

# Youth support seeking from adults: the influence of additional non-parental support

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# Challenges of adolescence

- Adolescence- a time of different changes, new social roles and decisions about the future
- Focus on identity, education and vocation (Holland et al., 2007)
- Relationships enable youth to face changes and transitions more effectively (Cotterell, 2007)
  
- Youth seeks support in their social networks
- Important role of parents and peers
- *There are many questions friends can't answer because they lack the experience and skills, which youth may not want to ask or talk about with their parents (Beam et al., 2002)*

# Support of non-parental adults

- Support through relationships with *relatives, teachers, coaches, counsellors, family friends...* (Spencer, 2007; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Behrendt, 2005)
- Introducing them to adult perspectives, knowledge and skills, that may be different to those of their parents
- New route to access the adult world
  
- Normative experience (Beam et al., 2002), important regardless of the risk although studied mostly in at-risk youth
- Social support, social capital, resilience and attachment theory
- little understanding of socioeconomic, family or youths' characteristics that come into play in the context of these relationships

# Support of non-parental adults

- ‘My World Survey’ (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012)
  - Importance of **One Good Adult**
- Parents or non-parental adults?

## Questions:

1. How many 17- and 18- year old young people in an Irish national sample recognises adult support in the form of parental and other non-parental adult support?
2. Are there differences in socioeconomic characteristics, relationships, socio-emotional behaviour, coping strategies, self-esteem and identity between youth with different adult support profiles?

# Method

- Secondary analysis of *Growing Up in Ireland* data
- Third wave of the Child cohort study
- Data from the Main questionnaire of the primary caregiver and Young-person self-completed questionnaire
- 6216 young people age 17/18 (51.2% girls)
  
- **H9 'Is there an adult (or adults) in your life you can usually turn to for help and advice?'**
- **L5 'When I have difficulties or problems I can usually talk about them to: my mother/my father/another adult'**

# Measurements

- Socioeconomic characteristics (Household grid)
  - Gender
  - Household type (single-parent or two-parent household)
  - Primary caregiver's level of education
  - Employment status
  - Household income (equivalised)
  
- Relationships

## PARENTS

Scale	Subscales	Reliability <i>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></i>
<i>The Parental Monitoring and Youth disclosure scale</i>	MONITORING	0.76
	YOUTH DISCLOSURE	0.72
	CONTROL	0.83
<i>Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)</i>	COMMUNICATION	0.88
	TRUST	0.91
	ALIENATION	0.72

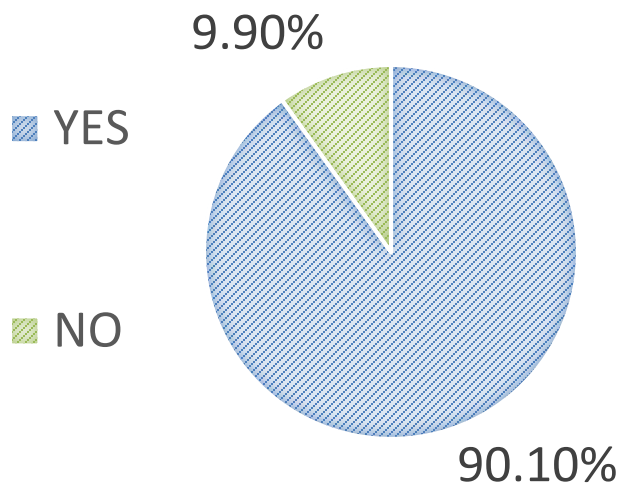
## PEERS

- Youths' characteristics

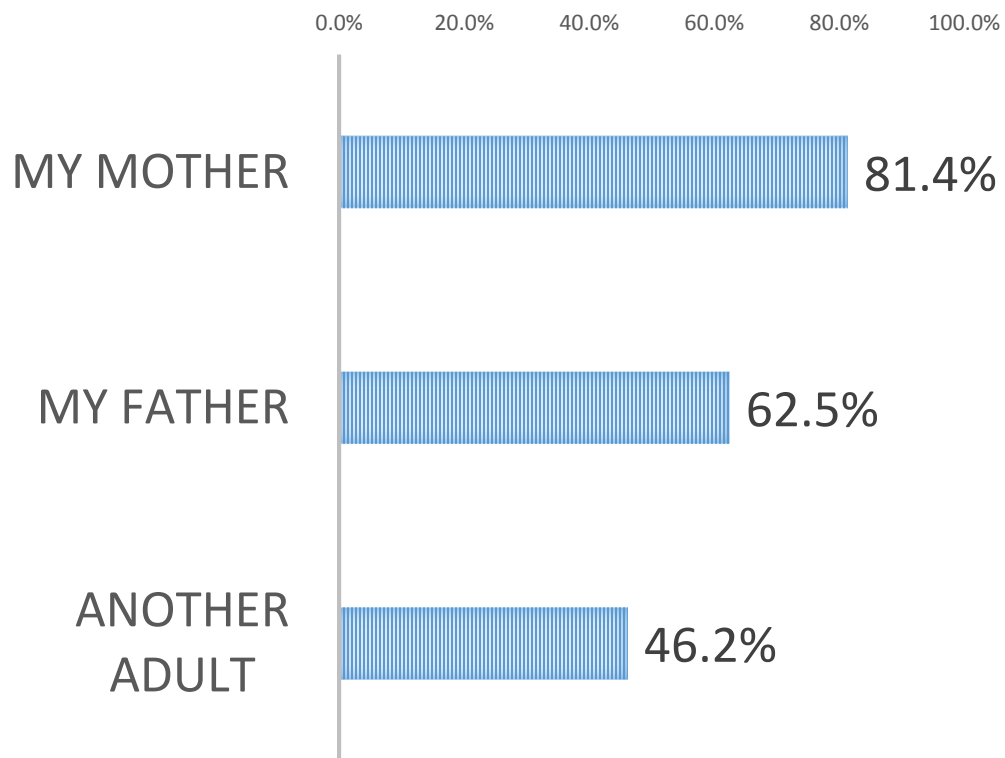
	Scale	Subscales	Reliability <i>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></i>
SOCIO-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR	<i>Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire</i>	TOTAL DIFFICULTIES	0.7
		PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR	0.7
COPING	<i>Coping strategies indicator</i>	PROBLEM SOLVING	0.83
		SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT	0.9
		AVOIDANCE COPING	0.83
SELF-ESTEEM	<i>Rosenberg self-esteem scale</i>	GLOBAL SELF-ESTEEM	0.73
IDENTITY RESOLUTION	<i>Adult Identity Resolution Scale</i>	TOTAL SCORE OF IDENTITY RESOLUTION	0.72

# ADULT SUPPORT

**DO YOU HAVE AN ADULT  
YOU CAN TURN TO FOR HELP  
AND ADVICE?**



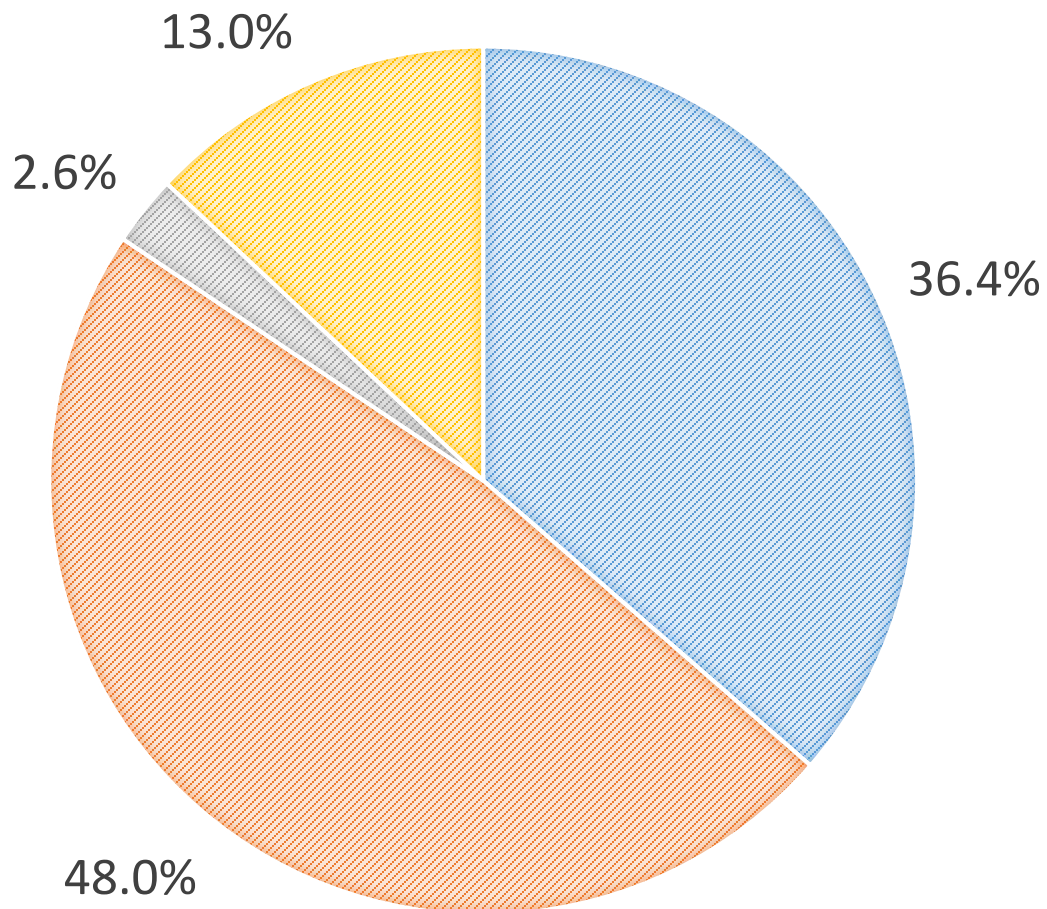
**WHEN I HAVE DIFFICULTIES I  
CAN TALK TO:**





# SUPPORT PROFILES, n=5533

- PARENT ONLY
- PARENT AND ANOTHER ADULT
- ANOTHER ADULT ONLY
- NO ADULT SUPPORT



# What are the differences between youth with parent support only and those with added non-parental adult support?

Young people with added non-parental support:

More frequently from single-parent households,  
lower level of parental education & income

Higher level of disclosure with parents & attachment to peers

Higher level of socioemotional difficulties & prosocial behaviour

Use better coping strategies

Higher level of self-esteem & identity resolution

# SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1. Chi square tests and Mann Whitney U test difference between groups of parental support only and added non-parental support in sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics

	Gender	Household type	Caregivers' education level	Caregivers' employment status	Household income
Parental support					
Added non-parental support	$\chi^2(1)=0.23,$ $p>0.05$	$\chi^2(1)=9.501,$ $p<0.01, \text{phi}=0.045$	$\chi^2(5)=64.358,$ $p>0.001,$ $\text{phi}=0.118$	$\chi^2(4)=6.625,$ $p>0.05$	$U=1967104.5,$ $z=-5.087,$ $p<0.001, r=0.08$

- Proportion of youth seeking support from a parent and another adult that come from single parent households is higher than expected (9% out of 15%)
- Youth whose primary caregiver had lower levels of education were more like to be in the group with additional non-parental support, while those with higher levels were more likely be in the group parent only
- Youth who seek support from parents only have higher family income than youth that seek parent and another adult support

# SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- Other adults are present for both young men and women, but maybe for different reasons or types of support
- Young people from single-parent households more inclined to search for the ‘second attachment figure’ (Zimmerman et al., 2005)
- Added non-parental support for categories with lower levels of education of the caregiver and lower household income



Table 2. Mann Whitney U test difference between groups of parental support only and added non-parental support in relationships with parents and peers

	Parental monitoring	Perceived control	Disclosure to parents	Peer attachment
Parental support				
Added non-parental support	U=2616358, z=-.402, p>0.05	U=2603125, z=-1.266, p>0.05	U=2434723.5, z=-3.604, p<0.001, r=0.05	U=2189380, z=-10.427, p<0.001, r=0.15

- There is no significant difference between the groups in the subscales of monitoring and control
- Youth seeking support from both parent and another adult show higher results on disclosure
- Youth with parent and other adult support have significantly higher results on peer attachment

# RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND PEERS

- Young people who have better relationships with parent(s) may feel more adept to approach other adults
- OR relationships with other adults helps them to understand the adult perspective without tension (Rhodes, 2005)
- With peers again more adept OR have the space to exercise social and communication skills (Zimmerman et al., 2005)

**BELIEVE**  
**NURTURE** **GIVE TIME**  
**ENCOURAGE**  
**SUPPORT** **STRENGTHEN**  
**EMPOWER** **LISTEN**

Table 3. Mann Whitney U test difference for socioemotional behaviour

	Socio-emotional difficulties	Prosocial behaviour
Parental support		
Added non-parental support	U=2401902, z=-5.551, p<0.001, r=0.05	U=2477891, z=-3.577, p<0.001, r=0.08

- Youth who seek support from parents and another adult have higher results on both difficulties and prosocial behaviour
- Interesting finding, in need of deeper analysis

# YOUTH'S CHARACTERISTICS

Table 4. Mann Whitney U test difference for coping strategies

	Problem solving	Support seeking	Avoidance
Parental support			
Added non-parental support	U=2440820.5, z=-4.728, p<0.001, r=0.07	U=2356865, z=-6.732, p<0.001, r=0.1	U=2261713, z=-8.736, p<0.001, r=0.13

- Youth from the group parent and another adult showed higher results for using problem solving and seeking support and lower results for avoidance
- In line with 'My World Survey' (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012)
- Relationships with caring non-parental adults can model different ways of active coping or they can share their own experience and strategies



# YOUTH'S CHARACTERISTICS

Table 5. Mann Whitney U test difference for self-esteem and identity resolution

	Self-esteem	Identity resolution
Parental support		
Added non-parental support	U=2335981.5, z=-6.909, p<0.001, r=0.1	U=2335981.5, z=-6.909, p<0.001, r=0.14

- Young people who seek support from both parent and another adult have higher results for self-esteem and adult identity
- Higher levels of self-esteem acquired through emotional support and social approval (Sarah, Lowe & Rhodes, 2012)
- Better adult identity resolution important-identity formation central for this developmental stage

# Conclusion

- 90.1% of 17-18 year olds recognise an adult who can give them support
- 48% recognise added non-parental support
- The group who seek support from non-parental adults in addition to parents show different results than those relying only on parent support:
  - more disclosure with parents and higher attachment to peers
  - higher levels of difficulties but also strengths in socioemotional behaviour
  - using more active coping strategies
  - higher self-esteem and identity resolution
- Needed a deeper look into the quality and processes of these relationships

# Limitations and Future Research

- Analysis of the group who don't seek parental support
  - Cross-sectional data
  - Non-parametric tests
  - Number of tests and big sample- Type 1 error?
- 
- Include the quality and meaning of non-parental adult support (Doland & Brady, 2012; Rhodes, 2002)
  - Social roles of other adults present in young people's lives (Beam et al., 2002; Chen et al., 2003)
  - Support from other adults a different kind of support?
  - Possibility of longitudinal data

Thank you for Listening!

Any Questions?

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