



# Positive youth development and victimization as a developmental system: A longitudinal Irish national cohort study

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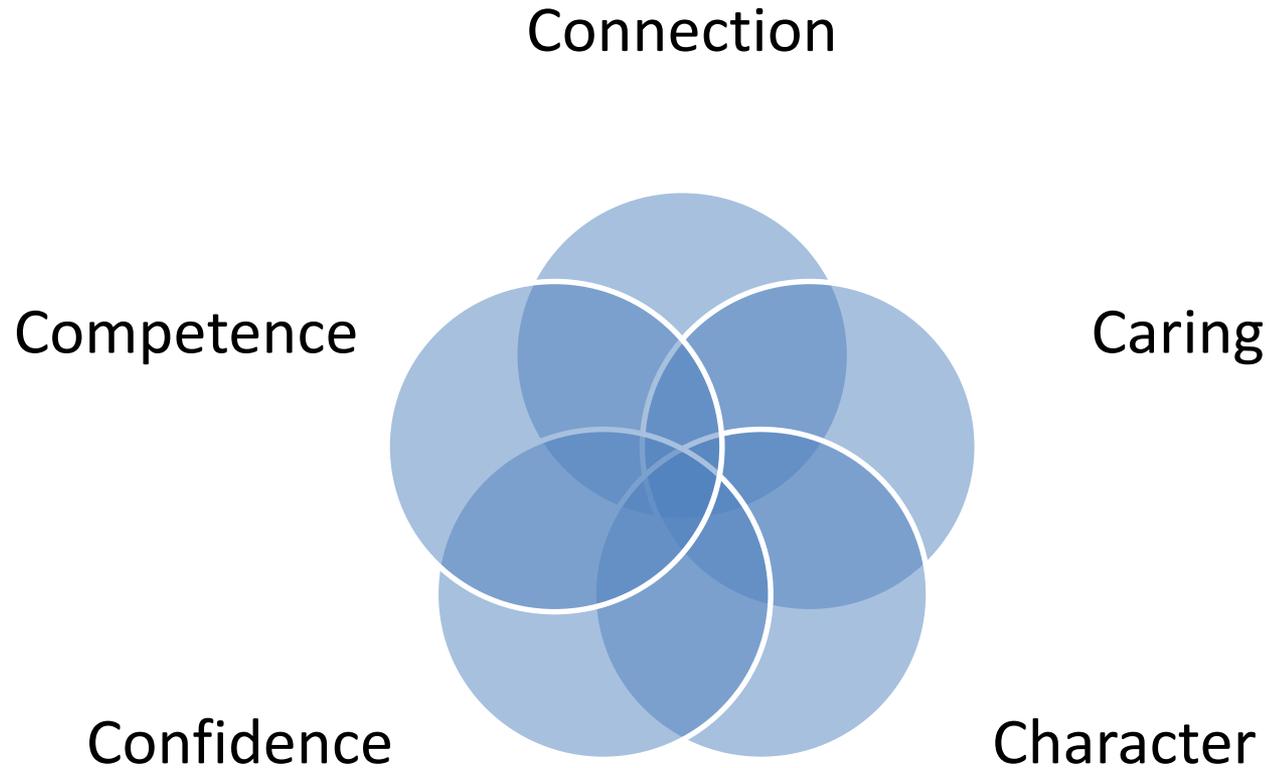
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# Bullying in adolescence

- Bullying is pervasive across nations and genders in early adolescence (Smith, López-Castro, Robinson & Görzig, 2019).
- Adolescents who are bullied report less positive self-perceptions (D'Urso & Pace, 2019), and higher levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation (e.g., Moore et al., 2017).



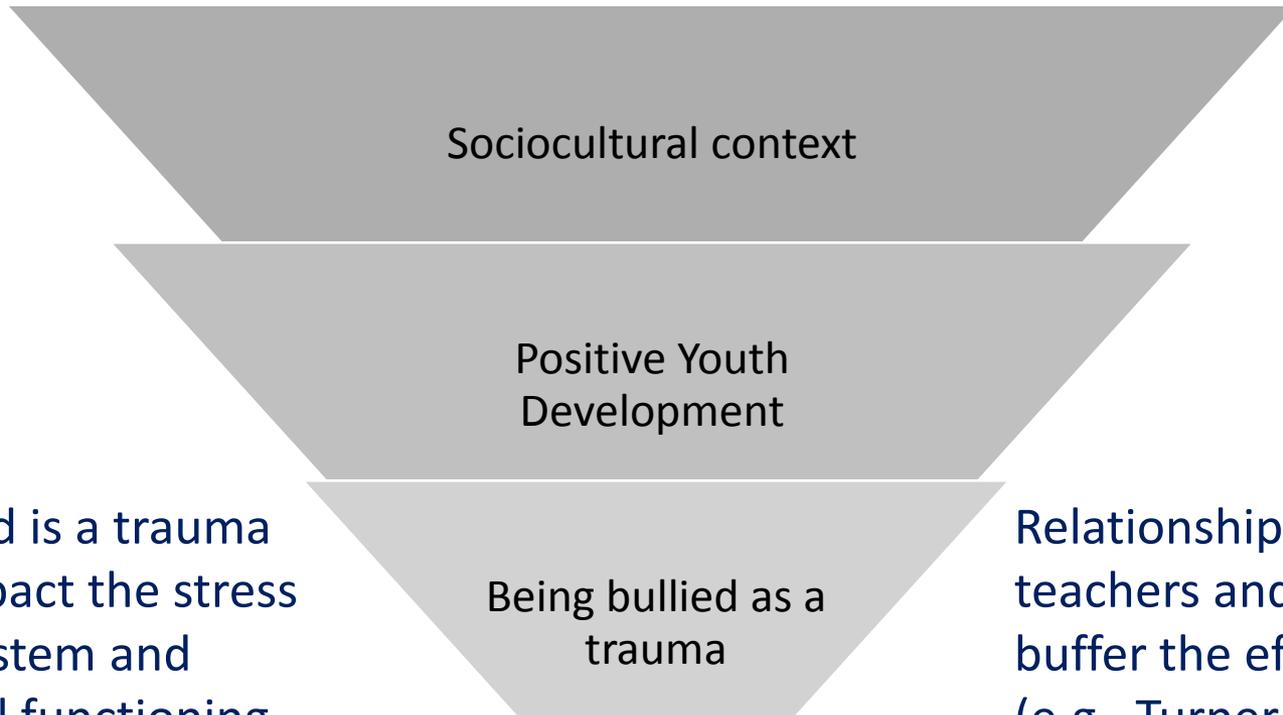
# Positive Youth Development



PYD is a relational developmental system (Lerner, 2017)

# Theoretical Framework

Young people's chances of being bullied emerge in sociocultural context. Important associations identified in prior research include social class, gender, family functioning and school experiences



Being bullied is a trauma that can impact the stress response system and psychosocial functioning (Van der Kolk et al., 1996)

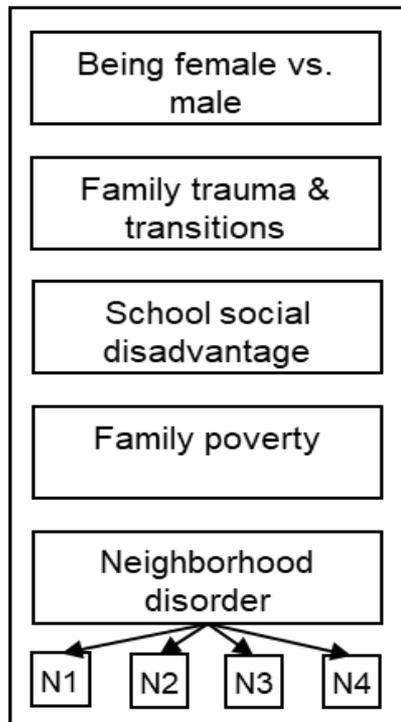
Relationships with parents, teachers and peers can buffer the effect of trauma (e.g., Turner et al., 2017)

# Secondary data analysis

How can we model being bullied, PYD and sociocultural context, as a developmental system, in the GUI?

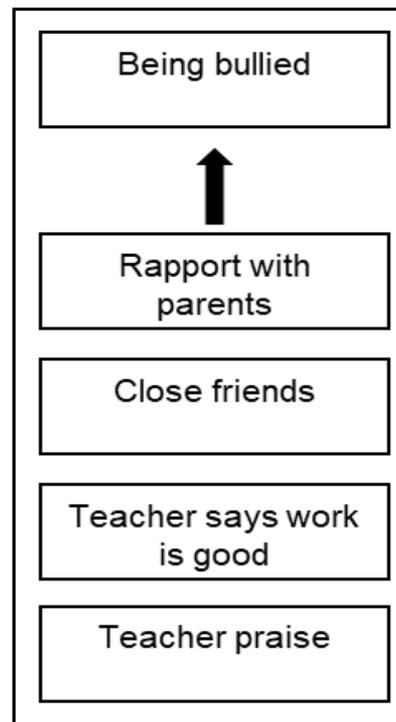
Childhood / Early adolescence

Sociocultural Factors



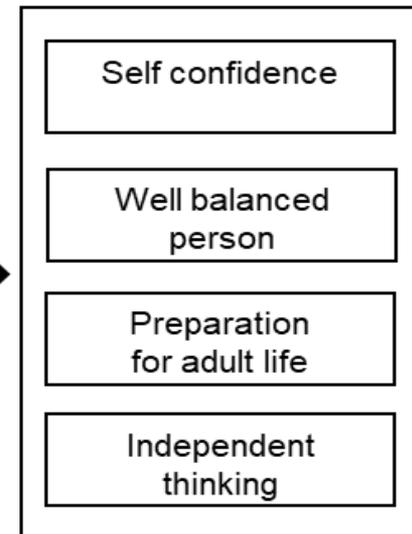
Early adolescence

Connection & Caring



Late adolescence

Competence, Confidence & Character



# Research Questions

1. How do young people's experiences of connection and caring predict being bullied in early adolescence?
2. How do young people's experiences of being bullied and connection and caring in early adolescence, predict their personal competence, confidence and character in late adolescence?
3. How do sociocultural factors impact young people's experiences of being bullied and connection and caring in early adolescence, and personal competence, confidence and character in late adolescence?

# Participants and procedure

- Participants were 3,509 males (49%) and 3,656 females (51%)- a total number of 7,165, interviewed at ages nine, thirteen, and seventeen in the ***Growing Up in Ireland*** study.
- The study only involves participants who gave data on the variable about being bullied at Wave 2 to improve the reliability of results.
- **Measure of being bullied.** Child cohort participants were asked at Wave 2 only “Have you been bullied in the last 3 months?” and responded using a dichotomous scale (yes/no).



# Sociocultural context measures at Waves 1 and 2

- **Child gender:** Wave 1: female (2) and male (1).
- **Family trauma and transition:** Sum of Wave 1 parent report binary items on separation/divorce of a parent, death of a parent, death of close family member, death of close friend, moving house, moving country, serious illness / injury, serious illness / injury of a family member, mental disorder in immediate family, conflict between parents, prison in prison, and foster / home residential care.
- **Family poverty.** Wave 1 parent report on medical card. The item was used as an ordinal scale: 1 = Not covered, 2 = Yes, doctor only card, and 3 = yes, full card; each corresponding to an increased level of poverty.
- **School social disadvantage.** Wave 2 school principal report on DEIS status. Participants responded using a dichotomous scale (yes/no).
- **Neighborhood disorder.** Wave 1 parent report of neighborhood conditions. “How common in your area: Rubbish & litter; homes & gardens in bad condition; vandalism; people being drunk/taking drugs” (1 = not frequent, 4 = very frequent).

# Connection and caring measures at Wave 2

- **Parental rapport.** Wave 2 child report on getting along well with their mother, father, and any stepparents. Dichotomous response scale (yes/no) was averaged across three dimensions to give a total score of parental support across divergent family structures.
- **Friendship closeness.** Wave 2 child report on “How many of these (people who you are friends with) would you describe as close friends?”. Exact number used.
- **Teacher acknowledgment.** Wave 2 child report on how often they were “told by a teacher that your work is good” (1 = never, 4 = very often).
- **Teacher praise.** Wave 2 child report on “A teacher praises you for answering a question” (1 = never, 4 = very often).
  - The teacher praise and acknowledgement items were not combined into a scale, because they measured weakly associated aspects of children’s social experience in classrooms (skill in classwork, versus social participation in learning).

# Competence, confidence and character measures at Wave 3

- **Self-confidence.** Wave 3 child report on whether the adolescent had increased in self-confidence since beginning secondary schooling. (1 = no; 2 = yes some; 3 = yes a lot).
- **Well balanced person.** Wave 3 child report on whether the adolescent thought they had developed into a well-balanced person. (1 = no; 2 = yes some; 3 = yes a lot).
- **Preparation for adult life.** Wave 3 child report on whether the adolescent felt prepared for adult life. (1 = no; 2 = yes some; 3 = yes a lot).
- **Independent thinking.** Wave 3 child report on whether secondary schooling had helped the adolescent think for themselves. (1 = no; 2 = yes some; 3 = yes a lot).

# Results: Predictors of being bullied

	b	SE	t	p
★ Neighborhood disorder	0.05	0.02	2.39	0.017
Female	-0.01	0.02	-0.64	0.522
Family trauma and transitions	0.02	0.02	0.87	0.384
★ Family poverty	0.05	0.02	2.43	0.015
School social disadvantage	-0.02	0.02	-1.14	0.255
Teacher says your work is good	0.02	0.02	0.91	0.363
Teacher praise	0.02	0.02	0.80	0.422
★ Close friendships	-0.10	0.02	-6.02	0.000
★ Rapport with parents	-0.06	0.02	-3.06	0.002

# Results: Predictors of connection and caring

	b	SE	t	p	SE	t	p	
	Close friendships				Rapport with parents			
Neighborhood disorder	★ -0.06	0.02	-3.00	0.003	★ -0.05	0.02	-2.35	0.019
Female	-0.02	0.02	-1.20	0.230	★ -0.07	0.02	-4.12	0.000
Family trauma and transitions	-0.02	0.02	-1.37	0.171	★ -0.06	0.02	-3.01	0.003
Family poverty	-0.03	0.02	-1.69	0.092	★ -0.09	0.02	-4.84	0.000
School social disadvantage	★ 0.05	0.02	2.48	0.013	-0.01	0.02	-0.32	0.752
	Teacher says work is good				Teacher praise			
Neighborhood disorder	-0.04	0.02	-1.87	0.061	-0.01	0.02	-0.59	0.555
Female	★ 0.10	0.02	5.76	0.000	★ 0.06	0.02	3.47	0.001
Family trauma and transitions	-0.01	0.02	-0.49	0.625	-0.02	0.02	-1.26	0.209
Family poverty	★ -0.05	0.02	-2.61	0.009	-0.03	0.02	-1.28	0.200
School social disadvantage	-0.01	0.02	-0.64	0.520	0.00	0.02	-0.08	0.939

# Results: Predictors of competence and confidence

	Self-confidence				Being prepared for adulthood			
	b	SE	t	p	b	SE	t	p
Neighbourhood disorder	★ -0.05	0.02	-2.24	0.025	-0.01	0.02	-0.28	0.779
Female	★ -0.04	0.02	-1.94	0.052	-0.02	0.02	-0.94	0.348
Family trauma and transitions	★ -0.08	0.02	-3.95	0.000	★ -0.09	0.02	-4.08	0.000
Family poverty	-0.03	0.02	-1.59	0.113	0.03	0.02	1.45	0.147
School social disadvantage	0.01	0.02	0.43	0.666	★ -0.04	0.02	-1.99	0.047
Teacher praise	★ 0.07	0.02	3.47	0.001	0.02	0.02	1.11	0.265
Teacher says your work is good	★ 0.06	0.02	2.89	0.004	★ 0.05	0.02	2.15	0.032
Close friendships	★ 0.06	0.02	3.08	0.002	0.03	0.02	1.69	0.091
Rapport with parents	★ 0.10	0.02	5.45	0.000	★ 0.12	0.02	5.90	0.000
Being bullied	-0.04	0.02	-1.69	0.090	-0.03	0.02	-1.31	0.191

# Results: Predictors of character

	Being a well-balanced person				Independent thinking			
	b	SE	t	p	b	SE	t	p
Neighbourhood disorder	-0.03	0.02	-1.40	0.162	-0.02	0.02	-0.71	0.475
Female	-0.03	0.02	-1.68	0.092	0.02	0.02	0.93	0.354
Family trauma and transitions	★ -0.05	0.02	-2.18	0.029	★ -0.07	0.02	-3.14	0.002
Family poverty	★ -0.06	0.02	-2.54	0.011	0.01	0.02	0.27	0.784
School social disadvantage	0.01	0.02	0.33	0.742	-0.01	0.02	-0.36	0.716
Teacher praise	0.04	0.02	1.78	0.075	-0.01	0.02	-0.30	0.762
Teacher says your work is good	★ 0.08	0.02	4.04	0.000	0.03	0.02	1.34	0.182
Close friendships	★ 0.04	0.02	2.12	0.034	0.01	0.02	0.78	0.433
Rapport with parents	★ 0.07	0.02	3.55	0.000	★ 0.09	0.02	4.72	0.000
Being bullied	★ -0.05	0.02	-2.50	0.012	-0.04	0.02	-1.84	0.066

# Summary of results

- **Being bullied in early adolescence** is most strongly predicted by friendships, relationships with parents (caring and connection) and neighbourhood disorder. School poverty and teacher praise/acknowledgement have no impact statistically.
- **Predictors of caring and connection in early adolescence** vary depending on relationship dimension. Trauma and disadvantage are important for relationships with parents, and gender is important for relationships with teachers.
  - There is a positive impact of low-income schooling on friendships!
- **Predictors of competence, confidence and character in late adolescence** also vary depending on dimension. Relationships with parents and family trauma are the most pervasive influences on these personal aspects of PYD. Being bullied in early adolescence has limited impact, suggesting recovery / adaptation.

# Conclusion

- The current study demonstrates the importance of studying positive youth development and being bullied as a developmental system occurring in sociocultural context.
- Being bullied is linked to broader relational functioning in early adolescence but has limited impact on personal aspects of PYD in late adolescence compared to the influence of families.
- This suggests that young people can thrive in adolescence after being bullied, if their home environments are positive.
- More research is needed on the protective roles of peers, parents and teachers for positive adaptation after being bullied.

