

Steps Toward an Inclusive Research Methodology for "At- Risk" Youth

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UNIVERSITY



YOUNGANDWELL
Cooperative Research Centre

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An Australian Government Initiative



Introduction

- **Kaya!**
- **Master of Applied Psychology (Clinical/PhD) candidate, School of Psychology & Exercise Science, Kulbardi Center, Murdoch University**

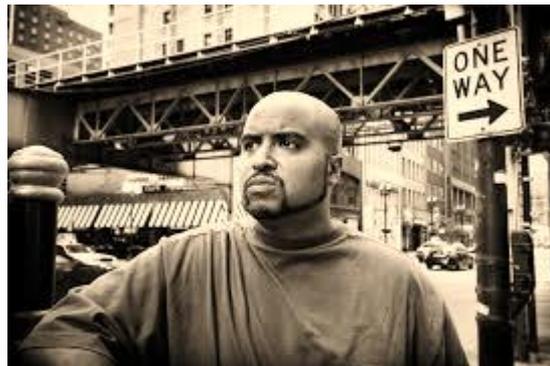
Research agenda: the intersection of socioeconomic risk & externalizing psychopathology on how young people respond, react and recover emotionally From the stressors of day-to-day life

Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM)



Definitions of “At-Risk” Youth

- Lambert and Wiebel’s (1990) ***“those who are disadvantaged and disenfranchised: the homeless and transient, chronically mentally ill, high school drop-outs, criminal offenders, prostitutes, juvenile delinquents, gang members, runaways and other street people”***
- Includes socially disadvantaged groups (Bonevski et al., 2014)
 - i.e. youth in low socioeconomic status communities (low SES)
 - Indigenous youth



Why “hard-to-reach”?

Bonevski et al (2014) systematic review findings:

1. **Researchers not creating trust**, especially for groups with past harms
2. Belief that research will shame/harm community
3. **Researchers not successfully describing the benefits** of the research to the community
4. Time and financial constraints
5. Non-familiarity with the research process
7. Literacy issues
6. Presence of community gatekeepers



Ethnic Minority Youth

Often deemed “hard-to reach”, underrepresented in psychological research (Coll et al., 1996)

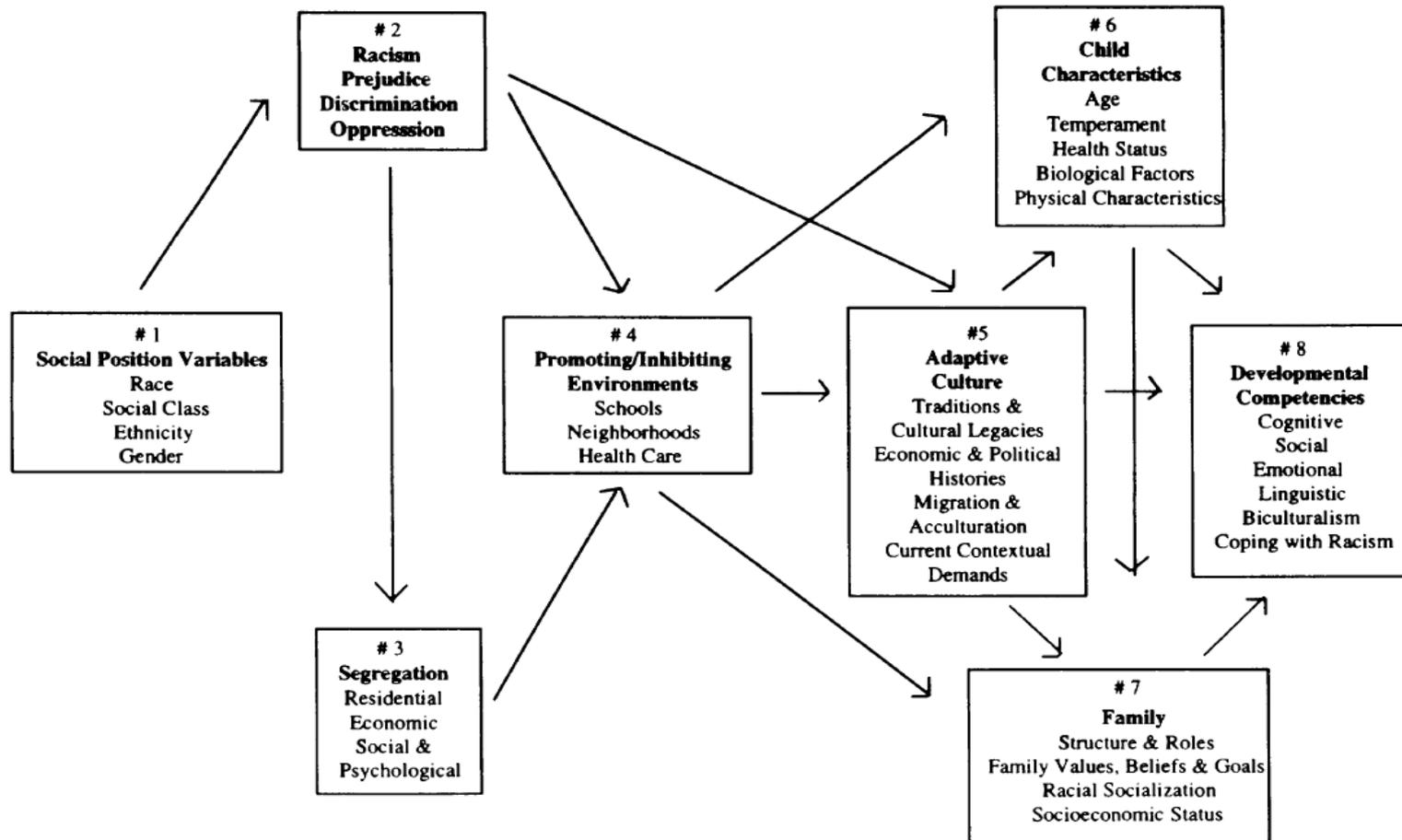


FIG. 1.—Integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children.

Youth living in socioeconomic disadvantage

- Can face a number mental health difficulties due to high levels of life stress
- **Gap in research:** *what* stressors vulnerable young people face on a day-to-day basis, and *how* these impact on youths' everyday wellbeing.
- In order to accurately capture these stressors and how they spill-over into the everyday emotional lives of vulnerable youth, my team and I partnered with youth themselves



Overview of PhD research

- **Funded by the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre**

“an Australian-based, international research centre that unites young people with researchers, practitioners, innovators and policy-makers from over 75 partner organisations. Together, we explore the role of technology in young people’s lives, and how it can be used to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 25. The Young and Well CRC is established under the Australian Government’s Cooperative Research Centres Program”
www.youngandwellcrc.org.au

- **Research Aim: understand the stressors that disadvantaged youth face on a daily basis, and the emotional impact of stressors**
 - Involved using technology as a means of engagement and data collection



Using technology to reach the hard-to-reach?



- growing recognition that, among disadvantage groups, innovative techniques are required for collecting and evaluating health outcomes data (Hahn & 2003)
- Smartphones are devices with which adolescents are both comfortable and familiar (Madden et al., 2013).
- Pilot studies of smartphones in research also show that adolescents report feeling comfortable with the devices (Reid, Kauer, Dudgeon & Shrier, 2008).
- Adults in low SES settings are more likely to be dependent on smartphones with no other type of internet connection (PEW, 2015 report).

Using Tech to Reach Indigenous Youth

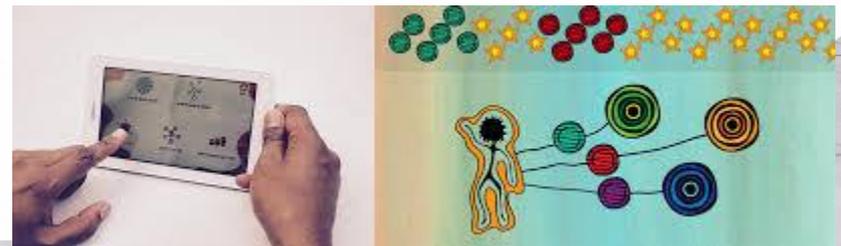
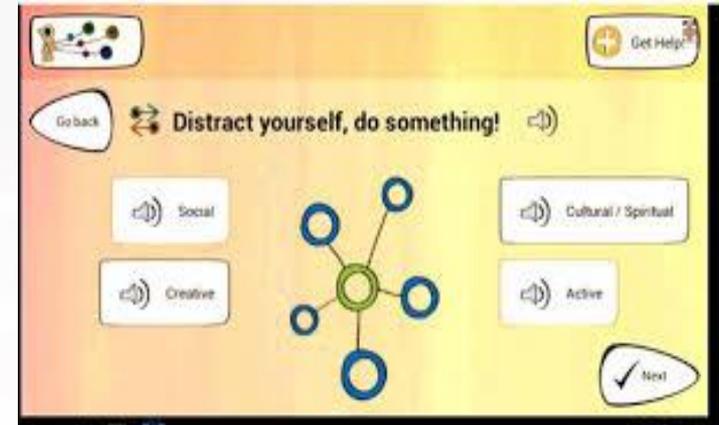
Some examples...

iBobbly –

suicide prevention app,

developed as part of PhD research by Joe Tighe, Young & Well CRC and partners

- Encourages help seeking by reducing stigma around suicide and removing factor of geographical isolation



Using Tech to Reach Indigenous Youth

- **AIMhi Stay Strong App** - Menzies School of Health Institute
http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Resources/Stay_Strong_iPad_App/
- Health professionals use with Indigenous persons to assist in management of drug, alcohol and tobacco use



To inform researchers...

- Welcome to Country App

www.welcometocountry.mobi/about/

-gps tracker, sends push notifications with links to welcome to country for that area

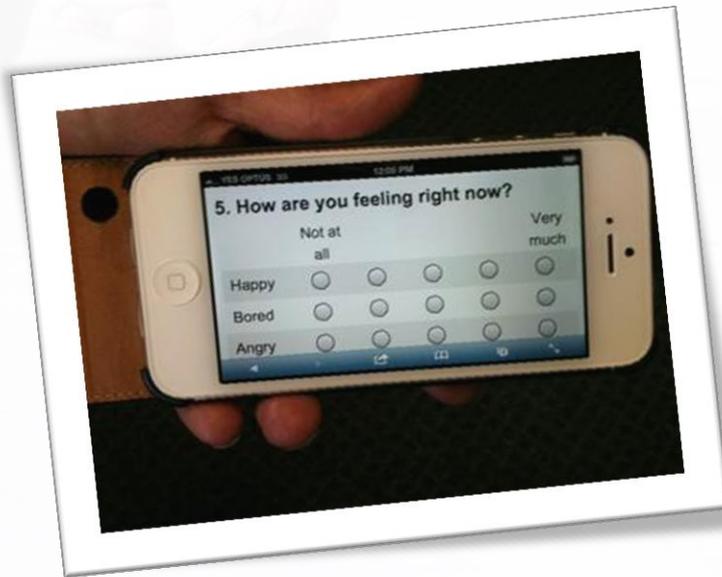


Smartphones to Engage Youth

Concern	Smartphone solution
Disadvantaged youth report not completing over-the-phone surveys due to lack of privacy from parents (Meyers, Webb, Frantz, & Randall, 2003).	Smartphones provide discrete and private data collection device
Lack of trust in researchers/research process	Adolescents can be encouraged to enter passwords on smartphones to ensure privacy of their data. Data that is entered into smartphones can be sent automatically to an online server and not stored on the actual phone.
Unfamiliarity with research process	Reduced burden on participants
Time and financial constraints	Can meet youth “where they are”

Smartphones to Engage Youth

- We loaned youth iPhone 5 & 6's for 7 days, so they could tell us about their daily stressors, emotions, social contexts and technology use



Our research partners

- 206 adolescents from two schools in the South West Corridor (SWC) of Western Australia (Whadjuk people on Nyungar Country)
- Recent concerns about the emotional wellbeing of youth in the SWC

Mandurah community reeling after six teenage suicides

April 11th, 2016, 03:30PM | Written by Rachel Fenner | Mandurah Coastal Times **NEWS**

Perth teen creates suicide prevention video urging peers to get help

ABC Radio Perth | By Emma Wynne

Posted 31 May 2016, 12:57pm

- Prompted state and federal government action

Turnbull in Mandurah to tackle youth suicide

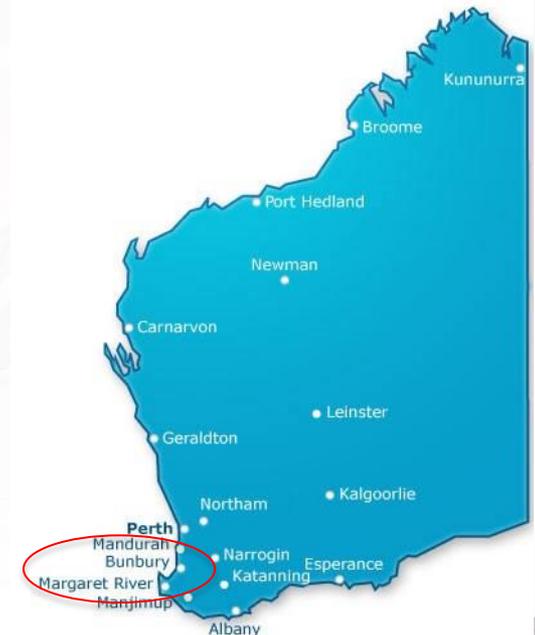


Nathan Hondros

@nathanhondros

12 Aug 2016, 12:57 p.m.

<http://www.mandurahmail.com.au/story/4093049/turnbull-in-mandurah-to-tackle-youth-suicide/>



Youth Engagement

1) Focus group: 20 adolescents, thoughts on ESM study?



“It’s a Smartphone, everyone would do it”
“Sounds pretty cool”



2) Pilot Study: 40 adolescents, low SES context, feasibility of ESM study

Positives: Fun, easy to fill out surveys, Surveys sent at suitable times

Concerns: Surveys repetitive, some emotion items inaccessible (e.g. proud), students answering surveys at different times

Youth Engagement Cont'd

**3) Large scale ESM study
across two schools in low
SES communities**

***N = 206 vulnerable young
people***

***Mean age = 14.6 years, Range
= 12-18 years, F = 61%***

***Caucasian (73.8%)
Aboriginal or Torres Strait
Islander (7%)***

The schools were selected based on having an Index of School, Community and Educational Advantage (ISCEA) value which was suggestive of low SES (both schools had values below 960, values below 1000 are considered low SES; Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013).

Participation Rates



500 information letters
given out

213 consent forms
returned

5 participants withdrew

97% participation rate

Compliance Rates



Similar compliance rate to other ESM studies that do not offer monetary incentives (e.g. Larson, 1983)

Similar compliance rate to ESM studies with at-risk samples (e.g. Swendeman et al., 2015)

What worked?

Technology

iPhones were a comfortable and familiar data collection platform

- Young people reported being very excited to get the iPhone for the week
- When asked in end of day surveys “what is the best thing that happened to you today”?

“The best thing that happened to me today was getting to use a iPhone 6s.”

“I got an iPhone 6s from the Murdoch survey people”

“Getting the iPhone”

“I got to have a iPhone for 7 days”

**What about “human
technology”?**

Getting experience on board...

Dr Kathryn Modecki – experience in collecting data with “at-risk” youth through Arizona State University, US (incarcerated youth, low income Mexican-American youth, children with incarcerated fathers)

Several years of hands on work with at-risk youth (Outward Bound, Head Start), sense of barriers that youth face, actively working to overcome barriers from day 1

Realistic sense of what is achievable

Prevention Science viewpoint – coming out of the “Ivory Tower” and knowing what makes sense if the “real world”



- a) **Listening to youth** – using our focus group data to inform study decisions
- b) **Daily school visits** – research team drove an hour out of Perth each day to be at partner schools during the school day
- c) **Hanging out with youth** – being at the school each day meant we were able to form genuine connections with the participants. Students would come into the study room during lunch times, talk to us about the study and about university, their hopes and dreams for the future, baked treats for us!



d) Cheerleading – ongoing contact meant ongoing cheerleading for participation

e) Engaging stakeholders (e.g. girls' program, not specifically targeting ATSI girls, but high % in the program, e.g. liaising with school psychologists who knew Maori culture)



Thank you

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Parents, schools and young people

YOUNGANDWELL_{CRC}



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