

Research project: Resilience in western Melbourne youth

RESILIENCE IN WESTERN MELBOURNE YOUTH

This project aims to study the resilience of teens who are marginalized or at-risk of poor outcomes (e.g., education, delinquency) in Western Melbourne. Resilience is the process of achieving positive outcomes (such as, educational expectations and aspirations and psychological wellbeing) in the face of significant adversity. An essential aim of this study is to be culturally sensitive to diverse populations in this region of Australia. Several aspects of resilience will be examined including peer support, social skills, parent/caregiver support, cultural identification, response to stigma, and adult mentors. Outcomes will include educational expectations and aspirations, and psychological wellbeing.

Youth face many challenges as they grow up and today research should be guided by the idea that young people are assets of the community to be nurtured, not simply problems to be managed (Lerner, Cichetti, & Becker, 2000). Masten (2001) and many others support a conceptualization of resilience as a process, not a state of being or personality trait; therefore resilience research should focus on understanding these processes. More research is needed that focuses on at-risk Australian youth utilizing a modern cultural approach; previous research has relied on deficit approaches or definitions of positive outcomes that are not culturally-sensitive.

The outcomes of this research will include a contextualized understanding of the cultural and local definitions of positive outcomes and the resilience processes which have not been previously researched. It will aim to inform both future research and help local communities to find ways to promote success. This research will contribute to the growing international data about at-risk and disadvantaged youth and pathways to positive outcomes. This project will also provide important information about local communities' most vulnerable young people.

This project has approval to proceed from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee.

CONTACT US

See the website: vu.edu.au/youth-research

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MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON ADMINISTRATION

This study involves a survey of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM). A minimum of 130 survey participants aged 14-19 (grades 9-12) will be recruited. Both schools and Council programs will be approached for approval to recruit. Schools will help to determine a time and place for researchers to explain the project to adolescents. They will be given the option to arranging for researchers to meet with youth during class periods, during lunchtime, or during free periods. Teachers/staff will be present to supervise, but will not need to assist and will be asked not to influence potential participants. Researchers will be present and will provide potential participants with information packets and consent forms to take home and be available for questions immediately.

Consent from a parent/guardian will be necessary for youth 17 and under. Youth 18 and older will be encouraged to gain parent/guardian consent but it will not be mandatory. All participants will also sign a youth consent form.

The descriptive statistics collected from the survey data will be analysed using correlation, multiple regression, and non-parametric analyses with SPSS program.