Enhancing Child and Youth Resilience Through School-Based, Wrapround

Supports

by

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Abstract

Poverty is a critical issue in Canada that needs to be researched and addressed. Many children and youth in Canada are impacted by poverty, this is defined by both low income and social hardships. Within the school environment, children, youth, and families experiencing poverty are more likely to have different needs and may require extra support to be able to fully participate in the educational journey and experience both physical and mental well-being (Basu, 2019; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). One way to positively influence students and their families is by providing them with collaborative support between service agencies and schools to build resilience. Resilience is a person ability to overcome and thrive from impoverished and stressful life circumstances, which is associated with the amount number of supportive individuals and social supports in their life. One example of this collaborative support model is the All in For Youth Initiative (AIFY) in Edmonton, which is providing wraparound support in schools in order to foster resilience in children and youth and to bolster their life outcomes. The AIFY initiative has been active within Edmonton schools for the last five years and has been providing support and resources to five school communities. This support is provided in order to meet families' basic needs, increase resilience, improve educational outcomes, and for students to ultimately graduate high school. Consequently, this thesis research examined two research questions: (1) Have any changes occurred in overall resilience and academic engagement from year 3 to 4 in the three cohorts of students who have participated in AIFY? (2) What are student perceptions of the AIFY supports, resources, and personnel? In order to address these two research questions, a multiple method secondary data analysis was utilized (Creswell, 1999; Vannoy & Robins, 2011). For this multiple method approach, the first research question was addressed by the quantitative data, including the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28) and Engagement Survey

adapted from the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools Climate Survey over the past two-years.
Qualitative interview data was used to understand students' perspectives surrounding the AIFY
initiative. This study found that over the last two years both resilience and academic engagement
levels remained stable. Also, this research found that the AIFY supports, resources, and
personnel are positively impacting students and families lives by meeting their basic needs,
improving mental health, enhancing social relations, and increasing academic focus. The insights
from this study show that collaborative school partnerships that provide wraparound support are
helping students and families within their daily lives and they are being positively impacted by
this support model.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Nicholas Lesyk. This research project received research ethics

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Childhood poverty is complex and can alter a child's immediate well-being and future life opportunities (Evans, 2004; Hulme & Shepherd, 2003). One dimension of poverty is economic, where poverty is measured by observing a family's income level and how this impacts their ability to afford food, housing, and other essential life needs (Colin & Campbell, 2008). Poverty also includes a social dimension consisting of lack of access to education and health care, marginalization within one's life, and social exclusion in society (Hulme & Shepherd 2003; Nelson, 2012). This social aspect of poverty takes into consideration the personal experience and individualized effects of poverty. Consequently, it is essential to consider both financial and social factors of poverty in research, as it recognizes that poverty as a whole is complex and includes various life domains (Colin & Campbell, 2008; Nelson, 2012).

In Canada, the current rate of childhood poverty is at 8.2%, down from 15% in 2012 (Government of Canada, 2018). This decline is due to numerous reasons, such as private and public initiatives and financial investments and policies implemented by the Canadian Government. One example of this is creating the Canada Child Benefit, which increased the value of childhood benefits and resulted in more money being distributed to families with a certain income threshold (Government of Canada, 2020). Although there have been investments made towards alleviating childhood poverty, many opportunities remain to limit the poverty rate for specific populations. Poverty disproportionately impacts specific people within Canada, such as Indigenous, refugee, and immigrant children (Albenese, 2017; Family Service Toronto, 2016). For instance, 40% of Indigenous youth in Canada live in poverty, and one-third of recent immigrant and refugee children are more likely to experience the effects of income instability (Albenese, 2017; Family Service Toronto, 2016). The consequences of living in poverty impacts

children's social, physical, and mental health. For example, poverty has the potential to increase food insecurity, mental health problems and limit educational outcomes (Heinemann et al., 2017). These impacts are associated with poor quality of life and chronic poverty (Heinemann et al., 2017). Children, youth, and families living in poverty are more likely to face challenges at school and within their daily lives. These challenges range from an inability to fully participate in educational experiences and a lack of healthy family relationships (Basu, 2019; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Specifically, children and youth that live in poverty face significant obstacles to succeed in academics; they have lower levels of engagement in school, greater levels of social vulnerability, and are at higher risk of leaving the school system (Oreopoulos, 2007). Research suggests that children who struggle during school-age years and leave the school system prematurely face both short-term and lifelong issues, such as chronic poverty, inability to obtain well-paid and full-time employment, and an overall lower quality of life (Oreopoulos, 2007). Early interventions within schools that support children and families by providing extra resources can promote positive life trajectories and help them within their educational journey.

One promising approach to address the repercussions of poverty and assist student well-being is through collaborative initiatives within schools that provide wraparound support to increase resilience and improve academic and out-of-school success (Ungar et al., 2019). These initiatives are characterized by schools that work collaboratively to provide personalized support to families, such as mental health therapists, social workers, nutritional support, and after-school programs. Fostering resilience in children, which is defined as a child's ability to individually and collectively manage stressful life challenges through social resources and personnel within their life, has the potential to be a protective factor (Ungar et al., 2011). Resilience is a critical protective factor in life challenges, such as mental health issues and an unstable family life

(Ungar, 2019). Building resilience has shown great potential in supporting children through challenging times and enables them to use resources to make appropriate life choices (Gandhi et al., 2018; Kielty et al., 2017). Wraparound support has also been shown to improve students reading and writing levels and effectively foster resilience (City Connects, 2020; Ungar, 2019). Subsequently, to address the complex needs of vulnerable children and youth living in poverty, collaborative support between schools and community service agencies that focus on building resilience through wraparound supports has shown great promise (Hunter et al., 2017; Kuperminc et al., 2019).

One example of school and community initiative is All in For Youth (AIFY), based in Edmonton a collaborative, Alberta. This initiative provides school-based wraparound support to children and their families (Poitras, 2019). School and community leaders recognized that children and youth experiencing low income and social hardships faced complex barriers that impacted their ability to experience academic success, complete high school, and live healthy and thriving lives. Children and youth between 6 and 18 years of age that experienced these challenges needed extra support. In response, schools and community agencies have been providing support within Edmonton for the last 20 years. This support helped alleviate some of the challenges of poverty and addressed the immediate needs of children and families, such as food insecurity, academic challenges, and family instability. However, the efforts were still primarily offered in silos, without considering how a multi-service provider approach that combines strategies, resources, and personnel from the school community and community-based organizations could more fully address student and familial concerns. What was needed was an initiative to support families for multiple years throughout their educational journey to provide different types of collaborative supports and resources as families' and children's needs evolved

and changed. Building upon research and other successful initiatives in Edmonton (e.g., Partners for Kids and Schools as Community Hubs), which provided support to vulnerable school populations, a new model, All in For Youth (AIFY), was created. AIFY was implemented in September 2016 within five inner-city schools in Edmonton, with the ultimate goal of enhancing academic and resilience outcomes for students.

The AIFY initiative provides integrated collaborative services, also referred to as wraparound supports (Eber et al., 2003), based in a school setting (Poitras, 2017). For example, AIFY provides social support (e.g., mental health therapists, nutrition supports, after-school programs, social workers, financial supports) to children, youth, and families that are part of these school communities (Poitras, 2019). AIFY is aimed at children and youth from households struggling to meet their basic needs and face complex familial challenges. Investigating this model of wraparound support and its impacts is critical to better understand how cultivating resilience through wraparound support in children and youth can positively impact their educational outcomes and personal lives. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis research is to examine how the AIFY wraparound supports have impacted student resilience and academic engagement, as measured by two surveys, the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28) and the Academic Engagement sub-scale from the Engagement Survey adapted from the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools Climate Survey over a two-year period, and as described by student's participating in qualitative interviews. For this study, two research questions will be addressed: (1) Have any changes occurred in overall resilience and academic engagement from year 3 to 4 in the three cohorts of students who have participated in AIFY? (2) What are student perceptions of the AIFY supports, resources, and personnel? A multiple method secondary data analysis was used to address the research questions (Creswell, 1999; Vannoy & Robins, 2011).

For this multiple method approach, the first research question was addressed by the quantitative

data, specially the CYRM-28 and Engagement Survey. The second research question was

addressed by qualitative interview data. However, both research questions provided insight into

how the AIFY initiative has affected students' lives. This study is timely as there is a lack of

literature on models such as AIFY, how models like this contribute to resilience and academic

outcomes for children, and whether the investment of resources is justified (Blank & Villarreal,

2015; Johnston et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2019). Consequently, investigating the impacts of this

type of wraparound support model is critical to better understand and raise awareness about the

potential benefits of this type of model. This study will also contribute to our knowledge base on

the benefits of wraparound school support, the impact that fostering resilience has on children,

and the positive effects of supporting students who experience vulnerability.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review of the literature will examine six main areas. First, childhood poverty in a Canadian context will be covered, followed by assessing the impact that poverty can have on children and families' behavioural and mental health, food security, and educational opportunities. Further, the importance of school-community partnerships as sites of intervention will be discussed. The literature review will then investigate how fostering resilience in children and wraparound supports can provide multiple benefits in the short-term and in the long term as students' progress through their life. Next, key details and the context surrounding the AIFY initiative will be reviewed. Lastly, the literature review will discuss how this research will contribute to the resilience literature and fill a gap in the school-community partnership domain.

Description of Poverty within a Canadian Context

To fully understand poverty, concepts of social exclusion and access to resources must be considered (Evans, 2004; Hulme & Shepherd, 2003). The World Bank Organization acknowledges that social aspects are a part of poverty, such as access to education, health care, vulnerability, and social exclusion. The World Bank Organization (2009) defines poverty as, "Poverty is hunger. Poverty is a lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time" (p.1). Scholars are also showcasing how we must consider social aspects and exclusion in the definition of poverty (Bourassa et al., 2004; Evans, 2004; Hulme & Shepherd, 2003). This would include social exclusion from activities, not being able to afford proper nutrition, not having access to health care, and being unable to access educational resources. As a result of families being focused on basic needs such as shelter, they are excluded from fully participating in society (Evans, 2004). This causes more

social marginalization. This is evident in research done in industrialized countries similar to

Canada. For instance, in Mood and Jonsson's (2016) research, they sought to examine the

relationship between poverty and social outcomes by utilizing longitudinal data from Sweden's

level of living surveys. In their research, they found a significant association between poverty

and deleterious social outcomes. Their research findings found that living in poverty influences

social relations, decreased civic participation, and limited political participation. Decreased

social relations and capital can lead to social exclusion, which can impact educational attainment

and employment. As Mood and Jonsson explain, "participation relates to the fears of a

'downward spiral of social exclusion,' as there is a risk that the loss of less intimate social

relations shrinks social networks and decreases the available social capital in terms of contacts

that can be important for outcomes such as finding a job" (p. 627). With less social capital and

networks, this limits an individual's ability to reach out for help, access financial resources, have

a voice in society, and become more isolated.

The other dimension of poverty within Canada is the financial and economic aspects

(Raphael, 2011; Shillington & Lasota, 2009; Wilkins & Kneebone, 2018). For instance, the

amount of income and financial capital individuals and families have is a significant indicator of

whether they can afford basic living standards and necessities (Evans, 2004). Hence, low-income

families have a more challenging time paying rent, obtaining healthy nutrition, and buying

educational resources. This low-income measure is what the Canadian government uses to

determine poverty rates. The rate of poverty in Canada, which estimates the number or

percentage of people under the established poverty line, is determined by three measurements:

the Low-Income Cut-off (LICO), the Market Basket Measure, and the Low-Income Measure

(LIM) (Shillington & Lasota, 2009; Wilkins & Kneebone, 2018). For instance, the rate of

Canadian poverty in 2013 was 8.8% (3 million people) using the LICO measurement, and 13%

(4.8 million people) using the LIM measurement (Statistics Canada, 2017). First, the LICO

represents the poverty line in various urban areas within Canada, which has a population of

500,000 or greater (Government of Canada, 2008; Raphael, 2011). For example, if the LICO of a

single person living in Edmonton is $25,921 and an individual makes $24,000, then this person is

considered to be in poverty. The Market Basket Measure determines if an individual has low

income on a specific measure of goods and services representing a basic standard of living

(Wilkins & Kneebone, 2018). According to the LIM, a household is considered to be living in

poverty if its after-tax income is less than half of the median after-tax income of all the

households within Canada (Shillington & Lasota, 2009). Overall, the poverty rate within Canada

is relatively low compared to other countries around the world. However, improvements can still

be made in specific cultural and ethnic groups within Canada, which will be discussed later in

this review.

Financial instability and having less access to social resources are two significant

indicators of Poverty (Basu, 2019; Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Haveman & Wolfe, 1995). Chaudry

and Wimer (2016) describe less access to resources (i.e., high-quality education, extra parental

care, caring social relationship) as material hardships. Nelson (2012) explains that material

hardships are the "Inadequate consumption of goods or services that the public deems minimally

necessary for decent human functioning" (p. 1). This material hardship alters a family's access to

social support, extra-curricular activities, and educational necessities. Material hardships can

impact how families care for their children, the time and resources spent on them, and parents'

relationship with their children (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Nelson, 2012). Families experiencing

material hardships are more likely to have a lower capacity to invest in purchasing academic

resources and have less access to programming to help children's development, such as early learning and childcare opportunities (Yeung et al., 2002). This is due to families not being able to afford these supplemental resources and not having the time to access these opportunities.

Furthermore, the effects of having both low family income and experiencing material hardships contribute to increased parental stress (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016). This stress reduces parent and child relationship quality, which is integral for child-rearing and caring (Kaiser et al., 2017). Increased stress within families can lead to psychological distress in parents and impact marital relationships. Both psychological distress and poor marital relationships have been associated with the reduced capacity of parents to engage and interact with their children (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016). This parent-child interaction is vital in emotional development and stable family relations. During the early years of life, children's emotional and behavioural development is dependent on the quality of adult interaction (Kaiser et al., 2017). In addition, income insecurity has also been shown to increase stress and behavioural issues in parents and their children (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Kaiser et al., 2017). This occurs because parents worry about paying rent and affording food, school supplies, and other life necessities. This increased anxiety then affects parents' responses to their child and impacts their relationship, such as providing less attention to their child and disciplining their child more harshly. The combination of stress and income insecurity can lead to chaotic home lives for children (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016). With less familial income and material hardships, families may live in substandard housing, where there is community violence, and the conditions are not conducive to a safe childhood environment. Additionally, these poor conditions can lead to mental health issues. Research conducted by Gilman, Kawachi, Fitz-Maurice, and Buka (2003) showed that low socioeconomic status households had greater rates of mental health issues, such as depression

and anxiety. Utilizing longitudinal national data from the United States, it was found that low

socioeconomic status and family instability were related to the increased development of mental

health issues in children by the age of 14 (Gilman et al., 2003). Overall, the indicators of poverty,

which are low family income and material hardships, lead to many effects, such as increased

stress, impaired child-parent relations, lower parental capacity, and chaotic homes lives.

The Impact of Poverty on Families: Behavioural and Mental health, Food Security, and Academic Attainment

Behaviour and Mental Health Impacts

Low income and material hardships can potentially lead to behavioural and emotional

problems. Research suggests that socioeconomic status and stress negatively affect brain

function and influences cognitive and emotional health (Haveman & Wolfe, 1995; Lipina &

Colombo, 2009). This results from instability in their family life due to income, familial

violence, and previous trauma, increasing the risk for mental health issues (Tilleczek et al.,

2014). Paying attention to mental health concerns within schools is crucial because these

children and youth are more likely to experience difficulties with learning and display

behavioural and emotional issues. Consequently, these factors can lead to a heightened risk for

children to have problems with self-regulation and behavioural functions, such as defiance,

impulsivity, and poor relationships with other classmates (Basu, 2019). However, research shows

that having meaningful social connections with caring adults and other children is integral in

expressing feelings and improving overall mental health. Ungar (2019) refers to this as social

and human capital. These types of capital lead to more positive outcomes, such as increased self-

worth and confidence in students and allows them to benefit from these social relationships. One

way to provide more meaningful relationships and capital in one's life is through wraparound

support within schools, where mental health counselors, mentors, and after-school programs are available. Yu et al. (2020) point out that having these resources available to students improves their mental health and creates more caring relationships. In the form of a counselor or mental health therapist, mental health support provides a space for students to discuss their issues, resolve familial concerns, and get to the root cause of anger and anxiety. Through a wraparound approach, schools implement an integrated prevention plan, where the student has access to these supports (Eeber et al., 2002). These types of processes allow for enhanced social and human capital and foster meaningful relationships. This leads students to have greater protective factors within their life and ultimately enhanced resilience. These supports provide help to students who are trying their best to dealing with life issues and may be on the way to more positive outcomes. These supports and interventions offer an extra layer of support and help. Furthermore, mental health initiatives within schools have been linked to promoting resilience in students (Ungar et al., 2019). Research shows that when students face stress within their personal lives, access to trained professionals or caring adults in their lives provides them with the ability to cope with these issues and act as a protective factor against future life stressors (Ungar & Liegenber, 2013). Promoting resilience has been found to significantly decrease mental health issues (Wingo et al., 2010). Wingo et al. (2010) investigated the effect of resilience on depressive symptoms from adults who experienced trauma and abuse during their childhood. Wingo et al. (2010) utilized a cross-sectional design with 792 individuals to determine if childhood abuse and trauma predicted depressive symptoms and how resilience impacted depression severity. They found that resilience moderated depressive symptoms. In other words, higher levels of resilience were associated with less depressive symptoms. The study design of this research took into account the moderating impact of resilience on depression and at the same time considered childhood

abuse and trauma. Wingo et al. (2010) contended that resilience acts as a protective factor and that resilience may have a large impact on responses to trauma and stress. This research demonstrates the potential that resilience has on mitigating depression and other mental health issues.

Food Insecurity

Low income and material hardships can impact a family's ability to afford and access healthy food (Brooks & Dunn, 1997; Chaudry & Wimer, 2016). Barret (2010) explains that the prevailing definition of food security is "a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (p. 825). The inability to afford nutritious food is more prevalent in low-income families (McIntrye, 2003). Loss of income or low income is directly related to increases in the usage of food banks and greater food insecurity (Barret, 2010). Consequently, the chances of experiencing food insecurity are about 18% greater for families living in poverty (Chuadry & Wimer, 2016). Turning to food banks and other nutritional supports may be helpful in the short term, but it does not address the underlying issues that require families to use these supports in the first place (McIntyre, 2003). In terms of health outcomes, children experiencing food insecurity are 40% more likely to be obese (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016).

Achieving food security requires that a family have a stable source of income. Studies show that wraparound support within schools can play an integral role in helping families find jobs, take courses to improve their English to secure employment, and supplement nutritional needs (Bartlett & Freeze, 2018; Johnston et al., 2017). Wraparound supports within schools encourage engagement from parents and provide services and support so families can achieve

financial and nutritional stability. For example, Bartlett and Freeze (2018) investigated various schools in Canada incorporating wraparound support. Most of these schools included programs such as grocery initiatives, community gardens, and food banks. Bartlett and Freeze (2018) explain how these supports can break down financial barriers and access to healthy eating by providing families with supplemental subsistence without cost to the family. The same was true for the City Connects Intervention in Boston, which provided support for students to address their out-of-school needs, implemented interventions that alleviated food needs faced by families, and provided daily support for students by delivering hamper programs and lunches. The City Connects intervention resulted in students achieving higher achievement, increased attendance, improved statewide academic performance, and students were more likely to transition to the next grade level. Subsequently, wraparound supports within schools can increase the family's ability to access financial and social capital while achieving educational and nutritional support. With greater access to these types of capital, families and students can achieve greater food security (Bartlett & Freeze, 2018; City Connects, 2020; Ungar, 2019).

Educational Impacts

Children and youth's educational outcomes are impacted when they have less parental support at home and instability within their family lives due to material hardships and familial stress (Ferguson et al., 2007). For instance, grade repetition is about 10% greater for students from low-income households, children are 5% more likely to leave the school system, and they are 4% more likely to require early intervention and support within schools (Chuadry & Wimer, 2016). With that being said, research has shown that when students are provided with extra intervention, they can enhance academic performance and have increased motivation to graduate (Bifulco et al., 2017; Johnston et al., 2020). For example, The SayYes program in Buffalo, which

provided increased financial supports and fewer restrictions to scholarships to high school students, demonstrated that after two years of intervention that math grade level scores significantly improved (Bifulco et al., 2017). More specifically, grants and scholarships were provided for low-income families. The research found that the relationship between students wanting to attend college and being accepted into post-secondary education was significant in this same program. Similar results were replicated in the New York Community School Initiative. Additional benefits such as student attendance were greater, and student grade progression and graduation rates increased after schools implemented wraparound supports (Johnston et al., 2017). In these studies, changes in student's academic performance were linked to non-academic factors. Research shows that disparities in academic performance are related to instability in their lives (Johnston et al., 2017). These out-of-school barriers then impact student's ability to attend school and focus on academics. As a result of schools having nutritional support, counseling, and financial help available and addressing students out of school needs, students can then focus on their academics.

Educational attainment is a significant predictor of life outcomes regarding employment rate, earnings, health, and happiness (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). A few crucial factors that impact educational attainment and engagement are race, ethnicity, and family relations (Albense, 2017; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). However, the most significant influence on the educational journey is poverty. Poverty is more prevalent in families with only one caregiver, immigrant and refugee populations, and First Nations peoples (Albenese, 2017). Within Edmonton, Alberta, around 20% of students in the public school system do not graduate within the 5-year time limit (Edmonton Public Schools, 2015). Self-identified First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) children had an early school leaver rate of 8.5%, with only 43.3% of self-identified

FNMI students graduating within the 5-year time limit. The early school leaver rate was 7.2%

within the Catholic school system, and 50.9% of self-identified FNMI students graduated within

three years (Edmonton Catholic School 2013). Within schools, students who leave the school

system before graduating are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, employed in

inferior paying occupations, receiving social support, and engaging in risky behaviour such as

committing crimes (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Hankivsky, 2008). The financial cost of

early school leavers is also significant. It is estimated that it costs about $19,104 per year for one

early school leaver due to unemployment insurance, lost tax revenue, social support payments,

and health care costs (Hankivsky, 2008). Within Canada, the costs associated with early school

leavers are significant due to the cost of social assistance programs, and the criminal justice

system contributes to a cost of $1.3billion annually (CCLCCA, 2009). Education achievement is

a strong predictor of life outcomes later on in people's lives (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997).

This is why addressing and supporting students in their early years of education is vital to

mitigate these potential effects.

School Community Partnerships

Children and youth spend a large portion of their time within school environments.

Schools can act as sites for providing wraparound support and promoting resilience (Gandhi et

al., 2018; Zakszeski et al., 2017). Schools can act as a hub, where formal programming can

occur, such as mental health support and social work (Blank & Villarreal, 2015). Informal

programming can also be supplemented in schools, including extra educational experiences and

various after-school programs. Recently, studies have begun to demonstrate that schools can act

as sites that help foster resilience by incorporating wraparound supports within the school system

(Kumpulainen et al., 2016; Tatlow-Golden et al., 2015; Theron & Theron, 2014). The school

environment and the extra support that schools offer allow them to be a fundamental community-based site in helping students through adversity (Theron, 2016; Ungar, 2011). For example, schools can collaborate with community agencies, where interventions can be held, resilience-focused activities can occur, and mental health services are available (Shields et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2019). Schools can partner with other social service organizations and offer nutritional support, mentorship services, and after-school programming (Rea & Zinskie, 2017; Stefanski, 2016). These activities and supports can help alleviate short-term challenges students face and build trusting relationships with adults. Studies show that these meaningful relationships with adults are imperative for child and youth mental health (Theron, 2016; Ungar, 2011). For example, Fries et al. (2012) reviewed the Earmark grant-funded research project, which sought to provide wraparound services to help high-risk teen parents. Fries et al. compared this school population to another which took a decentralized approach to service delivery, where support was not coordinated and did not take a wraparound approach. The schools with the wraparound support included extra help to prevent homelessness and stop eviction and resources to address mental and physical health problems. This research suggests that the wholistic support assisted the teens in finding housing, addressed legal issues and finances, secured employment, focused on education, and built interpersonal relationships (Fries et al., 2012). They also reported that once the high-risk teen's lives were stable due to the wraparound support and individualized help, they could reconnect to the school community, focus on their educational goals, and graduate from high school. Overall, collaborative school initiatives can provide students and families with various supports that meet their academic and psycho-social needs, all within one location (Singh et al., 2019).

In conclusion, an overarching goal of school community collaboratives is to increase students' resilience (Kuperminc et al., 2019; Ungar et al., 2019). The social-ecological view of resilience considers the school environment, community factors, the social resources available, and the number of caring relationships that students have and can utilize within their lives. Thus, to foster resilience within schools, wraparound philosophy is incorporated to provide holistic support to students and families within all areas of their lives (Eber et al., 1997b; Heinemann et al., 2017). This includes nutritional supports, mental health therapists, guidance counselors, financial resources, and extra academic help. The wraparound supports are intended to increase social, human, and financial capital to high-needs families. As a result of the social supports, caring people, meaningful relationships, and material resources available, students and family's resilience are greatly enhanced, they are better able to deal with various type of adversities within their lives, can focus on school, and have their basic needs met (Ungar et al., 2019).

Resilience and Wraparound Support

Research shows that fostering resilience in children and youth, which is defined as the ability to cope with adversities by utilizing resources available in their lives (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011), is critical in dealing with psycho-social issues and alleviating the stress associated with poverty (Kuperminc et al., 2019; Ungar et al., 2019). Utilizing various resources and capital allows children to buffer the stress associated with deteriorating mental health and family instability (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). Ungar et al. (2019) explain that "In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways" (p. 616). Hence, resilience is not entirely the child's responsibility

to foster, as researchers such as Ungar (2019) and Theron (2016) argue; fostering resilience is a process that should involve the school, the home environment, and community support agencies.

Researchers interpret resilience through a social-ecological lens, where the student's interactions and social resources available to them are at the center of their well-being and security (Ungar, 2008; Ungar, 2015; Ungar et al., 2019). The quality of social interactions and the number of resources are integral to resilience. This ecological view of resilience considers the quality of the school, the child's home and school environment, and the social systems that support the student (Ungar et al., 2019). The various interactions students have within the school and the resources available to them initiates this resilience process. The interactions and the social resources supporting students are the key determinants that will enable them to deal with instability within their life (Theron, 2016; Ungar et al., 2019). The social interactions, structures, and services that are a part of students' lives are fundamental in resilience and student engagement. Panter-Brick and Eggerman's (2012) research showed that student's positive development is more pronounced when they are a part of a facilitative environment with various social systems supporting them. Positive student development and increased engagement have been attributed to students having multiple types of capital available within their lives (Osbrit et al., 2010; Ungar, 2015). As an example, Sharkey et al. (2008) examined data from the California Healthy Kids Survey Resilience Youth Development Module from various schools, which included a sample of 100,000 diverse 7, 9, 10, and 11th-grade students to observe the relationship between school assets and engagement. Their research results showed through multigroup structural equation modelling that that school environment, the supports, and assets it contained were associated with student engagement. This finding was true for families of all

socio-economic status. Consequently, having supportive relationships and a caring school environment are integral to increased academic and student engagement.

Overall, resilience should be understood in a way that incorporates the numerous social ecologies of a child's life (i.e., home, school, community), which initiate resource provision, build up human and social capital, and helps children receive support (Ungar, 2008; Ungar, 2015). Resilience can be built through schools that provide wraparound support and take a dynamic understanding of resilience where students' socio-cultural environment is considered (Ungar et al., 2019). With many students living in difficult life circumstances, wraparound supports provide needed help to families and children while at the same time fostering resilience (Kuperminc et al., 2019; Ungar et al., 2019).

First off, wraparound support is an approach and philosophy that incorporates many services, an obligation to support families and children's individualized needs, and includes a diverse set of supports (Eber et al., 1997b; Heinemann et al., 2017). Providing wraparound supports to children and their families within school environments has been identified as an effective approach to providing care for students who may need support in their education and meeting life needs (Eber et al., 1997a; Heinemann et al., 2017; Kielty et al., 2017). There are ten key elements often used to define wraparound: (1) families are engaged, (2) families have choice, (3) delivered from a team-based approach, (4) resources and interventions include natural supports, (5) supports are collaborative, (6) supports are community based, (7) the approach is culturally responsive, (8) supports are individualized, (9) supports are strength based, and (10) supports are unconditional. However, a study exploring wraparound principles within Alberta, Canada identified an 11th principle which was shared leadership (Prakash et al., 2010). This shared leadership principle has been identified as key in providing coordination of support

services and in accountability between partners. For this thesis, I will focus on three key

elements; the collaborative nature of wraparound supports, the community-based orientation, and

family engagement (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005; Bruns, Walker, & The National

Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999). The wraparound

process is unique because it incorporates a high degree of collaboration and a team-based

orientation to its service delivery (VanDenBerg et al., 2003). This approach involves multiple

community agencies (i.e., social workers, mental health therapists, mentors, success coaches,

housing, and nutritional services) based on an interactive support strategy (Fries et al., 2012;

Heinemann et al., 2017). This collaboration occurs between the child, parents, community and

health care providers, and school personnel to create a plan designed to help that specific child

(VanDenBerg et al., 2003). The process is driven by implementing a personalized plan based on

the family's and individuals' strengths. The whole process is focused on the family's needs rather

than services that are open or available in the community (Eber et al., 1997a). Wraparound

philosophy considers the home, school, and community environments while addressing various

needs (i.e., family needs, food, educational, mental health) (Eber et al., 1997a). To put it

succinctly, wraparound philosophy and support aim to meet multiple life needs of individuals

and provide holistic support in all domains of an individual's life while empowering them for the

future. The different types of support help foster greater types of capital within students' and

families' lives and also aids in promoting resilience. One example of the effectiveness of

wraparound supports can be seen in Carney and Buttell's (2003) research, where they evaluated

wraparound services compared to conventional services for juveniles who committed crimes.

The researchers used a pre and post-test design with a control group, with multiple follow-up

assessments of 141 youth who committed various crimes. Their research concluded that those

who received wraparound support were more likely to attend school, not get suspended from school, and stay at home and not run away. Subsequently, the results showed that wraparound support might be better suited to support vulnerable youth than conventional supports that do not incorporate wraparound support.

The All in For Youth Initiative

The All in For Youth (AIFY) initiative has been following a school-based, collaborative wraparound support model to improve life and educational outcomes for students in Edmonton, Alberta, since 2016 (All in For Youth, 2017; Poitras, 2019). This initiative was built off previous initiatives in Edmonton (i.e., Schools as Community Hubs, Partners for Kids, Out of School time) that provided support and programming to school communities. However, these previous programs did not work in conjunction with one another and did not have a collaborative partnership to address student and family needs. These programs did provide needed support to families within the school setting. This included student support, family support, and nutritional help. The AIFY initiative is different from these previous programs in at least three ways: AIFY has multiple funding sources coordinated by one agency, a central governance and reporting system, and it reduces the duplication of services and streamlines access to services while holistically addressing family challenges (All in For Youth, 2017). The AIFY initiative collaborates with multiple organizations involved within five Edmonton schools, one high school, one junior high, one combined junior high and elementary school, and two elementary school (Poitras, 2019). Many partners contribute various resources, personnel, time, and funding towards the AIFY initiative. These partners can be broken down into four categories and include funders, community partners, school partners, and service providers. Some of the services provided include mental health therapists, mentoring facilitators, after-school programming,

support workers, nutrition supports, and success coaches. Services are provided to holistically

address students and families at risk and that have complex life challenges. The participating

schools are located in higher-risk areas within Edmonton, where poverty, crime, and violence are

more prevalent (Poitras, 2019). Participating families may be of low-income, refugees, new

immigrants, and Indigenous peoples. AIFY is focused on helping these children, youth, and their

families through prevention and integration programs across schools, which have adopted

wraparound philosophy and support to foster students' strengths, promote positive adult

relationships, improve grades and attendance, promote graduation, and create a positive view of

schools and the people in them.

Figure 1.

The AIFY Model and Structure of Partners (All in For Youth, 2017)
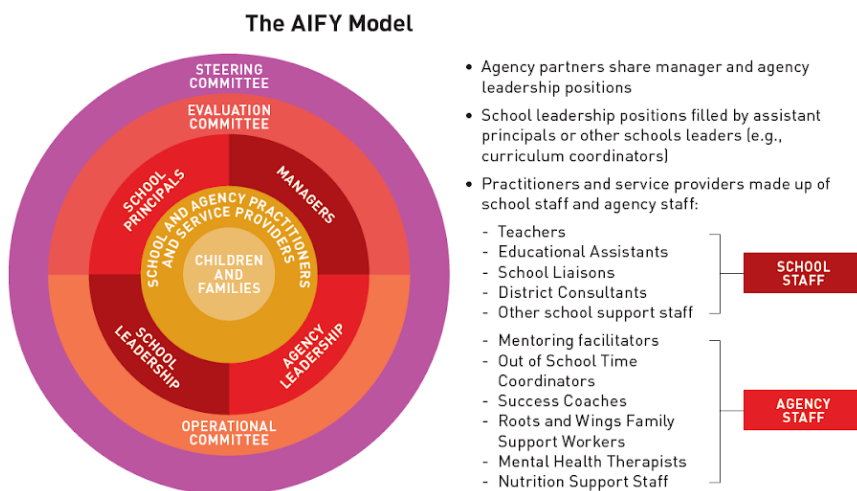
The AIFY model is highly collaborative, and there are many layers and intricacies to the

work. The AIFY model is based on ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). This

theory considers the quality and quantity of a child's environment, and the interactions the child has within their life and how that impacts their development and life course. As shown in Figure 1, the AIFY model involves a steering committee, evaluation committee, operational committee, and school and agency partners. A unique aspect of the AIFY initiative is that no one organization owns or runs this initiative. The partnership operates through collaborative practice, where the various organizations and agencies come together collectively to make decisions around its operations (All in For Youth, 2017). The initiative spent over a year creating a shared vision, responsibility, and accountability on how the partners will interact. The AIFY partners include community and municipal funders, human service organizations, educational boards, and community agency providers. For all organizations to have mutual agreement and understanding, collective decisions are made about funding commitments and marketing and administrative decisions.

There are no final decisions made until all partners have been consulted. Three committees guide the partnership—the steering committee, which is responsible for strategic oversight and guidance over the initiative (All in For Youth, 2017). The operational committee, which is responsible for the day-to-day planning and running of the initiative and is responsible for implementing the services and resources. Finally, the evaluation committee is responsible for overseeing the evaluation, reporting, and disseminating the evaluation results and liaising between the other committees (i.e., steering and operational). The committees consist of various partner agencies, municipal leadership, community and school organizations, and funders. Within the five schools, five managers work in collaboration with the school principals. Once a month, all managers and principals meet and discuss how the program runs within the schools, if improvements can be made, and keep in touch concerning service delivery. The school staff

relies heavily on assistant principals, teachers, support staff, and education assistants to help with

the planning and collaboration involved with the AIFY initiative (All in For Youth, 2017). There

is an on-site staff in each school, including mentors, success coaches, out-of-school-time staff,

social workers, mental health therapists, and nutrition support workers. Having these on-site

community-based organizational staff is crucial for prompt service delivery and ensuring

families receive support when they need it. Within school-community partnerships, collaboration

and communication is a key factor. Collaboration allows for multiple agencies to work together

to solve issues that arise more promptly (All in For Youth, 2017). However, a drawback of this

collaboration is that it takes time for all agencies ' and organizations voices to be heard, and there

may be disagreements in the correct course of action. Although collaboration may have its

challenges, the benefits of multiple agencies and organizations coming together outweigh the

potential drawbacks.

Supports and Resources

The five participating schools have high rates of social vulnerability and face various

issues such as challenging student behaviour, low academic achievement, and low attendance

rates (Edmonton Public Schools, 2015; Edmonton Catholic Schools, 2013). The student

population is diverse, and there are Indigenous, refugee, and immigrant children and youth. The

AIFY initiative works towards improvements in reading and writing, providing various in-school

support, and having out-of-school programming available (All in For Youth, 2017). The

initiative accomplishes this by supporting children and youth in reading and writing skills by

providing extra educational support after school and with the help of support staff, such as

mentors and educational assistants. The initiative offers nutritional food support, mentoring,

success coaching, and mental health support to increase service utilization through easy access to

the supports that families and students need (All in For Youth, 2017). The initiative also offers

before and school programming within the school, including fall, spring, and summer break

camps and programs for the children.

Additionally, AIFY utilizes a positive behavioural support framework within the

initiative. This framework is designed to help students improve their lifestyle and the direction

their life is heading by enhancing their quality of life (Carr et al., 2002). This is done by

improving the student's social environment to address any areas they are struggling in and

reduce any behavioural problems they may face. These areas and issues include personal life,

academic areas, work, social areas, community living, and family life. There are many vital

components of positive behavioural supports within schools (Carr et al., 2002). This includes

fostering positive relationships, creating learning environments that promote student success,

making learning engaging, teaching emotional skills, and creating behaviour expectations.

Furthermore, this framework includes positive reinforcement for student behaviour, providing

clear and valuable feedback to students, collecting data and information to make choices, and

using collaborative practices (Alberta Government, 2021). This positive behavioural approach

uses a three-tier system level to support students. The first tier is called universal support or

primary intervention, which is available to all students. The first tier focuses on creating

beneficial interactions with staff and enhancing social-emotional learning. The first-tier benefits

around 80-85% of students. The second tier is often called secondary prevention support and is

provided to students who may be experiencing vulnerability or are at risk. The second tier of

support often includes mentoring, student support networks, and increased social skills

instructions. Within the second tier, all of the universal first-tier supports are available to

students. The third tier is called intensive and individualized support. Students who need this

type of intervention often experience trauma, have mental health issues, have difficulties learning

and forming and maintaining relationships. The supports provided in this tier often include

mental health professionals, social workers, and mentors in order to create a behavioural support

plan to assist the student. The AIFY initiative utilizes this positive behavioural support

framework when working with students; the staff collaboratively decide which students need the

second and third-level tiered support.

Within AIFY, if a student requires extra support (e.g., mental health, academic, social),

teachers are often the first individuals to identify the need. In AIFY, the teacher can reach out to

the multidisciplinary team at their school, and they work together to identify and provide support

to students (All in For Youth, 2017). Meetings and contacting support staff are how the teachers

notify support staff about students. Consequently, in AIFY, students who require extra life

support are referred to the comprehensive and integrated services within the school. The

following section will describe some of the critical supports available, such as mentors, family

support, success coaching, therapy, nutrition programs, and out-of-school time.

Mentoring

Children and youth can utilize mentors within the schools and increase the number of

positive role models and adults within students' lives. Mentoring has been shown to play a vital

role in positive youth development and in helping foster resilience. Previous research shows that

children with mentors are 52% less likely to skip or miss school (Private Public Ventures, 2002).

This mentoring support occurs during the school day, such as during lunch breaks and recess.

Family Support

Family support can take the form of working with and connecting families to other

community resources, while at the same time parents and caregivers build skills and take control

of their life. During this support, caregivers improve various skills, such as parental capacity, parenting skills, and increase the family's capabilities and strengths. Ensuring that the home environment is stable is critical; caregivers and the home environment play a key role in children's development (Hunter et al., 2017). This support is provided to fit parent's schedules and is offered in the school, home, or community.

Success Coaching

Student success coaching is another service available in schools. Student success coaches work with students and provide support for their ambitions or goals they may have. Success coaching is focused on supporting students' plans and helping them with their goals, and develop strengths they already possess. This success coaching occurs during school hours or after school if needed.

Child and Family Therapy

Child and family therapy provides support to families, while they address their mental health issues and trauma. This therapy allows for increased social capital for students and enables families to use their coping skills to handle stress and life issues better. Therapy within schools is an effective intervention strategy to deal with student behavioural problems and helping students achieve higher academic grades (Kim & Franklin, 2009; Newsome, 2004).

Nutrition Support

Further, nutritional support is provided to all students and is a universal support. This nutritional support takes the form of a breakfast and snack program and food hampers to families in need. Students can access the snack program whenever they feel the need. In addition, the breakfast program is provided every morning, and families may access the food hampers as many times as they need to meet their family's nutritional needs.

Out of School Programming

Lastly, out-of-school programming is available for students to provide them with a safe space after school or when parents cannot pick up or be there for their children immediately after school. This after-school programming can take the form of clubs, sports, crafts, study groups, or field trips.

Students may not need all of the services available to them. Some students may only need one or two services, depending on their needs. These agencies have the time, personnel, and approaches to deal with trauma, mental health, family conflict, or emotional concerns. In addition, this in-school support from agencies allows for quick access to services, reduces duplication of services, and increases the efficiency for families to access services. This support model between schools and service agencies tackles social vulnerability within schools and is a practical approach to address students' and familial immediate needs and concerns.

AIFY Goals and Outcomes

The All in For Youth initiative's primary goal is to support families and students to increase the chances that students graduate high school and reduce the impacts of living in poverty (All in For Youth, 2017). The programs and services are provided to ensure that families' critical needs are being met and that children's skill sets are being fostered for them to prosper academically and in their personal lives. The initiative hopes to promote a positive and supportive school culture with informed staff and high-quality teaching. AIFY is also outcome-driven and has academic markers that it hopes to achieve. These markers include kindergarten readiness, grade 3 reading level, building resilience, successful transition from junior high to high school, and high school completion (All in For Youth, 2017). AIFY has five primary outcomes; quality teaching and learning, family support, in-school support, out-of-school

support, and systems change. Accompanying these outcomes are short-term, medium-term, and

long-term goals. These short-term goals are expected to occur within 1-2 years, the medium-term

goals within 3-5 years, and long-term goals within 6-10 years.

        The first outcome of quality teaching and learning revolves around ensuring that school

staff can focus on and support their teaching and learning objectives with students and families

(All in For Youth, 2017). A few short-term goals include creating positive perceptions of the

AIFY staff and supports, creating positive relationships between schools and agencies, and that

support and school staff are can effectively connect with students and families. The medium-

term outcomes would include that school staff feels supported within the schools and that AIFY

helps them team to teach students more effectively, such as through trauma-informed practices.

Long-term outcomes would include that there is decreased teacher stress and increased rates of

teacher satisfaction.

Figure 2.

AIFY Intended Outcomes

QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

» AIFY supports help school staff teach students more effectively/efficiently
» School Staff feel more support in schools
» School Staff are able to focus on teaching and learning in schools
» Positive relationships between schools and agencies are maintained
» School Staff in each AIFY school use trauma-informed practices
» Decreased School Staff turnover in AIFY schools

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUPPORT

» Positive relationships maintained with caring adults out-of-school (e.g., adult mentors)
» Positive relationships with community partners maintained
» Increased student volunteerism
» More external community partners involved in the AIFY work
» Student and family out-of-school needs are met

FAMILY SUPPORT

» Decreased feelings of isolation among caregivers
» Improved parental capacity (e.g., self-esteem, confidence, parenting skills/abilities)
» Improvement to family mental health
» Increased stability in families
» Improved family relationships
» Increased food security
» Positive relationships are maintained between family members and caring adults in the school
» Families are more involved in school communities
» Families' needs are met (e.g., basic needs, financial)

SYSTEMS CHANGE

» AIFY partner relationships maintained
» Effective/efficient information sharing practices between schools and agencies maintained
» More schools want to implement AIFY in their school communities
» Improved access to supports for students and families (e.g., barriers to access removed)
» AIFY partner working differently (with each other and internally) and influencing how others are working together

IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT

» Students have the intention to complete high school
» Improved attendance
» Improved school readiness for children
» Successful school transitions for students
» Improved student resiliency
» Improved student reading ability
» Improved student mental health
» Decreased student truancy

» Improved student behavior
» Positive relationships maintained between students and caring adults in the school
» Student needs are met (e.g., basic needs, transportation, nutrition)
» Improved academic performance
» Improved social skills
» Improved peer relationships

The family support outcomes aim to ensure that families and students have access to in-school support that enhances their well-being and can foster skills that promote healthy relationships and functioning. For the short term, AIFY will improve access to support, shift mindset about support, and create positive relationships with caregivers. Medium-term goals include improved stability and family relationships, enhanced mental health, and decreased family violence and addiction. The long-term goals consist of helping families get out of poverty, that schools can meet family's complex needs and a reduced burden on public systems (All in For Youth, 2017).

The in-school support goals include that students have sufficient access to supports in school that foster their overall well-being and helps them achieve success in school (All in For Youth, 2017). The short-term goals of in-school support include positive perception of supports, improved access to the supports, and enhanced student behaviour. The medium-term goals the initiative hopes to achieve are to improve rates of high school completion, attendance, early school leaver rates, student's resilience levels, and reading and writing levels. In-school support long-term goals include completing post-secondary education, gaining full-time employment, and achieving economic stability in the future.

Out-of-school supports strive to ensure that students and families can access various types of out-of-school supports, such as after-school programming and summer programming, which can help their well-being and build skills for life success (All in For Youth, 2017). The short-term goals include improved access to out-of-school supports and having positive relationships fostered between students and families with caring adults. Medium-term goals include that the students and families are involved within the community, families out of school's needs are being met, and the relationship between families and the out-of-school staff is

maintained. Lastly, the long-term goals associated with out-of-school support would be changes such as communities within Edmonton are safer, students and family members are actively involved in the community, and universal access to support and resources for students and families within Edmonton schools.

Ultimately the AIFY initiative plans for the combined effects of the partnership to contribute to systems change, such as schools and social sectors, for the needs of students and families to be better met (All in For Youth, 2017). These short-term changes would include shifts in school culture, and the AIFY partnership finds new ways to solve issues and foster positive relationships with one another. Medium-term changes include that the AIFY partnership is maintained, that the supports are sustained within schools, and that long-term funding is secured for the initiative. The long-term impacts of system change would include that the initiative is implemented across the province, sustained by government policies and funding and that AIFY is connected to other partnerships to support student and family well-being.

AIFY Guiding Principles

All in for Youth has created principles about how the organizations, families, and children should interact for long-term prosperity. Six principles guide the AIFY initiative: school-based, a social-ecological resilience lens, collaboration, family and culturally responsive services, research-informed practices, and evidence-based decision making (All in For Youth, 2017). First, the initiative is school-based, where the location and access to supports are within the school and is a place where agencies can organize and provide integrated services. This school-based work is vital in fostering an AIFY culture within schools and ensuring that agency supports and staff become embedded within schools. Moreover, the initiative aims to incorporate a socio-ecological resilience-focused lens to enhance children's self-worth and social capital, and

resources within their lives (All in For Youth, 2017). This is adapted from Bronfenbrenner's

(1979) ecological systems theory. The ecological approach to service delivery includes the

children, families, systems, and communities. School success and its predictors are most often

interrelated and need to be considered as such (Ungar et al., 2011). For instance, if a child is to

succeed at school and has positive experiences, then the home environment needs to be

conducive to mental and social well-being. The ecological systems theory explains that the

unpredictability in family life and home environment is most harmful to children's development

and future experiences. This is why a child's home and school environment are considered in this

initiative to ensure that both academic and non-academic needs are being met. In addition,

fostering resilience has shown great promise in helping children and youth through difficult life

circumstances. Building resilience has demonstrated great potential in supporting children

through challenging times and enables them to use resources to make appropriate life choices

(Gandhi et al., 2018; Kielty et al., 2017). Subsequently, resilience is fostered within AIFY

schools by promoting various types of social capital through wraparound support. The types of

capital cultivated include social, human, and material capital. Social and human capital is built

by increasing the amount and quality of meaningful relationships within a child's life (Ungar,

2011). Throughout the resilience literature, a reoccurring theme is the importance of trusting and

compassionate relationships that provide children support within their life (Stefanski, 2016;

Stewart & Suldo, 2011). These relationships have been linked to better emotional well-being and

engagement in school. Also, material capital, including financial help, food, shelter, clothing,

and health care, are essential resources within AIFY schools.

Collaboration between the partners in AIFY is critical for setting priorities, incorporating

different partners' views, and creating trust among the various school and support staff (All in

For Youth, 2017). Team-based practices to collaboratively support children, youth, and family members are fundamental in ensuring that services are effectively implemented. Also, there is a commitment by AIFY partners to co-learn, reflect on what is working and not working in the initiative, and deepen the commitment to the goals of AIFY. The initiative prioritizes the family's voices and needs to ensure that the family's perspective is considered. Additionally, culturally responsive practices are essential to respect children and families' values, beliefs, and cultural identities (All in For Youth, 2017). AIFY strives to incorporate research-informed practices that acknowledge resilience, poverty, and trauma. The initiative also aims to be data-informed to better support children and youth and ensure that the indicators of success are being observed, monitored, and reviewed. In order to make the best decisions around front-line practice, implementation, and funding, the partners use data and evidence to inform the subsequent decisions they make.

Conclusion and Justification

The AIFY initiative has incorporated wraparound support and philosophy by explicitly adopting a team-based orientation to its service delivery while being holistic, comprehensive, and flexible to meet the family's needs (Eber et al., 2002). The initiative provides individualized support to children and youth and their families by using customized strategies, supports, and services. Researchers explain that the wraparound model considers these social, cultural, and economic factors while considering the needs of the whole child and family (Hill, 2020; Jenkins-Hill, 2010). Hill (2020) explains that wraparound services provide access to mental health and social enrichment programs and that these supports extend beyond what a school alone can provide. This allows students to be in supportive and caring environments, which fosters and supports resilience (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011).

Research on the significance of initiatives fostering resilience in youth and children is currently an emerging topic, with studies focusing on how wraparound supports enhance resilience and support students and families throughout their educational journey (Johnston et al., 2017; Johnston et al., 2020). This study will provide a better understanding of how wraparound social supports within schools impacts their resilience and academic engagement levels. Further, this research will fill a gap in the literature on community-school partnerships aiming to support students and families. Critically examining a school-based wraparound model of support will provide further awareness of what are students perspectives on this type of support model. Lastly, this study will assist future research exploring how wraparound models aid in the development of meeting children and youth's holistic needs. The intended findings of this research are to highlight the benefits of wraparound school support, the impact that fostering resilience has on children, and the effects of supporting students who may be experiencing vulnerability. There are a lack of studies investigating if this type of partnership creates impacts within students and families lives, in a Canadian context. Also, many partners in similar initiatives have questioned whether the extensive amount of commitment and resources that go into wraparound support are justified (Blank & Villarreal, 2015; Johnston et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2019). Consequently, investigating the impacts of this type of wraparound support model is critical to better understand the importance of it, and raise awareness about the potential benefits of this type of model, and justify its use in order to highlight the positive changes in the students' lives.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This thesis utilized a multiple methods secondary analysis (Creswell, 1999; Terrell, 2012; Vannoy & Robins, 2011) to address the following research questions: (1) Have any changes occurred in overall resilience and academic engagement from year 3 to 4 in the three cohorts of students who have participated in AIFY? (2) What are student perceptions of the AIFY supports, resources, and personnel? The secondary data for this study was previously collected as part of the AIFY initiative evaluation, which the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) at the University of Alberta conducted. The initiative partners wanted to measure changes, ensure they were reaching their goals, and use evaluative data to make continuous improvements to the programs. Quantitative data from two questionnaires (CYRM-28 and the Academic Engagement sub-scale from the Engagement Survey adapted from the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools Climate Survey; See Appendix A &B) administered in the AIFY initiative from 2018-2020 were analyzed to determine if resilience and academic engagement levels have changed from year 3 to year 4 of the initiative (Creswell, 1999; Terrell, 2012). Although academic engagement was not a direct outcome of the AIFY initiative, reading and writing levels, which are outcomes could not be utilized for this study. Students in AIFY initiative schools did not receive a unique I.D for these outcomes, so I could not differentiate those students who received the AIFY intervention.

Qualitative interview data was analyzed to understand what are students views of the AIFY supports, resources, and personnel (Creswell, 1999; Terrell, 2012; Vannoy & Robins, 2011). For this study, ethics was obtained from the University of Alberta and approvals were granted from the Edmonton Public and Catholic School Boards that participate in AIFY. In the following sections, I will first describe my positionality as a researcher, followed by each of the

multiple methods' secondary analysis (quantitative and qualitative) including the method, sample and analysis.

Positionality

Positionality is how a researcher creates understanding and interprets meaning based on their identity and life experiences (Bourke, 2014). In the context of this study, my experiences, values, biases, and environment shape the knowledge that was generated. During my Master's degree, I was a research assistant for the All in For Youth project and part of the evaluation team for over a year and a half. I was involved in the evaluation discussions, meeting often with the evaluation team, participating in meetings with key stakeholders, and analysing data and supporting reporting requirements. Further, I conducted literature reviews for the evaluation team, maintained meeting notes, transcribed and coded various stakeholder interviews, and aided in the writing of the yearly evaluation reports. In addition, I previously volunteered for eight months at an after-school program called Wahkotowin nights, at Amiskwaciy Academy for their spring feast, and hosted open house events at MacEwan University for junior high and high school students. This research and volunteer background have provided me insight and understanding of schools that offer support to students.

Throughout the research process, I engaged in reflexive practice, which included reflective thinking and discussion with the AIFY evaluation team. This created the opportunity to consider the lens I applied to this study, my various experiences and biases, and ensured that the knowledge generated from this study reflected not just my perspective, but participants as well. My role as a research assistant for AIFY has allowed me to become familiar with the initiative, be aware of the issues and strengths of the students and families, understand the data thoroughly, and comprehend what the initiative is trying to achieve. This opportunity has provided me with

the insight to understand the circumstances of the initiative and what families face. This research involved secondary data analysis, which meant I did not interact with nor collect the data from the families involved. As a white, middle-class, Canadian-born male with post-secondary education, I acknowledge my position of privilege at both the societal and individual levels. I do not have the first-hand experience of what families have been through, nor have I ever experienced poverty. I can research these types of topics due to my privilege and background, and I realize I will not comprehend what these families have been through or how they feel about the changes and impacts that have occurred in their lives. I have tried my best to interpret the qualitative data through the students' lens and be aware of any biases. These biases include being a part of the AIFY evaluation team and viewing the AIFY initiative and its work in a positive light. I have tried my best to view the research and the results with an objective lens and to use the data to make logical arguments and conclusions.

Quantitative Secondary Data Analysis

Data from two scales, the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28 scale; See Appendix A for measure) (Liebenberger et al., 2012; Resilience Research Centre, 2009; Ungar & Liebenberger, 2011) and the Engagement Survey from the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools Climate survey (Bradshaw et al., 2014), were used for the purposes of this thesis and to answer the first research question: Have any changes occurred in overall resilience and academic engagement from year 3 to 4 in the three cohorts of students who have participated in AIFY? The CYRM-28 data had been collected for the past two years (2018-2020) as part of the ongoing evaluation of the AIFY initiative. The CYRM-28 consists of twenty-eight questions that are indicators of resilience, and each question is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 - does not describe me, to 5 - describes me a lot. The CYRM-28 was developed as a screening tool to

examine the social resources (i.e., individual, relational, communal, and cultural) available to individuals that enhance their resilience (Resilience Research Centre, 2009). This tool was designed for people between the ages of nine to twenty-three years old. The CYRM-28 has three sub-scales: individual capacities/resources (consisting of questions 11), relationships with primary caregivers (consisting of 7 questions), and contextual factors facilitating a sense of belonging (consisting of 10 of questions). Within each sub-scale, there are additional cluster of questions that provide further understating on these three sub-scales. For the individual sub-scale, the three clusters are individual personal skills (questions: 2, 8, 11, 13, 21), individual peer support (questions: 14, 18), and individual social skills (questions: 4, 20, 15, 25). For relationship with primary caregiver, the two clusters are physical care giving (questions: 5 and 7) and psychological care giving (questions: 6, 12, 17, 24, 26). For contextual factors facilitating a sense of belonging, the three clusters are spiritual (questions: 9, 22, 23), cultural, (questions: 1, 10, 19, 27, 28), and education (questions: 2 and 16). To generate a score for each sub-scale, one must sum responses to the relevant questions (Resilience Research Centre, 2009). In addition, an overall score of resilience can be determined by adding up all of the responses. The CYRM-28 has been demonstrated to effectively determine resilience levels in previous studies in children from various ethnocultural backgrounds within Canada (Daigneault, 2013). This is important as the children and youth participating in AIFY represent various ethnocultural backgrounds. Studies have also been conducted on the validity and reliability of this measure (Jefferies et al., 2019; Rezapour et al., 2020). Specifically, Jefferies et al.'s (2019) study determined that there is good internal reliability, using Cronbach's alpha, across the sub-scales with .82 for the personal resilience sub-scale and caregiver/relational resilience sub-scale and .87 for overall resilience. In addition, the CYRM-28 was developed across 14 communities in 11 countries to consider

diversity and contextually sensitive questions (Resilience Research Centre, 2018). For this research, the sum resilience score of the survey was used.

The Academic Engagement sub-scale from the Engagement Survey adapted from the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools Climate Survey was utilized (Bradshaw et al., 2014). In total, there are 31 questions on the Engagement Survey, and these are further broken down by six sub-scales: connection to teachers (questions 1-6), student connectedness (questions 7-11), academic engagement (questions 12-15), whole-school connectedness (questions 16-19), culture of equity (questions 20-23), and parent engagement (questions 24-28) (See Appendix B for Survey). For each question, the responses range on a scale from 1-5 (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly agree) A total score can be calculated for the entire survey by summing up all 31 questions with a range of 31-155. To obtain an Academic Engagement score, questions 12-15 from the survey are summed and can range from 4-20 (Bradshaw et al., 2014). The Academic Engagement sub-scale measures a student's attachment to their school, their emphasis on education, and their positive behaviours within the school environment (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2013). Higher levels of academic engagement have been associated with more positive student behaviours, minor delinquency, and greater importance on learning and education (Ungar et al., 2019). A study by Rezapour et al. (2020) showed that this survey can be used for culturally diverse populations and has strong psychometric properties. Further studies have shown that this survey has high internal consistency (Bradshaw et al., 2014)

To administer both surveys, it is recommended that practitioners complete it with each child individually by reading each question. Within AIFY, the teachers administer the survey in October of each school year. For younger children, the survey is split into two parts for them to

complete, with a break in between. It takes anywhere from 30-60 minutes to complete the

CYRM-28 and the Engagement Survey.

Sample

All five schools involved in AIFY were included in this study, and the 2018-2020 data is

the main focus of this research. Of the five schools, two are elementary, one is junior high, one is

a combined elementary and junior high school, and one is a high school. The student sample has

been divided into three cohorts of students for the quantitative portion (i.e., elementary cohort,

junior high cohort, and high school cohort). The students have been divided into three cohorts for

this study in order to consider their age, developmental stage, grade level, and the type of

intervention they receive from AIFY. See Table 1 for a breakdown of sample per cohort.

Table 1.

Number of Students for each cohort

	Year 3	Year 4
Elementary	118	118
Junior High	83	83
High School	80	80
Total	281	281

Quantitative Secondary Analysis

To conduct secondary data analysis, I received the data from the AIFY evaluation team in

an excel spreadsheet. This data file contained information from the past four years on student

grade level, the supports those students accessed, student attendance history, reading and writing

level, and the responses from the CYRM-28 and Engagement Survey. The data set was reduced

for the purposes of secondary analysis by grade cohort and those that completed the CYRM-28

and Academic Engagement sub-scale survey for the years considered in this study (years 3 and

4; 2018-2020). All variables that were not considered in this study (e.g., supports students

accessed, attendance history, reading and writing level) were removed. Students who were

missing resilience and engagement scores were also removed from the data set. Only students

who participated in both years 3 and 4 were included. Students were then divided into three

cohorts (i.e., elementary, junior high, and high school). SPSS statistics 28 was used to carry out

the data analysis.

The three cohorts were analyzed separately. First, descriptive statistics were conducted

for each of the three cohorts of students to determine the mean scores and standard deviation for

resilience and academic engagement for years 3 and 4, see Table 2 for descriptive statistics.

Next, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted for the three

cohorts of students. A MANOVA is appropriate when there are multiple dependent variables and

to determine if there are any differences between independent groups on more than one

continuous dependent variable (French et al., 2008). An ANOVA can only assess one dependent

variable at a time and running multiple ANOVA's can lead to an increase in Type I error or a

false positive, finding a significant difference when it doesn't exist. The first research question

aimed to determine if there are any differences by cohort in resilience and academic engagement

levels from year 3 to year 4. Consequently, for the MANOVA, the two dependent variables are

resilience and academic engagement levels, and the independent variable was time (time 1: year

3; time 2: year 4); three separate MANOVA's were conducted for each cohort (elementary,

junior high, high school).

Qualitative Secondary Data Analysis

I utilized a constructivist approach for the qualitative analysis portion of this study (Mertens, 2019; Mayan, 2016). The constructivist approach acknowledges that truth and information are subjective, socially constructed, and dependent on the life experiences of that individual. Moreover, the constructivist approach enables researchers to position themselves within the research context (Mertens, 2019). Overall, the constructivist approach is crucial to understanding students' perspectives on what resilience means to them and how it influences their personal and family life (Mertens, 2019). Qualitative description (Mayan, 2016; Sandelowski, 2000) was used to answer the second research question in this study: What are student perceptions of the AIFY supports, resources, and personnel? Qualitative description supports understanding various types of phenomena, inquiries, and issues more holistically and in-depth (Kim et al., 2017). This approach is commonly used for research questions that are geared towards understanding who, what, and where of events and understanding experiences from individuals fully.

Sample and Qualitative Secondary Analysis

A secondary analysis of previously conducted interviews was utilized for the qualitative portion of this study. The interviews were conducted in 2018-2019 with students as part of the AIFY evaluation. All five schools participated in the interview process, and a total of 29 interviews were conducted (See Appendix C for Interview Guide). Questions centred on how the programming has helped students and their families, how their lives have changed due to the support and staff within the schools, what they like about the programming at the school, and whom the students leaned on for advice and support. Most interviews lasted 20-50 minutes in length and were audio-recorded. The students that participated in the interviews ranged from

grades 3-12. I used all 29 interviews (16 elementary students, 7 junior high students, and 6 high

school students) and the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. For the qualitative data, the

29 students were not divided into the 3 cohorts due to the small sample size. As in comparison,

the quantitative data had sufficient numbers of students for all three cohorts. Consequently,

student interviews were analyzed together to get a true sense and understating of what students

were saying. All identifiers were removed before the interviews were transcribed. Once the

interviews were transcribed, I analyzed the interview data using latent content analysis

(Erlingssion & Brysiewicz, 2017; Mayan, 2016). Latent content analysis is a process where the

researcher identifies, codes, and organizes the patterns in the data. During this process, the

researcher interprets the meanings within the interviews in order to categorize the meanings. This

method is helpful for understanding participants' intent while considering the context of the

participants' life and worldview. The qualitative data analysis program NVIVO was used for data

coding. To begin, the interviews separated by the school. Once all interviews from one school

was completed, I moved on to the next school. I chose school interviews by alphabetical order.

To start, all interview transcripts were read twice to gain an understanding of the content and

context of the student interviews. The interviews were then read line by line and codes were

generated around important changes and shifts in their life, the significance of AIFY, how they

were being helped, and who helped the students. As I went through each interview, similar

topics, impacts, and sentiments were put into the same code and new codes were created along

the way to capture what the students thought about the AIFY initiative. While reviewing the

interview data, I looked for phrases and contexts behind the words to create various codes. Codes

represented condensed meaning about the particular word or phrase (Erlingssion & Brysiewicz,

2017). These codes were then grouped by their meaning into sub-themes that were aggregated

into more prominent themes. These themes expressed the underlying meaning and patterns found in the transcripts. Once the initial coding of an interview was complete, I re-read the interview and ensured I did not miss any important details of information. Each of the 29 interviews underwent this process. Once this was completed, descriptions of each code were created in order to highlight the importance and background of what each code contained (See Appendix D for Analysis Summary). Consequently, these themes provided insight into how the wraparound supports and staff have affected students' lives. After completing the coding of the twenty-nine interviews, I revisited each interview to investigate similarities between what the student expressed and ensured the codes captured the meaning behind the students' words.

Rigour

Criteria for rigour were followed in this research for both the qualitative and quantitative portions of the study. The criteria and standards for rigour that I applied for the qualitative portion of my research included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmation. Credibility is the confidence that the research findings are truthful and valid (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Credibility was established in this research by interpreting both qualitative and quantitative findings, which allows for greater rigour and a better understanding of the AIFY initiative. Transferability is the degree to which the research findings can be transferred to other contexts. This was achieved by ensuring that a detailed description of the population being studied is present, that there is an explanation and justification of why multiple methodologies is being used, and an in-depth examination of the issues students may be facing (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Dependability refers to the reliability of the findings and how consistent the study procedures were documented. Dependability was ascertained by providing an audit trail about the purpose of the research, communicating the multiple methods used, the analysis

procedures and discussing how the findings were interpreted. Lastly, confirmability refers to the

extent to which other researchers can replicate the results. The researcher established

confirmability by taking a reflexive approach during the study to ensure I was aware of any

biases that may impact the research findings and interpretations (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

For the quantitative portion of this study, the four sets of criteria that I followed are

internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Internal

validity refers to how accurate the results are and if they accurately represent the study

population. To ensure internal validity, all variables were documented to ensure that the

statistical analyses are valid, that the research design is adequately explained, and an in-depth

explanation of how the variables are being measured (Trochim, 2006). External validity means to

what extent can the findings of this study be applied to similar populations. External validity was

ascertained by having a sufficient description of the students within the sample. Reliability refers

to how consistent the research instrument measures a variable. Reliability was achieved by using

the same measure (i.e., CYRM-28), which has been validated through several previous studies,

and by using the two measurements during the study (i.e., resilience and academic engagement

scores) and by comparing the results against the significance levels (i.e., $p = < .05$) (Trochim,

2006). Objectivity refers to how free the research was from the researcher's bias. Objectivity was

achieved by the researcher using statistical analysis to guide their interpretations and subsequent

analyses (Trochim, 2006).

Chapter 4: Findings from the Multiple Methods Secondary Analysis

Quantitative Findings

This chapter will focus on the quantitative results of the study and address the first research question: Have any changes occurred in overall resilience and academic engagement from year 3 to 4 in the three cohorts of students who have participated in AIFY? This section includes the results from the descriptive statistics and the MANOVAS. The next section of this chapter will go over the qualitative findings from the student interviews.

The mean for elementary resilience across the 2 years was in the above average range, with academic engagement as well-being above average. The junior high cohort was in the below average resilience range with a SD of 19.5 and 18.7. Academic Engagement scores were relatively high as a score between 15-20 means they had above average academic engagement to high academic engagement, as can be seen in Table 2. The mean resilience score for the high school cohort was in the below average range as well. Academic Engagement scores were all above 15.7 meaning academic engagement was above average for this cohort.

There was not a significant difference for the elementary cohort from year 3 to year 4 on resilience and academic engagement Wilks' Lambda = .996, F (2, 233) = .478, p= .621. For the junior high cohort, there was not a significant difference from year 3 to year 4 on resilience and academic engagement Wilks' Lambda= .963, F (2, 163) = 3.172, p= .64. There was not a significant difference for the high school cohort from year 3 to year 4 on resilience and academic engagement Wilks' Lambda= .992, F (2, 157) = .613, p= .54.

Table 2.

Year 3 and 4 Resilience and Academic Engagement Means and Standard Deviations

	Year 3 scores	Standard Deviation	Year 4 scores	Standard Deviation	Sample
Resilience					
Elementary	114.7	15.0	116.2	12.8	118
Junior High	104.4	19.5	105.0	18.7	83
High School	108.7	17	108.6	14.7	80
Academic Engagement					
Elementary	17.7	3.6	18.0	3.0	118
Junior High	16.27	4.0	14.8	5.6	83
High School	16.3	3.5	15.7	4.2	80
Sample Size for Each Year					281

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative interviews shed light on the student's perspectives about the supports, resources, and personnel provided through the AIFY initiative. Student quotes and statements are utilized in this section to portray their perspectives on AIFY where appropriate. In addition, the quotes highlight how students describe AIFY schools, their views on the available AIFY supports, and which support staff have been integral within their life. All quotes are deidentified to protect the students' anonymity and confidentiality. Three themes and 6 sub-themes emerged during the qualitative analysis process and include: (1) Impacts on Families, (2) Effects on Students, and (3) Views on the School and School Culture. The three themes, which will be described below, directly and indirectly, highlight how the wraparound supports implemented within schools' impact students daily, their families, and how their lives are changing due to this collaborative initiative.

Impacts on Families

AIFY specifically focuses on the family environment to ensure that children can come home to a stable household. Additionally, AIFY has targeted supports in order to help students and families in terms of their financial and nutritional needs. Students appreciated how the initiative considered their families' home life situation and that the families were included within the program. For example, one student explained that AIFY staff took a vested interest in their family and helped them with appointments and other life needs.

> The AIFY worker who works in this office, he is working with our family right now and he's awesome. He helps us … if we need to go to appointments, if we can't get there through public transit, he takes us, he also brings us bread … I think it's the police station bakery" (High School student)

Consequently, AIFY staff try to minimize barriers that families face in order to allow families to access community resources. AIFY staff try to become a part of families lives in order to make caregivers feel more comfortable and access any supports or resources they may need. The wraparound support within the school strives to incorporate parents to feel a part of the school community and help families foster the strengths that they already possess. Since the AIFY initiative considers the family's needs, and supports their strengths and ambitions, many students said there were two significant impacts on their family unit. These impacts comprised two sub-themes and included the importance of financial and nutritional support, and the students' enhanced family relationships and engagement, which are described below.

Financial and Nutritional Support

Within AIFY, there is a wide variety of nutritional supports provided. This includes a breakfast program, lunch program, and snack program. These nutritional supports are provided to help families lower the financial cost of food and supplement their subsistence. Many students explained that the nutrition programs provided them with food at school, and they were even able to take home leftovers for themselves and their families. Additionally, these programs were aimed at reducing the financial stress and burden for parents. Students explained that support workers and mental health therapists were integral for them to help students with financial issues. As one Junior High student pointed out, "Oh, and you could also [get] help with food banks …. You can … talk to support workers or the Mental Health Therapist and they help you with food. If you're struggling with money or something too." Moreover, the lunch program was vital for families that had multiple children at school. Students discussed how the nutritional program helped save their families money because they had other siblings who needed to be fed. The cost of ensuring that multiple children are fed can be strenuous for low-income families.

Subsequently, this universal nutrition program was recognized by students for helping their caregivers financially. One student acknowledged that the food program was integral for their family: "I think the lunch program is helping my family because we don't have lots of money to like feed three kids" (Junior High Student).

From a young age, children and youth realized that their family might not have the income to support their entire family's nutritional needs fully. Families were supported with nutrition, but students were also allowed to access other supports that lessened the financial burden on families. This support took the form of helping students gain access to bus passes, payment arrangements, and school fees. As one student highlighted:

> Yeah, the school does [help our family situation]. We couldn't afford a bus pass,
> and I think it was last month or a month ago, [or] two months ago… they made a
> payment arrangement for us. We were able to come to school. (Junior High Student)

Additionally, a student explained that support staff would accompany them to go to the stores to buy clothes they needed: "If you're struggling with money or something. Also, the school helps every year, they take people to Old Navy during winter break." (Junior High Student). Consequently, the supports and resources helped students in various areas of their life, including their engagement in sports as one Junior High student pointed out "I couldn't pay my fees for football next year because I play on football team. So, then there's a program which is called Kid's Sport and they help you to pay for the fees and stuff."

Furthermore, most students shared that the wraparound supports were vital for meeting their everyday life needs, without the family needing to spend money. This included help with getting jobs, accessing food or clothing, a washing machine for clothes, or even a ride home from school.

The people here are really nice, and they give us a lot of opportunities like after school help and mostly, it's after school help with anything, if we have any questions, if we need help with jobs or anything, we ask these certain people, and they give us the help that we need. (High School Student)

Enhanced Family Relationships and Engagement

The socio-ecological model and positive behavioural framework within AIFY strives to incorporate the student's home environment, intending to improve the family relationship and overall family functioning. Subsequently, a few students brought up that due to the services available (i.e., family support help and mental health therapy) for their families, their relationships with one another and overall stability in their day-to-day lives at home have improved. For example, one High School student said, "The service definitely helps my family function better." Students also highlighted that the supports were integral for their parents and caregivers; if caregivers were going through difficult life experiences, mental health therapy was accessible to them, and this seemed to be a positive experience for most families. As a result of these supports, some families developed important relationships with the staff. Students have cited this service as helping their parents through life challenges, such as divorce and mental health challenges, as one Junior High student shared:

My mom, she did go through a hard time divorcing with my dad…. And [the therapist] also helped with that. She did see [a therapist] for a while, until moving on to another therapist. But she still does talk to her sometimes. She's really good friends with [After-school worker] and [Family support worker] because [the family support worker] speaks Spanish, same as her, and they both communicate with each other.

Students also brought up how the school's support, services, and personnel have also increased family in-school engagement. This has been done by including family members (i.e., parents and siblings) within after-school programs and clubs. This family involvement and engagement is a key factor in wraparound support. AIFY strives to incorporate a students' family to build relationships and form trust with the families. One example provided by a student showcases that the wraparound supports and associated services helped their older sibling work on their resume and eventually achieve a job:

> They helped him [my older brother] come into the school, and he also wanted a job. So, he went to one of the after-school programs, and that also helped him get his resume and work done. I feel like it definitely impacted my family and me, because it's so helpful and supportive here. (High School Student)

The Impacts on Students

The main focus of the AIFY initiative is to help and support the students in holistically centred ways, which occurs in various ways within AIFY schools. Consequently, many of the students talked about how the personnel, resources, and supports are gradually helping them in different areas of their life. These impacts included four sub-themes: improved mental health support, increased educational and after-school support, increased relationships and socialization with peers, and students' personal development.

Improved Mental Health Support

At the center of the AIFY initiative are the children and youth that the organizations aim to support. Many of the students interviewed identified that mental health supports have been integral for positive changes in their life. For example, students explained that accessing mental

health therapy allows them to have someone to talk to without fear of judgment, as one student described:

> I feel really good because when I talk to someone I trust; it makes me feel safer. And it's
>
> sometimes I just need to get stuff out. Since I was talking to [therapist's name], she
>
> helped me. And she helped me with depression, self-esteem, and then I got my friends
>
> back. (Junior High Student)

Utilizing this support has made students feel comfortable sharing their issues and trusting another adult within their life. This support has created an outlet to allow students to seek support and form positive social relationships. As one Junior High student pointed out "She's (Teacher) just the kind of person that when you are in trouble, [she's] someone that you can go to because they are trustworthy, and you can talk to them and they won't judge you." Many students said that mental health therapy impacted them by helping them navigate depression, self-esteem issues and creating healthy friendships. Further, when students have life stress or personal issues, they feel comfortable knowing they have someone to turn to who will listen and help them through challenges, such as bullying, parent-family relations, sexuality, and emotional well-being, as one High School student explained:

> Well, one of the main examples is that I'm having difficulties with my sexuality.
>
> Being gay, the teacher that I had before, she knows about it. She's the only one
>
> who I talked to about my sexuality because I haven't, I still haven't told my
>
> parents yet about it. And whenever I'm feeling down…she always talks to me
>
> about it, that life is just like that – it's always unfair… I need that encouragement
>
> for me because sometimes it just gets me down. It really starts to get me down,
>
> so this is why I am grateful that I'm in this school because I met this person. She

has a really good heart.

Access to supports and resources was important for students. A few students explained that without AIFY supports and staff, their lives would be different, and they would face challenges without proper support. This support came in the form of building students' confidence, learning healthy eating habits, and making friendships. One student highlighted this point:

> I feel like I'd just probably be a different type of person. Because they (FNMI
>
> consultant, after-school coordinators, the success coach) helped me become more
>
> confident, make relationships and then also helped me develop a healthy good diet. So, I
>
> feel like they helped a lot with… when I'm going to go graduate and figuring out
>
> myself." (High school Student)

Students also highlighted that the AIFY supports in the schools are needed because they help support their family life in many ways. Without the AIFY supports, many students felt their personal and family life would not be the same and they would face increased challenges. As one student said, "If we didn't have these supports …We'd probably have child welfare at my house" (Highschool Student). Another student commented:

> Whenever I need help, they help me right away. They still wait to be done with
>
> the other person but right after they come straight to me, when I need it. And I
>
> can talk to mental health therapist and support workers about my family
>
> issues. (Junior High Student)

Not only did these programs help students, but this support extended to their families. For instance, siblings of the students were also provided with mental health support when needed. A

High school student said that "Their (mental health therapist) focus was my little brother because he's got a lot of mental health [issues]. So he was the priority for [them], back then."

Increased Educational and After-School Support

Most students pointed out that educational support and after-school time were vital in helping them through their academic journey and in supporting them in achieving better grades. One Junior High student explained the importance of having a mentor involved with their education, "Yeah, he's been mentoring me for like 3 years. He's been really bringing up my marks." With after-school support, students agreed that the one-on-one time was beneficial for them and allowed them to understand the course material better and work on projects. This after-school time allowed students to be in an environment where they could focus on education and ask for help. Both mentors and success coaches aim to support students in their personal and academic journeys. This was evident in the interviews. For instance, students cited success coaches as key in helping students' future career choices by providing opportunities for volunteering and mentoring in those specific fields.

> They'll just [support staff] ask how we are and what we're doing, and they ask us about after-school plans or and they offer to help us. So, I know one of the success coaches, I was telling him how, 'I don't want be a doctor anymore. I want to be an astronaut' or something like that. And I was telling him how I needed engineering to be, like one of my requirements to become…with NASA. And then the next week he came, and he was, 'So I have this opportunity to have an engineering mentor if you want it.' And I was like, 'That's awesome! (Junior High Student)

 Students said that the field trips, clubs, and summer camps were fun and good social opportunities. This after-school time allowed students an environment where they could be safe

and participate in intellectually stimulating activities. Without this after-school time, many students would not have a place to go, or they would be in an environment without educational support staff. Subsequently, this after-school time was key source for academic improvement and educational help. In addition, the after-school time provided the student's opportunities to make friends with their fellow peers and creates bonds with caring adults. This provided different benefits to the students, such as improved social skills, increased focus on education, and increased student confidence. For example, one student highlighted this:

> [The programs and staff] just boosted my confidence because he was a really nice guy.
> And then there was also [the] [after school coordinator], who he took over the workouts
> on Wednesdays and… he had the tutoring in the library and then he also had these
> fieldtrips that you could ask to go on…. It was kind of cool (High School Student)

The after-school program also helped students with problems in their life, personal issues, and their studies. Students pointed out numerous staff that they view in a positive light. This included teachers, principals, after-school staff, and mental health therapists. One student focused on how they feel about the school staff and how they help them within their life:

> I like how it's comfortable in here. Everyone [talks about your] problems here, they know
> they feel how you feel. For example, after school every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday,
> [I have] homework lab [and] I could basically tell my teachers and tutors about my
> problems in life, and they help me a lot through personal and studies too and it's really
> helpful for me. (Junior High Student)

Increased Relationships and Socialization with Peers

One of the indirect effects of the after-school programming and clubs was the opportunities for students to meet their peers and create social bonds and friendships. These

after-school activities provided space for connecting with other students that may not be

available during regular school hours. The programs are designed for students to have

intellectually stimulating experiences within a social setting. One student highlighted how the

after-school time impacted them:

> Well, I like it [after school time]. It's fun and well, in the survey it asked if 'does it help
>
> you get along with others?' and I did – I forgot the options – but I know I did a yes. And
>
> yeah, it does help me get along with others. And it helps me make new friends.
>
> (Elementary Student)
>
> Moreover, many of the students discussed how they could make friends and keep them

due to the guidance from AIFY school staff. For example, the mental health therapist helped

students with anxiety around meeting new people. Also, students talked about how they are

better able to navigate through social interactions. For instance, a few students reiterated that

they could better handle their emotions when in social interactions and have a more positive

outlook when going to school. As one student shared:

> I didn't really like talking to people. And at home, I would just go home on the
>
> bus. I wouldn't talk to anyone on the bus, I wouldn't say good morning to the person who
>
> checks off your name, or like goodbye. I would just walk on the bus, go straight to the back
>
> and sit in my favorite spot. Not talk to anyone, and then when I got home, open the door…
>
> take my shoes off, put my backpack down, and go to my room. And then I wouldn't come
>
> out, only to go to the bathroom and eat. And after eating, I wouldn't do anything. I would
>
> just go back to my room. But now, I'm not a troubled kid. I actually like talking to people
>
> now, sometimes if they're rude to me… I don't react angrily. And … it's helped me because

now I can actually interact with people. And people that I interact (support staff) with help

me. (Junior High Student)

Overall, based on the interviews, students viewed the supports and resources as helping

them get along with others and increased the number of social interactions they would typically

have.

Students' Personal Development

Many students pointed out that they have noticed personal development in various areas

of their life. This included growth in emotional areas and controlling their mental health, such as

anxiety and anger control. For instance, some students were now taking medication to manage

their anxiety but had also learned strategies for controlling their emotions in positive and healthy

ways. As one student shared, "[The therapist] usually helped me. She was my therapist mostly

every day. I used to talk to her a lot. She helped me, she calmed me down." (Junior High

Student). Students emphasized that with the help from school and support staff, they have been

provided with sound advice and life supports. A Junior High student shared, "I'm confident

about myself in what I do and stuff. And I'm not insecure in anyway." Many of the students

positively viewed themselves and shared their strengths and the core qualities that they have.

Students explained they are confident, happy, energetic, like to help others, and are caring. One

Elementary student explained "I feel like I'm more of a helping, caring person."

Many students focused on how the personal strengths that they already have are being

further developed. With support from AIFY staff and supports, many students said that they

possess many skills and attributes and were able to share that, as one Elementary student said, "I

describe myself as creative. Very artsy." In addition, the students also explained that the

strengths that they are developing centred around their work ethic and how they view

themselves, as one Elementary student pointed out, "I work as hard as I can to achieve my goals. I am a very ambitious, pig headed, stubborn."

Views on the School and School Culture

Students spoke about their experiences with their school, the culture and how that created a safe and caring environment. Students talked specifically about the staff that supported them and what they liked about their school. Many students spoke highly about how the staff within created this sense of community and openness. The students acknowledged that they feel good and comfortable with the staff. One student said how nice the staff are, "The school staff are really nice to other people too, which makes me like them even more, because they are kind to other people too, not just me." (Junior High Student). Furthermore, the teachers at the school are very welcoming and friendly and help make the material easier to understand and help them with course material.

> It's just better because they help me learn and they do that with some other
>
> students too. So yeah, it's fun. Cause like it really gets us (the students) to expand
>
> our learning and they help us (school staff and support staff) lots, like I got my
>
> marks up a lot this year (Junior High Student)

The AIFY schools have worked hard for the last 4 years in order to create a school environment that is welcoming and supports students' well-being and strengths. In addition, the schools and school staff strive to create a sense of belonging for students and families in order for them to feel comfortable asking for help and to access supports and resources. Students realize that the schools and staff are genuine in their efforts, and they trust the staff. For example, as one student said, "If anything went wrong, they'd help me in any way." (High School Student)

Further, students made general comments that the staff and supports made them feel supported. This included mental health therapists, nutritional support, after-school time, family support workers, success coaches, and mentors. The students suggested that the staff work together to support students and include them in the schools' various activities and clubs.

> Oh yeah [the teacher] has included me in a lot of things and so has the [family support worker] and [after school coordinator]. They're sort of working together cause [family support worker] and [after school coordinator] both asked me together if I wanted to be performing at culture night. (Junior High Student)

Most students believed that the school culture within AIFY schools is welcoming and makes them feel comfortable. Students emphasized that the schools make them feel at home, included, and that school staff are friendly. This is due to both school and support staff, as one student discussed, "It's inclusive because they want to know – I don't know how to describe it, but they [school staff] want to try and make you feel included." (Junior High Student). Within AIFY schools, AIFY staff, administrators, and teachers strive to have continuous growth in trauma-informed learning and implement positive behavioural frameworks within schools. The staff and teachers aim to be genuine, positive, encouraging and caring towards the students and families. Students have recognized that the staff are caring people and look out for them.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitations, and Conclusion

The first research question aimed to understand if the wraparound supports are changing resilience and academic engagement scores. To reiterate, the supports and resources provided within AIFY are intended to gradually increase levels of resilience and educational outcomes while helping families improve their overall quality of life (All in For Youth, 2017). The holistic support teams carry this out within each of the schools. Resilience is fostered within the schools by allowing students access to support and resources, such as mental health therapists, mentors, success coaches, and financial and nutritional help. Consequently, by AIFY supports being located within schools, students can access supportive environments to better deal with domestic issues and tackle academic and non-academic barriers. These issues include family violence, trauma, lack of moral and compassionate support, mental health issues, lack of academic support, and nutritional needs. Consequently, analysis of the quantitative data indicate that resilience and academic engagement scores have remained steady over the past two years and have not significantly increased or decreased.

Resilience and Academic Engagement Across Years 3 and 4 of AIFY

The results from the three cohorts of students showed that both resilience and academic engagement scores remain stable over the past two years. There are a few explanations as to why there was not a significant increase in these scores. First, the resilience literature explains that fostering and bolstering resilience is a complex process dependent on many factors. Initiatives such as AIFY can facilitate access to resources and support for students to be more likely to experience resilience. As Ungar et al. (2019) explain, children face different risks for various reasons, such as their gender, race, class, and home environment. Initiatives and programs can provide resources, supports, and community help; however, students may be dealing with

specific issues that may go unnoticed. Consequently, students may experience unique risks due to their cultural background and the social environment (Ungar et al., 2019). Although programs and initiatives try their best to account for various factors, such as trauma and low income, students may experience vulnerabilities that are out of the reach of these interventions.

With that being said, the results of this study showed that although resilience and academic engagement did not significantly increase, there were no significant decreases as well. This is an important finding. As a result of AIFY taking a wraparound approach and using a positive behavioural framework, the intervention strives to foster resilience. If resilience and academic engagement levels were significantly decreasing, this would signify that students may need more targeted supports and are utilizing unneeded resources and supports. However, this does not seem to be the case. Another essential factor to consider is that during the first two years the initiative was implemented, there was a different measurement scale used to capture resilience and academic engagement. The CRYM-28 and Engagement Survey were adopted in the third year of the initiative. As a result, the students may have already benefited from the intervention and fostered strong resilience levels in the initiative's third year. Consequently, due to this lack of baseline of students' resilience and engagement levels, the increases may have already occurred from year 1 to year 3; however, without the data supporting this inference, this is just a hypothesis of what might have occurred. Hence, the results from year 3 to year 4 show that students already have high resilience and academic engagement levels, and they are maintaining these levels. According to the CYRM-28, a resilience score of 112-123 was in the 50-75th quartiles of resilience, meaning that those students have either average or above-average resilience. The elementary cohort had a score of 114-116, which meant they had above-average resilience. The junior high and high school cohorts had scores of 104.4 and 105.0 and 108.7 and

108.6. This result shows that these groups of students have slightly below-average resilience levels. However, none of these cohorts were in the levels of extremely low levels of resilience. In comparison, a sum resilience score of 92-98 would mean that students have extremely low resilience levels and struggle to deal with life issues and their academics. The three AIFY cohorts score shows that these students have considerable resilience with their lives. Subsequently, these results show that although there is still room for the students to foster greater levels of resilience, the cohorts already have high levels of resilience.

There are a few reasons why the cohorts already have stable and around average levels of resilience and academic engagement. Over the past 4 years, the AIFY initiative emphasized creating a culture and environment that fosters resilience and progressively improves other academic outcomes, such as engagement. Throughout the resilience literature, it is reiterated that fostering resilience and developing it takes many day-to-day interactions that must occur in the classroom, with peers, at the school level, and within the household (Morrison & Allen, 2009). Subsequently, fostering and supporting resilience is a process that requires long-term dedication and accessible support to resources. The AIFY initiative has started this journey towards fostering a school culture of promoting resilience. The responsibility of enabling the resilience process is complex and multifaceted, including prioritizing a child's mental health, having intervention present, and having constructive relationships with caring adults (Ungar et al., 2019). Additional research shows that when school staff are committed to the resilience process, such as AIFY, they can be crucial in championing resilience (Theron, 2016). The educational and support staff within AIFY are appropriately trained, aware of the resilience framework, have a trauma-informed lens, and consider the social issues students face. Research shows that effective teaching, safe learning environments, and supporting resilience within the classroom

can be catalysts for resilience (Bondy et al., 2007; Cefai, 2007; Doll, 2013; Henderson, 2012; Hojer & Johansson, 2013). This catalyst for resilience may have already occurred in the first three years the initiative was implemented. Another essential aspect is that AIFY incorporates everyday whole-school support of resilience. Research shows that this is another way to reinforce resilience and ensure that strategies and interventions are followed through (Theron, 2016). Promoting this type of culture within AIFY schools results in a socio-environment that supports student well-being, success, and overall engagement. In AIFY schools, this would take the form of students having access to supportive and caring adults, such as mentors, success coaches, and therapists. Also, an important strategy that promotes resilience in schools is considering their basic needs (Theron, 2016). This is done within AIFY. For instance, AIFY schools ensure that students have proper nutrition, clothing, and immediate health and safety are not in jeopardy. These aspects are fundamentals in students' lives and need to be met for school functioning (Hojer & Johansson, 2013; Theron, 2016). Theron (2016) explains that creating stimulating learning environments and having extra-curricular activities is another way to bring about resilience. AIFY does this by having a comprehensive after-school program, where students can participate in volunteering, work on resumes, attend field trips, and get extra help on school-related work. Further, students within AIFY receive support that helps their personal development. Specifically, mentors, success coaches, and school staff help students develop life skills and knowledge conducive to future occupations, hobbies, and life endeavours. Overall, these aspects are reasons within the resilience literature of ways to foster resilience. AIFY incorporates these strategies intending to increase resilience and promote academic engagement. These strategies and wraparound support appear to be keeping resilience scores relatively stable within AIFY schools.

The process of fostering resilience can also be dynamic. There is variability in how quick resilience can be promoted within schools, children, and families. Some children may come from households with high-risk factors and immediately benefit from school-based wraparound support (Theron, 2016). Other children and families may be more hesitant about the support and not fully commit to the interventions and programs within the schools. Researchers reiterate that resilience is a complex process that involves individual, cultural, community, and school factors (Theron, 2016; Ungar et al., 2019). For example, there are questions in the literature around whether the impact of resilience promoting factors impacts all students the same or do students with more challenges experience greater benefits.

Ungar et al. (2019) explain that one contextual factor that can affect engagement levels is resilience. In other words, for academic engagement to increase and other areas of students' lives to improve, then levels of resilience must first be fostered, and students need to be within supportive and caring environments. Resilience and its contextual factors can have an influential impact on students' lives. Consequently, with this initiative only running for four years, there may not have been enough time to see the correlating increases in academic engagement that can follow with increases in resilience.

The same can be said for the levels of academic engagement within the three cohorts of students. For the three cohorts, the elementary group of students had scores of 17.7 and 18.0, the junior high cohort had scores of 16.27 and 14.85, and the high school cohort had 16.3 and 15.7. The scoring range for academic engagement ranges from 4-20. All three cohorts of students already have high levels of academic engagement, which may be attributed to the initiative already implement the supports and resources over the last three years or students already possessing high levels of academic engagement prior to AIFY. These above average levels of

academic engagement show that students are focusing their time on their studies and have made

educational attainment a priority in their life. The qualitative discussion and quotes support this

finding. In the future, as the AIFY supports and resources continue to address the psychological,

emotional, and various life issues of students, it can be assumed that levels of resilience will

continue to increase. As levels of resilience increase in students, this may result in better student

well-being and allow them to better deal with social, emotional, and behavioural problems that

come up in day-to-day life (Twum-Antwi et al., 2019). As life needs are met, and resilience is

high, the literature suggests that students will focus more on their education within the classroom

due to less stress, acute life issues, and higher levels of academic engagement (Ungar et al.

2019). Research shows that higher levels of resilience are correlated to behaviours such as better

emotion regulation, managing stress, and organizing themselves (Twum-Antwi et al., 2019).

These factors have also been linked to better interpersonal skills, maintaining positive

relationships, and listening to other perspectives, which are key for better functioning within the

school and home environments. Additionally, these factors are critical for academic engagement.

Studies show that academic engagement is integral for enhanced academic success (Twum-

Antwi et al., 2019). Durlak et al. (2011) showed that school programs intended to enhance

academic engagement significantly improved educational outcomes by over 10%. This study was

done on kindergarten to high school students in the US (n= 270, 034). Within this research study,

academic engagement remained stable, but students explain that there have been improvements

towards their dedication and focus on education, which will be discussed in the qualitative

discussion. Although academic engagement remained stable, there is optimism based off the

literature and previous findings that as students develop support systems with school-based staff,

have the time to focus on their education, and are not dealing with pressing life challenges, that

academic engagement may increase in the years to come. However, the academic engagement

levels are already quite high, so there may be just incremental increases which may not show

statistical significance.

Positive Impact of AIFY Supports and Resources on Students and Their Families

Although the quantitative results did not statistically show that students are experiencing

increased resilience, the qualitative findings highlight that the support, resources, and personnel

positively impact students' lives. The students did not directly bring up resilience or academic

engagement verbatim, but that is to be expected due to the academic nature of these terms. To

reiterate, resilience is the ability of individuals to achieve psychological, social, cultural, and

physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity collectively to obtain these

resources in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar et al., 2011). Through the interviews, the

students highlighted how the AIFY supports and resources allowed them to achieve food

stability, address their psychological and social issues, and obtain resources that helped and

maintained their well-being. Further, the students also focused how they are more inclined and

have the space and time to focus on their studies and have the support to achieve this outcome.

This section will directly answer research question #2: What are student perceptions of

the AIFY supports, resources, and personnel? The students have provided concrete examples of

how they and their families are being supported and the impacts that is having on their mental

health, social relationships, academic achievement, and in maintaining their well-being. Students

shared that as a result of the supportive resources and personnel, students can better handle stress

and challenging life issues. Further, students are more inclined to focus on academics and have

an increased motivation to pursue their education. Additionally, the students discussed their

positive views on the school culture, people, and programs. This discussion will focus on two

main areas: (1) Impacts on Students and Families (2) Perceptions on the School, School Culture, and AIFY Supports. These two areas discuss directly and indirectly how families and students are being supported, in what ways they are being helped, and how the school and supports within are making this change occur.

The Impacts on Students and Families

Students explained several ways their participation in AIFY schools has influenced their lives. In interviews with students, most of them explained that there had been improvements in their educational success and their dedication to their academics. This finding is directly related to academic engagement. This included discussion around having an increased focus on education and spending more time after-school working on their studies. Students also said they felt more interested in class subjects and wanted to be involved in afterschool academic help to catch up on work and learn the subjects they struggled with. Based on the interview data, the success coaches, mentors, and after-school program have been a significant influence in this shift. This impact is expected in the wraparound literature. For instance, City Year's wraparound model in the United States showed similar results to AIFY in student academic growth and participation (Hill, 2020). Students were provided with mentor-type relationships to tackle low attendance, poor behaviour, and low academic achievement within City Year's program. The findings from this study showed significant improvement with the services and personnel. The 2020 report showed that chronic absenteeism was reduced (3% increase in attendance), a 57% reduction in students struggling with English language arts, and a 47% reduction in students struggling with mathematics (Hill, 2020). Subsequently, this study reiterates the importance that community school partnerships provide critical resources to tackle socio-economic barriers and out-of-school life issues. Subsequently, within AIFY, the support and services provide

immediate support to the student's family's life challenges. In addition, the students are provided with the space and time to focus on their education and ask for extra help.

The students provided specific reasons as to why their school performance and dedication to academics was enhanced. One reason mentioned by the students was that school and support staff provided increased attention and help during after-school support and during school time. This after-school connection was vital in helping students gain extra support, learn more about subjects they had difficulty with, and be in a supportive, one-on-one environment. Similar sentiments have been reported in other studies where schools incorporated community and wraparound support (Hill, 2020). Hill (2020) explains that some students require support from mental health practitioners and various enrichment programs to connect students to problem-solution-focused relationships and provide intensive and holistic support that addresses students' specific barriers. These barriers, such as mental health, family issues, and trauma, impede students from focusing on academics (Hill, 2020). Thus, AIFY is addressing this by fostering strong relationships with various community service providers with the expertise to deal with issues students face, including academic and non-academic.

Additionally, students discussed the ways their personal lives were positively impacted by AIFY. This included mental health, social interactions, and solving their problems with their strengths. Specifically, students said that there had been significant improvements in mental health, and they now have better strategies to support their well-being and the skillsets to cope with issues within their lives. These changes occurred due to students having access to mental health support within the school and having an abundance of support staff willing to be there for them, discuss their issues, and find tangible solutions to their problems. Thus, students were able to individual and collectively address psychological issues which is a major component of

experiencing increased resilience. Also, the school and support staff went out of their way to take additional time and effort to provide guidance and advice to students to navigate life challenges. This support allowed student to address social issues within their life, which is key in being able to enhance resilience (Ungar et al., 2019). Much of this support also occurred outside of school hours and throughout students' daily lives. As a result, many students realized they saw these changes in their mental health and felt cared for. Research confirms many benefits to students when mental health therapy and interventions are available for students and families (Shailer et al., 2013). Specifically, mental health therapy promotes psychosocial development, helps educational progress and builds skills needed for social, behavioural, and relationship skills (Shailer e al., 2013). These skills built during therapy helps students when experiencing issues with their self-esteem, identity, and various mental health issues. Subsequently, mental health therapy within a school, such as AIFY, allows for a flexible and community-based service designed to provide treatment plans and interventions that is effective and personalized for that student or caregiver (Shailer et al., 2013).

The social aspect that came along with AIFY was integral. The mentors, success coaches, and help from mental health therapy enabled students to experience positive interactions and helped foster their self-esteem. Some of the concrete examples of how students were helped were making new friends, keeping friends, and feeling more positive about themselves and their skills. Students explained that they were better able to handle social interactions in their day-to-day lives. Furthermore, students at schools reiterated that having relationships with the AIFY staff and caring adults allowed them to have beneficial relationships with adults they felt they could confide in. This was important because students do not always share their trauma and issues with their parents because they do not feel comfortable discussing these topics out of fear of

judgement. Without these AIFY supports and staff, students would not have an outlet to express their emotions and feelings and be unable to work through their life issues. These types of supportive relationships are essential in the wraparound process and in enhancing resilience (Ungar et al., 2019). Fostering constructive relationships with students allows for a range of support systems and social networks. Research shows that these support systems can lead to positive behaviours in students, a proactive support network that allows adults to see what issues students are facing, and proactive intervention when students may be struggling (Eber et al., 2002). Having a wide range of relationships for students can increase their social capital within their lives, leading to greater resilience outcomes (Ungar et al., 2019).

Another way AIFY has provided support to students was by helping their family and their home life. One significant impact was the access to financial aid and life opportunities. This financial support was critical for their families because it covered the cost of clothes, food, school-related fees, and after-school activities. Without this financial support, students' ability to participate in school-related activities and opportunities would be severely diminished. Another area that was integral was that the extra support and resources within AIFY. This included driving students and families to school and appointments, meeting families at their homes to provide individualized support, pointing families in the right direction for community resources, and providing food hampers to students. Subsequently, all this extra help allowed students to be at school, ensured that they could adequately function, and met their at-home needs. These impacts indirectly allowed for increased attendance, improved engagement during class time, and reduced familial stress. These results are confirmed by previous studies where students explained that wraparound support was integral in helping them in their education, personal relationships, and not wanting to leave the school system. Fries et al. (2012) study findings

indicate that once students feel stable within their lives and complex issues are being addressed, they realize education's importance. According to the resilience literature, being able to access these supports and resources increase the capacity of students to experience resilience and meet their basic needs (Ungar et al. 2019).

Moreover, AIFY students explained that their families were supported in multiple ways. For instance, many students said that AIFY staff took a vested interest in their families and their life needs. This was done by AIFY and school staff working with caregivers and siblings. Caregivers were provided with mental health counselling and resources to address trauma, anger issues, and parenting skills. Further, the AIFY supports allowed the families to be more engaged and involved in school-related activities and supports. This family support increased engagement in schools and has impacted families, caregivers, and siblings. For example, siblings were provided with opportunities to be involved in creating a resume and findings jobs. Parents were included in after-school time, parents clubs, and embedded in the AIFY supports. This was beneficial for the students because this contributed to their stability and improved relationships within their families. Families benefitted from the AIFY program due to the elements of wraparound support. For instance, the wraparound approach deliberately involves the family working together with the holistic team to provide individualized and strength-based service (Walter & Petr, 2011). Consequently, these interventions resulted in a more stable and healthy home environment that the student could properly function in.

Perceptions on the School, School Culture, and AIFY Supports

Many students brought up the importance of the school, the culture associated with it, and the AIFY supports located within. One of the key findings was that students felt supported and cared for during school hours. The students explained that they thought the environment was

welcoming and supportive, that the school staff were open and friendly, and the programs and

services in AIFY were beneficial to their academic and personal life success. Yu et al. (2020)

reaffirm that the school environment and culture can significantly affect students. A school-

based and backed support model that is integrated within allows for the wraparound support and

community agencies to be embedded within the school. The benefits of a supportive and holistic

school environment include that it is open to the families, it can promote healthy social,

emotional, physical, and mental health growth for students (Gandhi et al., 2018). Subsequently,

AIFY staff and the school environment were integral for students because when students felt

welcome, they wanted to be there, and enjoyed their time with teachers and support staff.

Research shows that engagement within schools is integral for academic achievement and

fostering a common school culture (McAlister, 2013) There is evidence that once there is family

engagement with the school, students' grade tests scores, behaviours and social outcomes

improve (Henderson & Map, 2002; McAlister, 2013). Consequently, a benefit of creating a

whole school culture and promoting engagement in AIFY schools is that it can lead to increased

participation, leading to positive educational outcomes for students.

Most students also appreciated and enjoyed the after-school activities and programs

available to them. The students talked about looking forward to these programs and how much

they enjoy attending them. The field trips, one-on-one help, social opportunities, and having

somewhere safe to be after school were key factors that students enjoyed. The mentors were vital

in helping students navigate through issues and provided companionship during school hours.

These mentors also became friendly with students and were there for life advice. The success

coach provided students with direction and helped them realize and achieve goals on which they

wanted to follow through. This support was critical in assisting students in realizing ambitions

and dreams that they may have had and helped them follow through on them. Mental health therapy was another service that was instrumental in helping students and caregivers through trauma, anger, personal and familial issues. Through listening, providing support, tools, and advice, students and families tackled the problems that impacted them and allowed them to tackle depression, anxiety, and other psychological issues. Lastly, the nutritional program and providing basic needs were vital for families to meet their daily needs and food intake. Overall, the students felt like the school, staff, and programs were very important, fun, and meaningful in their life. All of these aspects can contribute to enhanced resilience. Using a social-ecological lens of resilience makes it apparent that having access to these supportive relationships and material resources can positively influence student resilience. Ungar et al. (2019) explain that these resources are associated with enhanced developmental outcomes for students. When students face adversity in life and academic trouble, being able to have access to supports, programs, and personnel allowed the student to enable the social capital within their life resulting in a supportive care network that allows them to have pathways to experience resilience in the face of adversity, which AIFY strives to achieve.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study possesses many strengths, it had a number of limitations that will be discussed below. This study used a multiple methods secondary data analysis, which is limited by the type of data that is available, the measures that were used, and the qualitative interview questions that were asked of the sample of students that participated. Not having access to resilience and academic engagement scores over the entire life of the AIFY initiative (years 1 through 4) was limiting. Further to this, the AIFY initiative used a different resilience measure for the first two years of the intervention and the CYRM-28 for the remaining two years (years 3

and 4). While the measures look at resilience as a whole, the various questions and constructs were different and could not be compared. Having baseline scores at the beginning of the initiative and the opportunity to follow the participating students over four years would have provided a more robust understanding of the influence that the supports and resources within the schools were having, and whether this was significantly impacting resilience and academic engagement. As mentioned in the findings and discussion, the resilience and academic engagement scores for years 3 and 4 were slightly below average to high and remained stable over time. While this is a positive indicator that the students participating in AIFY initiative are doing well overall, and the supports and resources are likely contributing this, there is no baseline resilience and academic engagement to compare against. The ability to follow a cohort of students longitudinally in order to understand how interventions are impacting participants from year to year and how their lives progress cannot be understated. Future research would benefit from examining student resilience and engagement and tracking their progression from the beginning of the intervention. While this study only examined two outcome measures (resilience and academic engagement), future research could use additional variables from the AIFY initiative such as the sub-scales from the Engagement Survey, student attendance as a proxy for academic engagement, and student achievement as measured by term grades and reading and writing assessments.

This study did not rely solely on quantitative data to understand the impacts of AIFY on resilience and academic engagement, which is a strength. Complementing the quantitative data with qualitative interviews captured the changes and shifts that the quantitative metrics did not account for. The interview data showed that students and families are benefiting from the initiative and are seeing significant changes within their life. Without this qualitative aspect,

essential information and experiences would have been missed or overlooked. Students were also able to articulate all of the supports and resources that were provided as part of the wraparound AIFY initiative, in one way or another as impacting their lives. This suggests that all of the supports, resources, staff, and programs offered through AIFY are impactful and are reaching those that most need them. Even with the richness the interview data provided, it was limiting in that it was only gathered in year 3 of the AIFY initiative and on a small sample of participating students from across the three cohorts (Elementary, Junior High, and High School). Future studies would benefit from a more reflective sample of participants at different time points across the school year and initiative. This study also only looked at student interview data and adding parent interviews and AIFY staff would provide an even richer description of the types of supports and resources that are provided, and the significant impacts that the AIFY initiative is having on children, youth, and family's lives.

Conclusion

Responding to the holistic needs of students and families within the five AIFY schools is an extensive and multifaceted endeavour. Working collaboratively with schools, school boards, community agencies, and funders has allowed the AIFY initiative to collectively bring their expertise and resources to address complex obstacles that AIFY families face. The advantages of this type of work include bringing in various kinds of expertise that teachers may not have, allowing for services to be embedded within the school, and having a wide range of social services and resources that families can access. Consequently, this thesis research shows the importance of community-school partnerships that utilize a wraparound approach to support families. Having a wide range of community services available in the school supports families' social-emotional needs, allows for their basic needs to be met, and enables students to focus on

academic and life goals. This school-based support is intended to deal with life issues for students to have a stable school and home life, allowing them to focus on academics, their various life goals, and build upon strengths they already possess. Subsequently, these wraparound supports offer families high-quality support and help students foster resilience, which is beneficial in the short and long term.

One of AIFY's main goals is to help foster resilience within students. This is done by the school communities allowing families to access a wide range of services, resources and to address mental, emotional, and familial issues that students face. Consequently, based on the qualitative findings, this research shows that the capacity of students to achieve psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources to help their well-being has been improved. Many students talked about how they can access clothing, financial support, and nutrition to meet their and their family's immediate needs. The mental health therapists, mentors, and success coaches provided emotional support and guidance that allowed students to always have a safe individual that they could talk to, experience healthy relationships while building social skills, and identify goals and academic achievements that they didn't know they were capable of. Additionally, the mental health therapists worked with students to deal with trauma, depression, anxiety, domestic violence, and suicide ideation. Research shows that increasing resilience in students' lives results in less social-emotional challenges, increases academic success, and improves mental health outcomes (Luthar & Ansary, 2005; Ungar et al., 2019). The quantitative findings indicate that resilience and academic engagement of the participating students were slightly below average to high and remained stable over a two-year period.

AIFY has been able to plan and coordinate a collaborative support model designed to support students and families through their educational journey holistically. This initiative has

addressed complex social issues and helped students and families who may be experiencing vulnerability. This thesis research showed that community-school partnerships that take a wraparound approach, through embedded supports and resources in schools, can support the needs of children, youth, and their families lives. The knowledge generated from this research project will be shared with the AIFY evaluation committees, AIFY board members, and school partners involved with this partnership. A presentation will be prepared to facilitate discussion, dialogue and showcase the findings of this thesis research.

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Appendix A: CYRM-28

Resilience Research Centre

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure
(CYRM) - 28

USER'S MANUAL:
Research

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Resilience Research Centre

INTRODUCTION

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) - 28 is designed as a screening tool to explore the resources (individual, relational, communal and cultural) available to youth aged 9 to 23 years old, that may bolster their resilience. The measure was designed as part of the International Resilience Project (IRP), of the Resilience Research Centre, in collaboration with 14 communities in 11 countries around the world.

The IRP originated in 2002 under Dr. Michael Ungar at the School of Social Work, Dalhousie University, and at the time was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada as well as the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation.

This manual has been created to guide new users of the CYRM-28 through the preparation and implementation of the measure in their own research. As such, much of the technical research jargon and detail has been removed to streamline reading and use of this document. More detailed information regarding the CYRM-28 is included in Section Six entitled *Development of the CYRM-28*.

The manual has six sections. Section One, the Introduction, includes a brief explanation of our own interpretation of resilience, and Section Two contains suggestions to enhance contextual relevance of the CYRM-28. While following these suggestions is not mandatory to using the measure in your study, it is strongly recommended these procedures be adopted given the importance of cultural and contextual relevance in research. Section Three contains the actual measure, Section Four presents the structure of the CYRM and SPSS syntax for scoring, and Section Five contains a list of relevant publications. Section Six presents a detailed review of the development of the CYRM-28 to date, with Section Seven presenting a discussion of the validation of the CYRM-28. Normative data is provided in Appendix A. (Please be advised that work continues on validation of the CYRM-28).

RESILIENCE

Based on work conducted by researchers affiliated with the Resilience Research Centre, we now understand resilience ecologically. An ecological perspective implicates those mandated to help (social workers, child and youth care workers, psychologists, nurses, educators, etc.) as well as those expected to provide support (communities, family, and peer groups) in the process of intervening to provide a child opportunities to realize his or her potential.

Resilience is defined as:

I. The capacity of individuals to navigate their way to resources that sustain well-being;

II. The capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide those resources; and

III. The capacity of individuals, their families and communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared.

See Michael Ungar's publication *"Resilience across cultures"* in the *British Journal of Social Work* (2008, Vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 218-235) and "The Social Ecology of Resilience: Addressing Contextual and Cultural Ambiguity of a Nascent Construct" in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (2011, Vol. 81, no.1, pp. 1-17) for a more detailed discussion.

FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

There are two recommended components to preparing the CYRM-28 for use and its actual implementation. These components and any related steps are summarized in the table below and expanded on in the pages that follow. It is important to note that these components are included in this manual as a recommendation when using the CYRM-28, given the cross-cultural nature of the measure. These components and related steps will help ensure that use of the measure remains contextually relevant to the community involved in your research.

Component	Task
1	*Establish a community advisory committee*
2	*Prepare the CYRM-28 for local use* → Establish a local advisory committee → Prepare the CYRM-28 for administration Step 1: Conduct focus group interviews Step 2: Select site specific questions for section two of the CYRM-28 Step 3: Finalise language of the CYRM-28
3	*Administer the CYRM-28*

COMMUNITY INPUT

It is strongly advised that meetings be held with select members of the local community in which the research is being conducted. A local advisory committee can provide valuable input on the research implementation, such as suggestions on contextually relevant ways of conducting the study; and additional site specific questions that may be important to add to the CYRM-28; they can also provide important commentary on findings and to ensure that interpretations of the data are given local context.

A small group of about five local people (adults and youth) who have something important to say about children and families in their community generally works well. The group could include youth, parents, professionals, care-givers or elders who themselves have overcome challenges while growing up.

PREPARING THE CYRM-28 FOR USE

Step One: Focus group interviews

In order to be sure that there are questions included in the CYRM-28 that make sense to people locally, we recommend holding focus group interviews with a small group of people who are similar to those who will complete the CYRM-28. These people should be asked to come up with questions for Section Two of the CYRM-28 (see page 12 of this guide). We've found it best to hold two separate focus groups, one for youth and one for adults.

The following prompt questions may help generate conversation and questions:

- "What do I need to know to grow up well here?"
- "How do you describe people who grow up well here despite the many problems they face?"
- "What does it mean to you, to your family, and to your community, when bad things happen?"
- "What kinds of things are most challenging for you growing up here?"
- "What do you do when you face difficulties in your life?"
- "What does being healthy mean to you and others in your family and community?"
- "What do you do, and others you know do, to keep healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually?"

Step two: Select site specific questions

Review the focus group data and questions that have emerged. Together with the advisory committee, select up to ten site specific questions for inclusion in Section Two of the CYRM-28 (see page 12 of this guide).

Step three: Finalise language of the CYRM

Review the CYRM-28 together with the advisory committee ensuring that questions are phrased in a way that makes sense to youth locally. Finalise translation of the CYRM-28 into the local language and if possible back translate the measure into English to enhance validity of the translation process. For more information on the process and value of back translation see Richard W. Brislin's article, "Back-Translation for Cross-Cultural Research" in the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (1970, Vol. 1, No. 3, pages 185-216).

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ADMINISTERING THE CYRM-28

The CYRM-28 can be administered to participating youth either in groups or individually. It is important that all questions be read to the youth as they work through the measure to ensure comprehension.

Administration of the CYRM-28 takes approximately 20 minutes.

**The Child and Youth
Resilience Measure**

For office use only
Participant number:
Site ID:
Data number:
Date of administration:

Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)-28

DIRECTIONS

Listed below are a number of questions about you, your family, your community, and your relationships with people. These questions are designed to better understand how you cope with daily life and what role the people around you play in how you deal with daily challenges.

Please complete the questions in Section One.

For each question in Sections Two and Three, please circle the number to the right that describes you best. There are no right or wrong answers.

SECTION ONE

What is your date of birth? _____

What is your sex? _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?_____

Who do you live with? _____

How long have you lived with these people? _____

How many times have you moved homes in the past 5 years? _____

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Please describe who you consider to be your family (For example, 1 or 2 biological parents, siblings, friends on the street, a foster family, an adopted family, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

People are often described as belonging to a particular racial group. To which of the following groups do you belong? (Mark or check the one that best describe(s) you)

- ○ Aboriginal or Native
- ○ South Asian (*e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan)*
- ○ South East Asian *(e.g., Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese)*
- ○ West Asian to Middle Eastern *(e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese)*
- ○ Asian (*e.g., Korean, Chinese, Japanese)*
- ○ Black (*e.g., African or Caribbean descent)*
- ○ White or European
- ○ Filipino
- ○ Latin American (*e.g., Mexican, South American, Central American)*
- ○ Other (please specify): _____
- ○ Mixed Race (please list all groups that apply): _____

People are often described as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group(s). *(For example, Chinese, Jamaican, German, Italian, Irish, English, Ukrainian, Inuit, East Indian, Jewish, Scottish, Portuguese, French, Polish, Vietnamese, Lebanese, etc.)* To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you see yourself belonging? Please list as many groups as you want.

_____

_____

_____

SECTION TWO

To what extent do the statements below DESCRIBE YOU? Circle <u>one</u> answer for <u>each</u> statement.

	Not at All	A Little	Some-what	Quite a Bit	A Lot
1. Site specific question 1	1	2	3	4	5
2. Site specific question 2	1	2	3	4	5
3. Site specific question 3	1	2	3	4	5
4. Site specific question 4	1	2	3	4	5
5. Site specific question 5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Site specific question 6	1	2	3	4	5
7. Site specific question 7	1	2	3	4	5
8. Site specific question8	1	2	3	4	5
9. Site specific question 9	1	2	3	4	5
10. Site specific question 10	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION THREE

To what extent do the statements below DESCRIBE YOU? Circle one answer for each statement.

	Not at All	A Little	Some- what	Quite a Bit	A Lot
1. I have people I look up to	1	2	3	4	5
2. I cooperate with people around me	1	2	3	4	5
3. Getting an education is important to me	1	2	3	4	5
4. I know how to behave in different social situations	1	2	3	4	5
5. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) watch me closely	1	2	3	4	5
6. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me	1	2	3	4	5
7. If I am hungry, there is enough to eat	1	2	3	4	5
8. I try to finish what I start	1	2	3	4	5
9. Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am proud of my ethnic background	1	2	3	4	5
11. People think that I am fun to be with	1	2	3	4	5
12. I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example by using drugs and/or being violent)	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel supported by my friends	1	2	3	4	5
15. I know where to go in my community to get help	1	2	3	4	5
16. I feel I belong at my school	1	2	3	4	5
17. My family stands by me during difficult times	1	2	3	4	5
18. My friends stand by me during difficult times	1	2	3	4	5
19. I am treated fairly in my community	1	2	3	4	5
20. I have opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly	1	2	3	4	5
21. I am aware of my own strengths	1	2	3	4	5
22. I participate in organized religious activities	1	2	3	4	5
23. I think it is important to help out in my community	1	2	3	4	5
24. I feel safe when I am with my family/caregiver(s)	1	2	3	4	5
25. I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others)	1	2	3	4	5
26. I enjoy my family's/caregiver's cultural and family traditions	1	2	3	4	5
27. I enjoy my community's traditions	1	2	3	4	5
28. I am proud to be (Nationality: _____)?	1	2	3	4	5

Resilience Research Centre

**Scoring and understanding
The Child and Youth
Resilience Measure-28**

Sub-scales and question clusters on the CYRM-28

Confirmatory Factor Analysis conducted on data gathered in three international sites has confirmed that the CYRM-28 has three sub-scales: Individual, relationships with primary care-givers, and contextual factors that facilitate a sense of belonging (see fit statistics on page 18). Within each of these sub-scales there are additional clusters of questions that provide additional insight into these three dimensions. To score each of the clusters and/or sub-scales simply sum responses to the relevant questions[1]. The higher the score, the more these resilience components are present in the lives of participating youth.

Normative data[2] for scores on the total measure, the sub-scales and the sub-clusters of questions are contained in Appendix A. Data are presented for youth with complex high needs (n=1071), a comparison sample of low-risk youth (n=1128) and both groups combined (n=2199).

Individual

Individual: Individual personal skills

2. I cooperate with people around me
8. I try to finish what I start
11. People think that I am fun to be with
13. I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example by using drugs and/or being violent)
21. I am aware of my own strengths

Individual: Individual peer support

14. I feel supported by my friends
18. My friends stand by me during difficult times

Individual: Individual social skills

4. I know how to behave in different social situations
20. I am given opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly
15. I know where to go in my community to get help
25. I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others)

---

[1] Please note that work continues on the CYRM-28 with regards to scoring and interpretation of results. As this information becomes available, this manual will be updated and distributed.
[2] Please note that normative data presented here are from a Canadian sample of youth only. As data collection internationally continues, these norms will be revised and distributed.

Relationship with Primary Caregiver

Caregiver: Physical Care giving

5. My caregiver(s) watch me closely
7. If I am hungry, there is enough to eat

Caregiver: Psychological Care giving

6. My caregiver(s) know a lot about me
12. I talk to my caregiver(s) about how I feel
17. My caregiver(s) stand(s) by me during difficult times
24. I feel safe when I am with my caregiver(s)
26. I enjoy my caregiver's cultural and family traditions

Context

Context: Spiritual

| |
|---|
| 9. Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me |
| 22. I participate in organized religious activities |
| 23. I think it is important to help out in my community |

Context: Education

3. Getting an education is important to me
16. I feel I belong at my school

Context: Cultural

1. I have people I look up to
10. I am proud of my ethnic background
19. I am treated fairly in my community
27. I enjoy my community's traditions
28. I am proud to be a citizen of _____
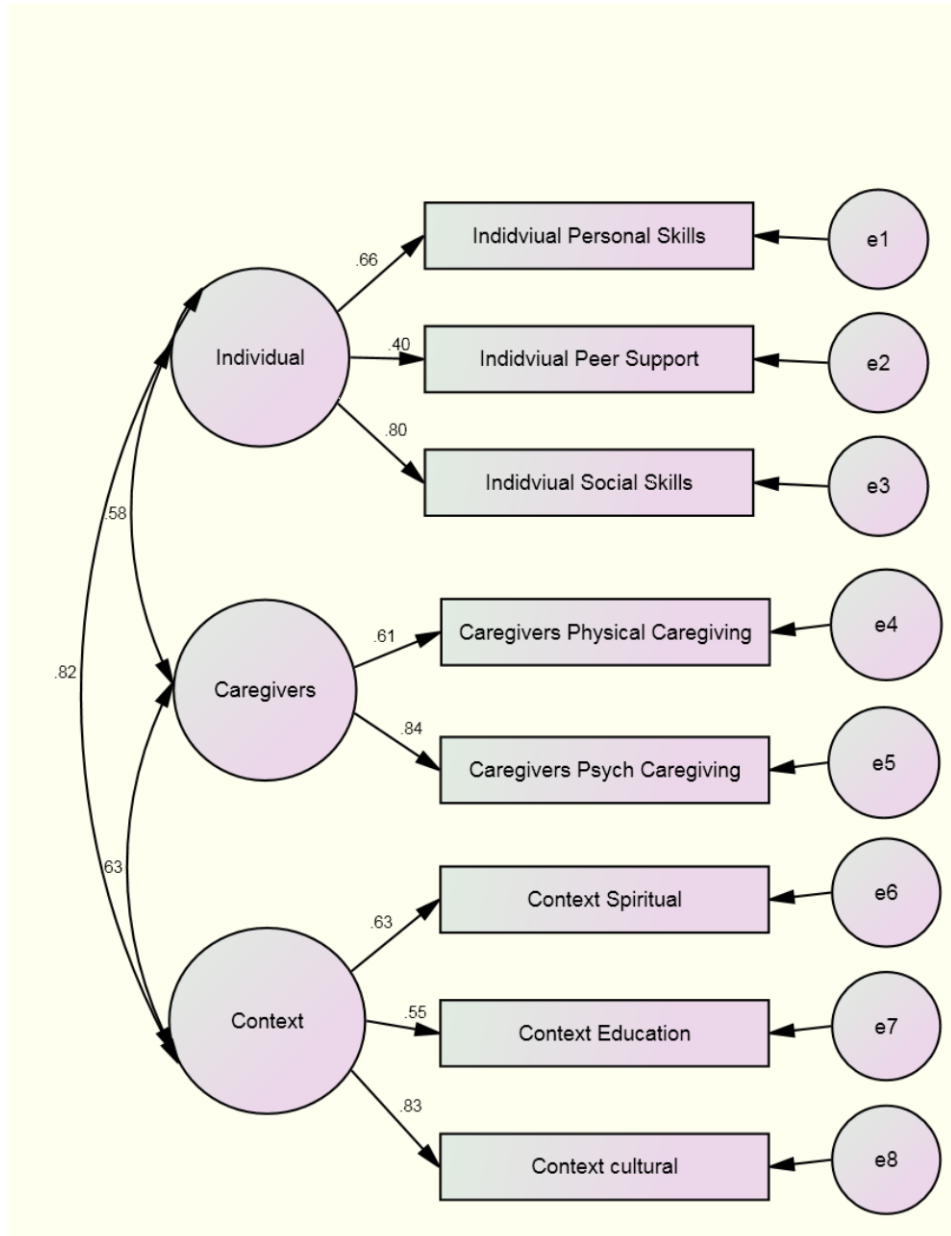
SPSS Syntax for Scoring the CYRM-28

To compute a total CYRM score
Higher scores indicate higher levels of characteristics associated with resilience.

COMPUTE CYRMscore = SUM (B1_1, B2_1, B3_1, B4_1, B5_1, B6_1, B7_1, B8_1, B9_1, B22_1, B23_1, B24_1, B25_1, B26_1, B27_1, B28_1, B38_1, B39_1, B46_1, B47_1, B48_1, B49_1, B50_1, B51_1, B52_1, B53_1, B54_1, B55_1) .
VARIABLE LABELS CYRMscore 'CYRM Score' .
EXECUTE .

To compute total scores on the three CYRM sub-scales
Higher scores indicate higher levels of characteristics associated with each of the subscales.
Individual.
COMPUTE CYRM_I_score = SUM (B1_1, B2_1, B3_1, B4_1, B5_1, B8_1, B9_1, B47_1, B48_1, B49_1, B50_1) .
VARIABLE LABELS CYRM_I_score 'Individual Sub-Scale CYRM Score' .
EXECUTE .

Relationship with caregivers.
COMPUTE CYRM_R_score = SUM (B22_1, B23_1, B24_1, B25_1, B26_1, B27_1, B28_1) .
VARIABLE LABELS CYRM_R_score 'Relationship with caregivers Sub-Scale CYRM Score' .
EXECUTE .

Context/Sense of belonging.
COMPUTE CYRM_C_score = SUM (B6_1, B7_1, B38_1, B39_1, B46_1, B51_1, B52_1, B53_1, B54_1, B55_1) .
VARIABLE LABELS CYRM_C_score 'Context Sub-scale CYRM Score' .
EXECUTE .

To compute mean scores on the three CYRM sub-scales
The mean score for each Sub-Scale will give you a score out of 5. These scores will represent the participant's average response to the questions included on that particular sub-scale.
Individual.
COMPUTE MCYRM_I_scr = MEAN (B1_1, B2_1, B3_1, B4_1, B5_1, B8_1, B9_1, B47_1, B48_1, B49_1, B50_1) .
VARIABLE LABELS MCYRM_I_scr ' Mean Individual Sub-Scale CYRM Score' .
EXECUTE .

Relationship with caregivers.
COMPUTE MCYRM_R_scr = MEAN (B22_1, B23_1, B24_1, B25_1, B26_1, B27_1, B28_1) .
VARIABLE LABELS MCYRM_R_scr ' Mean Relationship with caregivers Sub-Scale CYRM Score' .
EXECUTE .

Context/Sense of belonging.
COMPUTE MCYRM_C_scr = MEAN (B22_1, B23_1, B24_1, B25_1, B26_1, B27_1, B28_1) .
VARIABLE LABELS MCYRM_C_scr ' Mean Context Sub-Scale CYRM Score' .
EXECUTE .

* To compute total scores on the CYRM Sub-scale question clusters*
Higher scores indicate higher levels of characteristics associated with each of the clusters*.
The Individual Sub-scale of the CYRM has three sub-clusters of questions*.
COMPUTE IndPS=SUM (B1_1 to B5_1).
VARIABLE LABELS IndPS 'Individual Personal Skills'.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE IndPeer= SUM (B8_1, B9_1).
VARIABLE LABELS IndPeer 'Individual Peer Support'.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE IndSS= SUM (B47_1 to B50_1).
VARIABLE LABELS IndSS 'Individual Social Skills'.
EXECUTE.

The Caregiver Sub-scale of the CYRM has two sub-clusters of questions*.
COMPUTE CrPhys= SUM (B22_1, B24_1).
VARIABLE LABELS CrPhys 'Caregivers Physical Care Giving'.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE CrPsyc= SUM (B23_1, B25_1 to B28_1).
VARIABLE LABELS CrPsyc 'Caregivers Psychological Care Giving'.
EXECUTE.

The Contextual Sub-scale of the CYRM has three sub-clusters of questions*.
COMPUTE CntS= SUM (B6_1, B7_1, B53_1).
VARIABLE LABELS CntS 'Context Spiritual'.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE CntEd= SUM (B38_1, B39_1).
VARIABLE LABELS CntEd 'Context Education'.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE CntC= SUM (B46_1, B51_1, B52_1, B54_1, B55_1).
VARIABLE LABELS CntC 'Context Cultural'.
EXECUTE.

* To compute mean scores on the CYRM Sub-scale question clusters*
**The following scoring will produce a score out of 5 for each of the clusters of questions. These
score will represent the participant's average response to the questions included in that cluster.*

The Individual Sub-scale of the CYRM has three sub-clusters of questions*.
COMPUTE MIndPS=MEAN (B1_1 to B5_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MIndPS 'Individual Personal Skills Mean Score'.
EXECUTE.

```
COMPUTE MIndPeer= MEAN (B8_1, B9_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MIndPeer 'Individual Peer Support Mean Score '.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE MIndSS= MEAN (B47_1 to B50_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MIndSS 'Individual Social Skills Mean Score '.
EXECUTE.

*The Caregiver Sub-scale of the CYRM has two sub-clusters of questions*.
COMPUTE MCrPhys= MEAN (B22_1, B24_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MCrPhys 'Caregivers Physical Care Giving Mean Score '.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE MCrPsyc= MEAN (B23_1, B25_1 to B28_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MCrPsyc 'Caregivers Psychological Care Giving Mean Score '.
EXECUTE.

*The Contextual Sub-scale of the CYRM has three sub-clusters of questions*.
COMPUTE MCntS= MEAN (B6_1, B7_1, B53_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MCntS 'Context Spiritual Mean Score '.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE MCntEd= MEAN (B38_1, B39_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MCntEd 'Context Education Mean Score '.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE MCntC= MEAN (B46_1, B51_1, B52_1, B54_1, B55_1).
VARIABLE LABELS MCntC 'Context Cultural Mean Score '.
EXECUTE.
```

**Appendix A:
Normative data for the CYRM-28**

CYRM Scoring for Manual

CYRM TOTAL SCORE (Total Sample)

	All (n=2198)	Female (n=1061)	Male (n=1137)
Mean	108.60	111.98	105.45
SD	18.66	17.65	19.03

CYRM TOTAL SCORE (Complex Needs Youth)

	All (n=1071)	Female (n=471)	Male (n=600)
Mean	103.85	106.99	101.39
SD	20.18	20.23	19.82

CYRM TOTAL SCORE (Low-Risk Youth)

	All (n=1127)	Female (n=590)	Male (n=537)
Mean	113.12	115.96	110.00
SD	15.82	14.07	17.02

CYRM Total Score

CYRM (TOTAL SAMPLE)

Total CYRM Score	ALL (n=2199)		FEMALE (n=1062)		MALE (n=1135)	
	%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %
29	.0	.0	.0	.0	.1	.1
30	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.1
31	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.1
32	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.1
33	.0	.1	.0	.0	.1	.2
34	.0	.1	.0	.0	.0	.2
35	.0	.1	.0	.0	.0	.2
36	.0	.1	.0	.0	.0	.2
37	.0	.1	.1	.1	.0	.2
38	.0	.1	.0	.1	.0	.2
39	.0	.2	.0	.1	.1	.3
40	.0	.2	.0	.1	.0	.3
41	.1	.3	.2	.3	.0	.3
42	.1	.4	.0	.3	.2	.4
43	.0	.4	.0	.3	.0	.4
44	.0	.4	.0	.3	.0	.4
45	.1	.5	.0	.3	.2	.6
46	.0	.5	.0	.3	.0	.6
47	.0	.5	.0	.3	.0	.6
48	.1	.5	.0	.3	.2	.8
49	.1	.7	.3	.6	.0	.8
50	.1	.8	.0	.6	.3	1.1
51	.0	.9	.0	.6	.1	1.1
52	.0	.9	.0	.6	.1	1.2
53	.1	1.0	.1	.7	.1	1.3
54	.1	1.1	.2	.8	.0	1.3
55	.0	1.1	.0	.8	.1	1.4
56	.2	1.3	.2	1.0	.2	1.6
57	.1	1.5	.1	1.1	.2	1.8
58	.0	1.5	.0	1.1	.1	1.9
59	.2	1.7	.2	1.3	.2	2.0
60	.2	1.9	.2	1.5	.2	2.2
61	.1	2.0	.1	1.6	.1	2.3
62	.3	2.3	.1	1.7	.5	2.8
63	.1	2.4	.1	1.8	.2	3.0
64	.1	2.5	.0	1.8	.2	3.2
65	.1	2.6	.0	1.8	.3	3.4

66	.1	2.7	.1	1.9	.1	3.5
67	.2	3.0	.1	2.0	.4	3.9
68	.5	3.5	.5	2.5	.6	4.6
69	.1	3.6	.1	2.5	.2	4.7
70	.2	3.9	.1	2.6	.4	5.0
71	.3	4.2	.2	2.8	.4	5.5
72	.3	4.5	.2	3.0	.4	5.9
73	.3	4.8	.3	3.3	.3	6.2
74	.4	5.1	.4	3.7	.4	6.5
75	.6	5.7	.5	4.1	.7	7.2
76	.6	6.4	.5	4.6	.8	8.0
77	.2	6.6	.1	4.7	.4	8.4
78	.6	7.2	.4	5.1	.9	9.3
79	.5	7.8	.7	5.7	.4	9.7
80	.6	8.4	.7	6.4	.6	10.3
81	.5	9.0	.5	6.9	.6	10.9
82	.8	9.7	.6	7.4	1.0	11.9
83	.7	10.4	.2	7.6	1.2	13.0
84	.5	10.9	.3	7.9	.7	13.7
85	.7	11.6	.4	8.3	1.0	14.7
86	.8	12.4	.6	8.9	1.1	15.8
87	.6	13.1	.5	9.3	.8	16.6
88	.8	13.8	.7	10.0	.9	17.4
89	.9	14.7	.9	10.9	.9	18.3
90	1.0	15.7	.6	11.5	1.4	19.7
91	1.2	17.0	.9	12.4	1.5	21.2
92	.8	17.8	.5	12.9	1.1	22.4
93	1.3	19.1	.9	13.9	1.7	24.1
94	1.7	20.8	1.7	15.6	1.7	25.7
95	1.3	22.1	.8	16.4	1.7	27.4
96	1.3	23.3	1.2	17.6	1.3	28.7
97	1.2	24.6	.9	18.6	1.5	30.2
98	2.2	26.8	1.8	20.4	2.6	32.8
99	1.4	28.2	1.2	21.6	1.5	34.3
100	1.9	30.1	1.1	22.7	2.6	36.9
101	1.5	31.6	1.5	24.2	1.5	38.4
102	1.9	33.4	1.4	25.6	2.3	40.7
103	1.5	34.9	1.4	27.0	1.6	42.3
104	2.1	37.1	2.0	29.0	2.3	44.6
105	1.6	38.7	1.6	30.6	1.6	46.2
106	1.7	40.4	1.2	31.9	2.2	48.4
107	1.6	42.0	1.7	33.6	1.5	49.9
108	1.9	43.9	1.8	35.3	2.0	51.9
109	2.0	45.9	1.9	37.2	2.0	53.9

110	1.7	47.5	1.6	38.8	1.8	55.7
111	2.1	49.6	2.0	40.8	2.2	57.8
112	2.4	52.0	3.1	43.9	1.8	59.56
113	2.4	54.5	3.0	46.9	1.9	61.5
114	2.0	56.5	1.7	48.6	2.4	63.9
115	2.4	58.9	2.2	50.8	2.6	66.4
116	2.0	60.8	1.8	52.6	2.1	68.5
117	1.9	62.7	1.9	54.5	1.9	70.4
118	2.5	65.3	3.5	58.0	1.7	72.2
119	2.7	68.0	3.1	61.1	2.3	74.4
120	2.3	70.3	2.6	63.7	2.0	76.4
121	2.0	72.3	1.9	65.6	2.1	78.6
122	2.4	74.7	2.7	68.3	2.0	80.6
123	2.8	77.5	3.5	71.8	2.2	82.8
124	1.6	79.1	1.1	73.0	2.0	84.8
125	2.2	81.3	2.9	75.9	1.6	86.4
126	2.1	83.4	2.7	78.6	1.5	87.9
127	1.8	85.2	2.5	81.1	1.1	89.0
128	1.9	87.0	1.9	83.0	1.9	90.8
129	1.6	88.7	1.9	84.9	1.4	92.2
130	1.8	90.5	2.8	87.7	.9	93.1
131	1.5	92.0	2.1	89.8	1.0	94.1
132	1.5	93.5	1.9	91.7	1.2	95.2
133	1.2	94.7	1.5	93.2	.9	96.1
134	1.0	95.7	1.8	95.0	.4	96.5
135	1.0	96.7	1.2	96.2	.7	97.2
136	1.0	97.7	1.4	97.6	.6	97.8
137	.5	98.2	.5	98.1	.5	98.3
138	.7	98.9	.8	98.9	.6	98.9
139	.6	99.5	.6	99.4	.7	99.6
140	.5	100.0	.6	100.0	.4	100.0

Appendix B: Engagement Survey

Youth Resiliency Survey: Engagement Questions Information Sheet

The Definition of Engagement

Student engagement refers to student involvement and participation in the schooling process that fosters a sense of commitment and belonging.

About the Engagement Questions

The engagement scale of the student survey administered at your school was adapted from the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools School Climate Survey. The School Climate Survey was developed by the Johns Hopkins Centre for Youth Violence Prevention, in collaboration with the Marlyand State Department of Education and a national non-profit organization.

How Engagement Questions are Scored

To measure student engagement at your school, we integrated the following questions from the the School Climate Survey:

- 6 Engagement sub-scales (28 questions in total)
- A Support sub-scale (3 questions in total)

The 6 subscales that capture the multi-faceted nature of engagement are:

1. **Connection to teachers:** Caring and respectful relationships with adults in the school
2. **Student connectedness:** Caring and respectful relationships between peers in the school
3. **Academic engagement:** Students' academic values and perceptions of academic success
4. **Whole-school connectedness:** Students' levels of identification with their schools
5. **Culture of equity:** Schools treat students fairly and ensure that all students receive the support they need to be successful
6. **Parent engagement:** Parents' involvement in students' learning

The support subscale captures students' perceptions of the support they receive at school to help them with the challenges they encounter in their lives. This subscale was included because the questions speak to how students perceive the support they may or may not receive in school. Each subscale is comprised of several questions. Table 1 (next page) maps out which questions belong to each subscale.

Students responded to the survey questions on a 5-point response scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). Students will receive a standard score for each subscale. Higher scores indicate that students identify with those factors of engagement or support to a greater degree.

Youth Resiliency Survey: Engagement Questions Information Sheet

Table 1. Engagement Questions Grouped by Subscale (Adapted from Bradshaw et al., 2014)

Connection to Teachers	Eng01	My teachers listen to me when I have something to say
	Eng02	My teachers care about me
	Eng03	Teachers respect the students
	Eng04	My teachers tell me when I do a good job
	Eng05	My teachers notice when I am not there
	Eng06	Students trust the teachers
Student Connectedness	Eng07	I feel like I belong
	Eng08	Students help one another
	Eng09	Students respect one another
	Eng10	Students like one another
	Eng11	Students trust one another
Academic Engagement	Eng12	My teachers believe that I can do well in school
	Eng13	I believe I can do well in school
	Eng14	My teachers always want me to do my best
	Eng15	It is important to finish high school
Whole-School Connectedness	Eng16	Students and staff feel pride in this school
	Eng17	I enjoy learning at this school
	Eng18	I like this school
	Eng19	I like coming to school
Culture of Equity	Eng20	Students of all races are treated the same
		All students are treated the same, regardless of whether their parents are rich or poor
	Eng21	Boys and girls are treated equally well
	Eng22	The school provides instructional materials that
	Eng23	reflect my culture, ethnicity, and identity
Parent Engagement	Eng24	My parent(s) or guardian(s) feels welcome at this school
	Eng25	If I do something bad at school, my parent(s) or guardian(s) hear about it
	Eng26	When I do something good at school, my parent(s) or guardian(s) usually hear about it
	Eng27	The school tries to involve parents or guardians
	Eng28	Parents or guardians often come to my school to help out
Support*	Eng29	Teachers at my school help students with their problems
	Eng30	Students who need help for their problems are able to get it through school
	Eng31	There is someone at school who I can talk to about personal problems

Note: Question #s correspond to the labels for the survey questions in the CSV file that has all the raw survey data for the students in your school. In the CSV file is where you can look up specific questions from the survey and see how students responded to them based on the 5-point response scale. *The support subscale is distinct from the engagement subscales.

Page 2 of 2

Appendix C: Interview Guide

All in For Youth Student Interview Guide

Hello, my name is _____ and we are here today to talk about ways you feel your school helps

you and your family. We also want to learn about what you do at school and how you feel in

school.

Hearing from you is so important because you are the only one who can tell us if you are getting

the support you need from your school. If you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked

to answer questions about yourself, your family, and your school. You can skip any questions

that you don't want to answer, and we will not tell anyone your name or any information that

could identify you.

Your parent/guardian gave us permission to talk to you today, but you get to decide whether you

want to or not. You do not have to take part in this project if you don't want to. You can also

agree to join now and change your mind later. All you have to do is tell us that you don't want to

be part of the project anymore. It is completely ok if you don't want to be part of the project, or if

you agree to talk to us and change your mind later.

Do you have any questions about the project?

Would you like to participate in this project?

So thank you for being here – we are very interested in what you have to say! To start, please

introduce yourself – What's your name, how old are you, and what grade are you in?

Okay, first we want to talk to you about your school and the adults who work at your school.

1. **How long have you gone to this school, since what grade?**

2. **What do you think about your school?**
   a. What do you like about it?

  b. What do you dislike about it?
  c. What could be done to help you like your school better?

3. **What do you think about your teachers or other adults who work at your school?**
  a. How do they support you to do well in school?
  b. How do they show you that they care about you?

4. **If you needed help with a problem, who would you go to for help?**
  a. Why would you choose to go to this person for help?

Now, we just want to talk about some of the supports your school gives to you and your families.

5. **What are some ways that your school helps you in your life?**
  a. How has your school/the people at the school helped your family?
  b. How do you feel when people in your school help you or your family?
  c. How has the support you received from your school helped you at home or at school (e.g., feeling more happy, completing homework, getting along with family)?
  d. Are you and your family more involved in the community (e.g., help others, volunteer, know more people in community)?

6. **How can the school better help you, your friends, and your family?**
  a. What are some other things your school could do to help you?

Just a few more questions,
7. **If you had to describe yourself to someone you didn't know, how would you describe yourself?**
  a. Qualities you have?
  b. Things you believe in?
  c. What do you think about yourself?

8. **What are some personal goals you are working towards?**
  a. What do you want to be when you grow up?
  b. Who helps you work towards these goals?

9. **What is something people don't know about you or your life that you want them to know?**
  a. Things you are good at?
  b. Things you know?

Thank you again for talking with us today. Your feelings about your school are very important to this project. This helps us get a better understanding of ways your school is or is not supporting the students and families that are part of the school community.

Appendix D: Condensed Analysis Summary

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Description	Illustrative Quote
Impacts of Families	Financial and Nutritional Support	Here the students allude to the fact that the AIFY initiative supported their families by lowering the financial burden in numerous ways and aided them in meeting their nutritional needs.	"…they give us food. Because … after lunch if there are still leftovers, you can ask if you can bring some home." "… I think the lunch program is helping my family because we don't have lots of money to like feed 3 kids" "Oh, and you could also help [from the] food banks…. You can pull out some food, talk to [Roots & Wings] or [Mental Health Therapist] and they help you with food. If you're struggling with money or something. Also, the school helps every year, they take people to Old Navy well winter break "
	Enhanced Family Relationships and Engagement	The students discuss how their family relationships and overall stability has improved as a result of the services provided to them in the schools	"[The services] definitely help my family function better, but yeah, I don't really see them that often."

The Impacts on Students	Improved Mental Health Support	Students clarify how having access to mental health supports and caring adults allows them to have someone to talk things out with and as a result, creates positive mental health changes	"… since I was talking to [therapist's name], she helped me. And she helped me with depression, self-esteem, and then I got my friends back"
	Increased Educational and After-School Support	Students reflect on how AIFY services has helped them in their education and improved their ability to learn	"… it's just better because they help me learn and they do that with some other students too. So yeah, it's fun. Cause like it really gets us [the students] to expand our learning and they help us [school staff and support staff] lots, like I got my marks up a lot this year" "Yeah, he's been mentoring me for like 3 years. He's been really bringing up my marks." "[How do the supports make you feel] …really good! Cause I know that I'm safe here, and I can work happily here, keeping up my grades and stuff."
	Increased relationships and socialization with peers	Students discuss how they are better able to make friends and keep them due to the staff and programming from AIFY. Also, students talk about how they are better able to navigate through social interactions	"…well I like it [after school time]. It's fun and well, in the survey it asked if 'does it help you get along with others?' and I did – I forgot the options – but I know I did a yes. And yeah, it does help me get along with others. And it helps me make new friends."

Students' personal development	This sub-theme focuses on how the students have progressed and grown during the school year. The students examine their personal growth in dealing with issues such as controlling their nerves and anger.	"Like a long time ago I used to be like getting angry at people, and then I just wanted to fight them. But then after I just start to learn about it. … after I didn't want to fight anymore, and I'm calm and I just go tell the teacher."
Views on the School and School Culture	This theme looks at the views that students had on their school and the environment within. Many students talked about the positive aspects of their schools and what they enjoyed about it.	"I can honestly say that it's an alright school. I met a lot of great people and I've also learned a lot since being here. Yeah, it's a good school."