being

Dr. Fannie, Khng Kiat Hui

Deputy Centre Director and Senior Education Research Scientist

Centre for Research in Child Development

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

Mindful parenting

- A way of parenting involving **mindful awareness** in everyday parent-child interactions (Duncan et al. 2009a; Kabat-Zinn and Kabat-Zinn 1997)
- **Present-centered, compassionate, and non-judgmental** approach to parenting
- Less **reactive**; more **responsive** → More effective parenting practices

Quality of Attention (“How”)

Attention

Present-centered
(here and now)

Intention

With **purpose**

Attitude

Openness, interest, **curiosity,** non-judging, acceptance, compassion, and receptiveness

Mindful parenting in action—Dimensions

- Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting (IM-P) scale (Duncan, 2007)

Theoretical model (5D, 31 items)

1	Listening with full attention to the child
2	Non-judgmental acceptance of self and child
3	Emotional awareness of self and child
4	Self-regulation in parenting relationship
5	Compassion for self and child

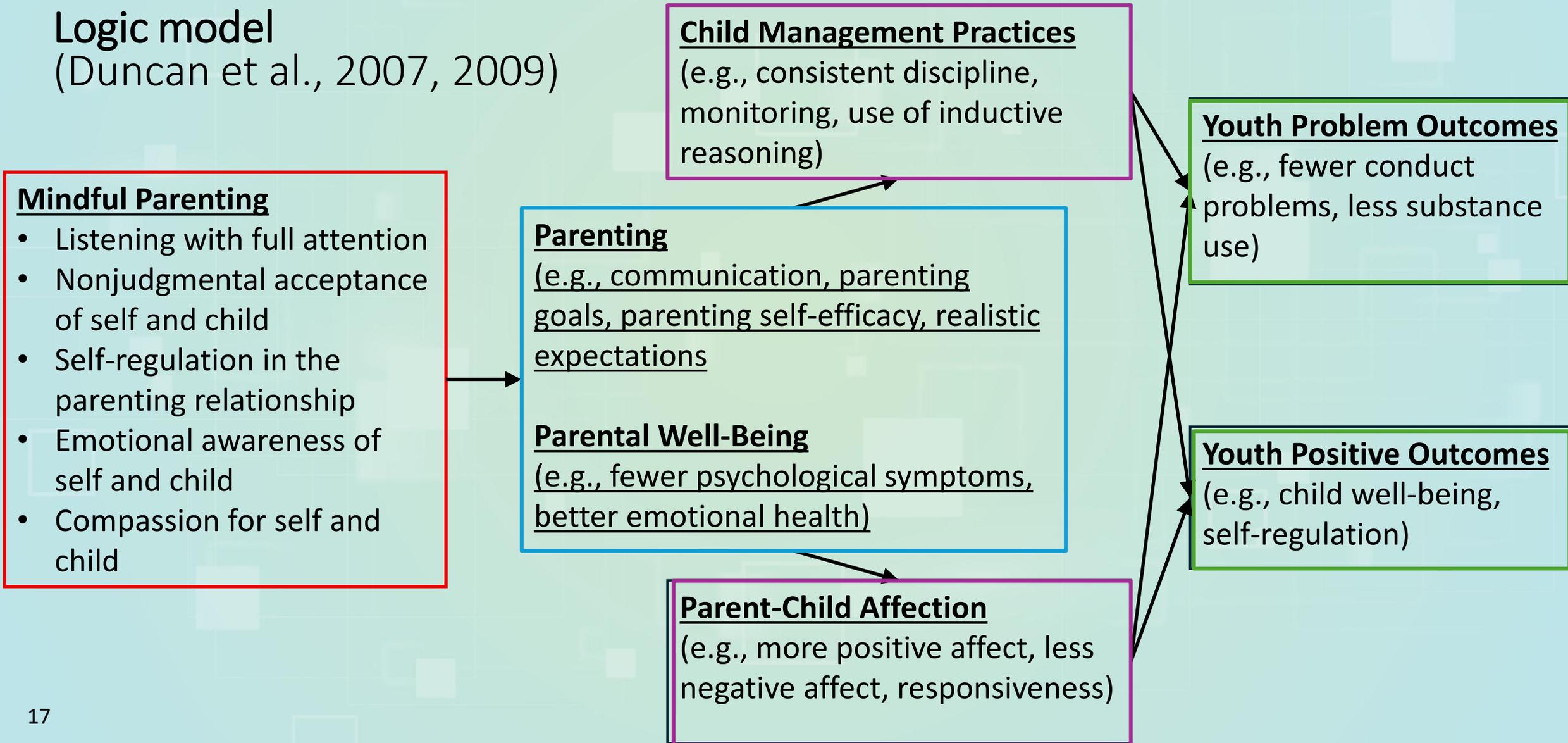
Mindful Parenting can look slightly different across societies and cultures (e.g., Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, Korean, Chinese)

Hong Kong Chinese (Lo et al., 2018; 4D, 23 items)

1	Listening with full attention
2	Non-judgmental acceptance in parenting
3	Emotional awareness in parenting
4	Compassion for child

How does mindful parenting benefit the child?

Logic model
(Duncan et al., 2007, 2009)





Mindful parenting linked to more positive parent and child outcomes

- More positive and less negative **parenting styles and practices**
- Lower **parenting stress and depression**
- Higher **parental involvement** in childcare
- Better **child well-being**
 - **Lower negative indicators:** emotional eating; internalizing and externalizing problems
 - **Higher positive indicators:** general subjective well-being, self-compassion and mindfulness

(Beer et al. 2013; Bögels et al. 2014; de Bruin et al. 2014; Gouveia et al. 2016, 2018; MacDonald and Hastings 2010; Medeiros et al., 2016, 2018; Meppelink et al., 2016; Parent et al. 2016; Wang et al., 2018; Williams and Wahler 2010)

Can we become more mindful parents?



- Programmes focused mindful parenting context to enhance parenting and child outcomes (Burgdorf et al., 2019)
 - Better well-being (i.e., decreased internalizing and externalizing problems) in child (Meppelink et al., 2016) and parent and child (Bögels et al. 2014)
 - Via e.g., less over-reactivity and experiential avoidance in parenting (Emerson et al. 2019)

Questions



What does mindful parenting look like in Singapore? What dimensions does it comprise?

“What is it about mindful parenting?” How do dimensions of mindful parenting relate to different (positive and negative) indicators of child well-being?

Participants

- 1286 preadolescents ($M_{age}=11.47$; 47% male)
- A parent interacting most frequently with the child (~30% fathers)



- 38.3% Chinese, 14.0% Malay, 29.0% Indian, and 18.7% Others
- ~49% in households with higher than median monthly household income from work in Singapore in 2021

Materials

Mindful Parenting

Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting (IM-P) scale



Child well-being

Positive Indicators (Well-being)

1. **General subjective quality-of-life well-being:** World Health Organization Well-Being Index (WHO-5)
2. **Self-esteem**
 - Lifespan Self-esteem Scale (LSE)
3. **Positive functioning in school:** Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (SSWQ)
 - Joy of Learning (JoL)
 - School Connectedness (SC)
 - Educational Purpose (EP)
 - Academic Efficacy (AE)
4. **Prosocial Strengths:** Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Prosocial Behaviours

Negative Indicators (Ill-being)

1. **Internalizing Difficulties:** SDQ Emotional Problems & Peer Problems
2. **Externalizing Difficulties :** SDQ Conduct Problems & Hyperactivity/ Inattention



Mindful parenting in Singapore

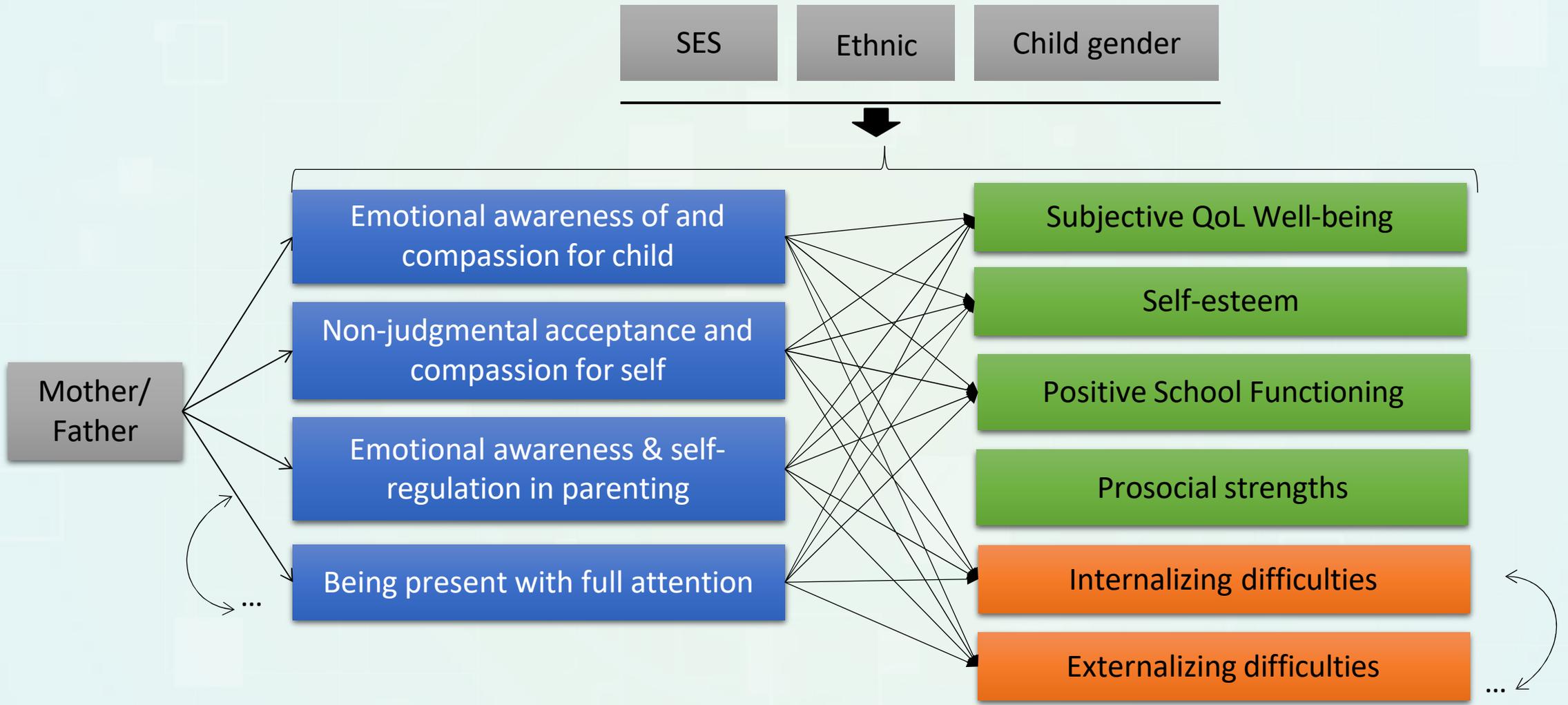
Theoretical model (5D; 31 items)

1	Listening with full attention to the child
2	Non-judgmental acceptance of self and child
3	Emotional awareness of self and child
4	Self-regulation in parenting relationship
5	Compassion for self and child

Singapore (4D; 18 items)

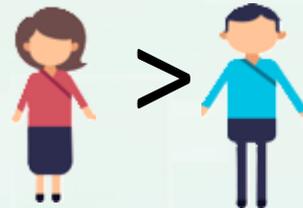
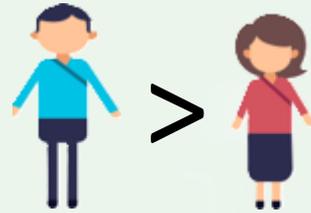
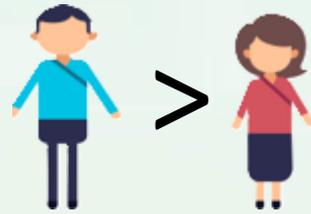
1	Being present with full attention to the child
2	Non-judgmental acceptance and compassion for self
3	Emotional awareness of self and self-regulation in parenting
4	Emotional awareness of and Compassion for child

Mindful parenting and child well-being

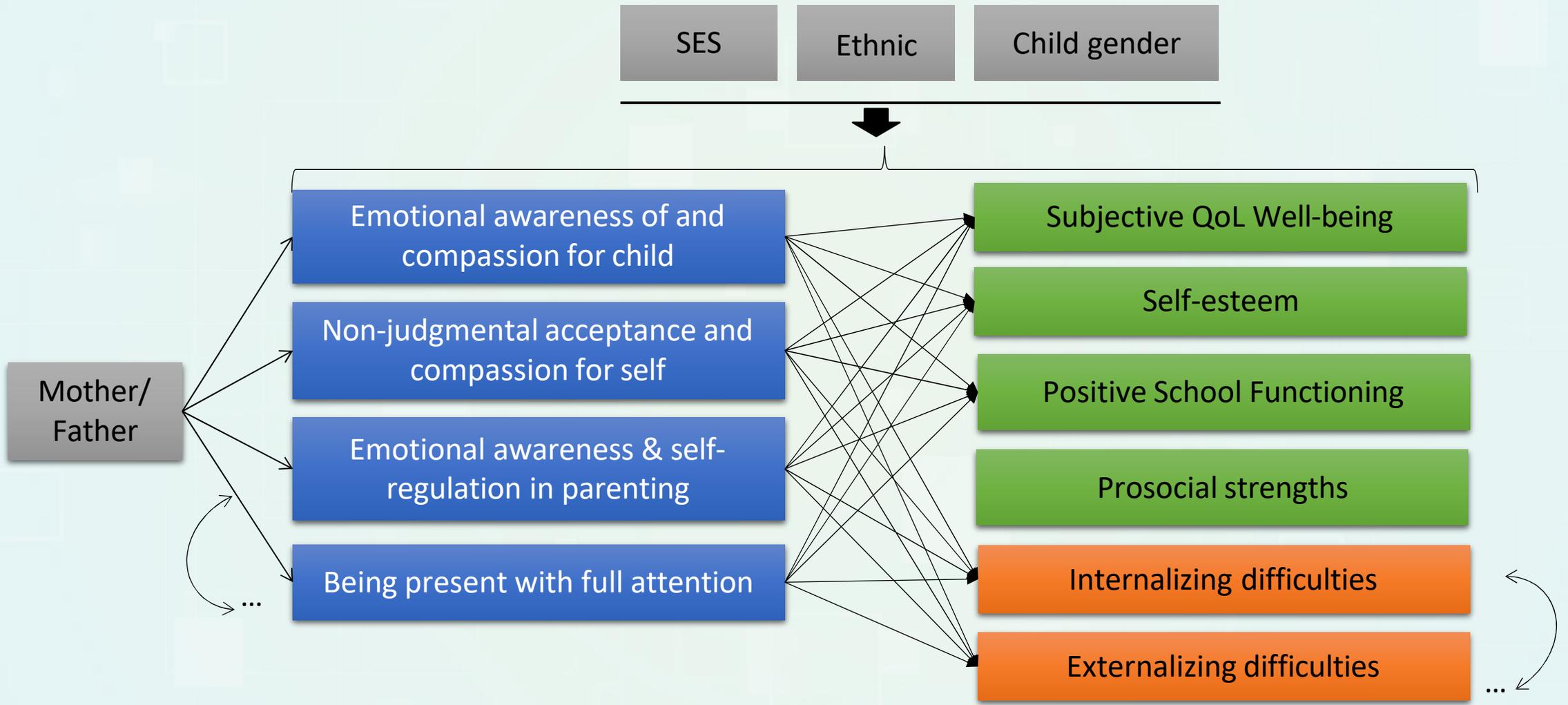


Mindful parenting in Singapore

1	Being present with full attention to the child
2	Non-judgmental acceptance and compassion for self
3	Emotional awareness of self and self-regulation in parenting
4	Emotional awareness of and Compassion for child



Mindful parenting and child well-being



Mindful parenting and child well-being

1	Being present with full attention to the child
2	Non-judgmental acceptance and compassion for self
3	Emotional awareness of self and self-regulation in parenting
4	Emotional awareness of and Compassion for child

- Considered together, all dimensions of mindful parenting - with the exception of *emotional awareness & self-regulation in parenting* - explained **unique variance** in preadolescents' general and school-related psycho-social well-being
- Effect sizes small (expected) but significant; other factors

Mindful parenting and child well-being

1	Being present with full attention to the child
2	Non-judgmental acceptance and compassion for self
3	Emotional awareness of self and self-regulation in parenting
4	Emotional awareness of and compassion for child



Higher on **all** positive well-being indicators and lower on **all** negative well-being indicators



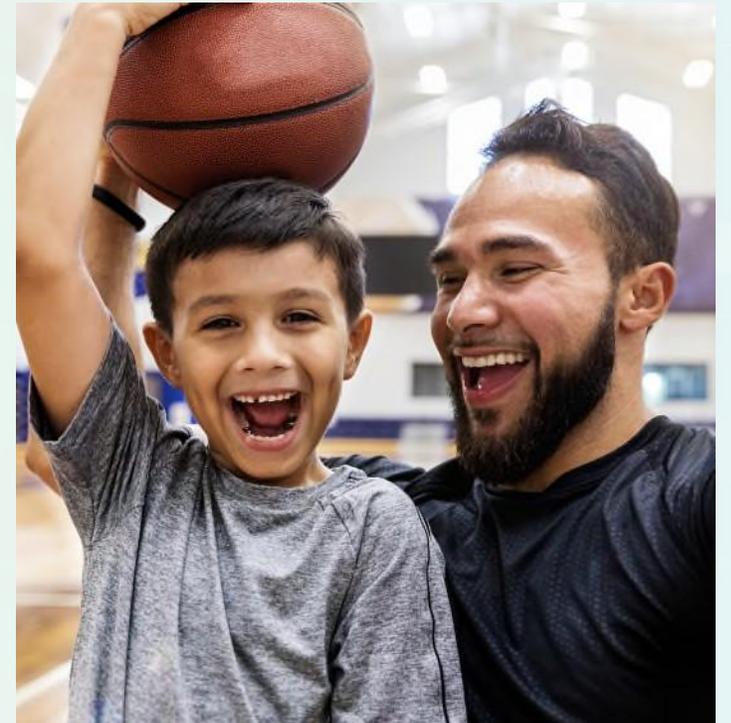
Higher self-esteem and lower internalizing and externalizing difficulties



Higher prosocial behaviours and lower externalizing difficulties

At home

- ***Being present with full attention*** was the most consistent predictor, highlighting the potential importance of cultivating this aspect of mindful parenting
- Consistent with study findings using an alternative mindful parenting scale:
 - Adolescents with higher emotional symptoms also had higher conduct problems only if their parent was low on “**being in the moment with the child**” (Royuela-Colomer et al., 2023)
 - Protective factor



In school

- In other analyses, we also found these well-being indicators to be (moderately to strongly) related to children's self-reported **connectedness to adults in school**
 - Children who feel more strongly that there are adults in their school who *really care about them, listens to them when they have something to say, and believes they will succeed*, report higher positive well-being and lower ill-being



The feeling of being seen and heard

- The quality of your attention to the child matters
- Not (or not just) quantity, but quality
- When we give someone our full attention, they feel seen and heard
- Your child is worth your time and attention



**Wherever you are,
be all there.**



Thank you!



Jessie Cheang
(MOE, Applied
Measurement
and Psychological
Sciences)



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MENDAKI SYMPOSIUM 2025

From Tutoring to Thriving: Understanding What Drives Positive Development Among MENDAKI Youth

Dr Chung You Jin
Associate Professor, SUSS

Mr Zuldaniel Zulkarnain
Lead Data Analyst, MENDAKI

ORGANISED BY:

Yayasan
MENDAKI

IN SUPPORT OF:

RAIKAN
ILMU
CELEBRATE KNOWLEDGE



*Positive Youth Development Study
by SUSS and MENDAKI*

Study Overview

What is Positive Youth Development (PYD)?

Building young people's personal competencies, potentials and strengths through **increased positive relationships, social support and opportunities** that enhance their assets and enable them to thrive in their live

Youth Research in Singapore

Most empirical research approaches lack a focus on positive attributes but are reliant on a **deficit perspective**:

- Delinquency behaviours
- Mental disorders
- Drug addiction
- Game addiction
- Bullying

Aims of this Study

To support youth development with a focus on promoting their social & emotional competence:

- Understand factors relating to the development of youths in MENDAKI Tuition Programme (MTP)
- Validate PYD frameworks for MTP youth to support proactive and focused planning

Research Design

Phase 1: Conceptual Foundations (Feb – Sep 2024)

- Literature Review
- Understanding the concept
- Reconstructing the PYD framework

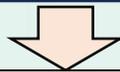
Phase 2: Quantitative Research (Sep 2024 – Apr 2025)

Pilot Survey

- n=109 MTP youth (13-17 years old)
- 15-min survey, 75 items

Actual Survey

- n=615 MTP youth (13-17 years old)
- 15-min survey, 34 items



Our Session Today

Phase 3: Qualitative Research (Apr – Aug 2025)

- 7 x 1-hour FGDs
- Target n= 45-60 respondents
- 4 x FGDs for Lower Secondary (13-14-year-olds)
- 3 x FGDs for Upper Secondary (15-17-year-olds)

Phase 4: Consolidation & Synthesis (Aug 2025 – 2026)

- Implications on practices and policies

PYD Models

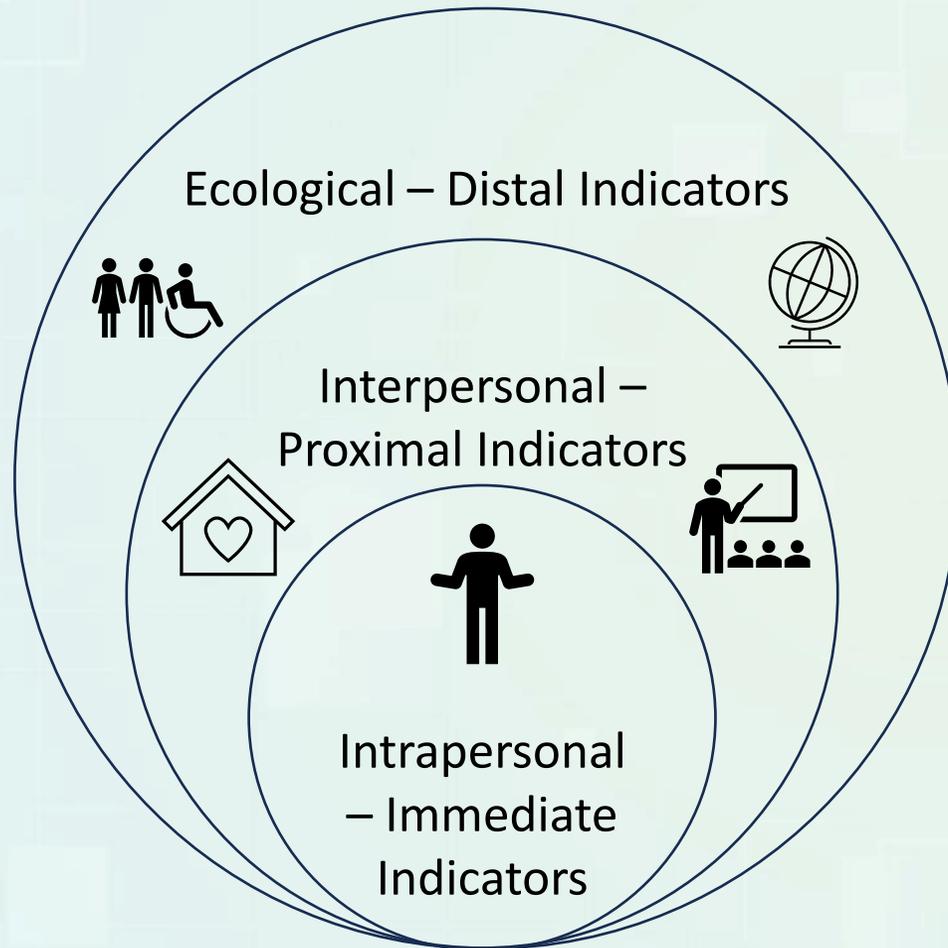
5/6 Cs
model
(Lerner et
al., 2005):

- Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring (and Contribution): 55 items
- Short 5C model: 34 items

Assets
Building
(Benson,
2007)

- Internal assets: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity – 20 items
- External assets: support, empowerment, boundaries & expectations and constructive use of time – 20 items

Integrated ecological framework*



- **Micro level – Intrapersonal**
 - Identity, esteem, resilience, other general competencies (cognitive, behavioural, academic, sports, etc)
- **Mezzo level – Interpersonal**
 - Positive connection with people in close contact
 - Ability to initiate and maintain relationships
- **Macro level - Ecological**
 - Values, principles, prosocial behaviours, social contribution, etc

*Buenconsejo & Datu (2023)

Comparing PYD Models

		5/6 Cs (Lerner et al., 2005)	40 Developmental Assets (Benson, 2007)	7 Factors PYD (SUSS-MENDAKI Research)
MACRO	Ecological – Distal Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring / Compassion • Character • Contribution 	<i>Internal</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Values <i>External</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosocial Values • Community Empowerment
MESO	Interpersonal – Proximal Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection 	<i>Internal</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Competencies <i>External</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Boundaries & Expectations • Constructive Use of Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritative Social Structure • Social Network Support • Interpersonal Self-determination
MICRO	Intrapersonal – Immediate Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence • Confidence 	<i>Internal</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to Learning • Positive Identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-concept • School Belonging

Reference: PYD Research across 5 SEA Countries

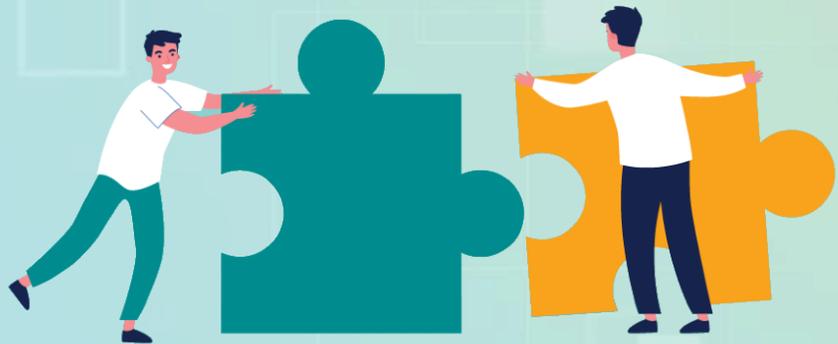
7C's of Positive Youth Development (PYD) In SEA
(Among Youths aged 18-29)



- Singaporean Youths (18-29 years old) had claimed lower Competence and Confidence, than our neighbours, in an earlier PYD research.

*Source: The factorial validity and measurement invariance of the 7Cs of positive youth development among emerging adults in Southeast Asia, Buenconsejo et al., 2025

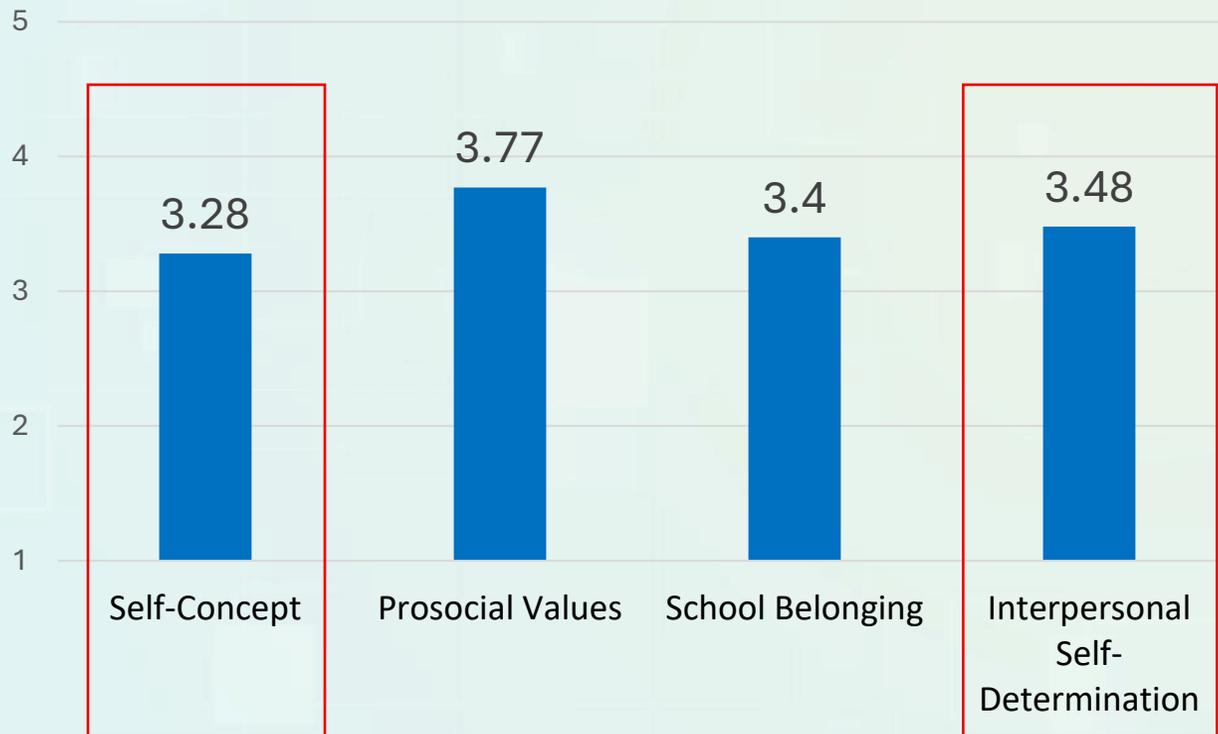
Findings & Implication



	Factors	Definition
External Levers	Community Empowerment	Active and voluntary involvement of an individual to a wider group sharing common interests, concerns and/or identities.
	Authoritative Social Structure	Presence of caring, authoritative adults , able to provide guidance and structure. Role models may include parents and non-parental individuals. Media influencers play a part too.
	Social Network Support	Family is considered the primary social circle for youths. As such, task-orientated interactions help facilitate feelings of family identity, interdependence and commitment among family members.
Youth Development Areas (Inner)	Self-Concept	How individuals view and evaluate themselves . While relatively stable, self-concept can change over time through life experiences and social influences
	Prosocial Values	Prosocial values provide guiding principles or motivational goals leading to voluntary behaviours that support the social fabric or advance the welfare of others.
	School Belonging	The extent of personal acceptance, respect, inclusion and support felt by the child in the school environment.
	Interpersonal Self-determination	Built on three core needs: autonomy (making independent choices), competence (being effective in various areas), and relatedness (feeling connected to others).

Key Focus Areas for Youth Development

Students' Reflection - Youth Development Areas
(Average rating, 5)



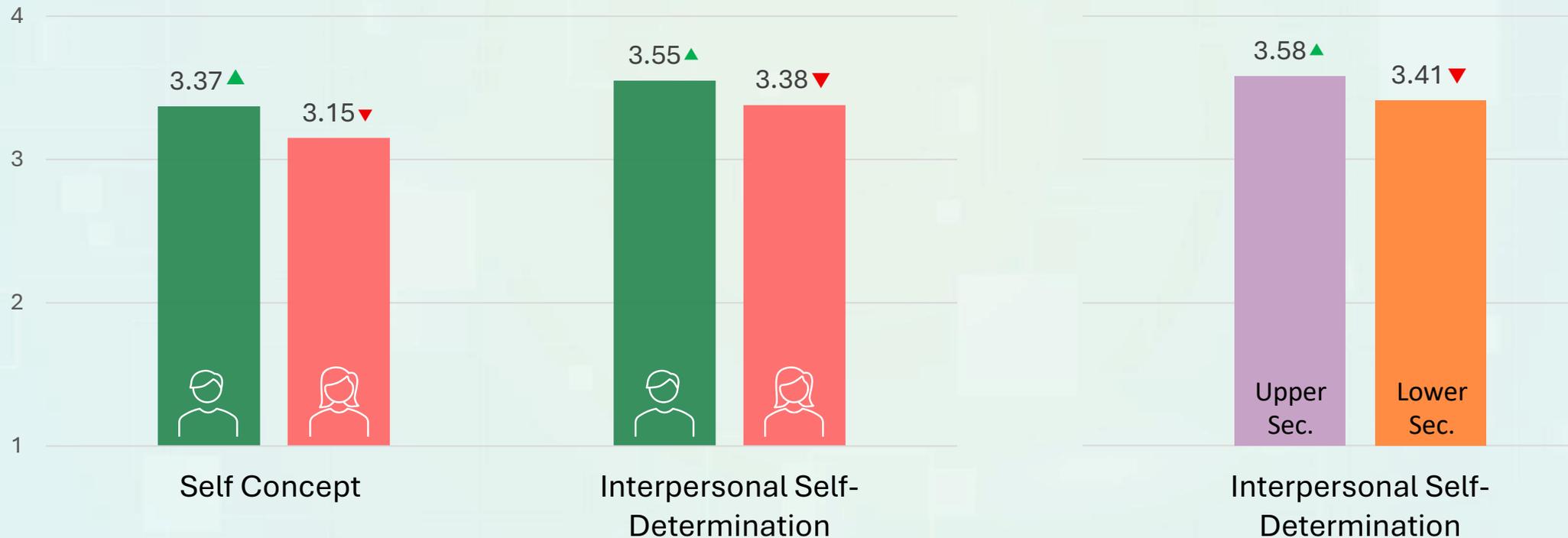
Two core focus areas:

- **Self-Concept** is weakest, significant difference among genders.
- **Interpersonal Self-Determination** has significant difference among genders and age (upper vs lower secondary).

Boys are more confident than Girls.

Upper secondary students report higher Interpersonal Self-determination

Students' Reflection - Youth Development Areas
(Average rating, 5-point scale)

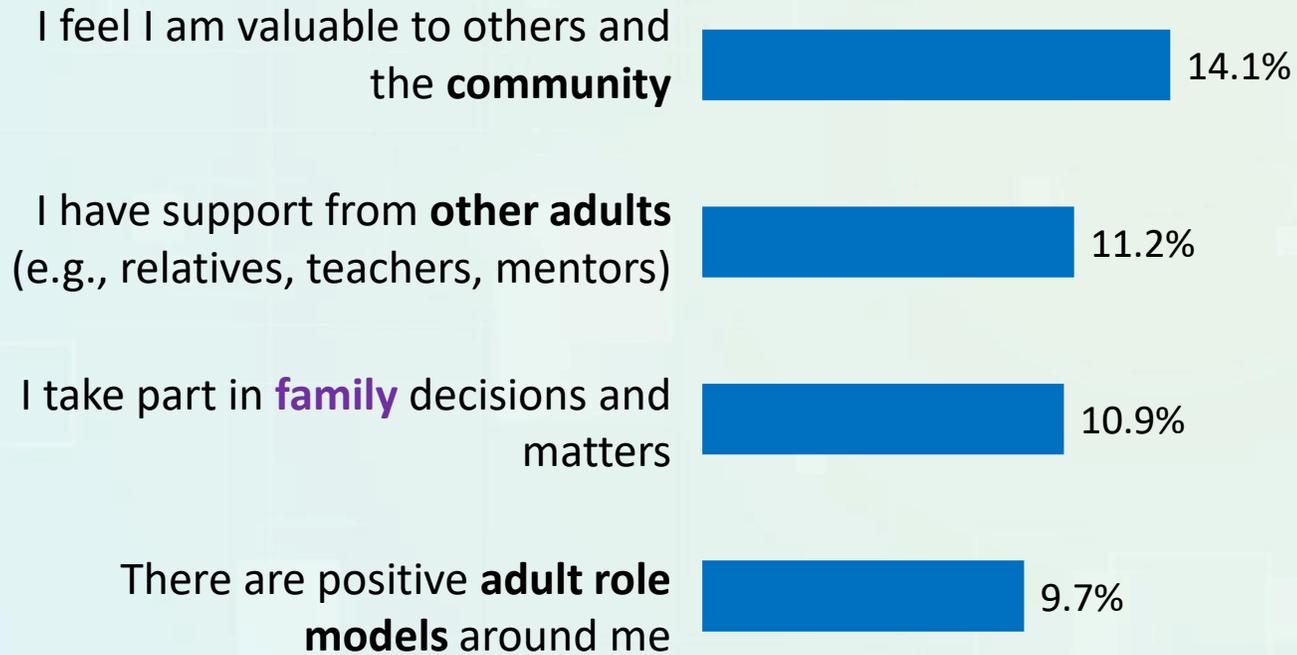


▲ ▼ Significantly different (at 95% confidence level)

Top Factors Impacting Youth's Self-Reflection

We used Relative Importance Analysis to understand the impact of each external variable to identify the more important ones:

Importance of Factors Impacting on Self-concept



It takes a village to raise our youth.

Receiving recognition from others and in the community is key to improving youth's self-perception.

Having support from other adults helps strengthen their confidence.

Gender Differences – Factors Impacting Youth’s Self-Reflection

Active Involvement



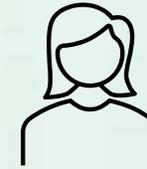
(Top 3 Important Factors)

I feel I am **valuable** to others and the community

I have **support** from **other adults** (e.g., relatives, teachers, mentors)

I **take part** in family decisions and matters

Guidance & Appreciation



I feel I am **valuable** to others and the community

There are positive adult **role model(s)** around me

If I have ideas that will contribute to the community, others will **listen** to what I have to say

Gender Differences – Factors Impacting Youth’s Self-Reflection

Active Involvement



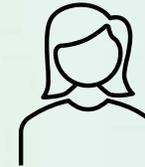
“

*Community goes **beyond the neighbourhood**. There is a group of parents in Punggol Oasis, they organize activities for the families and children, I will **join** in the **planning**”*

Boy, 14 years old

”

Guidance & Appreciation



“

*My **father is smart**. He did not do well in school, but he works very hard for our family, to provide for my sister and my family.”*

Girl, 13 years old

”

Age Differences – Factors Impacting Youth’s Self-Reflection

Family Guidance

Community Endorsement

Lower Sec.
13-14 years old

(Top 3 Important Factors)

Upper Sec.
15-17 years old

I feel I am **valuable** to others and the community

My **parent(s)** or **guardian(s)** encourage me to do well

There are positive **adult role model(s)** around me

I feel I am **valuable** to others and the community

If I have ideas that will contribute to the **community**, others will listen to what I have to say

I have support from **other adults** (e.g., relatives, teachers, mentors)

Household Differences – Factors Impacting Youth’s Self-Reflection

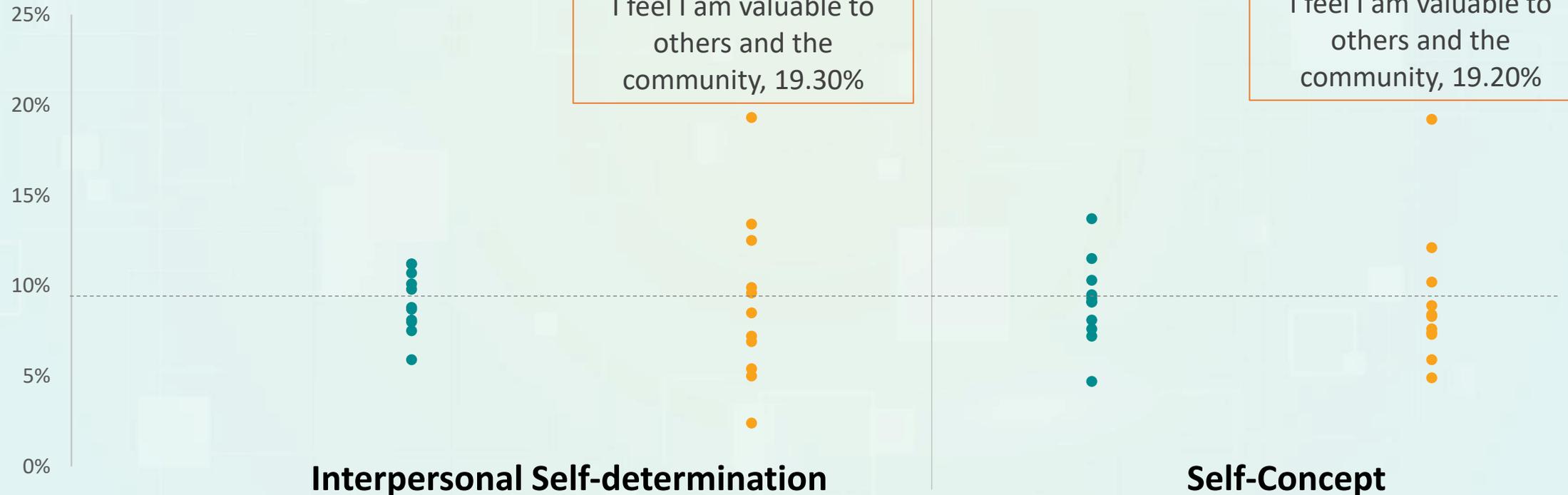
No stand-out need

● Larger households (≥6)

Distinctive Need

● Smaller households (≤5)

Importance Score



Adapt strategies to fit differences

- 1. It takes a village to raise our youth**
Three key drivers of Positive Youth Development are **feeling valued by others, support from other adults, and presence of positive adult role models.**
- 2. Boys thrive with active involvement; give Girls more guidance and appreciation**
Girls: Being heard and having positive adult role models.
Boys: Support from other adults and taking part in family matters.
- 3. Engage 15+ youths more actively, more platforms for expression**
Youths under 14: need for **encouragement from parents and role models.**
Youths 15 and older: need **to be heard and support from other adults.**
- 4. More individualised attention for youths from larger households**
Their less distinctive needs indicate deeper differences at individual levels.