RESEARCH REPORT

A Review of the Domains of Well-Being for Young People

Hannah Sumiko Daly *Amelia Coffey* *Kathryn L. S. Pettit*

January 2024 (corrected January 10, 2024)

URBAN INSTITUTE · ELEVATE · THE · DEBATE

ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that provides data and evidence to help advance upward mobility and equity. We are a trusted source for changemakers who seek to strengthen decisionmaking, create inclusive economic growth, and improve the well-being of families and communities. For more than 50 years, Urban has delivered facts that inspire solutions—and this remains our charge today.

Copyright © January 2024. Urban Institute. Permission is granted for reproduction of this file, with attribution to the Urban Institute. Cover image by View Apart/Shutterstock.

Contents

Acknowledgments v

Executive Summary vi

Errata ix

A Review of the Domains of Well-Being for Young People 1

- Introduction 1
- Approach 2
- Cross-Cutting Themes: Inclusion and Equity 4
- Youth Well-Being Domains 6
- Physical Health 9
  - Key Takeaways 9
  - Traditional Concepts and Measures 10
  - Emergent Concepts and Measures 10
  - Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 12
- Mental and Behavioral Health 13
  - Key Takeaways 13
  - Traditional Concepts and Measures 14
  - Emergent Concepts and Measures 15
  - Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 16
- Education and Learning 17
  - Key Takeaways 17
  - Traditional Concepts and Measures 17
  - Emergent Concepts and Measures 18
  - Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 19
- Economic Stability 20
  - Key Takeaways 20
  - Traditional Concepts and Measures 20
  - Emergent Concepts and Measures 23
  - Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 24
- Physical and Psychological Safety 25
  - Key Takeaways 25
  - Traditional Concepts and Measures 25
  - Emergent Concepts and Measures 27
  - Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 28
- Social Networks and Relationships 29

Key Takeaways 29
Traditional Concepts and Measures 30
Emergent Concepts and Measures 31
Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 32
Community and Belonging 33
Key Takeaways 34
Traditional Concepts and Measures 34
Emergent Concepts and Measures 35
Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 36
Sense of Purpose 36
Key Takeaways 37
Concepts and Measurement Approaches 37
Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement 39
Recommended Future Directions 40
Physical Health 40
Mental and Behavioral Health 41
Education and Learning 41
Economic Stability 41
Physical and Psychological Safety 42
Social Networks and Relationships 42
Community and Belonging 42
Sense of Purpose 43
Conclusion 43

Notes 45

References 49

About the Authors 56

Statement of Independence 57

Acknowledgments

This report was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The information, suggestions, and conclusions presented in it are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation. We thank our field experts for their time and feedback on the draft domains: Kim Flores and Sally Munemitsu from Hello Insight, Ahna Suleiman, an independent adolescent health and youth engagement consultant, Sarah Zeller-Berkman from CUNY's Youth Studies program, and Amy Syvertsen from the American Institutes for Research. We also appreciate the input of Florencia Gutierrez, Kimberly Spring, Jeffrey Poirier, Stephen Plank, Chris Kingsley, Laura Speer, and Cynthia Weaver of the Annie E. Casey Foundation for providing comments on the domains and the draft. The reviews and suggestions by our Urban Institute colleagues, Leah Hendey, Marla McDaniel, and Lily Robin, also greatly improved the report. Finally, we thank Urban's Cole Campbell, Lyndsey DeLouya, and Rodrigo Garcia for their assistance with citations and references.

Executive Summary

Adolescence and young adulthood are critical life stages full of possibility, but to experience healthy development, young people need support in all aspects of their lives. During this life stage, people begin to gain independence, learn social skills and behaviors that shape the rest of their lives, and begin to develop their identities. The youth field—or people working with and doing research related to young people, such as policymakers, funders, researchers, and practitioners—needs information as it considers investments and interventions to support youth development, and everyone in the field would benefit from understanding the distinctive but interrelated domains of youth well-being that need nurturing. The attempt to measure youth well-being is not new, but the field needs to continue refining how it defines and measures these domains. Such refinement will provide a stronger toolset to set priorities, establish baseline levels, and track progress over time.

This report describes eight domains of youth well-being and considerations for their measurement. The first step in our research was identifying key domains. We developed summary definitions of each domain based on a literature scan. These definitions were sharpened by feedback from five experts on youth development, including some who do participatory research with young people.

Our domains include those common to youth well-being in national indicator sets, as well as some that may be less familiar or fully developed. The eight domains are as follows:

- **Physical health.** Physical health is the condition of or perception about the body and the behaviors and environments that affect the body.
- **Mental and behavioral health.** Mental health is related to a person's emotions and social well-being; behavioral health describes how a person's actions affect health.
- **Education and learning.** Education is the subset of learning that includes formal study and training intended to provide specific knowledge and skills; learning more broadly covers the process of integrating information in knowledge, skills, and behavior.
- **Economic stability.** The economic stability domain includes a person's financial resources and prospects, including income, employment, and their financial ability to meet their basic needs.
- **Physical and psychological safety.** This domain includes the threats someone faces, the conditions that do or do not create safety, and what makes a person feel safe.
- **Social networks and relationships.** This domain concerns the different types of connections through which a young person feels supported.

- **Community and belonging.** Community and belonging are the ways in which a young person experiences connection to others and to their broader social environment.
- **Sense of purpose.** This domain focuses on intentions to achieve goals that are important to oneself and to the broader world.

After establishing the eight key domains, we completed a deeper literature scan for each domain to explore both traditional and emergent approaches to measurement and notable gaps in each area.

We also identified key themes that cut across all the domains. Our interviewees agreed on the critical need to include young people in the process of developing well-being concepts and indicators. Involving young people throughout the process would increase the validity and credibility of the indicators. Other key themes include the following:

- All measurement planning and implementation of youth well-being should center racial equity. This process should highlight the role of structural racism in influencing outcomes in the United States and recognize other intersectional identities like gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- People working with and doing research related to young people should prioritize improving their ability to understand how well-being dynamics differ across race, ethnicity, and other identities and to disaggregate these data without violating the privacy of individual young people.
- Interviewees underscored that indicators must look beyond the individual behaviors often used to explain racial disparities and toward community conditions shaped by structural racism that influence well-being. Although these contextual measures do not measure youth well-being directly, they provide critical context for interpretation of disparities in outcome indicators and points of intervention for improving the different domains of well-being.
- At the same time, the overall framing of youth well-being should focus on young people's assets instead of deficits, including personal aspirations and health-promoting community resources.

We hope that these ideas will encourage the youth field to expand their understanding of the aspects of well-being and use more emergent concepts within the domains. Because we did not limit ourselves to areas with easily obtainable national data, the concepts with missing or limited protocols or measures and other identified gaps reveal the need for additional efforts and sharing across the youth field—including across disciplines that tend to work in silos—to improve our ability to measure youth well-being.

A significant limitation of this report is that we were unable to involve young people in the development of the domains it features. Similar endeavors with adult researchers and funders as allies in partnering with young people will result in a stronger understanding of the elements of well-being and related investments required to ensure that all young people have what they need to thrive.

Errata

This report was corrected on January 10, 2024. We edited the Acknowledgments section to correct the spelling of Ahna Suleiman's name.

A Review of the Domains of Well-Being for Young People

Introduction

Adolescence and young adulthood are critical life stages full of possibility, but to experience healthy development, young people need support in all aspects of their lives. According to the National Academies, "adolescence—beginning with the onset of puberty and ending in the mid-20s—is a critical period of [brain] development. Changes in brain structure, function, and connectivity mark adolescence as a period of opportunity to discover new vistas, to form relationships with peers and adults, and to explore one's developing identity. It is also a period of resilience that can ameliorate childhood setbacks and set the stage for a thriving trajectory over the life course" (National Academies 2019, p. 1). The youth field—or people working with and doing research related to young people, such as policymakers, funders, researchers, and practitioners—needs to understand the distinctive but interrelated aspects of youth well-being that need nurturing as it considers investments and interventions to support youth development. Many scholars, nonprofits, intergovernmental organizations, and governments have developed measurement systems for population and youth well-being, as well as assessments of the state of the field in youth indicators, over the years.[1] The field needs to build on past knowledge while continuing to refine how well-being is defined and measured. Such refinement will provide a stronger toolkit to set priorities, establish baseline levels, and track progress over time.

This report describes the domains of youth well-being and considerations for measurement, including both traditional and emergent approaches. It is intended as a resource for researchers, practitioners, and funders assessing, planning, or investing in programs for young people. We aim to motivate readers to incorporate new domains and related measures in their work to get a fuller picture of the health and well-being of young people.

The opening sections review our approach to the report and discuss themes that cut across all the domains. The report then describes concepts, measures, and gaps in each of eight well-being domains:

- physical health
- mental and behavioral health
- education and learning
- economic stability

- physical and psychological safety
- social networks and relationships
- community and belonging
- sense of purpose

After the domain reviews, we conclude with reflections and final recommendations.

Approach

We use the eight domains as a framework for considering the concepts and measures needed to capture youth well-being, along with select examples and identified gaps. We provide evidence for our characterization of the domains, but, given the breadth of the topics, our report is not a definitive or comprehensive resource. Rather, we intend to break down silos and invite the reader to consider the ways that different domains interact with and reinforce each other. Additionally, we aim to include measures beyond individual characteristics and behavior to include instances in which place-based conditions and systemic factors should be examined and measured in relation to how they support or impede well-being.

The first step in our research was identifying key domains that describe the well-being of young people. Though no one accepted age range exists, we used a working definition as people ages 14 to 24 in this report.

We scanned a variety of sources, including major indicator projects and literature across disciplines, to identify potential domains. We developed summary definitions of each one, noting differences across the literature. We then received feedback on our initial domains from five experts on youth development, including those who do participatory research with young people:

- Kim Flores, cofounder and chief executive officer, Hello Insight
- Sally Munemitsu, cofounder and chief operating officer, Hello Insight
- Ahna Suleiman, independent adolescent health and youth engagement consultant
- Sarah Zeller-Berkman, academic director, City University of New York's youth studies program
- Amy Syvertsen, principal researcher, American Institutes for Research

These five interviewees provided input on how they would conceptualize each domain, drawbacks of traditional definitions, and new ways to think about them. We also consulted youth experts at the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

After our interviews, we completed a deeper literature scan for each domain. Our primary focus was the United States, but we drew from international literature and research when relevant. We used search terms to cover the entire domain broadly, but also terms that encapsulated specific topics related to each domain that we heard about through our interviews. In addition to searching in peer-reviewed journals, we included reports and sources from practitioner and government sources.

One limitation of the report is the lack of youth involvement in reviewing the domains, concepts, and gaps in measurement. We have included the concepts we believe are most important based on a scan of the literature that contains some youth-informed sources. However, young people know best about their priorities and what they need to thrive, and we need a variety of perspectives because priorities differ from person to person. Not including young people means we could be incorrectly emphasizing some concepts and missing important ideas and implications not evident from adult perspectives.

As a model for future inquiry into the domains described in this report, we point readers to the youth participatory action research initiative currently being organized by Fresh Tracks and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions (box 1). More endeavors like this one, with adult researchers and funders as allies in partnering with young people, will result in a stronger understanding of the elements of well-being and related investments required to ensure that all young people have what they need to thrive.

BOX 1

Initiatives That Support the Expansion of the Definitions of Youth Well-Being

Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Fresh Tracks and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions are facilitating a youth-led participatory action research project to define well-being through the specific cultural perspectives of Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latine young people. They published their first report on *Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing* in April 2023 and plan to produce well-being toolkits and measures that center culture as an asset to well-being.

Source: Aspen Institute, *Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing: A Youth-Led Participatory Action Research Project to Define and Measure Wellbeing* (Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2023), https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/youth-and-young-adult-wellbeing/.

Note: We chose to use the term Latine throughout the report as it is a gender inclusive form of Latino/Latina but is more tailored to Spanish pronunciation.

The next section discusses overarching themes across the domains. A supplemental reference (Pettit 2024) offers a list of surveys and administrative data sources that can shed light on the well-being of young people—available nationwide in the US.

Cross-Cutting Themes: Inclusion and Equity

Certain themes related to inclusion and equity cut across all the domains. Foremost, our interviewees agreed on the critical need to include young people in the process of developing well-being concepts and indicators for all the domains. Involving young people throughout the process would increase the validity and credibility of the indicators. Most of our sources were developed by adult experts in their respective fields, and many relied on parental responses. Additionally, there is a need to include young people with different identities, such as race and ethnicity, country of origin, or gender identity, as these may influence how they define well-being. In general, current concepts within the domains do not adequately distinguish the difference in measures needed for a 14-year-old compared with a 24-year-old. Youth engagement could also contribute to refining concepts and measures of well-being for different cultural backgrounds and across stages of development.

In addition to including a diverse set of youth perspectives, all planning, implementation, and measurement of youth well-being programs and policies should center racial equity. Governments and other institutions have invested in a wealth of valuable data sources that help us understand many aspects of youth well-being and inform policies and programs that benefit young people. However, most concepts and instruments were developed in white-dominated fields and are assumed to be universally valid despite rarely being vetted by people with different racial or ethnic backgrounds. In addition, surveys administered in schools—a common method of collecting data on youth well-being—exclude young people not enrolled in school, who are disproportionately young people of color. Thus, centering equity requires intentionally including young people of color and other historically marginalized groups because they are the most affected by current inequities and can incorporate their own lived experience in identifying domains and measures of youth well-being. The focus on the fundamental role of racism in influencing outcomes in the US should also include recognition of other intersectional identities like gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

The limited disaggregation provided by current data sources for race and ethnicity and other intersectional identities also restricts our ability to measure disparities for young people of color and other historically marginalized groups. Inadequate measures hamper efforts to focus and track programs to advance equity. Moreover, many data sources also only allow reporting for larger geographies, preventing insights about the outcomes for disinvested neighborhoods of color. These

limitations may be a result of the data owner not collecting the characteristics or that the sample sizes are too small to produce valid measures. Data owners need to be careful to balance the desire for detailed information to address inequities with people's rights to privacy and consent on how data about them are used.

An equity lens in selecting and using indicators also requires recognition of the key role that structural racism plays in shaping the various aspects of well-being of young people of color. Structural racism is the racial bias across institutions and society that results in cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2014). Inequities are both created and maintained through mutually reinforcing systems, policies, and practices in areas such as housing, education, employment, health care, and the criminal legal system. Multiple pathways account for how racism affects outcomes, such as reduced access to health-promoting resources, exposure to unhealthy environmental conditions, development of adverse cognitive and emotional processes, and increased engagement in unhealthy behaviors to cope with stress (Paradies et al. 2015). Research has demonstrated the effect of racial discrimination on youth well-being, but the youth field would benefit from additional study on the impact of systems and biased practices on youth outcomes (Benner et al. 2018). Such studies could build on existing work documenting how researchers are grappling with defining and measuring the components and effects of structural racism (Groos et al. 2018).

Interviewees underscored that indicators must look beyond the individual behaviors often used to explain racial disparities and toward community conditions shaped by structural racism that influence well-being. This critique asserts the need to include how the neighborhoods where young people live affect their lives directly, such as through clean air and water, or indirectly through the quality of the services and resources available to them, such as access to jobs or green space. Although they do not measure youth well-being directly, these types of measures provide critical context for interpretation of disparities in outcome indicators and points of intervention for improving different domains of well-being.

At the same time, greater focus on young people's assets instead of deficits is needed. One way to achieve this would be to develop measures that center young people's existing assets and personal aspirations, because too often we have emphasized deficits and challenges.[2] Another way would be to focus on the developmental assets needed for young people to thrive, as exemplified by the Developmental Assets® Framework (Search Institute 2020) discussed below in the physical health, social networks and relationships, and community and belonging domains. Finally, measures should capture the health-promoting factors of where young people live (like walkability, community centers, access to healthy food, and community cohesion), as well as the traditional negative factors (e.g., crime, vacant housing, air pollution) (Agdal, Midtgård, and Meidell 2019). Although many of the ideas and

examples in this report represent a negative perspective or focus on a lack of resources, we also present positive examples when possible and call out the need for better asset measures in the discussions of gaps in select domains.

All the equity and inclusion issues discussed above are relevant to all domains of well-being, though not all issues are discussed in every individual domain section. Together, these cross-cutting themes point to the need to critically reflect on assumptions about young people's well-being and consider ways to embed equity as we consider the concepts in each domain.

Youth Well-Being Domains

The sections that follow focus on each of the eight domains of youth well-being that we identified. We begin our discussion with domains most commonly associated with youth well-being in national indicator sets, such as physical health, mental and behavioral health, education, and economic status. We follow these with domains that may be less familiar or fully developed. Our hope is that this structure will invite readers to consider an expanded set of areas and a wide array of measures to get at the complex web of factors that affect youth well-being.

Each section begins with a short summary description of the domain, followed by some key takeaways from the discussion and notes about the significance of the domain to youth well-being and outcomes in other areas. We include traditional and emergent concepts and measures for all but one domain—sense of purpose. We categorized concepts based on their frequency in the literature review and our previous research and analysis of the literature cited. We do not suggest that the emergent approaches should replace the traditional ones, but rather that the new ideas can provide nuance, additions, and critical context for the commonly used concepts. In some domains, we also highlight promising projects that reflect a more expansive point of view on youth well-being or engage young people in exciting ways. We then explore selected gaps in concepts and measures that we identified through our literature scan and interviews. This exploration is not intended to be a comprehensive statement on potential new areas of development. Finally, each section pulls out two to three summary bullets on areas for growth.

Table 1 provides a broad overview of the domains we highlight in this report, including summary descriptions and selected sample concepts and conceptual gaps related to each.

TABLE 1

Youth Well-Being Domain Summary

Domain	Description	Sample concepts	Notable conceptual gaps
Physical health	Physical health is the condition of the body, behaviors, and environment that affect those conditions.	▪ Traditional: presence of disease; participation in physical activity; amount of sleep; body mass index (BMI); having a regular primary care doctor ▪ Emergent: availability of a balanced diet and ability to perform physical activity; general framing of health around what one has access to; effects of structural racism on health; rethinking BMI and focus on weight	▪ Young people's feelings about their own physical health and body ▪ Young people's ability to care for their body ▪ How structural racism drives conditions and systems, leading to different health outcomes between groups
Mental and behavioral health	Mental health is related to a person's emotions and social well-being; behavioral health describes how a person's actions affect health, with the note that the literature contains multiple definitions.	▪ Traditional: presence of mental health disorders; presence of risk factors (e.g., traumatic childhood events); presence of protective factors (e.g., parental involvement) ▪ Emergent: youth-defined, context-specific conceptions of mental health; availability of formal mental health supports (e.g., counselling)	▪ Additional community-specific conceptions of mental and behavioral health ▪ Greater understanding of individual resilience factors contributing to mental and behavioral health
Education and learning	Education is the subset of learning that includes formal study and training to provide specific knowledge and skills; learning covers any process of integrating information in knowledge, skills, and behavior.	▪ Traditional: assumed knowledge and skills acquisition based on achievement of credentials and test scores ▪ Emergent: individual student's strengths in areas that support learning; systems factors that drive disparities in education outcomes	▪ Whether and how education systems help young people develop their talent and skills to support success in life in ways they individually define
Economic stability	The economic stability domain is the financial resources and prospects of young people.	▪ Traditional: individual and family income and wealth; employment status; measures of meeting basic needs ▪ Emergent: expansive notions of basic needs to support thriving (e.g., enrichment activities); how material resources and employment support quality of life; new understandings of job	▪ Understanding of economic status for subgroups of young people (e.g., by race and geography) ▪ Measurements of job quality ▪ Balancing the traditional concepts around economic well-being with those concerning quality of life ▪ Young people's perceptions around what

Domain	Description	Sample concepts	Notable conceptual gaps
		quality, such as work-life balance and job security	makes them feel financially secure
Physical and psychological safety	This domain includes the threats someone faces, the conditions that do or do not create safety, and what makes one feel safe.	▪ Traditional: external threats as measured by neighborhood crime and school violence; a young person's behaviors that create greater risk of violence and injury; feelings of safety ▪ Emergent: consideration of why young people face structural barriers to safety; rethinking behaviors typically considered risky (e.g., sexual relationships); what makes different groups of young people feel safe	▪ Greater consideration of conditions that generate safety ▪ Additional work on what contributes to young people's feelings of safety
Social networks and relationships	This domain concerns the different types of connections through which young people feel supported.	▪ Traditional: placing of relationships into certain categories, such as peer, parent, and adult role models; how social media influence peer relationships ▪ Emergent: holistic views on how young people are embedded in webs of relationships; views of healthy relationships within different cultural contexts; trauma-informed interpretations of relationships	▪ Youth-driven understandings of what supportive relationships look like ▪ Surveys of young people not in school ▪ Rethinking risk in sexual relationships
Community and belonging	Community and belonging are the ways in which young people experience connection to others and to their broader social environment.	▪ Traditional: a young person's connectedness to others, including feelings of being valued and supported; how social environments promote or hinder sense of connectedness ▪ Emergent: significance of virtual communities and how young people experience them; importance of arts and culture in communities	▪ Youth-driven conceptualizations of community ▪ Understanding how concepts such as race, ethnicity, culture, and immigration status impact understanding of and connection to community ▪ Understanding how social media affect different types of young people
Sense of purpose	This domain focuses on intentions to achieve goals for oneself and for the broader world.	▪ Identity development, or how young people define themselves in terms of their goals, values, and cultural groups; spiritual development, or how they	▪ Greater understanding of how sense of purpose is mediated by cultural and individual experiences ▪ More knowledge of how structures in young

Domain	Description	Sample concepts	Notable conceptual gaps
		seek meaning and purpose in something greater than themselves; civic engagement (traditional and emergent are not specified for this domain).	people's lives help them develop a sense of purpose

Source: Authors' research.

Physical Health

The domain of physical health includes the conditions of the body, behaviors, and environment that affect the conditions of the body and behaviors.

Key Takeaways

1. Traditional ways to define physical health include the presence or absence of disease and individual behaviors that promote or harm health.
2. Another traditional way to consider physical health is how the built and natural environments affect physical health.
3. More expansive measures frame physical health as what one has or lacks, such as the availability of a balanced diet and ability to perform physical activity. They also take an approach to health that is more weight inclusive, not focusing on weight or BMI as a primary measure of health and instead viewing health as more multifaceted.
4. Based on our scan of the literature, the gaps in this domain include approaches to measuring young people's feelings about health and their own body; their ability to care for their body; and their assessment of whether their body can do what they would like it to do.

Young people's physical health is an aspect of well-being that impacts other parts of life, from academic achievement to participation in the workforce (Aston 2018; Perreira and Ornelas 2011). Some authors discuss how physical health affects cognitive and emotional development, work performance, parenting style, and mortality (Osher et al. 2020). In addition, mental health and physical health are linked, as conditions of mental health such as depression can increase the risk for health conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, and chronic conditions can affect one's mental health.[3]

Traditional Concepts and Measures

The literature most often defines physical health as the condition of one's body and presence or absence of contributing factors presented as objective measures. The primary distinction between adult and youth health is the emphasis that some authors place on how physical health can affect young people as their lives progress. The most common measures of physical health reflect a medicalized approach: body descriptors such as body mass index, the presence or absence of diseases, and other medical conditions affecting physical functioning, such as asthma (Land, Lamb, and Zheng 2009).[4] Other measures focus on whether people are meeting established standards of what being "healthy" means or performing certain activities that promote or harm physical health. Example concepts in the latter category are physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, alcohol consumption, tobacco use, other drug use, and amount of sleep each night (Aston 2018; Perreira and Ornelas 2011). Some measures are designed to reflect access to and use of health care, like having a regular primary care doctor and health insurance.[5]

Another widely accepted concept is that the quality of the built and natural environment directly affects physical health (Ross et al. 2020). Built environment measures include the presence of health-promoting infrastructure, like road designs that reduce traffic injuries, and access to safe green space. Another concept to keep in mind when discussing physical health and the built environment is the accessibility of the built environment for people who are disabled, such as accessible housing, ramps for wheelchairs, and depressed curves in sidewalks.[6]

Related to the natural environment, measures include those indicating that the house a child lives in is lead-free or the level of chemicals in a young person's neighborhood is safe. The US Department of Health and Human Service's Healthy People 2030 initiative has a "Neighborhood and Built Environment" objective that creates different measures of success, including increasing the number of people whose water supply meets Safe Drinking Water Act[7] regulations; reducing the amount of toxic pollutants released into the environment; reducing the number of days people are exposed to unhealthy air; and reducing blood lead levels in children ages 1 to 5.

Emergent Concepts and Measures

Beyond how the built environment directly affects physical health, considerable work also focuses on how many community conditions and resources impact young people's physical health outcomes. These sources emphasize that these external factors are a critical part of a holistic conceptualization of physical health. Health is influenced by what one is exposed to, not only one's individual actions, behaviors, and choices. As an example of the impact of community conditions on health, Wright and

colleagues (2017) demonstrate the association between youth exposure to community violence and specific physical health outcomes, such as cardiovascular health and sleep. Box 2 describes one promising project from the United Nations that frames health as what one has access to, instead of approaching it with a medicalized frame or individual behavior. The project also consulted young people directly in developing the approach.

As a related point, Osher and colleagues (2020) discuss how access to environments and opportunities that promote physical health are not equally available to every person. They explain that disparities in health outcomes are a result of the built environment (as discussed above), structural inequalities, and less access to quality, culturally appropriate services.

The literature also explores how the overemphasis on specific traditional measures could be potentially detrimental to health. For example, growing discussions question the simplistic use of body mass index as a measurement tool and the push for a more weight-normative approach to health. Gutin (2018) writes on how body mass index turned into "an arbitrary, subjective label for categorizing the population" and as a "proxy for health" and also how its power as a measure is linked with the overwhelming narrative that having "healthy weight" is the ideal way to be (pp. 1–6). Tylka and colleagues (2014) discuss how this emphasis on weight in medical care and as a measurement in the US can lead to doctors misdiagnosing or misunderstanding their patients based on their weight. At the same time, having a higher weight is associated with certain health conditions, such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease, so it should not be discarded altogether but used as a measure in context and conjunction with other indicators of health.

Other research proposes different ways to expand beyond traditional medical measures. Avedissian and Alayan (2021) define physical health in terms of what one has access to and the ability to do—for example, the availability of a balanced diet and the ability to perform physical activity. One of the experts we interviewed echoed this framing. In another instance, the Developmental Assets Framework (Search Institute 2020) describes knowledge of and support for positive behaviors as key to health, such as parents teaching children about having good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality as key supports for physical health for young people.

BOX 2

Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework

In "Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework," Ross and colleagues offer "an expanded definition of adolescent well-being" (p. 2) based on consultations with youth-serving organizations, such as a youth network called the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and the United Nations H6+ Technical Working Group. The authors frame health around access to resources and the individual's environment and propose "five interconnected domains for adolescent well-being" (p. 2). The first domain, "good health and optimum nutrition" (p. 2), includes

- access to valid and relevant information and affordable age-appropriate, high-quality, welcoming health services, care, and support, including for self-care
- a healthy environment and access to opportunities for adequate physical activity
- access to local, culturally acceptable, adequate, diversified, balanced, and healthy diet commensurate to the individual's characteristics.[a]

[a] Ross et al. (2020).

As mentioned in the cross-cutting themes, racism plays a significant role in influencing health by reducing access to culturally appropriate services, reflecting a medical system that has not done enough to understand or take seriously the conditions and needs of historically marginalized people (Anderson 2023). Racist policies and practices also lead to access to fewer health-promoting resources, exposure to unhealthy environmental conditions, and reduced access to opportunities in employment, housing, and education. In addition, it can affect physical health more directly through causing adverse cognitive and emotional processes, increased engagement in unhealthy behaviors to cope with stress, or reduced self-regulation (Paradies et al. 2015).

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

A few interviewees noted that although the emergent approaches above are positive directions, the more holistic concepts are not regularly considered when examining young people's physical well-being. They mentioned that overreliance on typical medicalized measures of youth physical health obscures how health is mediated by community-level factors. Although considerable data exist related to many of the external factors (e.g., safe and stable housing, income level, and access to safe places to recreate), the experts noted that these factors are often omitted as context for the outcome measures in published assessments of physical health. They also noted that measurement frameworks do not adequately emphasize how structural racism drives conditions and systems that lead to differing health outcomes

between groups (Hicken, Kravitz-Wirtz, and Jackson 2018). We heard in these conversations that it is also key not to be too deterministic or discuss this topic with the mindset that people's health is entirely determined by their circumstances. For example, measures of external factors that affect health should be paired with an acknowledgement of young people's agency over many aspects of their health.

Our expert interviewees emphasized the need to expand on traditional measurement approaches. One interviewee felt that the youth field should shift to measuring physical health according to whether young people's bodies can do what they want them to do. This would include measuring young people's aspirations for physical activity, their ability to care for their body, and their feelings about and perceptions of their own body. One suggestion to improve measurement is to develop ways to measure how comfortable young people feel with their bodies, even if their perceptions diverge from what is commonly considered healthy by standard medicalized measures.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Mental and behavioral health have multiple definitions in the literature. Mental health is often discussed in relation to a person's emotions and social well-being, and behavioral health is generally understood to describe how a person's actions affect health.

Key Takeaways

1. Mental and behavioral health have traditionally been assessed by the presence or absence of mental health disorders and risk factors associated with poor outcomes in this domain.
2. However, emergent approaches to measuring mental and behavioral health increasingly include more youth-defined and context-specific measures in addition to the traditional ones. Developing these new measures will require considering how mental and behavioral health vary among people from different ethnic and other backgrounds.
3. We need to improve our collective understanding of how individual young people's resilience relates to their mental and behavioral health outcomes.

Extensive research exists on how mental and behavioral health affect youth outcomes in a variety of critical ways. Measures of mental health are connected to a young person's life satisfaction, sexual and reproductive health, education attainment, and overall quality of life when they are older (Eisenberg et al.2009; Schlack et al. 2021). Some young people are particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of mental and behavioral health challenges because they have fewer familial, medical, and community

resources to overcome these challenges. COVID-19 and associated trauma, along with the trauma associated with racialized police violence, exacerbated mental and behavioral health challenges for many young people.[8] Furthermore, research has shown a trend of worsening mental health for young people that predates COVID-19, with the CDC citing rising rates of suicidal ideation and feelings of hopelessness. All of this means this is a critical domain to focus on.[9]

Traditional Concepts and Measures

Youth mental health is often measured in terms of the presence or absence of medicalized measures of mental disorders. These measures include indicators like having a major depressive episode, having a substance use disorder, or having attempted suicide. However, the literature also includes many examples of indicators of positive mental health in young people, such as curiosity, persistence, and self-control.[10] Indicators of resilience, or the ability to adapt and recover from risks and threats, are also employed widely in the literature and found to be positively associated with mental health (Mesman, Vreeker, and Hillegers 2021). Behavioral health indicators often substantially overlap with mental health indicators and many are strongly correlated (e.g., children with anxiety often have behavior problems and many have additional mental disorders).[11]

The literature includes measures of several common risk factors associated with poor mental and behavioral health outcomes. A category of risk factors that has grown in prominence over the past decade is adverse childhood experiences or potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood, like abuse or neglect. These experiences also reflect community-level factors that can undermine a child's sense of safety, including violence, noise, and crowding.[12] The literature and our expert interviews emphasized that many additional risk factors are structural. These factors include the stressors associated with immigrant experiences—for instance, discrimination in the labor market and government institutions and barriers related to language access (Nurius, Prince, and Rocha 2015)—and structural racism against Black Americans.

The literature also reports on protective factors that are associated with a lower risk of negative mental or behavioral health outcomes or that lessen the impact of risk factors. For example, at the individual level, parental involvement may be a protective factor. Community-level protective factors may include the availability of resources in schools and from faith-based organizations (SAMHSA 2019).

Emergent Concepts and Measures

Through our literature scan and expert interviews, we identified a growing recognition of the severity of the lack of access to mental health services, which are critical to supporting youth well-being. In 2019, about half of children with a mental health disorder did not receive treatment. This is a significant societal challenge, because community-based interventions are needed to help young people thrive.[13] And while expansions of public insurance have made mental health services affordable for more people (Blunt et al. 2020), availability remains inequitable, with rural areas and places with larger proportions of uninsured residents and residents of color less likely to have local mental health facilities that treat young people (Cummings et al. 2016). But insurance coverage and availability of facilities does not necessarily equal access. Studies have shown that young Black people face substantial barriers, including social factors, to accessing needed mental health services and that there is a need to further study barriers and facilitators of access in tandem to understand how to break down those barriers (Planey et al. 2019).

We also identified the need to develop valid measures of young people's mental and behavioral health incorporating the perspectives of different racial and ethnic communities and other identity groups. Experts we spoke with underscored that adults, typically white men, defined the traditional measures used to assess youth mental health. They emphasized that this was a "very deficit-based" approach, framing mental health around challenges as opposed to possibilities. They noted how a positive framing to development of these context-specific measures normalizes conversations about mental health and creates opportunities to pinpoint constructive interventions to address needs. They also contended that "it is critically important that [young people] have the space to define" mental health for themselves in specific contexts because young people's and older adults' views differ, and different groups conceptualize mental health differently.

Box 3 highlights two promising examples of research to engage young people in defining mental health through participatory approaches.

BOX 3

Participatory Mental and Behavioral Health Measurement Development

- The Youth Council for Suicide Prevention is a youth participatory action research project implemented at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. This project engages about 25 youth volunteers in annual cohorts to improve concepts and measures used in emergency department screening protocols and prevention efforts.[a]
- The Pittsburgh Study is an ongoing project to elucidate influences on child and adolescent health with an emphasis on racial equity. The project engages community members in answering questions about what children thriving means to them. The Pittsburgh Study included a series of community listening sessions and mapped out child-level, place-based, and relationship-level factors, in addition to a set of factors related to "racial equity, justice, and inclusion" (p. 339). The resulting framework is being used to assess community interventions.[b]

[a] Robin Lindquist-Grantz and Michelle Abraczinskas, "Using Youth Participatory Action Research as a Health Intervention in Community Settings," *Health Promotion Practice* 21, no. 4 (2020): 573–81, https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839918818831; "Youth Council for Suicide Prevention," 1N5, accessed August 14, 2023, https://1n5.org/ycsp/.

[b] Terence S. Dermody, Anna Ettinger, Felicia S. Friedman, Val Chavis, and Elizabeth Miller, "The Pittsburgh Study: Learning with Communities about Child Health and Thriving," *Health Equity* 6, no. 1 (2022): 338–44, https://doi.org/10.1089/heq.2021.0084.

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

People whom we interviewed and participatory researchers agreed that additional youth participatory action research is needed to capture a more diverse array of definitions of mental and behavioral health. Ozer and colleagues (2022) note that this approach presents an opportunity to engage with students to improve social and emotional learning in schools, which is increasingly emphasized to address mental and behavioral health challenges (including developing measures of success) so that curricula better reflect their lived experience and needs.

There is room to improve measurement of children's resilience to better understand mental health. Mesman, Vreeker, and Hillegers (2021) found through a systematic literature search that individual risk factors that are often measured in the literature do not necessarily accurately predict mental health challenges. They identify a gap in the literature in identifying and measuring factors that contribute to resilience, particularly longitudinally, as resilience varies across individuals and is strongly associated with good mental health in the face of challenges.

Education and Learning

Education is the subset of learning that includes formal study and training to provide specific knowledge and skills. Learning more broadly covers the process of integrating information in knowledge, skills, and behavior.

Key Takeaways

1. Education and learning are traditionally measured through completion of formal training and the results of standardized tests, assuming these equate to a set of desired knowledge and skills.
2. Emergent measurement approaches include assessments of individual young people's strengths in areas that support learning and an increased focus on systems factors that drive disparate education outcomes.
3. Future areas of focus should include measuring how well young people are set up to meet their individually defined life goals. The youth field should also develop additional measures of how well students are prepared to learn.

Education and learning are a near-universal part of a young person's life experience with significant potential to affect life outcomes. Several studies link attaining an advanced degree to increased longevity and other improved physical health outcomes (Hong, Savelyev, and Tan 2020; Hoque et al. 2019; Mirowsky and Ross 2015). Many researchers link additional education to increased lifetime earnings (Tamborini, Kim, and Sakamoto 2015).

Traditional Concepts and Measures

Education and learning success for young people (both in K–12 and postsecondary education) are often defined in terms of achieving a credential (e.g., a high school diploma, a training certificate, a college degree). These measures and concepts are important for youth well-being, as they are often associated with positive outcomes. For instance, lifetime earnings rise as education level rises for the median worker (Carnevale, Rose, and Cheah 2021). Apprenticeships, which are an increasingly popular way for young people to get started on careers, often offer valuable credentials that lead immediately into relatively high-paying jobs with a path toward still higher future earnings (Goger and Sinclair 2021; Helper et al. 2016).

Another type of measure is attaining a high score on common types of progress indicators (e.g., grade point average, standardized test scores) (Blankstein and Wolff-Eisenberg 2020; York, Gibson, and

Tankin 2015). Achievement in reading and math influences later life outcomes, including health and lifetime earnings, and therefore assessing student progress in these areas is important for keeping students on track. Evidence exists that common measures like grades and standardized tests are an important piece of the measurement puzzle for keeping students on track.[14] Despite the importance of these measures, they have important limitations, as we detail below.

Emergent Concepts and Measures

The high-stakes nature of standardized tests has brought substantial scrutiny about what the tests measure. These tests are used to track individual students into more advanced classes beginning in elementary school, to make college admissions decisions, and as an input to determine teacher compensation and school funding. Standardized tests have traditionally been developed in a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach based on state or national standards.[15] Many education and learning stakeholders argue that traditional measures, including standardized test scores, do not facilitate an education system set up for students to achieve economic success and personal fulfilment (Cantor et al. 2021). Moreover, education and credential level attained is imperfect as a proxy for youth success. Scholars have noted that factors like racial and gender discrimination and differential wages for graduates by field of study affect the extent to which different students benefit from a college degree, complicating notions of a straightforward link between credential attainment and well-being (Carnevale, Cheah, and Wenzinger 2021).

Through our literature scan and expert interviews, we identified several innovative approaches for measuring young people's education and learning, as well as the precursor conditions needed for them to learn. For instance, Renshaw, Long, and Cook (2015) validate a Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire that measures student strengths in other domains of well-being that other literature has shown to be foundational to learning, including protective factors like social support and physical exercise. Nagaoka and colleagues (2015) put forward the Foundations for Young Adult Success framework, which identifies four foundational components allowing for young adult success—self-regulation, knowledge, mindsets, and values.

At the systems level, *A Guide to Racial and Ethnic Equity Systems Indicators* (Kaur et al. 2021) from StriveTogether offers examples of systems indicators to collect and report data on how systems relate to disparities in education outcomes across groups. In contrast to the typical individual-level indicators used to measure outcomes in education, these systems-level indicators like teacher qualifications and race/ethnicity of teachers and administrators relative to the student body reveal disparities in resources and opportunities that can inform policies and practices.

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

Several sources emphasize that the youth field needs to define the concepts of education and learning more broadly. In Turnaround for Children's *Building Blocks for Learning: A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development*, Stafford-Brizard (2016) contends that though the academic standards the education system draws from are rigorous, they tend to focus on the content that students should learn, which misses the factors facilitating learning and may leave students unprepared to learn. She states that educators should evaluate skills and mindsets in key areas that prepare students to learn—independence and sustainability, perseverance, mindsets for self and school, school readiness, and healthy development. Stafford-Brizard identifies these as key building blocks for learning, in part because they are measurable, and notes that future research should focus on developing valid measures. Box 4 provides an approach to focusing on measuring the skills and competencies required for learning.

BOX 4

Measuring Student Competencies for Success at School and in Life at East Palo Alto Academy

East Palo Alto Academy, a public high school in a historically underresourced area of the San Francisco Bay Area of California, has supported students in achieving positive outcomes (including 90 percent graduating and attending college) through an innovative approach to measuring and promoting holistic learning. Specifically, the school's approach to measuring student success has involved the following:

- identifying five community habits—personal responsibility, social responsibility, critical and creative thinking, application of knowledge, and communication—as competencies necessary for academic and life success
- developing rubrics based on these habits to develop instruction and for classroom evaluation functions[a]

Together, these comprehensive efforts reinforce competencies that evidence suggests are critical for positive youth development.

Source: Cantor et al. (2021).

[a] East Palo Alto Academy, *East Palo Alto Academy's Advisory Handbook: A Guide to School-Wide Vertical and Horizontal Alignment*, 2nd ed. (Palo Alto, CA: East Palo Alto Academy, 2019), https://www.epaahs.org/documents/about/Advisory-Handbook-Rev-07_2019.pdf.

Cantor and colleagues (2021) underscore that additional work is needed to expand on traditional measures of education and learning. They explain that these measures are often operationalized in average or composite scores on standardized tests used to determine an individual's competencies,

reflecting assumptions that the education system should identify and support those above-average students with innate talent and skills. These assumptions are often embedded with racist, sexist, and other stereotypes that assume white, male children are more capable than others. The authors argue that all students have talent and skills that should be incorporated in individualized opportunities for learning and growth.

Economic Stability

Economic well-being includes the financial resources and prospects of young people, including income, employment, and their ability to meet their basic needs.

Key Takeaways

1. Traditionally, economic well-being is thought of as individual and family income and ability to meet basic needs, wealth, and employment status.
2. Emergent understandings include more expansive notions of basic needs, the ability to support quality of life, and job quality.
3. Our perceived gaps include disaggregation of economic measures, the need for young people to weigh in on what makes them feel secure, and capturing concepts such as quality of life and ownership.

Economic circumstances affect young people's well-being most directly by determining access to basic needs, including food, housing, and health care. They thus influence the ability of young people to support their own physical health, and financial insecurity can cause anxiety that affects young people's mental health.

Traditional Concepts and Measures

Traditionally, the economic stability domain covers people's income and ability to meet basic needs, wealth, and employment. Youth income has typically been measured in terms of a young person's individual and family income in absolute terms, like the federal poverty level, or in relative terms, like the amount relative to a poverty threshold or a region's median household income.

One of the most common standards for measuring economic well-being is the poverty level. The federal poverty level is based on cash resources, is adjusted for family size, and is the same across all

states (except Alaska and Hawaii) and the District of Columbia.[16] It is an absolute measure, meaning that one's income falls either above or below it, and there is no gradual threshold. Another measure, the supplemental poverty measure, was developed to address some of the limitations of the official poverty measure. The supplemental poverty measure measures poverty based on income after taxes, including benefits and tax credits, but it excludes work, child care, and medical expenses (CRS 2022).[17] It uses the income of an entire household, which is generally more inclusive than just a family and also accounts for different costs of living in different geographic areas (CRS 2022). Additionally, the model of the living wage uses a geographically specific hourly rate that takes into account what a family needs to pay for basic needs, including food, housing, and transportation.[18] It varies depending on how many children and working adults are in a household. Though these are the most common measures of economic well-being, one interviewee believed that measures of economic well-being should be benchmarked to a higher standard of living than the ability to meet basic needs and one that values greater thriving for young people.

These measures try to capture people's ability to meet basic needs. Related concepts include food and housing security. According to the US Department of Agriculture, "Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods [and] assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies)."[19] The Department of Agriculture's survey questions on food security ask respondents to respond to 10 questions about the conditions and actions around food security and how often they are true. Another measure is food insufficiency, which often "means households sometimes or often did not have enough to eat," often in the last seven days.[20] A common measure for youth food security is receipt of free or reduced-price lunch, but some scholars are shifting away from this measure as many jurisdictions have implemented universal free lunch.[21]

Another vital basic need is housing. According to Leopold and colleagues (2016), "housing insecurity can take a number of forms: homelessness; housing cost burden; residential instability; evictions and other forced moves; living with family or friends to share housing costs (doubling-up); overcrowding; living in substandard, poor quality housing; or living in neighborhoods that are unsafe and lack access to transportation, jobs, quality schools, and other critical amenities" (p. 1). Many of these measures are readily available in datasets, such as the American Community Survey and the American Housing Survey.

Public benefits that are in kind or affect expenses for basic needs, like housing assistance or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, may also be included in income measures. Indicators related to public assistance may be interpreted as an indicator of low economic well-being because

families must typically have low incomes to qualify, but they also improve the financial situation of a family by reducing their spending on essentials.

Beyond income alone, a family's savings and net wealth (including home equity) are also considered when evaluating economic well-being. Savings can promote a family's stability and their ability to weather a crisis. This financial ability is related to well-being because unplanned expenses, such as the need for a car repair, can be accommodated without putting a family into a dire financial situation (McKernan et al. 2016). With savings, families can also invest in activities that may promote future economic well-being, such as training or higher education. In previous work commissioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Urban Institute included debt collection agency contact and presence of an emergency fund to cover three months' worth of expenses as key indicators of youth economic well-being. Both indicators are available from the National Financial Capability Study (Anoll, Warren, and Pettit 2020).

Many young people take out large student loans to pay for secondary education. This component of net worth reflects young people's current economic well-being as well as is a predictive factor with a long-lasting negative effect on net worth. According to the Education Data Initiative, student loan debt in the US totals $1.757 trillion, and even the average student at a public university borrows $31,410 to receive a bachelor's degree.[22] This extensive debt is a barrier to young people building wealth. Based on the tabulations from the 2010 Survey of Consumer Finances, the Pew Research Center estimated that households without student debt had seven times greater median net worth than those with student debt.[23] According to the Education Data Initiative, the average student loan borrower takes 20 years to pay off student loans.[24]

Employment status is frequently measured to understand economic well-being. This measure includes whether young people are employed at a given time and any in-kind benefits that come with the job, such as health insurance or retirement contributions. More nuanced measures capture consistency of employment, which is important for describing people's economic well-being because factors like irregular hours and seasonal employment make it difficult to plan for regular expenses.

Factors that facilitate work, such as access to a reliable car or proximity to transit or job-rich areas, affect young people's ability to work and therefore their economic status. For young parents, access to quality and affordable child care, including public child care subsidies, can make the difference between being able to work and remaining unemployed (as they need child care to be able to work). Factors that contribute to young people's ability to work could also include health insurance programs like Medicaid or public health insurance subsidies to help them receive the care they need to be physically healthy for work.

Indicator projects have generally used some combination of the above categories to capture multiple aspects of economic well-being. The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics uses economic indicators that include the income and poverty status of children's families, secure employment of children's parents, and measures of food security and insecurity for the family. For its family economic well-being indicators, the Child and Youth Well-Being Index uses poverty rate, secure parental employment rate, median annual income, and rate of children with health insurance.

The appropriate measures for economic well-being vary according to the young person's stage of life. For example, measures of economic well-being for younger teens are largely dependent on their family's financial situation compared with older teens, and young adults may provide for their own basic needs. As two examples of age-specific indicators, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center's economic well-being indicators include adults ages 18 to 24 who lost employment income and teens ages 16 to 19 not attending school and not working (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2021).[25]

Emergent Concepts and Measures

In *Thriving, Robust Equity, and Transformative Learning and Development*, the authors take their definition of youth economic well-being beyond traditional measures. They include a more expansive definition of basic needs, including enrichment activities like school field trips. They also consider the ability of young people to make choices and feel secure, such as having control over their day-to-day finances and making financial goals (Osher et al. 2020).

A more difficult to measure concept is how the quality of employment and the possibility for advancement affect a youth's economic well-being and future. New conceptions of quality employment include work-life balance, employment security, a workplace free of harassment, and opportunities for skills development (Rosas 2017). In addition to job security, other research identifies the social value of employment and the meaningfulness in one's life as aspects of job quality (Katz, Congdon, and Shakesprere 2022).

The Aspen Institute's "Statement on Good Jobs" recognizes that even when some people work hard, they can still barely meet their basic needs nor advance in their careers.[26] The statement discusses how people use the blanket term *low skill* to describe work that does not require education and notes that such terminology dehumanizes work because it promotes a focus on outputs and not the people who do the work. To counter this narrative, the statement offers a working definition of good jobs that includes the following:

- economic stability, including stable, family-sustaining pay and sufficient, accessible, and broadly available benefits
- economic mobility, as evidenced by clear and equitable hiring and advancement pathways
- equity, respect, and voice, with an example measure of the ability to improve the workplace, such as through collective action or participatory management practices

An interviewee believed that measures of economic well-being should be benchmarked to a higher standard of living than the ability to meet basic needs and one that values greater thriving for young people. A related emergent area is how young people are critiquing capitalism and hustle culture. According to the Fresh Tracks' Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing project, one aspect of financial stability is being "free from the pressures of growing up in a capitalistic society" (p. 15) and the constant pressure to be productive (Aspen Institute 2023).

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

As we mentioned in the introduction, one shortcoming in the economic stability domain is the lack of measures of financial health, beyond basic income or employment status, disaggregated by age, detailed race, or geography. For example, the Survey of Consumer Finances, the primary source for national data on wealth, does not have disaggregated data on Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or American Indian or Alaska Native households, and instead clusters all these groups into an "other" category.

One of our interviewees discussed the need to develop measures for nontraditional factors related to economic well-being, such as quality of life and ownership. She noted that the young people she works with are dissatisfied with spending much of their time at work yet not making a substantial amount of money. She also discussed how young people are interested in nontraditional firms, such as worker or small business cooperatives, which bring financial and other benefits to participants and the wider community (Theodos, Scally, and Edmonds 2018). Access to these types of jobs or employment in these types of firms are ideas for future measurement. According to a 2015 survey, 75 percent of people ages 18 to 29 support employee-owned companies and government encouragement of them (Public Policy Polling 2015).[27]

Young people should also be given opportunities to answer questions about their perceptions, such as what makes them feel financially secure or their conception of having their basic needs met. One of our interviewees discussed how people in the same circumstances might feel different things, and how it is important to be mindful of people's differing life trajectories. Additionally, she discussed how young

people are transitioning to adulthood and experiencing financial independence later than previous generations, which may alter expectations of timing of milestones.

Physical and Psychological Safety

Physical and psychological safety include the threats someone faces, the conditions that do or do not create safety, and the factors that make one feel safe.

Key Takeaways

1. Safety is traditionally defined as the external threats a young person faces, including risk of bodily injury and violence, as well as behaviors that are considered risky.
2. More emergent ways of viewing this topic include rethinking what risky behavior is, considering the social determinants of safety, and developing measures that reflect what makes different groups of people feel safe or unsafe.
3. One gap in this domain is the lack of engagement with specific communities to understand what makes them feel safe or unsafe.

Safety and a supportive environment influence all other parts of well-being, as it impacts physical health, satisfaction with life, the likelihood that young people are victims of and perpetrate violence, and the ability to learn (Engel et al. 2021).

Traditional Concepts and Measures

Young people face various threats to their safety that reverberate through other aspects of their lives. These are traditionally conceptualized as external threats to a young person's safety, namely the extent to which a young person is at risk of bodily injury and experiences or is exposed to violence. Prevalent measures include the crime rate of an area or the type and number of injuries a person has sustained in their lifetime. In addition to measuring external factors or actual injury, this domain often includes how young people's behaviors may influence their own safety.

Several prominent sources offer comprehensive definitions. In "Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework," Ross and colleagues (2020) conceptualize safety as being free from all forms of violence and from exploitative commercial interests in families and communities, among peers and in schools, and in the social and virtual environment. In the National Academies'

summary of the workshop *Improving the Health, Safety, and Well-Being of Young Adults*, experts identify safety- and health-related events that have the "greatest consequence for young adults" (p. 35) as injuries, violence, suicides, substance use, risky sexual behavior, and motor vehicle accidents (National Academies 2013). Suicide is one concept illustrating the overlap of domains; it falls under mental health but also appears in discussions of safety.

Based on our review, measures of exposure to violence are the most common ones considered when describing young people's physical and psychological safety. Examples of measures indicating safety from crime include reported crime where young people live, juvenile arrests for violent crime, and youth homicides. Exposure to violence directly and indirectly in the home, such as domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, are other threats that are often considered. Approximately 4 million alleged maltreatment referrals are made every year, and researchers estimate that between 3.3 million and 10 million children are exposed each year to domestic violence.[28] Historical data on rates of exposure to domestic violence are from surveys, either from partners experiencing domestic violence and if they had children, or adults reflecting on whether their parents had been violent toward each other. Safety in schools has been increasingly front of mind because of increased school shootings in the US; the 2020–21 school year saw the highest numbers of school shootings since the early 2000s (Irwin et al. 2022). Although this is a frightening reality facing young people, youth advocates place the trend in the general context of growing gun violence in the US, which is recognized as a public health issue.[29]

Another common focus is measuring youth behavior that leads to injury and violence. For example, the Child and Youth Well-Being Index has a "safe/risk behavior" domain that includes the indicators of teenage birth rate, rate of violent crime victimization, rate of violent crime offenders,[30] rate of binge alcohol drinking, and rate of illicit drug use. Some of these measures are also related to the physical health domain.

Other prominent research focuses on measuring the rate of unintentional injuries. Globally, approximately 2,300 young people daily experience unintentional injuries because of motor vehicle accidents, drowning, poisoning, burns, falls, and violence (Salam et al. 2016). The rate of death due to motor vehicle accidents is 10.2 per every 100,000 young people (Salam et al. 2016). Children are especially susceptible to motor vehicle injuries because of their smaller stature and limited ability to perceive threats from vehicles and traffic (Cloutier et al. 2021).

Another way to think about safety is not only as risk or exposure to violence, but as feeling safe as a baseline condition or across various circumstances. The US Department of Education's School Climate Survey platform references perceptions of safety in school as one of its recommended physical safety concepts.[31] Another measure of feeling safe (though not youth specific) is the Neuroception of

Psychological Safety Scale. It measures three social, emotional, and bodily aspects of feeling safe by asking respondents to assess how much they agree with various statements.[32] The research identifies some common themes around factors that affect the feeling of safety, such as investment in communities, increased access to opportunities, and increased power and autonomy of residents.

Emergent Concepts and Measures

Several emergent concepts and measures have a more nuanced view of behaviors traditionally characterized as risky; track conditions that create safety as prevention, place, and structural determinants; and value what makes people feel safe or unsafe. An alternative approach to observing behaviors that may put young people at risk is to think about how and why they are in situations in which they cannot take control over their own experiences of safety. For example, Duff (2003) discusses how relying on "expert" discourse about drugs negatively impacts harm reduction strategies, leads to less comprehensive drug policy, and ignores the "nonexpert" risk management strategies of young people who choose to use drugs. Duff also discusses how "the setting itself [of drug use] often influences the ways in which risks are experienced" and that better "understandings of the *culture and meaning* of drug use within these cultural settings, and a clearer understanding of how young people themselves perceive the risks associated with the use of different substances, will ultimately deliver better and more effective health promotion outcomes" (p. 286). Health promotion should work to complement the practices that exist within drug-using populations.

Another prevalent theme equates risk to the people with whom young people interact. Traditional concepts and measures consider peers engaged in violence or "risky" behaviors in a young person's social network as a risk to that person. Lustig and Sung (2013) discuss how this framework blames individuals and ignores the complexity of the lives of young people. They show that these relationships anchor young people to their communities and help them move through their neighborhoods safely. Assigning blame to individuals "ignores both the structural factors that constrain youth choices and the benefits that seem to be linked to diverse friendships" (Lustig and Sung 2013, p. 17).

Social determinants are a significant component of safety. A Brookings Institution essay discusses how social determinants of safety contribute to neighborhood violence and argues for increased funding for programs that improve community safety instead of punitive programs that harm communities. This approach includes access to health care and treatment, employment and job quality, financial assistance, housing, and investing in green spaces and neighborhood-led projects.[33] While not youth specific, local efforts exist to redefine safety from lack of crime to a community-defined concept, aligned with the Brookings article. City governments are working toward looking at safety with broader

measures of well-being, beyond crime and police protection.[34] In addition to these measures, another important consideration impacting safety is violence against other people belonging to one's community or people who share a young person's identity. Even if not a victim themselves, violent acts against communities or identities that young people embody or identify with can impact their feelings of safety. For example, 58 percent of Asian Americans reported that from March 2020 to March 2021, reports of violence and discrimination against the Asian population affected their own mental health.[35] Another example is the trauma felt by Black, Latine,[36] Indigenous, and sexual minority communities as a result of police violence.[37] A growing body of research discusses how trauma can reverberate through generations and have a psychological and biological effect on descendants.[38]

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

The feeling of safety has been commonly measured by instruments such as school climate surveys, but practitioners and researchers now recognize that the factors that make different groups feel safe and unsafe differ. Overpolicing is one community condition increasingly recognized as a factor influencing young people's feelings of safety, particularly those who identify as African American and Latine. This recognition contradicts the traditional thinking that additional police presence would increase feelings of safety. In a national survey of 630 young people in Nevada, New Jersey, New York, and Oregon, only 16 percent of respondents cited police as something that makes them feel safe in school (Hamaji and Terenzi 2021). This theme occurs in other measures intended to increase school safety. Based on a survey from 98 schools in Maryland, the higher the number of cameras, the less safe some students said they felt. Victimized students felt less safe, while males and other students with more school connectedness felt safer.[39] Traditional measures of safety, such as crime rates or rates of school violence, might be counter to what young people actually feel. Refining concepts and measures about the factors and conditions that make different groups feel safe or unsafe requires engaging directly with young people with diverse backgrounds.

Box 5 provides an example of a community-based organization engaging community residents in conceptualizing what supports feelings of safety in their local context. Though not youth specific, it included young people and offers a useful model.

BOX 5

Redefining Community Safety

Just Communities Arizona in Tucson seeks to end the current punishment system and its emphasis on criminalization, surveillance, and mass incarceration. They launched a community survey to understand how residents perceived safety and what city investments should be prioritized to reduce disparities in the criminal justice system. The young people ages 14 to 24 who responded prioritized community-based alternatives to arrest and detention, more affordable housing, and more accessible mental health and substance use services.

[a] Susan Nembhard and Evelyn F. McCoy, "Reimagining Public Safety in Tucson, Arizona," Urban Institute, October 17, 2022, https://www.urban.org/catalyst-grant-program-insights/reimagining-public-safety-tucson-arizona.
[b] "Building Community Safety in Tucson!," Just Communities Arizona, accessed August 14, 2023, https://justcommunitiesarizona.org/community-safety-survey/.

Social Networks and Relationships

Young people's social network and relationship well-being is related to having different types of connections in which they feel supported.

Key Takeaways

1. The literature has firmly asserted the importance of relationships for young people's development and well-being, traditionally assessing the connections by their social category and the purposes they serve. A growing body of research acknowledges the significant role of social media and the internet in young people's relationships.
2. Emerging research goes beyond siloed categories to view relationships holistically and as interrelated, without rigid expectations of what each relationship should bring to a young person.
3. A gap in this domain is young people defining and helping determine the important parts of their relationships. Two additional gaps are that many surveys on this topic are based in schools, which miss many young people who are not in school, and sexual behavior for young people is seen solely with the lens of risk instead of also considering what young people gain from sexual relationships.

According to the Office of Population Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services, healthy relationships are ones in which young people "can safely feel and express respect for

themselves and others."[40] Avedissian and Alayan's (2021) review of the literature around adolescent well-being found that quantitative and qualitative studies show that the social aspect of a young person's life is crucial for well-being. In a comprehensive review of research, Luthar (2006) concluded that resilience in young people is built on the foundation of their relationships. Relationships can socialize young people, provide necessary social connection, and help encourage identity development (Lieberman 2013).

Traditional Concepts and Measures

Literature dealing with young people's relationships nearly universally discusses their critical importance for well-being. The Search Institute's framework of developmental relationships asserts that they "are the roots of thriving and resilience for young people, regardless of their background or circumstances" (Search Institute 2018). Within this framework, the Search Institute has identified five functions of relationships that make them impactful in a young person's life: expressing care, challenging young people to grow, providing support, sharing power, and expanding possibilities. Another Search Institute framework on developmental assets conceptualizes social and relationship well-being as having other adult relationships, adult role models, and positive peer relationships (Search Institute 2020). The literature discusses how different relationships can play different roles in young people's lives. For example, peer relationships provide young people with a sense of belonging, help them develop social skills, are a protective factor against negative forces such as bullying, and "provide students with intimacy, a sense of belonging, security, validation, and affirmation and social and practical support" (Noble and McGrath 2012, p. 24). Work by Matlin, Molock, and Tebes (2011) showed via a survey of Black adolescents that those who had increased peer and family support had decreased suicidality and depressive symptoms, showing the importance of social capital and relationships on emotional well-being.

An indicator framework based on a scan of the literature proposed specific indicators of quality within each type of relationship that a young person would be in. For example, for "positive relations with parents," the indicators are "warmth, closeness, communication, support, and positive advice"; for "positive friendship," the indicators are "supportive friendships, quality of relationships with peers, [and] opportunity to meet friends or invite friends home" (Lippman, Moore, and McIntosh 2011, p. 437). A paper from Charania and Fisher (2020) on measuring students' relationships and networks split measurements into four dimensions: quantity of relationships, quality of relationships, structure of networks, and ability to mobilize relationships. The report includes several questions from program assessment surveys to measure these dimensions, including the number of close relationships maintained in everyday life by type (family, work, faith-based) and how well a person is connected to

their professional contacts. In *Defining and Measuring Social Capital for Young People*, Scales, Boat, and Pekel (2020) describe social capital as "the resources that arise from a web of relationships which people can access and mobilize to help them improve their lives and achieve their goals, which inevitably shift over time" (p. 3). Having social capital can mean increased access to economic and other opportunities through relationships with professional adults or more affluent peers, but the positive impact might be limited to young people whose networks have connections to more resources.

Social media has changed the way that young people relate to and communicate with people in their lives, especially their peers. According to a survey of 13- to 17-year-olds by the Pew Research Center, 67 percent of respondents use TikTok, 62 percent use Instagram, and 59 percent use Snapchat (Vogels, Gelles-Watnick, and Massarat 2022). Through these platforms, young people both engage with people in their lives and with wider trends, brands, and figures. Ideally, they can forge new, continued, and deeper connections with the people they interact with regularly, but also connect with those they cannot see in their lives regularly. A report from the US Surgeon General's office notes that "the buffering effects [of social media] against stress that online social support from peers may provide can be especially important for youth who are often marginalized, including racial, ethnic, and sexual and gender minorities" (US Surgeon General 2023, p 6). However, social media also offers a platform for bullying and potential for interacting with negative people and content. According to the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 15.9 percent of high school students had been bullied electronically in the past 12 months, a statistic that has remained level for the past 10 years (Clayton et al. 2023).

Emergent Concepts and Measures

Some scholars argue for a framework that looks at relationships more holistically, not assessing each in isolation. Varga and Zaff (2017) write about how research on relationships focuses more on "relationship quality and supports within dyads or general structures of relationships and social capital across social networks," which has not fully captured "how relationships operate in a relational developmental system" (p. 1). They contend that young people are embedded within "webs" of relationships with people whom they know from school and family or environments in which they spend time and actively participate. They reference how young people are embedded within a "multilayered ecology" in which the "youth is an active agent continually influencing and being influenced by relationships with people, institutions, and the broader environment" (Varga and Zaff 2017, p. 2). The authors argue social and relational well-being is not just about how young people themselves connect with each part of their webs of support, but also how each part connects with and reinforces the others for positive youth development. For example, young people who have better relationships with their parents might have an easier time bonding with their teachers. They discuss how understanding the

webs in which young people are embedded can mean supporting them better. As an example, they point to after-school program staff using the relationships in students' lives to give the students support and help the students navigate conflicts (Varga and Zaff 2017).

Similarly, one of our interviewees stressed the need to look at relationships holistically and focus on whether a young person has someone to lean on for support, no matter what the category. She explained the importance of young people defining the relationships that are important to them, no matter how long these relationships have existed or what group they might fit in. She encouraged asking questions, such as who they ask for advice and who they spend time with. Other measures could include asking young people generally about the relationships in their lives, if they believe there is someone who knows them well, or if there is someone they can talk to if they are upset.

Conceptions of healthy relationships and the types of accessible relationships can vary by cultural context. Instead of viewing all relationships through the same lens of what might be considered normal or expected, different cultures vary, for example, in their understandings of how parents should treat their children or the obligations one has to extended family. Varga and Zaff (2017) discuss how many Latine cultures place an emphasis on family connectedness that affects how people in these cultures may judge whether relationships are healthy; those young people might have stronger or more of these types of connections.

Lastly, as mentioned in the mental and behavioral health domain section, having a trauma-informed lens could affect the interpretation of well-being outcomes in this domain. For example, one of our interviewees discussed how certain groups of young people, like those with a history of involvement with the child protection system, might have experiences that influence their ability to trust others and form relationships. Capturing these factors would provide important context to other measures of well-being in this domain.

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

The social networks and relationships domain reflects two of the shortcomings described above in cross-cutting themes. First, young people themselves should help determine the important concepts and measures about their social interactions and relationships. The youth field relies on surveys designed by experts who may not have direct interaction with young people. Often, survey questions are based on past research that is embedded with assumptions about relationships, like the importance of and need for a parental relationship, which may not hold true for all young people. A second weakness is that many surveys on this topic are based in schools. Although school-based surveys offer valuable information on a subset of young people, they exclude those not attending K–12 schools as

well as young adults, who might have different experiences and different points of view and who live in different conditions.

According to the Search Institute report on social capital (Scales, Boat, and Pekel 2020), although the literature mentions many ways to measure social capital, no agreed-upon consensus exists for how to measure it. The authors write how the most common categories are family social capital, community social capital, and peer social capital, but most measures do not capture information about relationships and resources.

As discussed in the traditional concepts and measures section, young people are increasingly using social media, and while we have data on their usage, Ito, Odgers, and Schueller (2020) discuss how we need changes in how we "measure, conceptualize, and approach the questions of whether, for whom, and how social media engagement is influencing young people's well-being" (p. 7). Instead of looking at causal relationships between social media and mental health, they suggest that we need to gain "more precise and actionable knowledge" on "what *specific* forms of social media engagement amplify or mitigate mental health risks for *different* adolescents" (p. 8).

Lastly, another current shortcoming is the negative way that the youth field conceptualizes risk in sexual behaviors and relationships for young people, often connecting them with sexually transmitted infections or unintended pregnancies. The discussion also emphasizes the benefits of delaying sex for young people, such as better academic achievement and improved self-esteem and mental health (HHS 2020). Although negative consequences from unconsidered sexual activity are possible, the field needs to move toward rethinking universal risk in sexual relationships. In a review of the literature, Vasilenko, Lefkowitz, and Welsh (2014) write how sexual behavior in adolescence is not associated with all negative effects, as is often discussed, and how sex in later adolescence might have positive outcomes. Despite that, they also discuss how sexual activity differs for each person depending on "personal, relational, and situational factors" (p. 14). One of our interviewees agreed, noting that sexual relationships can be important for a young person's growth and development. Additionally, our interviewee discussed how putting sexual behaviors in the framework of risk takes away from the concept that we are capable of learning from experiences and that they can help build resilience in the future.

Community and Belonging

The community and belonging domain of well-being is the connection of young people to a broader group outside themselves, whether that is defined by a geographic place, school, faith, activity, or

identity. Although the individual relationships described in the previous section can contribute to a sense of community, this domain is more about a connection to a collective group.

Key Takeaways

1. Traditionally, this domain has related to young people being connected to a community that values them and the importance of community spaces inclusive of all types of people.
2. Although emerging work explores the significance of virtual communities for young people, this area needs greater work on measurement.
3. Ideas related to the presence of and participation in arts and culture should be included in the domain of community and belonging.
4. Lastly, young people should define what community means to them. There should also be greater exploration of the factors that influence their conception of community.

Experiencing a community has vital positive impacts for young people. Belonging is a foundational support for young people and can help them develop self-confidence and a sense of who they are.[41] Young people should feel that they belong in and are valued by their community, and youth-serving spaces and programs should include many types of identities.

Traditional Concepts and Measures

The traditional way to conceive of community well-being is about how a group values a young person and the benefits that a young person receives from being connected to a community. No universally accepted definition of what it means to belong or be connected to a community exists, but most traditional ideas connect to a physical place, whether a neighborhood, a school, or a place of worship. In unpublished work commissioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Urban Institute authors conceived of youth connectedness to community as "the extent to which adolescents or young adults perceive that they belong in their community and that they and other youth are cared for, trusted, and respected by adults and peers in their community" (Anoll, Warren, and Pettit 2020, p. 1). Some of the measures they cite are participation in organized activities or getting together with people in their neighborhood to do something positive for their community. Proxy measures may include neighborhood resources, such as the percentage of people who have a recreation center or library in their neighborhood.

The Search Institute's 40 developmental assets for young people ages 12 to 18 include components of community, by which they mean neighborhood or a wider group that a young person could be a part

of (Search Institute 2006). The components include having caring neighbors, having a community that values the young person, that the young person is given a useful role in the community, that the young person serves in the community one hour or more per week, and the neighborhood taking responsibility for monitoring the young person's behavior. In *Youth Civic Engagement and Health, Wellbeing, and Safety*, Ballard (2019) writes about how more engaged communities with greater social capital positively impact the health and safety of young people.

Finally, beyond just measuring the activities indicating young people's belonging and connection to community, we must consider and measure how youth-serving programs promote or hinder belonging for all young people by creating spaces that are accepting of racial, sexual, gender, and other types of diversities. A report by the government of Canada discusses how social inclusion is just the first part of this effort, and instead people and organizations must actively create spaces where young people feel a sense of belonging. They cite the three pillars of belonging as equity, attachment, and children and young people feeling valued, heard, and included. They discuss how belonging is less about looking at surface interactions and more about structural and systemic barriers that can prevent their engagement in various youth-serving programs (CYPT 2021).

Emergent Concepts and Measures

Emerging ideas around connections to community relate to communities of identity, which may not have a geographic element; the rising significance of virtual communities; and the personal and cultural definitions of community. Although the rising use of social media among young people was mentioned in the traditional concepts and measures section of the social networks and relationships domain, the more emergent concept is the communities that young people form online (versus using social media to connect with people already present in other areas of their lives). Virtual communities have become increasingly important for young people and increasingly central in some young people's lives (Ito et al. 2020). The social support that can come with being online can reduce young people's feelings of isolation and anxiety (Best, Manktelow, and Taylor 2014; McInroy 2020). This social support has been shown to be especially important for young people with marginalized identities. According to Ito and colleagues, marginalized young people especially can benefit from the online social support from different online affinity networks, specifically citing fandom,[42] gaming, and creative communities. "(Ito et al. 2018, 2019). These online communities allow marginalized young people to "benefit from unique friendships and forms of social support"(Ito et al. 2018, 2019).

Another emergent concept is the role and importance of arts and culture in a community. For young people, art is often discussed in a transactional way—that is, in the context of how it helps with

academic outcomes, is therapeutic, and helps them find purpose. But the art and culture of a community, according to Maria Rosario-Jackson (2008), "embodies its essence and is crucial to its well-being" (p. 62). Through art, "communities explore their identities and histories, and art provides important cultural assets to a community (Rosario-Jackson 2008). All three groups (Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latine) of young researchers in the Fresh Tracks indicators project named cultural connections and practices as an aspect of well-being (Aspen Institute 2023). Additionally, art and culture can act as a mechanism for articulating the stories of community members. Rosario-Jackson discusses how these crucial parts of community happen in spaces normally associated with arts but also those that are not, such as parks, churches, and community centers. Community spaces such as parks and other public spaces can be a way to embed history and heritage into community members' everyday lives (Hodgson and Beavers 2011). Although arts and culture are essential to communities, planners and policymakers have not acknowledged the arts as a vital part of a community (Rosario-Jackson 2008).

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

An important step to expand understanding of community is for young people to define what their community is and its importance. This definition would include developing participant-driven ways of measuring what influences people's conception of their community. Additionally, people's race, ethnicity, country of origin, and migration status have large impacts on their understandings of community. For instance, one of our interviewees discussed how community can mean different things in different cultural contexts, specifically in communal versus individualistic societies. Therefore, there is a need to better recognize these influences in well-being conceptualization and measurement (Stewart and Townley 2020). Finally, and conceptually related to the overlapping webs of relationships discussed in the social networks and relationships domain, one person might belong to multiple communities that interact to affect the outcomes for well-being, and measurement should be more nuanced to reflect this.

Sense of Purpose

Sense of purpose can be thought of as a long-term intention to achieve goals that are important to oneself and to the broader world (Damon, Menon, and Bronk 2003). It relates closely to the domains of social networks and relationships and community and belonging.[43] We found the divisions between traditional and emergent concepts around sense of purpose less clearly defined than in the other domains, so we do not draw that distinction in this section.

Key Takeaways

1. Sense of purpose is related to three larger processes and concepts: identity development, spiritual development and engagement, and civic engagement.
2. Concepts around a young person's sense of purpose should reflect that it can be cultivated in a multitude of ways, without normative judgments on the better or worse paths.

Sense of purpose is associated with experiencing better physical and mental health (Hill and Turiano 2014). Despite its importance, a minority of young people feel that they possess a sense of purpose (Damon 2008).

Concepts and Measurement Approaches

Sense of purpose is a "forward-looking directionality, an intention to do something in the world."[44] Common sources of purpose include family, career, the desire to be a good person, the desire to make a difference, and faith. According to Cook-Deegan,[45] a sense of purpose has four defining characteristics: dedicated commitment, personal meaningfulness, goal directedness, and a vision bigger than oneself. It is personal but also has an external component (Damon, Menon, and Bronk 2003). The Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare's *Well-Being Indicator Tool for Youth* (2015) characterizes sense of purpose as "connection to something larger than themselves" (p. 3). They include things such as spirituality, future orientation, and religion. Young people find purpose through life experiences, and the process can be facilitated or hindered by their circumstances in family, school, or community.

Synthesizing information from both the literature and our interviews of youth experts and foundation staff, sense of purpose can be intertwined with three interrelated processes and concepts: identity development, spiritual development and engagement, and civic engagement. Identity development begins during adolescence and continues throughout the life course. Identity is how people define themselves and includes self-understanding, goals, values, and reflection on larger identities they are inherently a part of, like a specific racial or ethnic group (Schwartz, Zamboanga, and Weisskirch 2008). Identity achievement occurs when a person has explored different options and made commitments toward an identity (Marcia 1966). Success or achievement in a task in a stage lays the groundwork for success in later stages.

Identity development and sense of purpose work in tandem with each other—although some scholars might argue that purpose fits as a concept under identity development (Bronk 2012). Finding a purpose can help young people weather identity crises by offering a way to structure their time and efforts. Further, developing identity can help one develop new skills and assets, which can help facilitate a youth

developing purpose (Bronk 2012). A few common scales related to different accepted stages of identity development measure where a young person is along the trajectory of identity development. One is the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale, a 25-item instrument to assess where young people are along five aspects of identity development: exploration in breadth, commitment making, ruminative exploration, exploration in depth, and identification with commitments (Mastrotheodoros and Motti-Stefanidi 2017). Another is the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale, which measures where young people are along three identity dimensions: in-depth exploration, commitment and reconsideration of commitment. According to Kłym and Cieciuch, existing models focus more on adolescence and early adulthood than on the time between childhood and adolescence, which they believe is an important time for identity formation. They thus developed the Early Identity Exploration Scale. To administer this scale, they present descriptions of a person and then ask the young person to reflect on how he relates or does not relate to the concept the description shows (Kłym and Cieciuch 2015).

Benson, Roehlkepartain, and Rude (2003) describe spiritual development and engagement, another process related to developing a sense of purpose, as the "process of growing the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, in which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred…it propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose and contribution" (pp. 205–206). This process can take the form of formal religious practice, but scholars cite its multidimensional reach, including relationships, systems of thoughts or beliefs, beliefs in the sacred, and existential questions. Overall, spiritual development is the "transcendence of self toward 'something greater'" (p. 208). This process can be seeking a tradition, community, or line of thought, and the authors describe how it can be developed or curtailed within the context of family, peers, community, or religious tradition. A sense of purpose is embedded within this process of spiritual development—in the trend toward "something greater," people seek meaning and purpose (Benson, Roehlkepartain, and Rude 2003). MacDonald (2000) developed a measurement for people ages 17 to 52 of a set of five constructs of spiritual development: cognitive orientation, experiential-phenomenological dimension, existential well-being, paranormal beliefs, and religiousness.

Historically, measures and research on youth spirituality and well-being assumed or mostly focused on religiosity (Scales et al. 2014), although in a global sample of young people, the majority pursued spirituality without a deep engagement in religious practices (Benson, Roehlkepartain, and Scales 2012). One scale developed to measure youth spirituality is the Youth Spirituality Scale, which consists of 19 items that ask about young people's beliefs and behaviors consistent with past research on youth spirituality (Sifers 2012).

The third process that can contribute to developing a sense of purpose is civic engagement. Like opportunities in the community and belonging domain, opportunities for civic engagement allow young

people both to contribute to society and benefit individually. Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of one's community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes."[46] Participating in these processes may counter a youth's feelings of exclusion from societal decisionmaking processes. Through engaging civically, young people can feel a greater connection to their communities and feel like they are working toward something greater, which can help them develop their sense of purpose.

Contribution is an important overarching idea in all three domain concepts—identity development, spiritual development, and civic development.[47] As young people enter different stages of development, their ability to contribute to their families, schools, peers, and communities increases and helps them develop a sense of purpose. The social and cultural contexts in which young people live also play a role in encouraging contribution. For example, some cultures emphasize the importance of young people contributing to their family.

Researchers have created different measurement tools to reflect the extent to which a youth has achieved a sense of purpose. Before the creation of more recent scales, measures of purpose only addressed concepts related to self (personal meaningfulness and goals) and not concepts beyond oneself, and they focused more on adults than on adolescents (Bronk, Riches, and Mangan 2018; Damon, Menon, and Bronk 2003). As an improvement, the Claremont Purpose Scale measures sense of purpose among adolescents, focusing on three distinct factors: goal directedness, personal meaning, and beyond-the-self orientation (Bronk, Riches, and Mangan 2018). The authors drew on previous measures, such as a widely administered purpose scale that measured 20 items. They also added measures of life satisfaction, depression, openness, wisdom, and empathetic concern. Another measurement tool, the Revised Sense of Purpose Scale, was validated for young people ages 18 to 25. It consists of three subscales: awareness of purpose (extent to which one is clear and confident on one's meaning in life), awakening to purpose (which assesses recent changes around clarity of purpose in one's life), and altruistic purpose (desire to make a difference in the world) (Sharma and Yukhymenko-Lescroart 2019).

Measurement Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

Much of the literature on young people's sense of purpose focuses on distinct pathways where they might be most likely to find it. Many conceptions have implicit judgment on the places young people find their sense of purpose. Experts we spoke to noted that the youth field should move away from this approach and toward conceptualization of the multitude of ways that developing one's sense of purpose might take shape (e.g., through relationships with others or activities one finds meaningful). This expanded

understanding should include developing additional measures to examine how this process might differ depending on young people's racial or ethnic background or other personal characteristics or experiences, especially on identity formation. Box 6 discusses the assessment tools developed by Hello Insight, which incorporate a theory of change focused on positive youth development.[48]

BOX 6

Hello Insight: Embedding a Sense of Purpose in Program Evaluation

Hello Insight offers a set of survey tools to help youth-serving practitioners easily capture a more holistic set of measures around youth well-being. They have a theory of change framed around positive youth development. In addition to other aspects of social and emotional learning, their assessment tools include questions about youth contributions, defined as "a young person's desire to engage with and contribute to family, community, and society."[a] They also have questions to capture positive identity—that is, "a young person's internal sense of who they are and confidence to explore the multiple facets of their identities." They believe young people themselves provide the most reliable information about how different programs can support them and encourage youth-serving practitioners to engage with young people around cultivating their sense of purpose.

[a] "Hello Insight: Social and Emotional Learning," accessed August 14, 2023, https://helloinsight.org/what-we-measure/social-emotional-learning.

Recommended Future Directions

We are excited about the future of measuring youth well-being and believe there are many ways the work that has already been done can be built upon. Here is a recap of the directions we recommended in the above domains:

Physical Health

- To more fully capture a youth's physical health, people monitoring youth well-being need to supplement medically defined measures with the conditions that hinder or facilitate health, such as access to healthy food and safe places to exercise. More expansive measures also do not focus on weight or BMI as a primary measure of health and instead view health as more multifaceted.
- In addition, researchers, practitioners, and others in the youth field should consider young people's perceptions about their own body and its capabilities alongside the medical measures.

Mental and Behavioral Health

- People involved in policy, practice, and research should continue to increase their focus on developing youth-defined conceptions and measures on mental and behavioral health that reflect different cultural perspectives to complement universal measures. They also should include more context-specific measures of mental health.
- The youth field should also devote more attention to improving understanding of factors leading to young people's resilience and how it relates to their behavioral and mental health outcomes.

Education and Learning

- Measurements on youth educational well-being should include assessments of individual young people's strengths in areas that support learning and an increased focus on systems factors that drive disparate education outcomes.
- People defining and measuring youth educational well-being should increase their focus on developing measures of how well students are prepared to learn.
- The youth field should increase attention on measuring how well education systems help young people meet their individually defined goals and ideas of success, rather than relying on assumptions from white- and male-centric standards.

Economic Stability

- To supplement the usual measures like income and assets, measures about the economic well-being of young people should include concepts such as the extent to which they feel secure, ability to support quality of life, and ability to make choices over their day-to-day finances. We also support a more expansive notion of basic needs that benchmarks it to a higher standard of living.
- In assessing economic well-being more comprehensively, researchers and policymakers should also consider measures related to job quality and the possibility of advancement.
- Gaps we feel should be addressed include disaggregation of economic measures, the need for young people to weigh in on what makes them feel secure, and capturing concepts such as quality of life and ownership.

Physical and Psychological Safety

- Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners trying to conceptualize and measure safety should consider the social determinants of safety and how young people can have agency and control in situations to better understand the concept of risk in certain behaviors or in interacting with groups of people.
- Concepts of safety should include measures of threats and violence against subgroups as conditions that impact that group's feelings of safety.
- The youth field should contextualize measures that make people feel safe or unsafe, as the perception of safety could vary among different groups of people.

Social Networks and Relationships

- Researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and other people concerned with the social well-being of young people should take a holistic view on how all their relationships together support healthy development, instead of examining each in isolation.
- The youth field should recognize that the measures denoting *healthy* or *normal* in a relationship can vary by context, including cultural.
- Young people should determine the important concepts and measures to capture the value and influence of their relationships. A gap in this domain is that many surveys on this topic are based in schools, which miss many young people who are not in school. Another gap is how sexual behavior for young people is seen solely with the lens of risk instead of also considering what young people gain from sexual relationships.

Community and Belonging

- Researchers need more refined measures of the roles that social media and virtual spaces play in providing young people with a sense of community and belonging.
- An assessment of the community well-being of young people should include the concepts of connections to and practices of arts and culture.
- The youth field should expand participant-driven measures of community for young people and how different factors influence their conception of their community.

Sense of Purpose

- The youth field should move toward a conceptualization of the multitude of ways that young people develop a sense of purpose, rather than retain narrow ideas about acceptable paths.
- New protocols are needed to document how people and structures help young people develop a sense of purpose.

Conclusion

Our discussion of the domains of youth well-being occurs outside the context of *using* the indicators and so may appear detached from policy and practice. But we know decisions about measures have great impact as policymakers, funders, researchers, and youth-serving practitioners apply them to select areas of focus, design and invest in interventions, shape policy, and track the progress of young people. We present the domains and emergent concepts to lay out multiple aspects of young people's well-being and encourage youth-serving fields, researchers, and policymakers to think about connections across domains. We hope the ideas we include will encourage a greater focus on incorporating emergent concepts and the more expansive domains in measurement approaches. Because we did not limit ourselves to areas with easily obtainable national data, the concepts with missing or limited protocols or measures and the other identified gaps reveal the need for additional efforts and sharing across the youth field—including across disciplines that tend to work in silos—to improve our ability to measure youth well-being.

Our research underscores the importance of measurement improvements across domains. Above all, we would all benefit from more direct young people's involvement in defining the domain concepts, determining measures, and interpreting results, whether the data are drawn from national surveys, administrative data, or other primary data collection. Practitioners and advocates are leading the way and provide inspiration through an expanding body of research that includes youth participation.[49]

Other actions that we can take to improve measurement include the following:

- centering racial equity and highlighting the role of structural racism in influencing outcomes in the US while recognizing other intersectional identities like gender, sexual orientation, or disability
- advocating for filling gaps for existing data sources that provide limited disaggregation for race and ethnicity and other intersectional identities, balancing the desire for detailed information with privacy concerns
- looking beyond individual behavior toward community conditions and systems shaped by structural racism that influence well-being outcomes for young people

- focusing on young people's assets instead of deficits, including personal aspirations and health-promoting community resources

Researchers, practitioners, and funders can make progress by pursuing these improvements in their own work, but they also can champion these ideas. At the state level, they could advocate for more detailed data collection on race and responsible release of more geographically disaggregated data on young people and include youth issues and participation in broader philanthropic data improvement efforts (Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum 2021; Pettit and Pitingolo 2019; Rubin et al. 2018). At the federal level, champions and young people could contribute ideas to forums like the federal Equitable Data Working Group or comment on federal register notices on youth-related survey design and data collection. At all levels, we can encourage more traditional youth indicators projects to include measures of contextual factors and emergent domains, and in the cases in which measures are not available, acknowledge the importance of the concepts in the narrative framing of initiatives. In adopting a broader conception in academia, practice, and government of what it takes for young people to thrive, we can identify and begin to fill the gaps in current data sources. A stronger set of measures across all the domains will provide a more robust understanding to set priorities and measure progress toward our ultimate goal of fostering youth well-being.

Notes

[1] See Hauser, Brown, and Prosser, eds. (1997) and Brown, ed. (2008) for two collections of essays that explore specific domains of indicators on children and young people and assess the state of the field for measurement and practice. See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2011) for a set of comparable and comprehensive well-being indicators for advanced and emerging economies. Projects that feature youth-specific indicators include the annually updated "America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being," Forum on Child and Family Statistics, accessed December 18, 2021, https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/; and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS Count Data Center, accessed December 10, 2021, https://datacenter.aecf.org/.

[2] Trabian Shorters, "The Power of Perception: A Beginner's Guide to Asset-Framing: Defining People by Their Aspirations and Contributions Instead of Their Deficits," Change Agent, 2019, https://changeagent2019.comnetwork.org/2019/the-power-of-perception/.

[3] "How Are Mental Health and Physical Health Connected?," SonderMind, last reviewed September 19, 2022, https://www.sondermind.com/resources/the-connection-between-mental-and-physical-health-issues.

[4] "Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics," ChildStats, Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2022, https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/.

[5] "Healthcare Access in Rural Communities," Rural Health Information Hub, last reviewed November 21, 2022, https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/healthcare-access; "Access to Health Services," Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, accessed November 9, 2022, https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/access-health-services.

[6] "Accessibility and the Environment," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed October 15, 2009, https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/accessibility.htm.

[7] "Safe Drinking Water Act (SWDA)," US Environmental Protection Agency, last updated March 30, 2023, https://www.epa.gov/sdwa.

[8] Ruth Shim, "Mental Health Awareness Month: Understanding the Impact of Structural Racism on Mental Health," *Advancing Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* (blog), UC Davis Health, May 4, 2022, https://health.ucdavis.edu/blog/equity-diversity-inclusion/mental-health-awareness-month-understanding-the-impact-of-structural-racism-on-mental-health/2022/05; Christina Pazzanese, "How Unjust Police Killings Damage the Mental Health of Black Americans," *Harvard Gazette*, May 13, 2021, https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/05/how-unjust-police-killings-damage-the-mental-health-of-black-americans/.

[9] "Data and Statistics," Children's Mental Health, last reviewed March 8, 2023, https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html.

[10] "Data and Statistics," Children's Mental Health.

[11] "Data and Statistics," Children's Mental Health.

[12] "Fast Facts: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed April 6, 2022, https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/inter/fastfact.html.

[13] Vikki Wachino, Richard G. Frank, Keith Humphreys, and John O'Brien, "The Kids Are Not All Right: The Urgent Need to Expand Effective Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth," *USC-Brookings Schaeffer on Health Policy* (blog), December 22, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/usc-brookings-schaeffer-on-health-policy/2021/12/22/the-kids-are-not-all-right-the-urgent-need-to-expand-effective-behavioral-health-services-for-children-and-youth/.

[14] Tim Walker, "Survey: 70 Percent of Educators Say State Assessments Not Developmentally Appropriate," National Education Association, February 18, 2016, https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/survey-70-percent-educators-say-state-assessments-not.

[15] Vikki Wachino, Richard G. Frank, Keith Humphreys, and John O'Brien, "The Kids Are Not All Right: The Urgent Need to Expand Effective Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth," *USC-Brookings Schaeffer on Health Policy* (blog), December 22, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/usc-brookings-schaeffer-on-health-policy/2021/12/22/the-kids-are-not-all-right-the-urgent-need-to-expand-effective-behavioral-health-services-for-children-and-youth/.

[16] "HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2023," US Department of Health and Human Services, January 19, 2023, https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines.

[17] Liana E. Fox and Kalee Burns, "What's the Difference between the Supplemental and Official Poverty Measures?," *Random Samplings* (blog), US Census Bureau, September 9, 2021, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2021/09/difference-between-supplemental-and-official-poverty-measures.html.

[18] "About the Living Wage Calculator," Massachusetts Institute of Technology, accessed March 4, 2023, https://livingwage.mit.edu/pages/about.

[19] "Measurement," US Department of Agriculture, last reviewed October 17, 2022, https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/measurement/.

[20] "Measurement," US Department of Agriculture."

[21] Kristin Blagg, Macy Rainer, Erica Greenberg, and Emily Gutierrez, "Measuring Student Poverty: Dishing Up Alternatives to Free and Reduced-Price Lunch," Urban Institute, October 20, 2021, https://www.urban.org/data-tools/measuring-student-poverty-dishing-alternatives-free-and-reduced-price-lunch.

[22] Melanie Hanson, "Student Loan Debt Statistics," Education Data Initiative, last reviewed April 1, 2023, https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-statistics.

[23] "Young Student Debtors Lag Behind in Wealth Accumulation," Pew Research Center, May 13, 2014, https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2014/05/14/young-adults-student-debt-and-economic-well-being/st_2014-05-14_student-debt-0-01/.

[24] Melanie Hanson, "Average Time to Repay Student Loans," Education Data Initiative, last reviewed December 16, 2021, https://educationdata.org/average-time-to-repay-student-loans.

[25] "Economic Well-Being Indicators," KIDS COUNT Data Center, accessed December 10, 2021, https://datacenter.aecf.org/data#USA/1/16/17,18,19,20,22,21,2720/char/0.

[26] "Statement on Good Jobs," Aspen Institute, accessed August 14, 2023, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/good-jobs-champions-group/.

[27] "Clinton in Commanding Lead over Trump among Young Voters, Harvard Youth Poll Finds," PR Newswire, April 25, 2016, https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/clinton-in-commanding-lead-over-trump-among-young-voters-harvard-youth-poll-finds-300256313.html.

[28] "Rates of Child Abuse and Child Exposure to Domestic Violence," Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody, accessed September 15, 2022, https://www.rcdvcpc.org/rates-of-child-abuse-and-child-exposure-to-domestic-violence.html.

[29] "Understanding the Forces Fueling Gun Violence," March for Our Lives, accessed November 3, 2022, https://marchforourlives.com/forces/.

[30] We chose to keep the term *violent crime offenders* to describe this population, as that is what the source uses. Urban acknowledges this language can be harmful to people, and for this reason, we would prefer to use the term *person with a misdemeanor or felony conviction*. Despite this situation, Urban remains committed to avoiding dehumanizing language and using person-first language whenever possible as a matter of respect and accuracy.

[31] "Safety," National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, accessed March 3, 2023, https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/safety.

[32] "The Neuroception of Psychological Safety Scale," Traumatic Stress Research Consortium, accessed November 27, 2023, https://www.traumascience.org/neuroception-of-safety-scale.

[33] Thea Sebastian, Hanna Love, Sam Washington, Anthony Barr, Insha Rahman, Blake Paradis, Andre M. Perry, and Sakira Cook, "A New Community Safety Blueprint: How the Federal Government Can Address Violence and Harm through a Public Health Approach," Brookings Institution, September 21, 2022, https://www.brookings.edu/essay/a-new-community-safety-blueprint-how-the-federal-government-can-address-violence-and-harm-through-a-public-health-approach/.

[34] "Reimagining Public Safety," National League of Cities, accessed November 1, 2022, https://www.nlc.org/initiative/reimagining-public-safety/.

[35] Mary G. Findling, Robert J. Blendon, John Benson, and Howard Koh, "COVID-19 Has Driven Racism and Violence against Asian Americans: Perspectives from 12 National Polls," *Health Affairs*, April 12, 2022, https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20220411.655787/.

[36] We chose to use the term Latine throughout the report as it is a gender inclusive form of Latino/Latina but is more tailored to Spanish pronunciation.

[37] Holly Ober, "Experiencing Police Violence Worsens Mental Health in Distinct Ways: Unique Effects of Police Violence Create a Public Health Crisis for Communities Most Affected," *UC Riverside News*, October 13, 2020, https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2020/10/13/experiencing-police-violence-worsens-mental-health-distinct-ways.

[38] Rachel Yehuda, "How Parents' Trauma Leaves Biological Traces in Children: Adverse Experiences Can Change Future Generations through Epigenetic Pathways," *Scientific American*, July 1, 2022, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-parents-rsquo-trauma-leaves-biological-traces-in-children/.

[39] Linda Carroll, "Some School Security Measures Make Kids Feel Less Safe," *Reuters*, September 27, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-education-safety/some-school-security-measures-make-kids-feel-less-safe-idUSKCN1M72P5.

[40] "Healthy Relationships in Adolescence," Office of Population Affairs, accessed October 15, 2022, https://opa.hhs.gov/adolescent-health/healthy-relationships-adolescence.

[41] "Belonging, Inclusion, and Mental Health," *The Professional Youth Worker* (blog), accessed October 1, 2022, https://training.yipa.org/blog/belonging-inclusion-mental-health/.

[42] Oxford Languages defines fandom as "the fans of a particular person, team, fictional series, etc. regarded collectively as a community or subculture" (see Robin Parrish, "These New Words Added to Oxford Dictionaries Are Cray-Cray Adorbs," *Tech Times*, August 14, 2014, https://www.techtimes.com/articles/13047/20140814/new-words-added-oxford-dictionaries-cray-adorbs.htm).

[43] Jackie Swift, "The Benefits of Having a Sense of Purpose," Cornell University, accessed August 14, 2023, https://pryde.bctr.cornell.edu/news/2020/12/3/the-benefits-of-having-a-sense-of-purpose.

[44] Swift, "The Benefits of Having a Sense of Purpose."

[45] Patrick Cook-Deegan, “How to Help Teens Find Purpose,” *Greater Good Magazine*, April 16, 2015, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_help_teens_find_purpose.

[46] “Civic Engagement,” Youth.gov, accessed August 14, 2023, https://youth.gov/youth-topics/civic-engagement-and-volunteering.

[47] “Meaning and Purpose through Contribution,” UCLA Center for the Developing Adolescent, accessed August 14, 2023, https://developingadolescent.semel.ucla.edu/core-science-of-adolescence/meaning-purpose-through-contribution.

[48] Hello Insight provides “surveys based on the latest research in social and emotional learning” to a variety of youth-serving programs (https://helloinsight.org/how-it-works, accessed August 14, 2023).

[49] “Berkeley YPAR Hub,” accessed August 14, 2023, https://yparhub.berkeley.edu/home.

References

Agdal, Rita, Inger H. Midtgård, and Vigdis Meidell. 2019. "Can Asset-Based Community Development with Children and Youth Enhance the Level of Participation in Health Promotion Projects? A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 16 (19): 3778. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16193778.

Anderson, Brittney T. 2023. "Access to Quality, Culturally Appropriate Health Care." In *Black Health in the South*, edited by Steven S. Coughlin, Lovoria B. Williams, and Tabia Henry Akintobi, 31–49. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2021. *2021 Kids Count Data Book: 2021 State Trends in Child Well-Being*. Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

———. 2014. *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide: Embracing Racial Equity: 7 Steps to Advance and Embed Race Equity and Inclusion within Your Organization*. Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Anoll, Camille, Andrew Warren, and Kathryn Pettit. 2020. "Youth and Young Adult Indicators: Identifying Measures of Community Connectedness." Unpublished report.

Asian & Pacific Islander Health Forum. 2021. *Policy Recommendations: Health Equity Cannot Be Achieved Without Complete and Transparent Data Collection and the Disaggregation of Data.* San Francisco: Asian & Pacific Islander Health Forum.

Aspen Institute. 2023. *Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing: A Youth-Led Participatory Action Research Project to Define and Measure Wellbeing*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.

Aston. 2018. *Physical Health and Well-Being in Children and Youth: Review of the Literature.* Paris, France: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Avedissian, Tamar, and Nour Alayan. 2021. "Adolescent Well-Being: A Concept Analysis." *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing* 30 (2): 357–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12833.

Ballard, Parissa J. 2019. *Youth Civic Engagement and Health, Wellbeing, and Safety: A Review of Research*. Washington, DC: Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement.

Benner, Aprile D., Yijie Wang, Yishan Shen, Alaina E. Boyle, Richelle Polk, and Yen-Pi Cheng. 2018. "Racial/Ethnic Discrimination and Well-Being during Adolescence: A Meta-Analytic Review." *American Psychologist* 73 (7): 855–83. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000204.

Benson, Peter, Eugene Roehlkepartain, and Stacey Rude. 2003. "Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence: Toward a Field of Inquiry." *Applied Developmental Science* 7 (3): 205–13.

Benson, Peter L., Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, and Peter C. Scales. 2012. "Spirituality and Positive Youth Development." In *The Oxford Handbook of Psychology and Spirituality*, edited by Lisa Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Best, Paul, Roger Manktelow, and Brian Taylor. 2014. "Online Communication, Social Media and Adolescent Wellbeing: A Systematic Narrative Review." *Children and Youth Services Review* 41 (June): 27–36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.001.

Blankstein, Melissa, and Christine Wolff-Eisenberg. 2020. *Measuring the Whole Student: Landscape Review of Traditional and Holistic Approaches to Community College Student Success*. New York: Ithaka S+R.

———. 2021. *Moving the Needle on College Student Basic Needs: National Community College Provost Perspectives*. New York: Ithaka S+R.

Blunt, Elson Oshman, Johanna Catherine Maclean, Ioana Popovici, and Steven C. Marcus. 2020. "Public Insurance Expansions and Mental Health Care Availability." *Health Services Research* 55 (4): 615–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.13311.

Bronk, Kendall Cotton. 2012. "The Role of Purpose in Life in Healthy Identity Formation: A Grounded Model." *New Directions for Youth Development* 2011 (132): 31–44. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.426.

Bronk, Kendall Cotton, Brian R. Riches and Susan A. Mangan. 2018. "Claremont Purpose Scale: A Measure that Assesses the Three Dimensions of Purpose among Adolescents." *Research in Human Development* 15(2): 101–17.

Brown, Brett V., ed. 2008. *Key Indicators of Child and Youth Well-Being: Completing the Picture*. New York: Psychology Press.

Cantor, Pamela, Richard M. Lerner, Karen J. Pittman, Paul A. Chase, and Nora Gomperts. 2021. *Whole-Child Development, Learning, and Thriving: A Dynamic Systems Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Carnevale, Anthony P., Ban Cheah, and Emma Wenzinger. 2021. *The College Payoff More Education Doesn't Always Mean More Earnings*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Carnevale, Anthony P., Stephen J. Rose, and Ban Cheah. 2011. "The College Pay Off." Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. 2015. *Well-Being Indicator Tool for Youth (WIT-Y)*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Charania, Mahnaz, and Julia Freeland Fisher. 2020. *The Missing Metrics: Emerging Practices for Measuring Students' Relationships and Networks*. Boston: Christensen Institute.

Clayton, Heather B., Greta Kilmer, Sarah DeGue, Lianne F. Estefan, Vi D. Le, Nicolas A. Suarez, Bridget H. Lyons, and Jemekia E. Thornton. 2023. "Dating Violence, Sexual Violence, and Bullying Victimization among High School Students—Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2021." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* Supplement 72 (1): 66–74. https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7201a8.

Cloutier, Marie-Soleil, Emilie Beaulieu, Liraz Friedman, Alison K. Macpherson, Brent E. Hagel, Andrew W. Howard, Tony Churchill, Pamela Fuselli, Colin Macarthur, and Linda Rothman. 2021. "State-of-the-Art Review: Preventing Child and Youth Pedestrian Motor Vehicle Collisions: Critical Issues and Future Directions." *Injury Prevention* 27 (1): 77–84. https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2020-043829.

CRS (Congressional Research Service). 2022. *The Supplemental Poverty Measure: Its Core Concepts, Development, and Use*. Washington, DC: CRS.

Cummings, Janet R., Brady G. Case, Xu Ji, and Steven C. Marcus. 2016. "Availability of Youth Services in U.S. Mental Health Treatment Facilities." *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research* 43 (5): 717–27. https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs10488-015-0685-2.

CYPT (Children and Youth Planning Table). 2021. *Building a Case for Child and Youth Belonging: Insights from the Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region*. Waterloo, Canada: Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region, Canada.

Damon, William, Jenni Menon, and Kendall Bronk. 2003. "The Development of Purpose during Adolescence." *Applied Developmental Science* 7 (3): 119–28. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0703_2.

Damon, William. 2008. *The Path to Purpose: Helping Our Children Find Their Calling in Life*. New York: Free Press.

Duff, Cameron. 2003. The Importance of Culture and Context: Rethinking Risk and Risk Management in Young Drug Using Populations. *Health, Risk, & Society* 5 (3): 185–299.

Eisenberg, Daniel, Marilyn F. Downs, Ezra Golberstein, and Kara Zivin. 2009. "Stigma and Help Seeking for Mental Health among College Students." *Medical Care Research and Review* 66 (5): 522–41.

Engel, Danielle, Satvika Chalasani, Sabine Rakotomalala, Yulia Shenderovich, Rocio Aznar Daban, Stephen Blight, Afrooz Kaviani Johnson, Jose Roberto Luna, Avi Silverman, Richard Clarke, Lucie Cluver, and Omnia El Omrani. 2021. "Safety and a Supportive Environment: Essential Conditions for Adolescent Wellbeing." Geneva: Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

Goger, Annelies and Chenoah Sinclar. 2021. "Apprenticeships are an overlooked solution for creating more access to quality jobs." Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Groos, Maya, Maeve Wallace, Rachel Hardeman, and Katherine P. Theall. 2018. "Measuring Inequity: A Systematic Review of Methods Used to Quantify Structural Racism." *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice* 11 (2): 190–206.

Gutin, Iliya. 2018. "In BMI We Trust: Reframing the Body Mass Index as a Measure of Health." *Social Theory and Health* 16 (3): 256–71. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41285-017-0055-0.

———. 2021. "Body Mass Index Is Just a Number: Conflating Riskiness and Unhealthiness in Discourse on Body Size." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 43 (6): 1,437–53. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.13309.

Hamaji, Kate, and Kate Terenzi. 2021. *Arrested Learning: A Survey of Youth Experiences of Police and Security at School*. New York: Center for Popular Democracy.

Hauser, Robert M., Brett V. Brown, and William R. Prosser, eds. 1997. *Indicators of Children's Well-Being*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Helper, Susan, Ryan Noonan, Jessica R. Nicholson, and David Langdon. 2016. *The Benefits and Costs of Apprenticeship: A Business Perspective*. Washington, DC: US Department of Commerce.

HHS (US Department of Health and Human Services). 2020. *Factors Influencing Youth Sexual Activity: Conceptual Models for Sexual Risk Avoidance and Cessation*. Washington, DC: HHS.

Hicken, Margaret T., Nicole Kravitz-Wirtz, and James S. Jackson. 2018. "Racial Inequalities in Health: Framing Future Research." *Social Science & Medicine* 199:11–18. https://doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.socscimed.2017.12.027.

Hill, Patrick, and Nicholas Turiano. 2014. "Purpose in Life as a Predictor of Mortality Across Adulthood." *Psychological Science* 25(7): 1482–86. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614531799.

Hodgson, Kimberley, and Kelly Beavers. 2011. *How the Arts and Cultural Sector Strengthen Cultural Values and Preserve Heritage and History*. Chicago: American Planning Association.

Hong, Kai, Peter A. Savelyev, and Kegon T. K. Tan. 2020. "Understanding the Mechanisms Linking College Education with Longevity." *Journal of Human Capital* 14 (3): 371–400.

Hoque, Mohammad M., Elizabeth M. King, Claudio E. Montenegro, and Peter F. Orazem. 2019. "Revisiting the Relationship between Longevity and Lifetime Education: Global Evidence from 919 Surveys." *Journal of Population Economics* 32 (6): 551–89. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-018-0717-9.

Irwin, Véronique, Ke Wang, Jiashan Cui, and Alexandra Thompson. 2022. *Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2021*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Ito, Mizuko, Sonja Baumer, Matteo Bittanti, danah boyd, Rachel Cody, Becky Herr Stephenson, Heather A. Horst, Patricia G. Lange, Dilan Mahendran, Katynka Z. Martínez, C.J. Pascoe, Dan Perkel, Laura Robinson, Christo Sims, and Lisa Tripp. 2019. *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media*. 10th anniversary ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ito, Mizuko, Crystle Martin, Rachel Cody Pfister, Matthew H. Rafalow, Katie Salen, and Amanda Wortman. 2018. *Affinity Online: How Connection and Shared Interest Fuel Learning*. New York: NYU Press.

Ito, Mizuko, Candice Odgers, and Stephen Schueller. 2020. *Social Media and Youth Wellbeing: What We Know and Where We Could Go*. Irvine, CA: Connected Learning Alliance.

Jackson, Maria Rosario. 2008. "Art and Cultural Participation at the Heart of Community Life." In *Understanding the Arts and Creative Sector in the United States: Understanding the Arts and Creative Sector in the United States, Revised Edition* 92-104, edited by Joni Maya Cherbo, Ruth Ann Stewart, and Margaret Jane Wyszomirski. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Katz, Batia, William J. Congdon, and Jessica Shakesprere. 2022. *Measuring Job Quality: Current Measures, Gaps, and New Approaches*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Kaur, Balpreet, Delia Kimbrel, Gabriela Katz, Jennifer Blatz, Joe Munnich, Luvia Tapia, Marissa Villa, Matt Snyder, Michael Applegate, Rebecca Chavez-Houck, Ritika Kurup, Simon Tam, and Zach Pruitt. 2021. *A Guide to Racial and Ethnic Equity Systems Indicators*. Cincinnati: StriveTogether.

Kłym, Maria, and Jan Cieciuch. 2015. "The Early Identity Exploration Scale—A Measure of Initial Exploration in Breadth during Early Adolescence." *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (533).

Land, Kenneth, Vicki Lamb, and Hui Zheng. 2009. "How Are the Kids Doing? How Do We Know? Recent Trends in Child and Youth Well-Being in the United States and Some International Comparisons." *Social Indicators Research* 2011 (100): 463–77.

Leopold, Josh, Mary Cunningham, Lily Posey, and Tiffany Manuel. 2016. "Improving Measures of Housing Insecurity: A Path Forward." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Lieberman, Matthew D. 2013. *Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect*. New York: Crown Publishers and Penguin Random House.

Lippman, Laura, Kristin Moore, and Hugh McIntosh. 2009. "Positive Indicators of Child Well-Being: A Conceptual Framework, Measures, and Methodological Issues." *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 6:425–49.

Lustig, Deborah Freedman, and Kenzo K. Sung. 2013. "Dissolving Borders: Reframing Risk, Delinquent Peers, and Youth Violence." *Children and Youth Services Review* 35 (8): 1,197–205. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.02.013 .

Luthar, Suniya. 2006. "Resilience in Development: A Synthesis of Research across Five Decades." In *Developmental Psychopathology: Risk, Disorder, and Adaptation*, edited by Dante Cicchetti and Donald J. Cohen, 739–95. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

MacDonald, Douglas A. 2000. "Spirituality: Description, Measurement, and Relation to the Five Factor Model of Personality." *Journal of Personality* 68 (1): 153–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6494.t01-1-00094.

Marcia, James. 1966. "Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 3:551–58. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023281.

Mastrotheodoros, Stefanos, and Frosso Motti-Stefanidi. 2017. "Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS): A Test of Longitudinal Measurement Invariance in Greek Adolescents." *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 14 (5): 605–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2016.1241175.

Matlin, Samantha, Sherry Davis Molock, Jacob Kraemer Tebes. 2011. "Suicidality and Depression among African American Adolescents: The Role of Family and Peer Support and Community Connectedness." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 81 (1): 108–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01078.x.

McInroy, Lauren B. 2020. "Building Connections and Slaying Basilisks: Fostering Support, Resilience, and Positive Adjustment for Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Online Fandom Communities." *Information, Communication & Society* 23 (13): 1,874–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1623902.

McKernan, Signe-Mary, Caroline Ratcliffe, Breno Braga, and Emma Kalish. 2016. "Thriving Residents, Thriving Cities: Family Financial Security Matters for Cities." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Mesman, Esther, Annabel Vreeker, and Manon Hillegers. 2021. "Resilience and Mental Health in Children and Adolescents: An Update of the Recent Literature and Future Directions." *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* 34 (6): 586–92. https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000741.

Mirowsky, John, and Catherine E. Ross. 2015. "Education, Health, and the Default American Lifestyle." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 56 (3): 297–306. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146515594814. Nagaoka, Jenny, Camille A. Farrington, Stacy B. Ehrlich, Ryan D. Heath, David W. Johnson, Sarah Dickson, Ashley Cureton Turner, Ashley Mayo, and Kathleen Hayes. 2015. *Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework*. Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

National Academies (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine). 2013. *Improving the Health, Safety, and Well-Being of Young Adults: Workshop Summary*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

———. 2019. *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Noble, Toni, and Helen McGrath. "Wellbeing and Resilience in Young People and the Role of Positive Relationships." In *Positive Relationship, Evidence Based Practice Across the World*, edited by Sue Roffey, 17–34. Springer: New York.

Nurius, Paula S., Dana M. Prince, and Anita Rocha. "Cumulative Disadvantage and Youth Well-Being: A Multi-Domain Examination with Life Course Implications." *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* 32 (2015): 567–76.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2011. *How's Life?: Measuring Well-Being*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Osher, David, Karen Pittman, Jill Young, Hal Smith, Deborah Moroney, and Merita Irby. 2020. *Thriving, Robust Equity, and Transformative Learning and Development: A More Powerful Conceptualization of the Contributors to Youth Success*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research and Forum for Youth Investment.

Ozer, Emily J., Linda Sprague Martinez, Michelle Abraczinskas, Brian Villa, and Ndola Prata. 2022. "Toward Integration of Life Course Intervention and Youth Participatory Action Research." *Pediatrics* 149 (5).

Paradies, Yin, Jehonathan Ben, Nida Denson, Amanuel Elias, Naomi Priest, Alex Pieterse, Arpana Gupta, Margaret Kelaher, and Gilbert Gee. 2015. "Racism as a Determinant of Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *PLoS One* 10 (9): e0138511. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0138511.

Perreira Krista, and India Ornelas. 2011. "The Physical and Psychological Well-Being of Immigrant Children." *Future Child* 21 (1): 195–218. https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2011.0002.

Pettit, Kathryn L.S. 2024. "Catalog of National Data Sources on Young People." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Pettit, Kathryn L.S., and Rob Ptingolo. 2019. "Harnessing the Power of Open Data for Children and Families." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Planey, Arrianna M., Shardé McNeil Smith, Stephanie Moore, and Taylor D. Walker. 2019. "Barriers and Facilitators to Mental Health Help-Seeking among African American Youth and Their Families: A Systematic Review Study." *Children and Youth Services Review* 101 (June): 190–200. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.04.001.

Public Policy Polling. 2015. "National Survey Results." Raleigh, NC: Public Policy Polling.

Renshaw, Tyler L., Anna C. Long, and Clayton R. Cook. 2015. "Assessing Adolescents' Positive Psychological Functioning at School: Development and Validation of the Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire." *School Psychology Quarterly* 30 (4): 534–52. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000088.

Rosas, Gianni. 2017. "Assessing the Quality Dimensions of Youth Employment Offers." Paper presented at the Meeting of the Employment Committee Indicators Group of the International Labour Organization, Brussels, October 17.

Ross, David A., Rachael Hinton, Meheret Melles-Brewer, Danielle Engel, Willibald Zeck, Lucy Fagan, Joanna Herat, Gogontlejang Phaladi, David Imbago-Jácome, Pauline Anyona, Alicia Sanchez, Nazneen Damji, Fatiha Terki, Valentina Baltag, George Patton, Avi Silverman, Helga Fogstad, Anshu Banerjee, and Anshu Mohan. 2020. "Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 67 (4): 472–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.06.042.

Rubin, Victor, Danielle Ngo, Ángel Ross, Dalila Butler, and Nisha Balaram. 2018. *Counting a Diverse Nation: Disaggregating Data on Race and Ethnicity to Advance a Culture of Health*. Oakland, CA: PolicyLink.

Salam, Rehana, Ahmed Arshad, Jai K. Das, Marium N. Khan, Wajeeha Mahmood, Stephen B. Freedman, and Zulfiqar A. Bhutta. 2016. "Interventions to Prevent Unintentional Injuries among Adolescents: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 59 (4, supplement): S76–87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.07.024.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). 2019. "Risk and Protective Factors." Washington, DC: HHS.

Scales, Peter C., Amy K. Syvertsen, Peter L. Benson, Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, and Arturo Sesma. 2014. "Relation of Spiritual Development to Youth Health and Well-Being: Evidence from a Global Study." In *Handbook of Child Well-Being*, edited by Asher Ben-Arieh, Ferran Casas, Ivar Frones, and Jill Korbin, 1,101–35. Springer: Dordrecht.

Scales, Peter C., Ashley Boat, and Kent Pekel. 2020. *Defining and Measuring Social Capital for Young People: A Practical Review of the Literature on Resource-Full Relationships*. Minneapolis: Search Institute.

Schlack, Robert, Nele Peerenboom, Laura Neuperdt, Stephan Junker, and Ann-Kristin Beyer. 2021. "The Effects of Mental Health Problems in Childhood and Adolescence in Young Adults: Results of the KiGGS Cohort." *Journal of Health Monitoring* 6 (4): 3.

Schwartz, Seth, Byron Zamboanga, and Robert Weisskirch. 2008. "Broadening the Study of the Self: Integrating the Study of Personal Identity and Cultural Identity." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2 (2): 635–51.

Search Institute. 2006. "40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (Ages 12–18)." Minneapolis: Search Institute.

———. 2018. "Developmental Relationships Framework." Minneapolis: Search Institute.

———. 2020. "The Developmental Assets® Framework." Minneapolis: Search Institute.

Sharma, Gitima, and Mariya Yukhymenko-Lescroart. 2019. "Validation of the Revised Sense of Purpose Scale for Emerging Adults." *Journal of Character Education* 15 (2): 39–52.

Sifers, Sarah. 2012. "Measuring Spirituality in Children." *Journal of Psychology and Spirituality* 31 (3): 209–18.

Stafford-Brizard, Brooke K. 2016. *Building Blocks for Learning: A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development*. New York: Turnaround for Children.

Stewart, Katricia, and Greg Townley. 2020. "Community and Well-Being: A Qualitative Study of How Youth Experiencing Homelessness Define Community and Its Relations to Their Well-Being." *Journal of Community Psychology* 48 (3): 994–1,009. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22319.

Tamborini, Christopher R., ChangHwan Kim, and Arthur Sakamoto. 2015. "Education and Lifetime Earnings in the United States." *Demography* 52 (4): 1,383–407. https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs13524-015-0407-0.

Theodos, Brett, Corianne Payton Scally, and Leiha Edmonds. 2018. "The ABCs of Co-op Impact." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Tylka, Tracy L., Rachel A. Annunziato, Deb Burgard, Sigrún Daníelsdóttir, Ellen Shuman, Chad Davis, and Rachel M. Calogero. 2014. "The Weight-Inclusive versus Weight-Normative Approach to Health: Evaluating the Evidence for Prioritizing Well-Being over Weight Loss." *Journal of Obesity* 4 (40): 983495.

US Surgeon General. 2023. *Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory*. Washington, DC: HHS.

Varga, Shannon, and Jonathan Zaff. 2017. "Webs of Support: 'An Integrative Framework of Relationships, Social Networks, and Social Support for Positive Youth Development.'" *Adolescent Research Review* 3:1–11.

Vasilenko, Sara, Eva Lefkowitz, and Deborah Welsh. 2014. "Is Sexual Behavior Healthy for Adolescents? A Conceptual Framework for Research on Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Physical, Mental, and Social Health." *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 144:3–19.

Vogels, Emily A., Risa Gelles-Watnick, and Navid Massarat. 2022. *Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

Wright, Anna, Makeda Austin, Carolyn Booth, and Wendy Kliewer. 2017. "Systematic Review: Exposure to Community Violence and Physical Health Outcomes in Youth." *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* 42 (4): 364–78.

York, Travis T., Charles Gibson, and Susan Rankin. 2015. "Defining and Measuring Academic Success." *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation* 20 (1): 5.

About the Authors

Hannah Sumiko Daly is a research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute whose work focuses on various supports for young people and families, mainly using qualitative and community-engaged research methodology. She aims to contribute to work that works toward building abundant public systems that trust people and allow them to thrive. She has a BA in Public Health with a minor in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Amelia Coffey is a senior research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population, specializing in qualitative and community-engaged methods. Her work focuses on research and evaluation of policies and programs intended to support stability, mobility, and well-being for families and young people. She leads several projects focused on identifying the strengths, needs, and challenges of transition-age young people and engaging them in developing solutions. She is particularly interested in lifting up the experiences of people at the intersection of work and public assistance to identify how the public sector can ensure their basic needs are met. Coffey holds a master's degree in social policy research from the London School of Economics.

Kathryn L. S. Pettit is a principal research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where her research focuses on neighborhood change and how communities use data for more effective and equitable decisionmaking. Pettit is a recognized expert on several small-area local and national data sources and on the use of neighborhood data in research, policymaking, and program development. She has conducted research on many topics, including neighborhood redevelopment, federally assisted housing, and local housing markets and conditions.

Pettit directs the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, a network of more than 30 local organizations that supports local communities in their use of data to shape strategies and investments that ensure all neighborhoods are places where people can thrive. She frequently presents the model and accomplishments of the network and local partners. She has produced two books on the role of data in community change: *Strengthening Communities for Neighborhood Data* and *What Counts: Harnessing Data for America's Communities*.

Before assuming her current position, Pettit worked in Urban's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, where she analyzed Internal Revenue Service data on nonprofit organizations. Pettit earned her bachelor's degree in international affairs and humanities and her master's degree in public policy from Georgetown University.

Statement of Independence

The Urban Institute strives to meet the highest standards of integrity and quality in its research and analyses and in the evidence-based policy recommendations offered by its researchers and experts. We believe that operating consistent with the values of independence, rigor, and transparency is essential to maintaining those standards. As an organization, the Urban Institute does not take positions on issues, but it does empower and support its experts in sharing their own evidence-based views and policy recommendations that have been shaped by scholarship. Funders do not determine our research findings or the insights and recommendations of our experts. Urban scholars and experts are expected to be objective and follow the evidence wherever it may lead.

500 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20024

www.urban.org