



Alberta  
Mentoring  
Partnership



# A Strength-based Approach to Evaluating and Building Resilience through Mentoring



May 6, 2010



# Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP)

- AMP is a partnership of government ministries, government-funded organizations, community agencies and youth representation working together to provide more mentoring opportunities for Alberta’s children and youth.
- AMP’s goal is to develop and implement strategies to increase mentoring opportunities for children and youth.
- AMP takes a strength-based approach to its work. Strength-based focuses on building on the potential in all children and youth through positive and caring relationships.



# Alberta Mentoring Partnership



The implementation of the Alberta Mentoring Partnership addresses a recommended action from Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities (SafeCom) Task Force

## **SafeCom Recommendation**

Schools, communities and the provincial government should work together to expand mentoring programs for children and youth at risk.





# Our Vision

Every child  
who needs a mentor  
has access to a mentor





# AMP's Objectives

Public Awareness,  
Recruitment and Retention

Community Capacity  
Building, Training and  
Education





# Strategic Plan Overview

The AMP Leadership Team ratified the Strategic Plan in January 2008 and continues to move ahead with implementing strategies.

The strategies will be completed by March 31, 2011.





# Strategic Plan Overview

## Strategy Leads

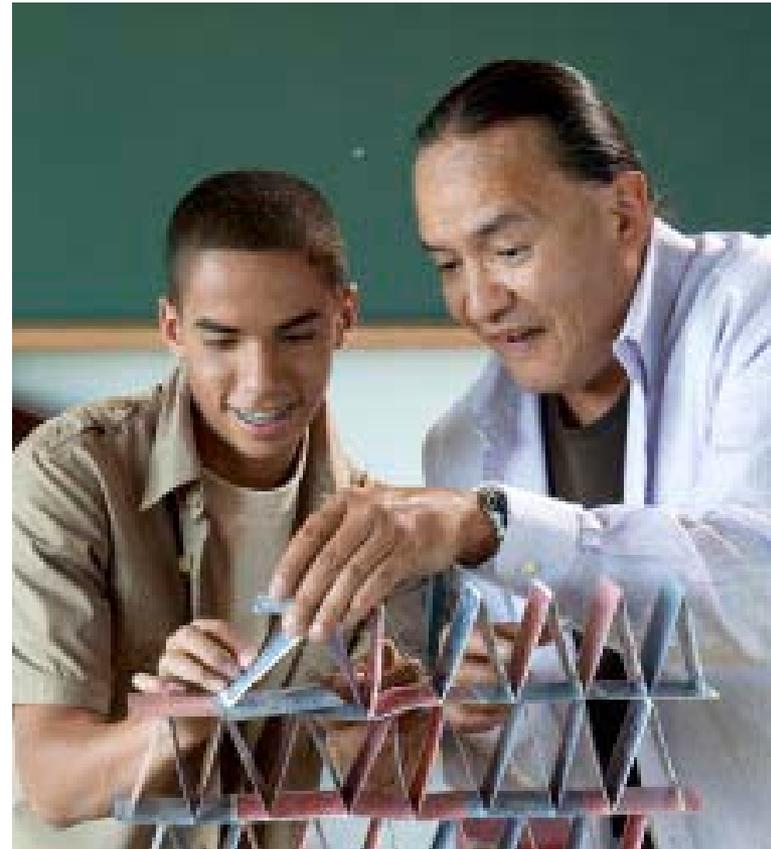
- There is a Ministry/Ministries and/or community agency responsible for leading each strategy.
- The Strategy Groups include representatives from the Leadership Team and others.
- Each Strategy Lead works collaboratively with the other Leads and reports back to the Leadership Team.





# Mentoring Defined

**Mentoring** is the presence of a caring individual(s) who provides a young person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role modeling over time.





# Benefits of Mentoring

## Mentoring results in:

- improved educational performance;
- healthier behaviours;
- improved social and behavioural outcomes;
- strengthened relationships; and
- improved resiliency.





# Without Mentors...

## In a school board in Western Canada:

- 100% correlation between students dropping out of school in grade 10 and not having a caring relationship with an adult at school.



# Estimated Costs of High School Non-Completion

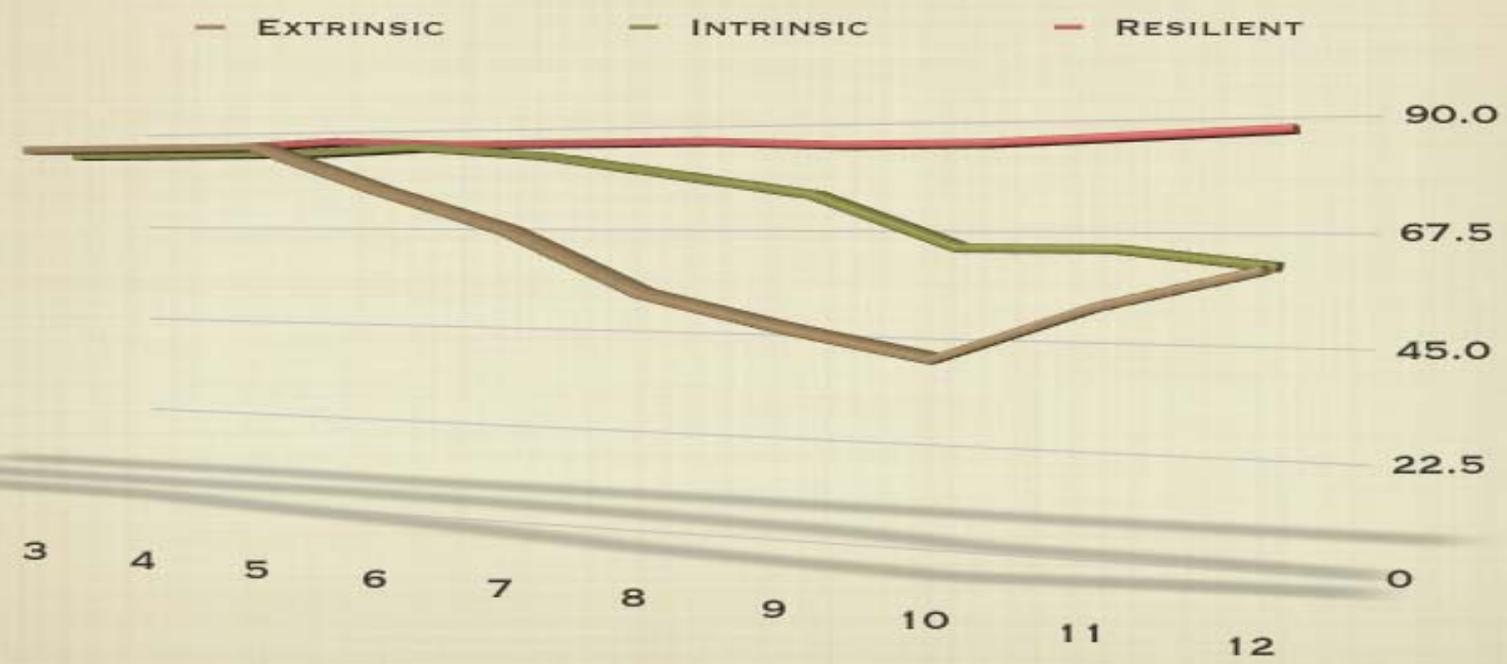
	Estimated cost per dropout		Aggregated total in Canada	
	Annual	Lifetime	Annual	Lifetime
<b>Tangible Costs</b>				
Health (private <sup>a</sup> )	\$8,098	\$211,471 <sup>b</sup>	\$23.8 billion	\$623 billion <sup>b</sup>
Social Assistance (public)	\$4,230		\$969 million	
Crime (public)	\$224		\$350 million	
<b>Labour and Employment</b>				
Earning loss (private)	\$3,491	\$104,222 <sup>c</sup>	\$10.3 billion	\$307 billion <sup>c</sup>
Tax revenue loss (public)	\$226	\$6,882	\$378 million	\$11.5 billion
Revenue loss in employment insurance premium (public)	\$68	\$2,063	\$201 million	\$6.1 billion
Employment insurance cost (public)	\$2,767		\$1.1 billion	

*(Canadian Council on Learning – December 2008)*



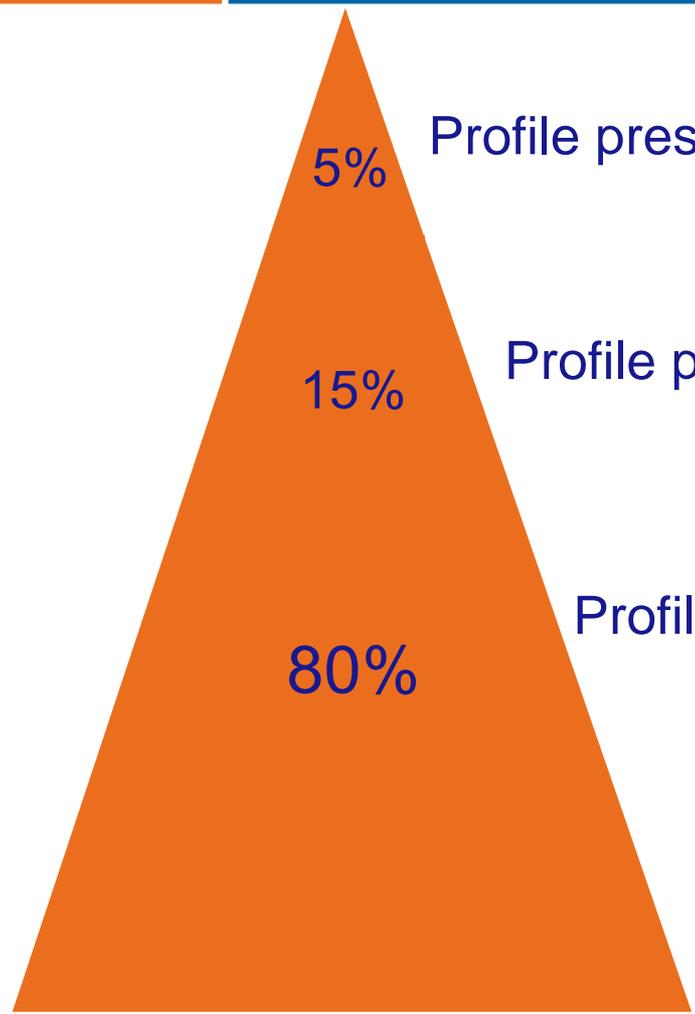
# Role of Relationships in Resiliency

## COMPLEX SCHOOL CHILDREN/YOUTH





# Typical Strength Distributions



## Impoverished Profile

Profile presents with 0 to 10 developmental strengths

## Vulnerable Profile

Profile presents with 11 to 20 developmental strengths

## Resilient Profile

Profile presents with 21 to 31 developmental strengths



# Resiliency Defined

*Resiliency is the capability of individuals, families, groups and communities to understand and creatively draw upon their internal and external strengths, resulting in effective coping with challenges and significant adversity in ways that promote health, wellness and an increased ability to respond constructively to future adversity.*

*W. Hammond, 2008*





# I Am. I Have. I Can.

**I Am**

*(Internal Characteristics/Strengths)*

**+**

**I Have**

*(External Strengths/Relationships & Connections)*

**=**

**I Can**

*(Resiliency, Capacity for Success)*

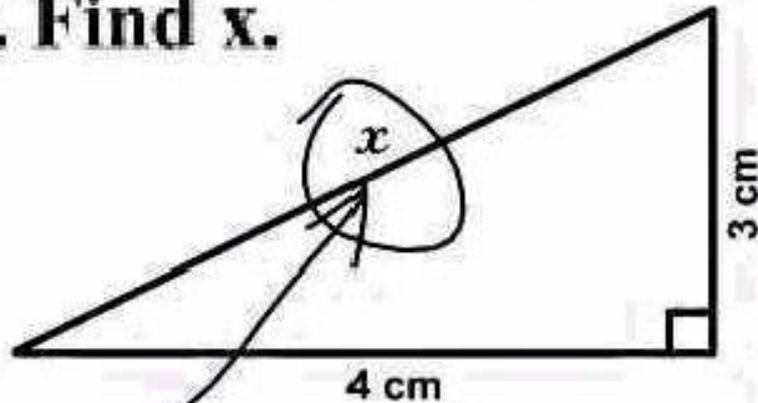
*Edith Grotberg, International Resilience Research Project (IRR)*





# Resilience Comes in Many Forms

3. Find  $x$ .

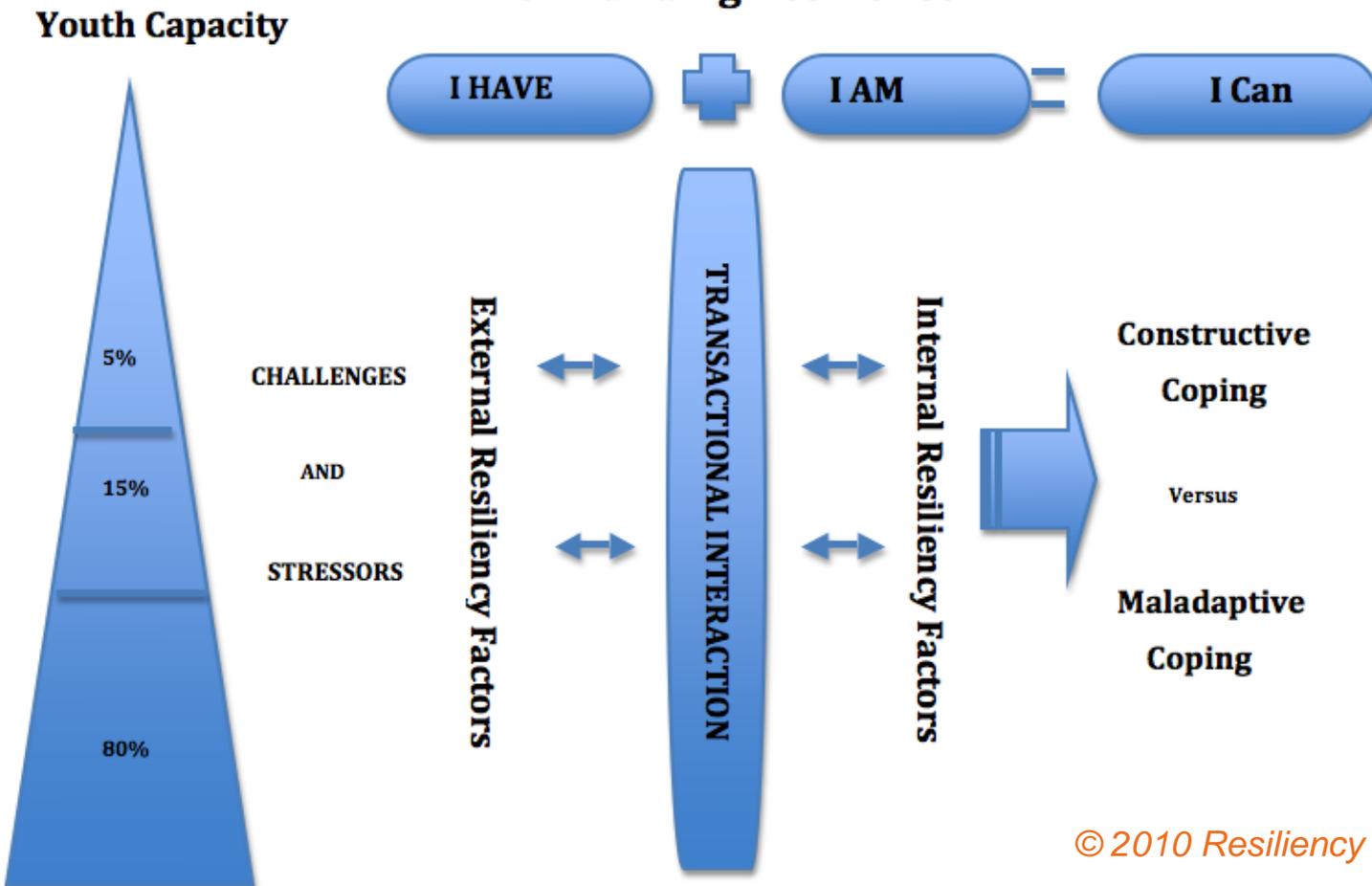


*Here it is*



# Two Expressions of Resilience

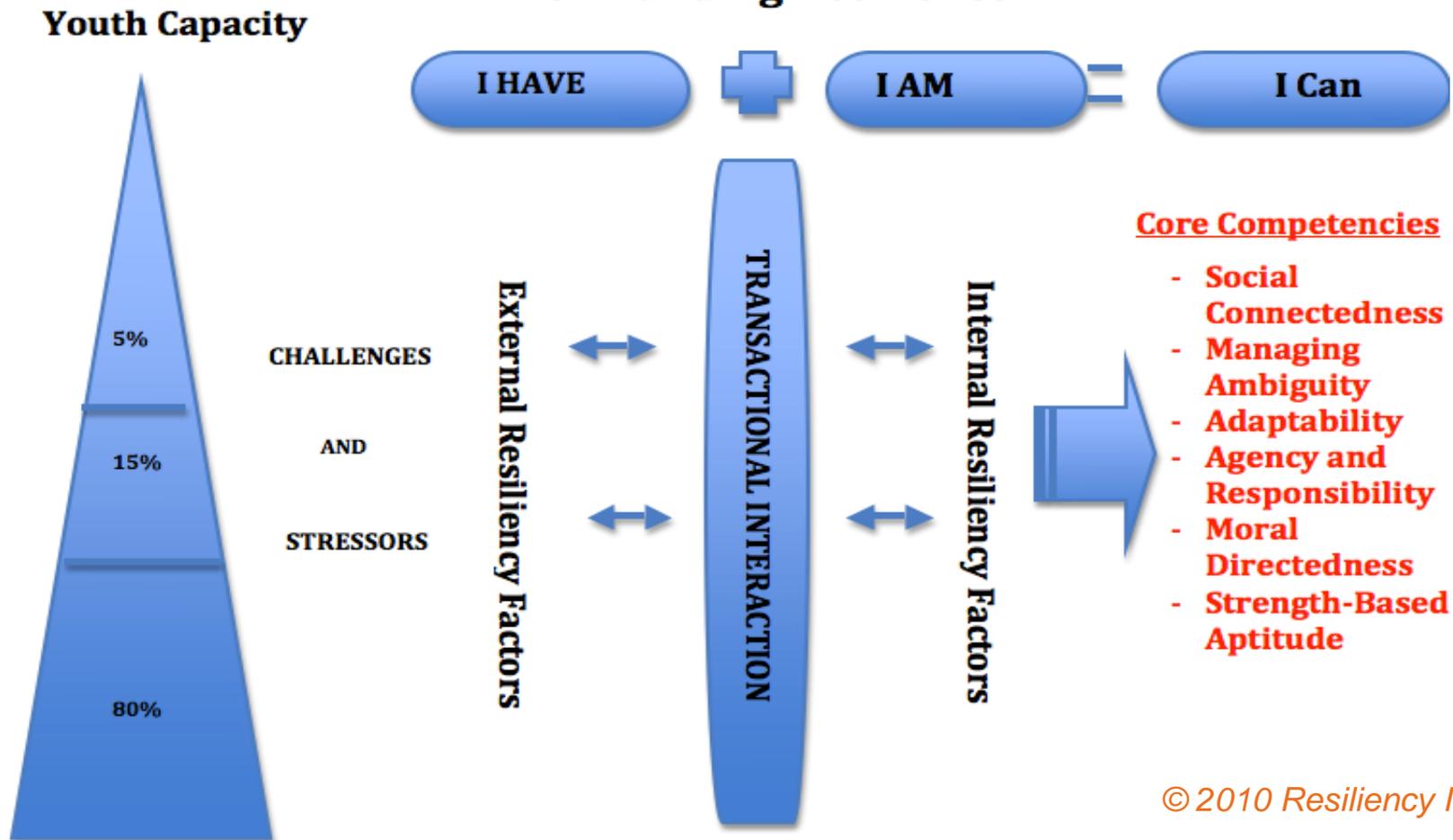
## A Strength-Based Framework For Building Resilience





# The Relationship between Resilience & Core Competencies

## A Strength-Based Framework For Building Resilience





# I Am. I Have. I Can.

**I Am**

*(Internal Characteristics/Strengths)*



=

**I Can**

*(Core Competencies, Resiliency, Capacity for Success)*

*Adapted from Edith Grotberg, International Resilience Research Project (IRR)*





# The Power of Relationship

Werner and Smith's groundbreaking study of "at-risk" youth was the first of many to substantiate the importance of internal (I am) and external (I have) strengths.

They were also the first of many to demonstrate that a close relationship with at least one significant other was predictive of successful adaptation for otherwise vulnerable children and youth.





# Statistical Support for Mentoring

## *Making a Difference –*

### *An impact study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters (1995)*

Children and youth with mentors experienced:

- 46% less involvement in substance use
- 70% less substance use in African American youth
- 33% reduction in violent behaviour
- 50% reduction in school truancy
- significant improvement in school performance and interactions with parents





# School Staff Relationships with Students

## In a School Resiliency Demonstration Site project in Edmonton:

- 50% increase in presenting as resilient when students report being connected to a school staff or significant adult at school.

## In a school board in Western Canada:

- 100% correlation between students dropping out of school in grade 10 to not having an established caring relationship with a school staff.



# The Power of Engagement

An analysis of 40 years of clinical research found the best predictor of positive change was:

- 1) engagement in meaningful relationship(s)
- 2) engagement in meaningful activities

83% of change involves these two factors

17% is a result of technique/model of practice

*Miller & Duncan, 1997*



# Strength-Based Mentoring

*A strength-based mentoring approach has as its focus the identification, exploration, and use of strengths in children and youth to foster positive mental health outcomes at school, at home and in the community.*



# Traits of Strength-based Mentors

- Interpersonal Warmth
- Self and other aware
- Active listening
- Trustworthy and dependable
- Unconditional positive regard
- Respectful of values
- Good natured humour
- High expectations/not perfection



# As a great poet once said...

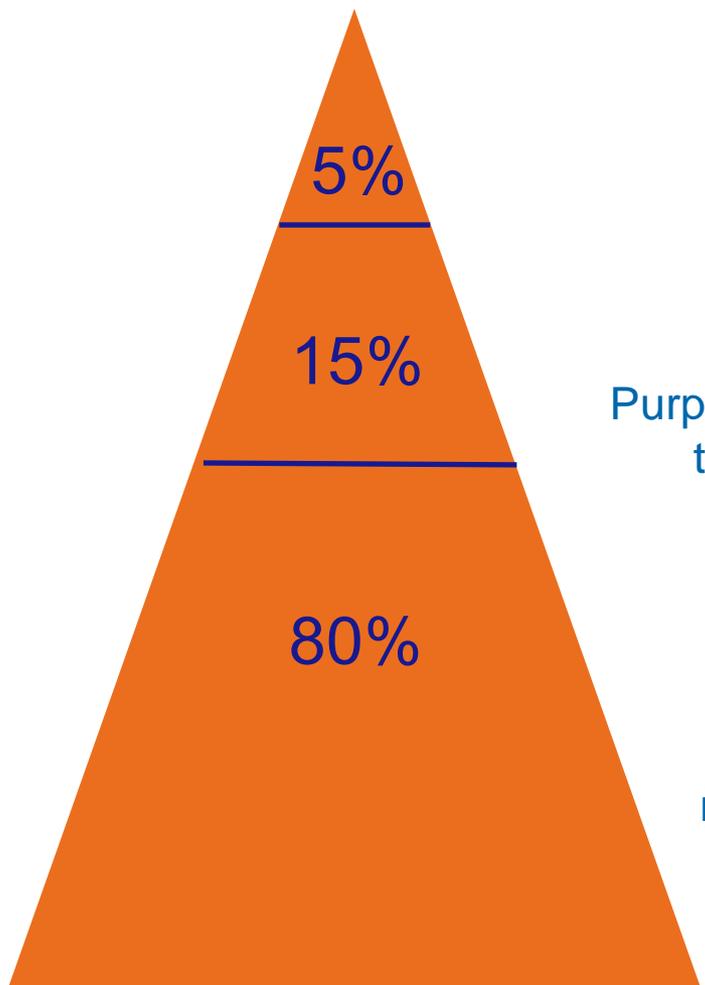
*We speak only with the voices of those we  
can hear ourselves...*

*David Whyte*





# A Differential Response



## Strategic Mentoring

Collaborative-based mentoring - intense, comprehensive and long-term focused that requires sustained help

## Formal Mentoring

Purposeful one-on-one mentoring and emotional support to help mentees facing challenges and stressors

## Natural Mentoring

Promotion of strength-based adult/peer interactions that lead to pro-active academic, social, & emotional programs/interactions and relationship building that promotes positive youth development for all children and youth



# Measuring the Impact of Mentoring and Resilience

Using the *Resiliency - Assessing Developmental Strengths* questionnaire, we are able to evaluate:

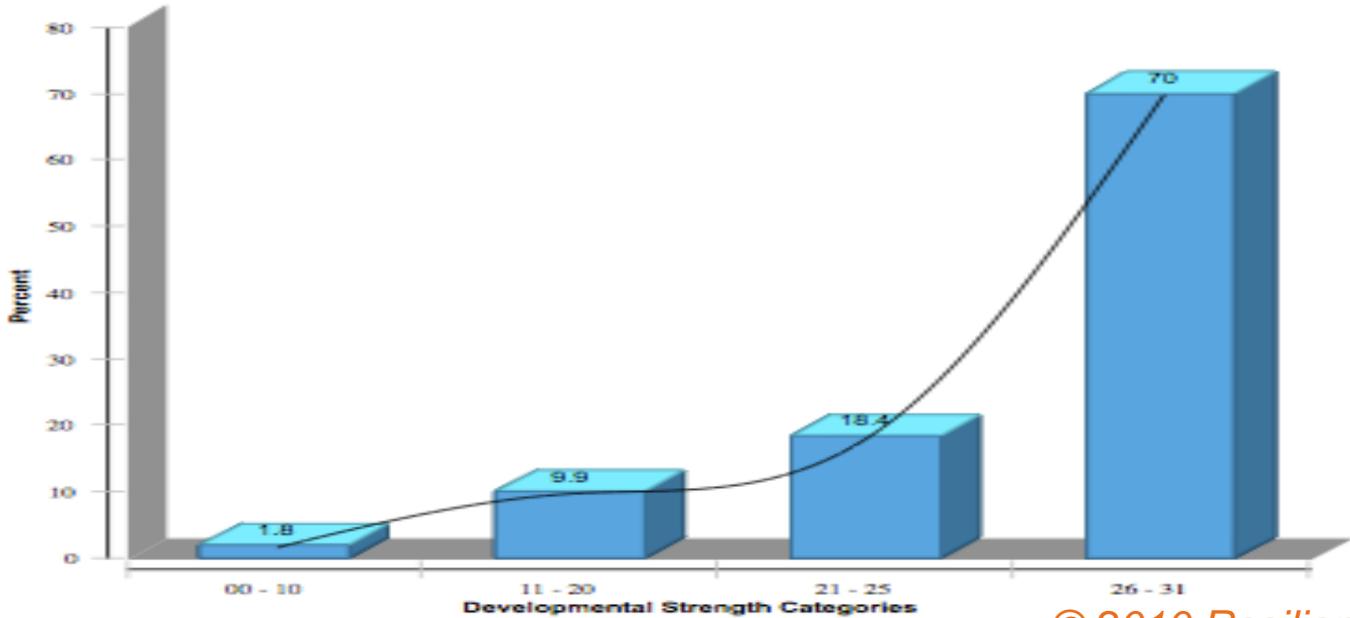
- The impact of formal & informal mentoring on students developmental strengths and core competencies.
- The impact of engagement in mentoring relationships on developmental strengths and core competencies.





# Initial Results (all students n= 680)

Number of Developmental Strengths	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
00 - 10	12	12	1.8	1.8
11 - 20	67	79	9.9	11.7
21 - 25	125	204	18.4	30.1
26 - 31	476	680	70.0	100.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>680</b>		<b>100.1</b>	





# Students with Mentors

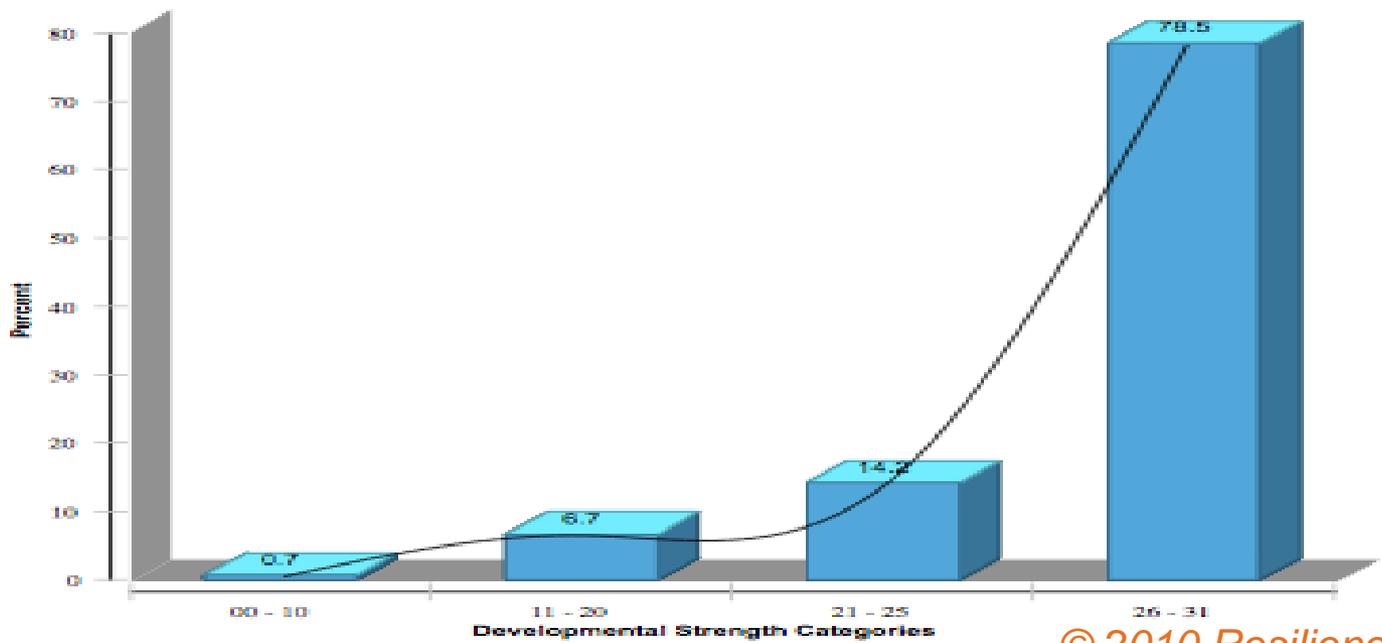
- 83% of students reported having a caring role model in their school to whom they could turn for support, guidance, encouragement and/or advice.
- 95% of those students felt respected and valued.
- 89% of those students felt their “mentor” valued what they had to say and wanted to talk about.





# Students with Mentors

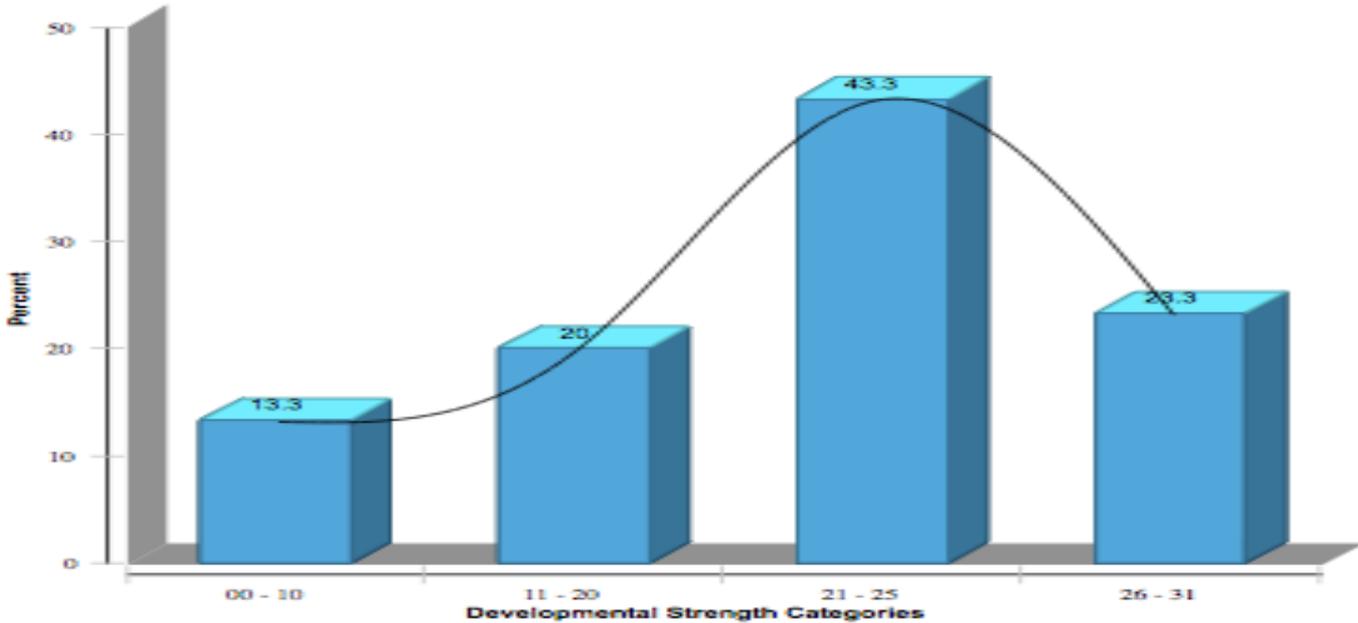
Number of Developmental Strengths	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
00 - 10	3	3	0.7	0.7
11 - 20	31	34	6.7	7.4
21 - 25	66	100	14.2	21.6
26 - 31	364	464	78.5	100.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>464</b>		<b>100.1</b>	





# Students without a Mentor

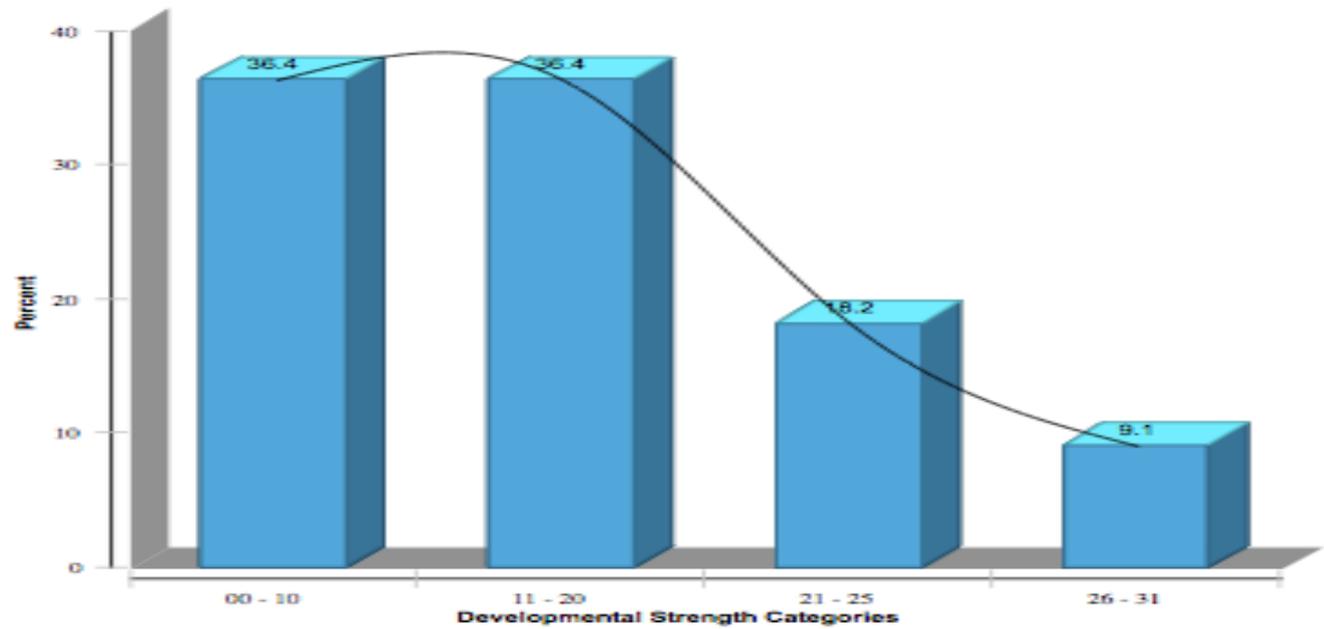
Number of Developmental Strengths	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
00 - 10	4	4	13.3	13.3
11 - 20	6	10	20.0	33.3
21 - 25	13	23	43.3	76.6
26 - 31	7	30	23.3	99.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>99.9</b>	





# Students with no Mentor and Low Family Communication

Number of Developmental Strengths	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
00 - 10	4	4	36.4	36.4
11 - 20	4	8	36.4	72.8
21 - 25	2	10	18.2	91.0
26 - 31	1	11	9.1	100.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>100.1</b>	



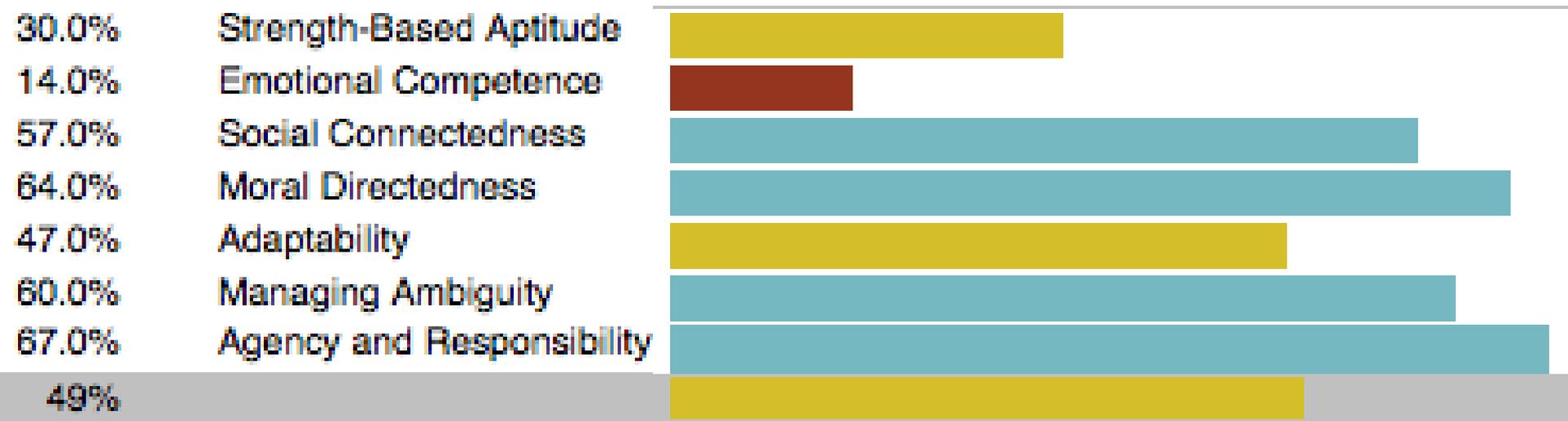


# Core Competencies of Mentored Students





# Core Competencies of Un-mentored Students





# Students with Mentors

- 41% more reported Strength-Based Aptitude
- 43% more reported Emotional Competency
- 36% more reported Social Connectedness
- 29% more reported Moral Directedness
- 27% more reported Adaptability
- 31% more reported Managing Ambiguity
- 26% more reported Agency and Responsibility

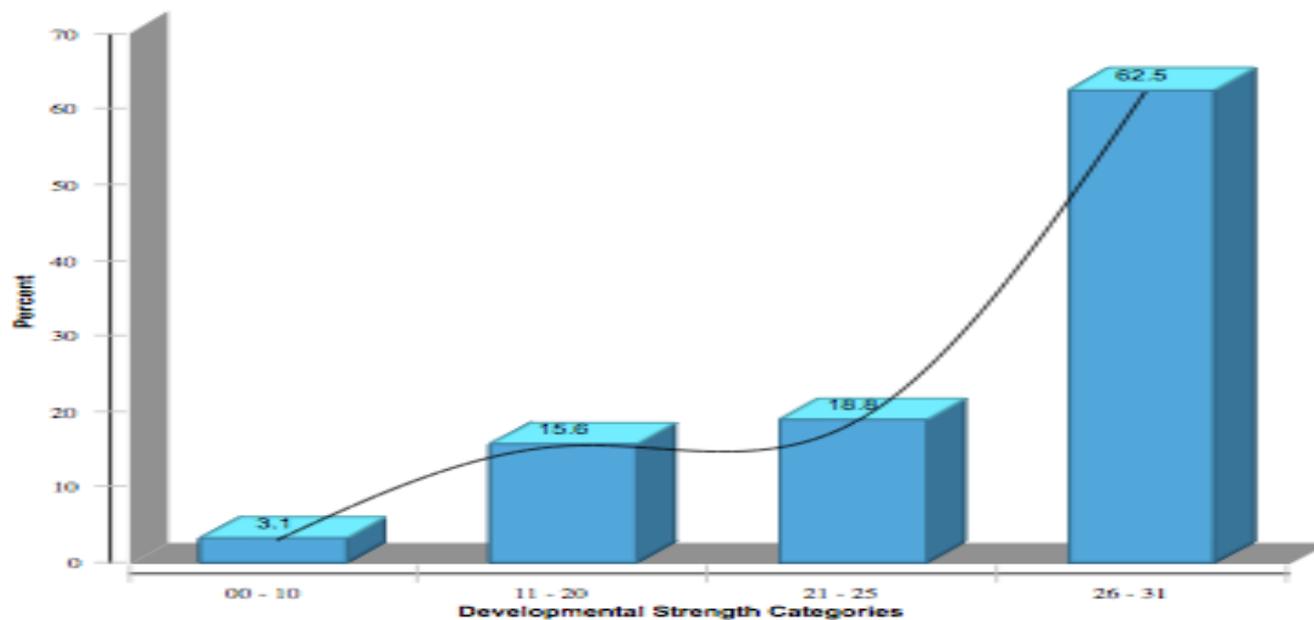
...as strengths!





# Students with a Formal Mentor

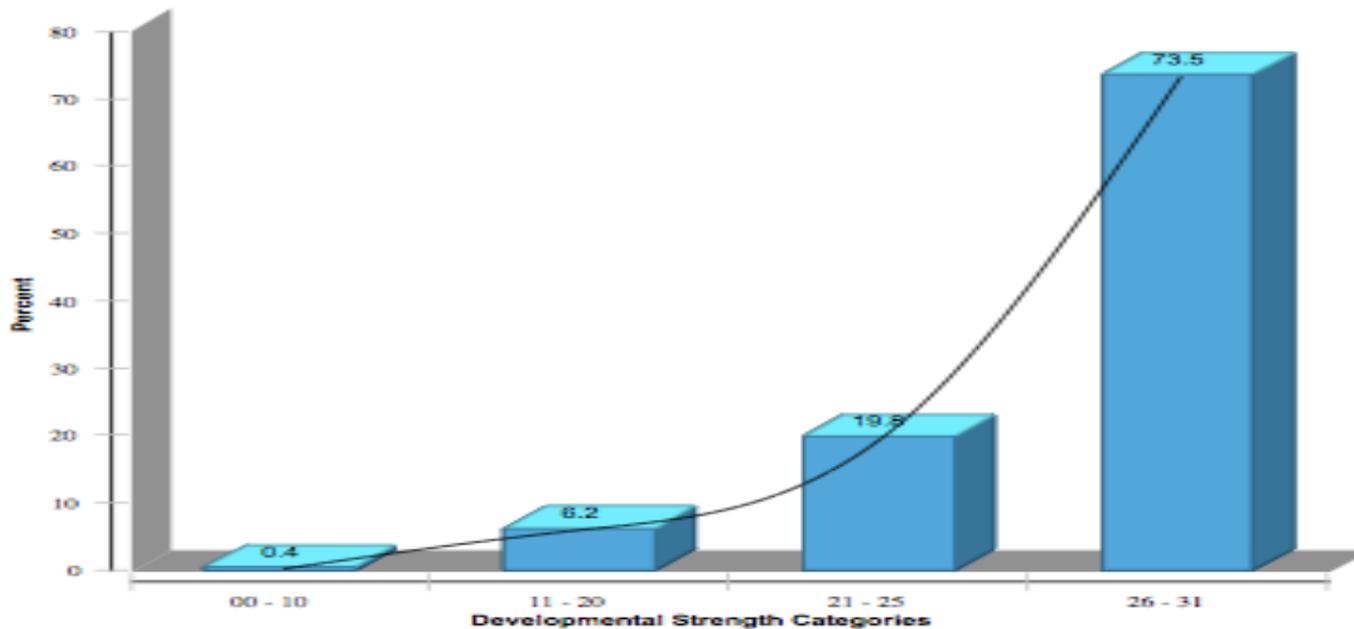
Number of Developmental Strengths	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
00 - 10	1	1	3.1	3.1
11 - 20	5	6	15.6	18.7
21 - 25	6	12	18.8	37.5
26 - 31	20	32	62.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>100.0</b>	





# Students with an Informal Mentor

Number of Developmental Strengths	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
00 - 10	1	1	0.4	0.4
11 - 20	16	17	6.2	6.6
21 - 25	51	68	19.8	26.4
26 - 31	189	257	73.5	99.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>		<b>99.9</b>	





# Focus on Strengths

*55% of students reported that adults in the school talked with them more about their strengths than their challenges.*





# Preliminary Interpretations

- Significant relationship between being mentored and resilience as indicated by number of developmental strengths and core competencies.
- No significant difference in resilience (as measured by number of developmental strengths) of students who have a formal mentor versus an informal mentor.
- A pre- and post-evaluation of the impact of formal and informal mentoring in schools is required.





# Preliminary Interpretations (cont'd)

- 17% of students did not report a caring positive role model in the school and these students represent a greater proportion of children and youth vulnerable to experience:
  - Academic challenges;
  - Truancy;
  - School non-completion;
  - Violence;
  - Drug use.





# Next Steps

- Compile the questionnaire data from all of the sites and complete focus group conversations with participating students to better contextualize the data.
- Interpret and report results to AMP, School Resiliency Demonstration Sites and community partners.
- Apply insights and learning with High Prairie School Division site project in the fall of 2010.
- Finalize strength-based mentoring resources for educators, mentoring organizations and mentors





# A Strength-based Philosophy

*It is not enough to institute best-practice strategies. Their success depends on the quality of the relationships surrounding them, invitations offered through them and ongoing opportunities for participation.*

*Wayne Hammond*





# A Strength-based Philosophy

*What we want to achieve in our work with those at risk is to find and strengthen the positive and healthy elements, no matter how deeply they are hidden.*

*We enthusiastically believe in the existence of those elements even in the seemingly worst of our adolescents.*

*Karl Wilker*





# Conclusion



Communities, families and government must ensure that children and youth are properly cared for in society, have positive adult mentors (formal or informal) in their lives, and are raised in safe, nurturing families.

[www.albertamentors.ca](http://www.albertamentors.ca)



Alberta  
Mentoring  
Partnership

*You don't  
need to be  
superhuman  
to be a  
mentor...  
just human.*



[www.albertamentors.ca](http://www.albertamentors.ca)