

# REDUCING ADOLESCENT RISK

TOWARD AN INTEGRATED  
APPROACH

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# *Youth Development Programs and Healthy Development*

## *A Review and Next Steps*

JODIE L. ROTH

JEANNE BROOKS-GUNN

**T**he notion of adolescence as a time of great risk and opportunity has taken hold in the American consciousness. A time of bodily changes, expanding independence, and growing self-discovery, adolescence can be characterized as a series of challenges. Each challenge carries the possibility of risk, opportunity, or both. These challenges, or developmental transitions, present critical junctures along the path that connects children to their transformed physical, mental, and social adult selves (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996; Schulenberg, Maggs, & Hurrelmann, 1997). Most individuals navigate transitions equipped with the competencies and supports they need to meet new challenges and take on new roles while further developing the cognitive, emotional, social, or physical skills necessary for these new roles (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). Many, however, do not. Individual differences in the negotiation of a transition are associated with development prior to the

transition, the timing of the transition, the individual's experience of the transition, and the context in which the transition occurs (Rutter, 1989). A varied collection of efforts, including after-school programs, targeted interventions, school policies, community development, and federal agencies exist to assist adolescents through these transitions on their way to healthy, self-sufficient adulthoods.

Over the past decade, the efforts of the youth development movement to shift the paradigm for helping youth from deterrence to development, captured by the phrase *problem free is not fully prepared*, has led to an increase in the acceptance of youth preparation and development, not just problem prevention and deterrence, as desirable goals requiring strategic action (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000). Programs incorporating this philosophy view youth as resources to be developed rather than as problems to be managed; they strive to influence adolescents' developmental transitions toward



healthy (positive) outcomes by increasing their exposure to developmental opportunities and supports (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998). Rooted, in part, in the research showing the common antecedents and comorbidity of many health-compromising behaviors (e.g., drug use, early childbearing) that limit adolescents' preparation for and success at the developmental transitions to adulthood, the youth development approach offers insight into programmatic elements that build adolescents' capacities for success, which includes, but is not limited to, curbing health-compromising behaviors. Youth development programs, then, square perfectly with the goals of this volume, exploring ways to reduce more than one risk to healthy development.

In this chapter, we use the youth development paradigm to frame and support our ideas for how to intervene in the lives of today's youth to enhance their chances of healthy development, including reducing their health-compromising behaviors. In the next section, we define briefly the goal for youth—healthy development. We then provide support for our suggested pathway to improving youths' lives—youth development programs. In the last section, we discuss needed next research steps for advancing the goal of healthy development by increasing the supply and appropriateness of programs offering a positive youth development setting.

### THE GOAL: HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Generally speaking, healthy development encompasses all our hopes and aspirations for a nation of healthy, happy, and competent adolescents on their way to productive and satisfying adulthoods (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Differences arise when we look at what specifically constitutes "healthy, happy, and competent" adolescents as well as "productive and satisfying" adulthoods.

The meaning of healthy adulthood, the goal of healthy adolescent development, fluctuates depending on the purpose and audience. To some, economic self-sufficiency is the primary requirement: A gainfully employed individual, not reliant on public funds or services, is considered a "successful" adult. To others, psychological stability and well-being are critical. One model of adult well-being lists six essential features: (a) self-acceptance, (b) positive relationships with others, (c) autonomy, (d) environmental mastery, (e) purpose in life, and (f) personal growth (Ryff, 1996). *Healthy People 2010*, the federal Office of Disease Prevention and Healthy Promotion's blueprint for how to increase the number of Americans who achieve a longer and healthier life, offers a different perspective on healthy adulthood (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). This effort has 10 leading health indicators, 7 pertaining to individuals and 3 concerning communities and policy. The 7 individual behaviors related to healthy adulthood include (a) physical activity, (b) maintaining appropriate weight, (c) tobacco avoidance, (d) avoiding substance abuse, (e) responsible sexual behavior, (f) mental health, and (g) avoiding injury and violence. Regardless of which criteria for successful (or healthy) adulthood one chooses, the foundation for these behaviors begins during childhood and adolescence.

What to include on lists of healthy or successful adolescent development differs as well. The differences, however, are mostly in organization and terminology. Typically, successful adolescent development is discussed in terms of skills and competence in the physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social arenas (see National Research Council, 2002). Sometimes these areas are extended to emphasize other qualities, such as the moral and spiritual, civic, and cultural aspects of one's life (e.g., see Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2001).

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Or alternatively, they are shortened to succinctly express the desired outcomes for the nation's youth: the ability to be productive, connect, and navigate (Connell, Gambone, & Smith, 2000). Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000) categorize the desired outcomes into five Cs: (a) competence in academic, social, and vocational areas; (b) confidence or a positive self-identity; (c) connections to community, family, and peers; (d) character or positive values, integrity, and moral commitment; and (e) caring and compassion. Pittman et al. (2001) add one more C—contribution.

Researchers produce similar lists when discussing the inputs, ingredients, or assets necessary to help youth develop into healthy adolescents on their way to healthy adulthood. These lists typically include people, experiences, and opportunities in the varying contexts that influence development, including the family, school, peers, neighborhoods, and larger social context (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Theory, empirical research, and practical wisdom converge to suggest important personal and social assets for healthy development (National Research Council, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). For example, Benson (1997) describes 40 internal and external assets believed to be the universal building blocks of positive (healthy) development. The 20 external assets envelop youth with familial and extra-familial networks that provide support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. The 20 internal assets serve to nurture, within individuals, positive commitments, values, and identities, as well as social competencies. The external assets describe the necessary ingredients in youths' environment (home, school, community) for positive development. The internal assets illustrate personal qualities that facilitate positive development.

Put another way, adolescents need access to safe places, challenging experiences, and

caring people on a daily basis (Zeldin, 1995). In their extensive review of developmental theory and empirical research, the National Research Council's Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth suggests a provisional list of eight features of positive developmental settings. Whether at home, school, among friends, in an after-school program, or in the community, positive developmental settings provide (a) physical and psychological safety, (b) appropriate structure, (c) supportive relationships, (d) opportunities to belong, (e) positive social norms, (f) support for efficacy and mattering, (g) opportunities for skill building, and (h) integration of family, school, and community efforts (National Research Council, 2002). When circumstances prevent both economically affluent and disadvantaged families, schools, and communities from providing their youth with these fundamental resources, youth development programs offer *one* avenue for increasing youths' exposure to positive developmental settings.

### ONE PATHWAY: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

This shift in thinking about what adolescents need for successful adulthood, coupled with the risks associated with unsupervised time during the after-school hours, has spurred growing public support, both ideologically and financially, for more structured activities during after-school hours (e.g., the expansive growth in funding for the federal government's 21st Century Community Learning Centers). In some communities, an array of school-based extracurricular activities—sports, music, art, community service—as well as community-based youth programs provide youth with ample choices for positive developmental settings outside of school or family. This is far from the norm. Availability, cost, transportation, and interest limit many

youths' choices during nonschool hours. In a recent opinion poll, 62% of 14- to 17-year-olds agreed with the statement, "Adults criticize teens for wasting time, but adults don't realize there's not much for teens to do after school." Over half wished for more after-school activities in their neighborhood or community (YMCA of the USA, 2001).

Youth development programs can provide developmentally rich contexts, where relationships form, opportunities for growth in multiple areas proliferate, and development occurs. Programs incorporating, at least to some degree, the youth development philosophy come in all shapes and sizes, from small, single-focus programs, such as sports teams or youth newspapers, to affiliates of national youth-serving organizations, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Boys and Girls Clubs. They are located in or sponsored by local schools, civic organizations, parks, museums, libraries, community organizations, and religious institutions (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a). Approximately 500 national and 17,000 state and local organizations classify themselves as youth development programs (Erickson, 1998).

Although we believe youth development programs hold great promise for improving the lives and futures of American youth, we caution against unrealistic expectations. One program, even an extraordinarily good program, cannot do it all. Young people do not grow up in programs, but in families, schools, and neighborhoods. Our best chance of positively influencing adolescent development through programs lies in increasing the web of options available to all youth in all communities and ensuring that those options take an approach consistent with the youth development framework. In trying to further this goal, we focus on *one* category of options—those offered by youth development programs.

At a general level, youth development programs help participants develop "competencies that will enable them to grow, develop

their skills and become healthy, responsible, and caring youth and adults" (Networks for Youth Development, 1998, p. 4). More specifically, we have identified three characteristics that theory and ethnographic research suggest differentiates youth development programs from other types of programs for adolescents (see Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003c, for more details). The three characteristics are (a) program goals, (b) program atmosphere, and (c) program activities.

The *goals* of youth development programs promote positive development, even when seeking to prevent problem behaviors. Youth development programs help young people navigate adolescence in healthy ways and prepare them for their future by fostering their positive development. They recognize that activities focused solely on the prevention of problem behaviors, such as violence or substance abuse, do not necessarily equip adolescents with the tools for a responsible and productive adulthood. Youth development programs can be distinguished from ameliorative services by their emphasis on promoting normal development and recognizing youths' need for both ongoing support and challenging opportunities.

Leaders and staff members at youth development programs create and nourish an atmosphere of hope. The positive, youth-centered atmosphere, or tone, conveys the adults' belief in adolescents as resources to be developed rather than problems to be managed. This guiding principle allows them to create not just a space, but a place, for youth. Individual attention, cultural appropriateness, and the choice and responsibility given to adolescents set a positive tone for youth development. The atmosphere in these programs resembles that in a caring family, where knowledgeable and supportive adults empower adolescents to develop their competencies. Like successful families, these programs create physically and psychologically safe places with a strong sense of membership, commitment,

explicit rules and responsibilities, and expectations for adolescents' success. Sustained involvement over time also characterizes a commitment to creating an environment that nourishes youths' potential for positive development.

*Program activities* provide formal and informal opportunities for adolescents to nurture their interests and talents, practice new skills, and gain a sense of personal or group recognition. Regardless of the specific activity, the emphasis lies in providing real challenges and active participation. Program activities also broaden youths' exposure to new worlds. Activities can have both direct (i.e., homework sessions and tutoring) and indirect (i.e., encourage adolescents to stay in school and try harder) links to education, but they present information and learning opportunities in a way that is different from school. The activities at many youth development programs offer leadership development opportunities, academic supports, and health education information.

Although still sparse, the growing available evidence supports the efficacy of youth development programs. In our previous work, we set out to determine if programs with more of a youth development bent—loosely defined as programs promoting positive behaviors by attempting to enhance competencies—led to better outcomes for participants (Roth et al., 1998). Our efforts met with a number of methodological challenges, including the paucity of experimental or quasi-experimental evaluations of such programs and few measures other than beliefs and academic-related behaviors and involvement to tap positive outcomes. For the most part, positive outcomes were measured as the absence of negative outcomes. Despite these obstacles, we concluded that the available limited evidence pointed to the effectiveness of the youth development framework. These obstacles, however, led us to warn that although the basis of the youth

development movement rests on sound and compelling theoretical thinking, the enthusiasm for youth development programs far outstrips the empirical evidence of their effectiveness.

In the years since then, a number of reports have been released that employ rigorous standards of evidence to identify programs successful in reducing specific negative outcomes, such as substance abuse (Brounstein & Zweig, 1999), violence prevention (Elliot, 1998), and mental disorders (Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 1999), or promoting positive development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1999; National Research Council, 2002). Overlap exists in the model programs identified in each report, despite their focus on different outcomes. These reviews identify 48 soundly evaluated programs that succeed in producing positive outcomes for their non-adjudicated teenage participants (ages 10–18). Adolescents who participated in the programs fared better than those who did not on at least one measure of development. We use these 48 effective programs as our database for investigating how programs create positive developmental settings for young people.

The evaluations varied not only in which outcomes they measured but also in how they assessed those outcomes. That is, the studies differed in both the specific measures and the number of measures used to assess the same construct. To take these discrepancies in measurement into account, we assigned a rating of success to programs when participants scored significantly ( $p < .05$ ) better on at least one measure of the construct than adolescents who did not attend the program. The evaluations also differed in the depth of their analyses; some investigated outcomes for specific subgroups of participants, such as males and females or more and less at-risk participants, whereas others did not. To compensate for these differences in detail, we assigned a rating of success

when participation in the program led to positive outcomes for at least some subgroup of the participants.

We examined the programs' effectiveness in reducing four specific risk behaviors: (a) a reduction in use of substances, including cigarettes, alcohol, and/or other drugs; (b) behavior that decreases the risk of early childbearing, including the postponement of sexual activity, fewer sexual partners, and contraceptive use; (c) a reduction in delinquent or aggressive behavior, home or school behavior problems, and/or mental illness; and (d) improved school performance, in terms of either grades, test scores, or attendance. The majority of the programs (73%) successfully altered only one of these four risk behaviors. Only 11 (23%) of the programs succeeded in altering two or more of these risk behaviors. Our ability to determine the successfulness of these programs in altering risk behavior is hindered, however, by the program evaluators' methodology; many more measured attitudes and/or knowledge of risk behaviors than measured the behaviors themselves.

Our goal in this chapter is to move beyond the question of whether or not programs can reduce risk-taking behaviors to the question of *how* they do. Thus, we use this database of programs to test our belief that programs incorporating a youth development philosophy achieve greater success not only in reducing risky, health-compromising behaviors but in promoting other aspects of positive development as well. As part of this test, we endeavor to determine which elements of the youth development approach are critical for their success.

Ideally, synthesizing the findings from these empirical evaluations would allow us to identify which programmatic elements work best for improving the lives of young people. Then we could provide a blueprint of sorts of the necessary and optional elements for a successful program. Such a list would

be an invaluable tool for program designers and those interested in increasing the web of positive developmental settings available to adolescents.

As a field, however, we are far from this ideal. Few studies systematically varied elements of program design to determine which, or what mix, are critical to program success (Roth et al., 1998). In addition, the general lack of theory predicting expected outcomes based on specific programmatic approaches and activities limits our ability to draw conclusions about *why* the program did or did not alter adolescents' development. Similarly, measures of program implementation and fidelity, rarely available, would help untangle the black box of programmatic effects. The limited types of outcome measures employed to judge program success prohibit a full understanding of what programs can do. Too often, due to demands for accountability and insufficient measures of positive behaviors, success is measured only in terms of a reduction in health-compromising behaviors, even when this is beyond what we may realistically expect from the program.

The program evaluations we used to create the database of programs can be viewed as the best of the available research. Even among them, there are considerable methodological flaws, particularly pertaining to group comparability and attrition issues. Their findings of how the programs enhance youth development are constrained by few measures of adolescent development other than engagement in problem behaviors, attitudes toward risky behaviors, and knowledge of risk-avoiding strategies.

We categorized the program outcomes by Lerner et al.'s (2000) five Cs of healthy adolescent development: competence, confidence, connections, character, and caring. To do so, we drew on our efforts to develop national indicators of confidence, character, and caring (Roth, Borbely, & Brooks-Gunn, 2001) and adapted the operational definitions

of the youth development objectives developed by Catalano et al. (1999) to arrive at the following operational definitions for the five Cs (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b). The *promotion of competence*, the first C, includes enhancing participants' social, academic, cognitive, and vocational competencies. Social competence refers to interpersonal skills such as communication, assertiveness, refusal and resistance, and conflict resolution skills. Cognitive competence describes cognitive abilities, including logical and analytic thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, planning and goal-setting skills. School grades, attendance, test scores, and graduation rates are included under academic competence. Vocational competence pertains to work habits and career choice explorations.

*Promoting adolescents' confidence*, the second C, consists of outcomes relating to improving adolescents' self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, identity, and belief in the future. *Encouraging connections*, the third C, involves building and strengthening adolescents' relationship with other people and institutions, such as school. The fourth C, *character*, is perhaps the most difficult to define. Increasing self-control, decreasing engagement in health-compromising (problem) behaviors, developing respect for cultural or societal rules and standards and a sense of right and wrong (morality), and spirituality describe character-building outcomes. *Developing caring and compassion*, the fifth C, implies improving youths' empathy and identification with others.

Two things become apparent when we look at the outcomes organized by the five Cs of healthy development. First, more programs demonstrated success at improving participants' character (75%) than their competence (63%), confidence (44%), connections (40%), or caring (19%). Second, when we compare the 11 programs that succeeded in altering two or more of the risk behaviors with the other 37 programs, we

found differences that suggest *how* these programs achieved their success. A larger percentage of these programs also improved adolescents' confidence, connections, and character. Programs altering multiple risk behaviors also succeeded in improving more of the five Cs than did programs altering fewer risk behaviors: (3.0 vs. 2.2),  $F(1, 47) = 4.1, p = .048$ . Thus, consistent with the youth development philosophy, programs that viewed adolescents as resources to be developed led to better outcomes in all areas of adolescents' healthy development.

Further support for the effectiveness of this approach in programming for adolescents comes from program goals. Using the same operational definitions described above for the five Cs, we looked at how many aspects of healthy development each program sought to address. Overall, the programs altering multiple risk behaviors endorsed significantly more goals than the other programs: (4.1 vs. 3.2),  $F(1, 47) = 6.03, p = .018$ . Table 37.1 shows the differences between the two types of programs. The largest difference was in the connections goal. All 11 programs altering multiple risk behaviors sought to improve participants' connections with other people or institutions, but only 65% of the other programs embraced this goal. More of the multiple-risk-altering programs also addressed participants' confidence.

We looked more closely at other elements of the youth development approach to programs to see if we could uncover other differences that contributed to program success. As described earlier, positive developmental settings provide young people with a supportive, caring environment where they feel valued. The atmosphere of youth programs was somewhat difficult to assess from the information provided in the program evaluations. Written program descriptions paint an incomplete picture of staff members' approach to participants. Many of the qualities that

Table 37.1 Comparison of Programs Positively Altering Two or More Risk Behaviors With Programs Positively Altering Fewer Risk Behaviors

	<i>Programs Improving Multiple Risk Behaviors (N = 11)</i>		<i>Programs Improving Fewer Risk Behaviors (N = 37)</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Outcomes</b>				
Competence	7	64	23	62
Confidence	6	55	15	40
Connections	7	64	12	32
Character	11	100	25	68
Caring	2	18	7	19
<b>Program Elements</b>				
<i>Goals</i>				
Competence	11	100	37	100
Confidence	9	82	23	62
Connections	11	100	24	65
Character	10	91	29	78
Caring	4	36	5	14
<i>Atmosphere</i>				
Supportive	10	91	12	32
Empowering	5	45	13	35
Expecting	8	73	36	97
Rewarding	9	82	23	62
Lasted at least 9 months	8	73	13	35
<i>Activities</i>				
Build skills	10	91	36	97
Authentic activities	4	44	12	32
Broaden horizons	5	45	10	27
Other contexts	5	45	18	48

distinguish a positive, caring, youth-centered tone depend on the staff's demeanor and attitude toward the adolescent participants as well as the quality of relationships. Unfortunately, few studies measure the attitudes of staff members or the quality of relationships. Although the measures are imperfect, we distinguish five dimensions of program atmosphere referred to in the literature from the program descriptions. Programs in which the

structure, activities, and staff members encourage the development of supportive relationships with adults and among peers, empower adolescents, communicate expectations for positive behavior, and provide opportunities for recognition convey a positive view of youth. Program duration also relates to program atmosphere. Longer-term programs recognize that development is ongoing; as a result, they offer more enduring

support and greater opportunities for meaningful relationships (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b).

We drew on the definitions provided by Catalano et al. (1999) and the National Research Council (2002) to develop the operational definitions of the first four indicators of program atmosphere. Programs classified as providing a supportive atmosphere encourage participants to develop a supportive relationship with adults and/or peers through participating in the program. Because we were interested in capturing the atmosphere that participants experience when attending the program, we did not consider programs that provided parent training to improve parent-youth relationships as providing a supportive program atmosphere unless they also directly encouraged supportive relationships with program staff members, mentors, or peers. Similarly, programs that worked to improve youths' social skills but that did not specifically encourage a sense of belonging or bonding with other program participants were not judged as offering a supportive program environment. An empowering atmosphere existed when program staff members and activities encouraged adolescents to engage in useful roles, practice self-determination, and develop or clarify their goals for the future. Programs conveyed a belief in adolescents as capable individuals when they communicated expectations for positive behavior by defining clear rules for behavior and consequences for infractions, fostering prosocial norms, and encouraging youth to practice healthy behaviors. They could provide opportunities for recognition by rewarding positive behaviors within the program or by structuring opportunities for public recognition of skills.

Table 37.1 shows the differences between the two groups of programs. All but one of the programs altering multiple risk behaviors encouraged the development of a supportive relationship within the program, but less

than one third of the other programs did the same. Fewer, however, conveyed expectations for positive behavior. Recognition for positive behaviors was a part of more of the multiple-risk-altering programs than of the programs improving fewer risk behaviors. A larger percentage of the multiple-risk-altering programs lasted at least 9 months. Thus, programs altering multiple risk behaviors provided participants with more of the elements of a supportive environment than did programs altering fewer risk behaviors: (3.6 vs. 2.6),  $F(1, 47) = 6.35$ ,  $p = .015$ .

Program activities, the third way programs can implement the positive youth development philosophy, are the vehicle through which most programs attract and engage participants. As noted earlier, the specific focus of the activity (e.g., sports, literacy) does not matter as much as the opportunities provided through participation. Consistent with this view, we depict the types of opportunities afforded by the array of program activities and components. We identified three features of program activities that capture the youth development philosophy: opportunities for adolescents to build skills, engage in real and challenging activities, and broaden their horizons. We also included a fourth dimension—increasing developmental supports in other contexts of adolescents' worlds, such as family, school, or community (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003b).

To classify the programs according to these features, we inferred opportunities from the components and activities described in the program descriptions. Some activities, such as community service, afford participants multiple opportunities—to build skills, engage in real and challenging activities, and broaden their horizons. Other types of activities provide more limited opportunities. For example, academic instruction or homework help components primarily build (school-related) skills. We judged programs that included a competency-building curriculum,



life skills training, direct academic instruction, homework help, or community service to offer participants the opportunity to build skills.

Activities that allow adolescents to engage in real and challenging activities were harder to infer from the program descriptions without more information about the quality of the activities. For example, activities described as “educational” can be real, challenging, and authentic, such as designing, writing, and producing a newspaper, or disconnected, mechanical, or rote, such as practicing spelling and grammar. Therefore, we included only employment, leadership opportunities (such as tutoring or peer mediation), and community service as activities that provide the opportunity to engage in an authentic, real, and challenging activity.

The literature describes youth development programs as places where young people can expand their horizons by providing them with opportunities they might otherwise not have, such as visiting a museum or engaging in a recreational activity requiring equipment not readily available. We considered programs that arrange for field trips, cultural activities, community service, employment opportunities, recreation, and mentors to expand participants’ horizons by exposing them to new people, places, and situations.

There is a question within the youth development literature of whether the primary focus of youth development programs should be preparing adolescents for the world by ensuring that they possess the five Cs or by shaping a better world for youth by also increasing the supports available to them at home, school, and in their community. The fourth feature addresses this question by indicating if the program activities attempted to improve at least one context—family, school, or community—through parent activities (e.g., parenting classes), teacher training, modifying school climate or structure, or changing community

attitudes or norms. Table 37.1 shows the characteristics of the program activities for both types of programs. None of the opportunities offered by the different program activities differed between the two types of programs.

It appears that the atmosphere, rather than the opportunities provided by program activities, differentiates successful programs that alter multiple risk behaviors from other successful programs for youth. In particular, these programs provide adolescents with a supportive and less demanding environment. The findings also support the assertion that programs combining youth development with risk reduction are more likely to achieve their goals.

#### **MANY BARRIERS: NEEDED RESEARCH**

The operational definitions we created to determine program goals, atmosphere, and activities can serve as the basis for the development of survey or observational measures for use in program evaluations. Program descriptions only tell us so much about *how* the program works. Our understanding, as a field, of why some programs are better at promoting youth development than others would be vastly improved by the development and inclusion in evaluation studies of measures of the quality of the atmosphere that programs create and the types of opportunities they provide. Too often, this process information is not collected or reported in outcome studies.

We also need to measure a broader array of program outcomes to fully understand the impact of youth development programs. Current evaluation efforts fail to capture the broader view of youth development held by many programs. Measures of the ingredients of youth development (competence, confidence, connections, character, and caring)

need to be included in evaluation efforts in addition to the more traditional measures of risky behaviors. We are encouraged by recent, although still preliminary, efforts to create such measures (Moore, Evans, Brooks-Gunn, & Roth, 2001; Roth et al., 2001).

We are hopeful that the recent burgeoning in attention to the after-school hours, and with it a general acceptance of the principles of the youth development movement, will be

met with an increase in funding and willpower to create and include these new measures as part of program evaluation efforts. Without these improvements, we are limited in our ability to provide guidance to program developers on how best to create programs that provide positive developmental opportunities by encouraging positive development in all areas, including (but not limited to) decreasing risky behaviors.