

# Youth AOD Training

## YOUNG PEOPLE AND SUBSTANCE USE



**YOUTH  
SUPPORT +  
ADVOCACY  
SERVICE**

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Youth

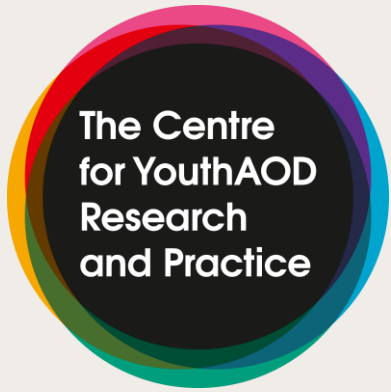
Research

Training

Practice

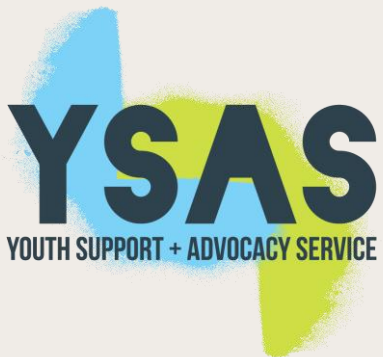
# WHAT ARE WE COVERING TODAY?

- A quick look at adolescent development with some of the interesting people in the field.
- A very brief overview of resilience based practice in youth AOD work.
- Some practice approaches around working effectively with young people who use drugs and alcohol
- Questions and discussion



# Youth AOD Training

## UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT



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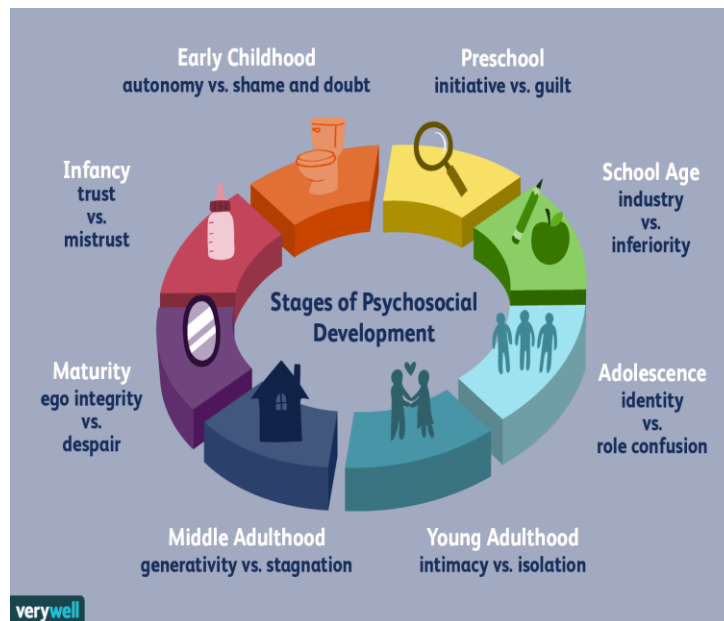
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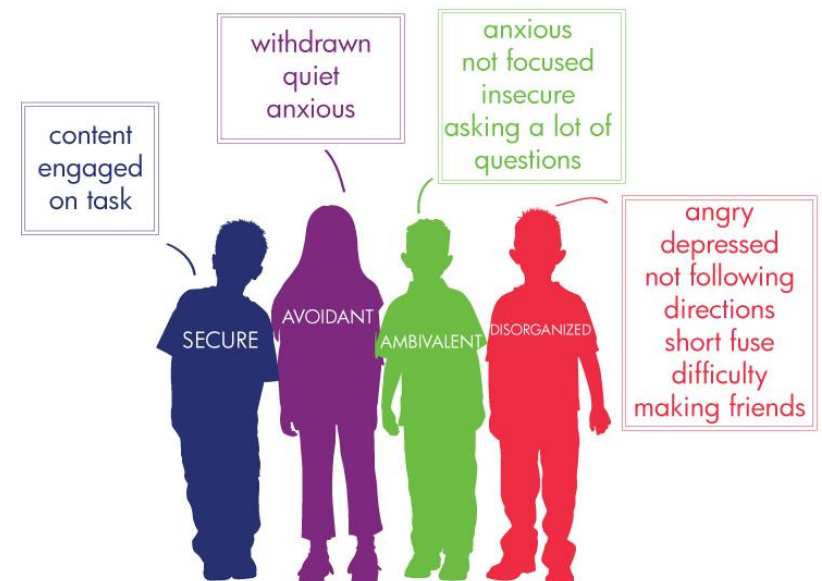
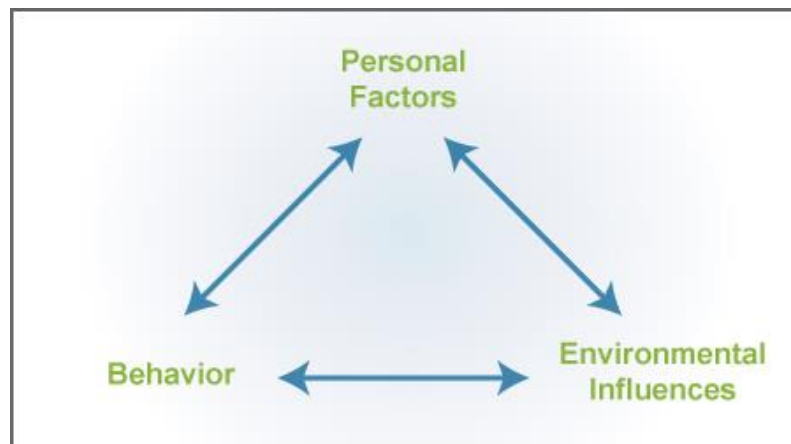
# STAGED OR BUILDING BLOCK THEORIES

- Erikson's theory of 'psychosocial' development
- Havinghurst's 'developmental task theory
- Piaget's cognitive development theory
- Kohlberg's (1981) theory of 'moral reasoning



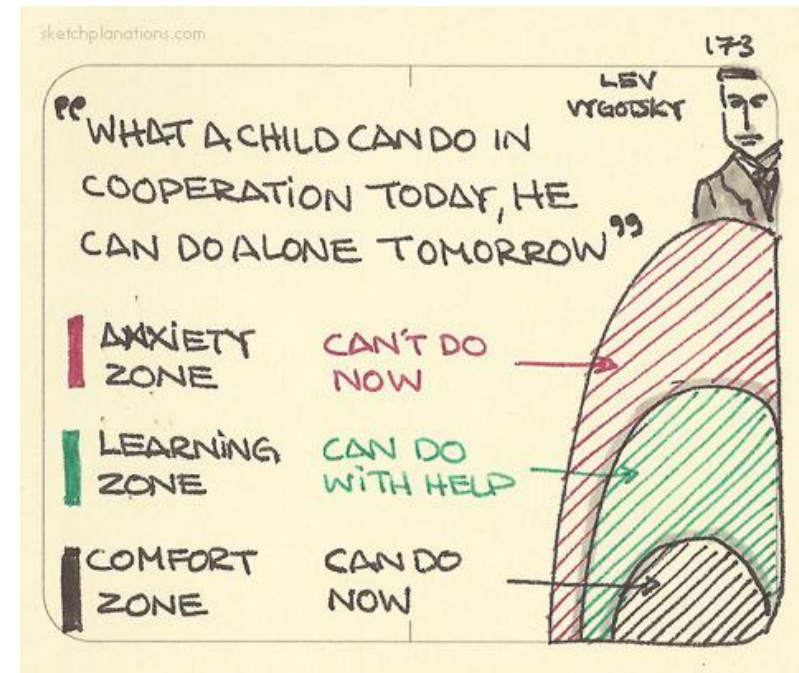
# ECOLOGICAL & EXPERIENTIAL THEORIES

- Developmental Systems Theory (DST)
- Ecological Systems Theory (EST)
- Cultural History Theory
- Social Learning Theory
- Attachment Theory



# LEV VYGOTSKY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY

- Social development theory
- Zone of proximal development
- The “More Knowledgeable Other”
- Understanding and knowing young people and pitching activities or interventions that challenge not overwhelm or bore them.
- Growth, development and progression happens in the “zone”
- “scaffolding” term coined by Vygotsky

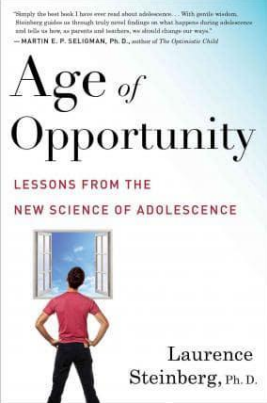


# HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND ADOLESCENCE?

“The period of life that starts with the biological, hormonal and physical changes of puberty and ends at the age at which an individual attains a stable, independent role in society”. She goes on to acknowledge that this “can go on a long time”.

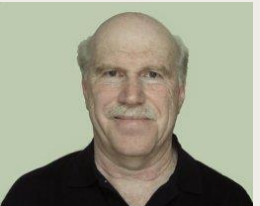
- Sarah-Janye Blackmore

- ‘Adolescent transition’ 10 – 25 yo
- Not a uniform process
- No single theory or model of development
- Domains central to changes
  - Physical
  - Psychological
  - Cognitive
  - Emotional
  - Social



# LAWRENCE STEINBERG

- Neuroplasticity in adolescence gives profound opportunities
- Risk taking = imbalance between limbic (emotional) and cortical (exec function)
- Scaffolded support to develop social and emotional learning

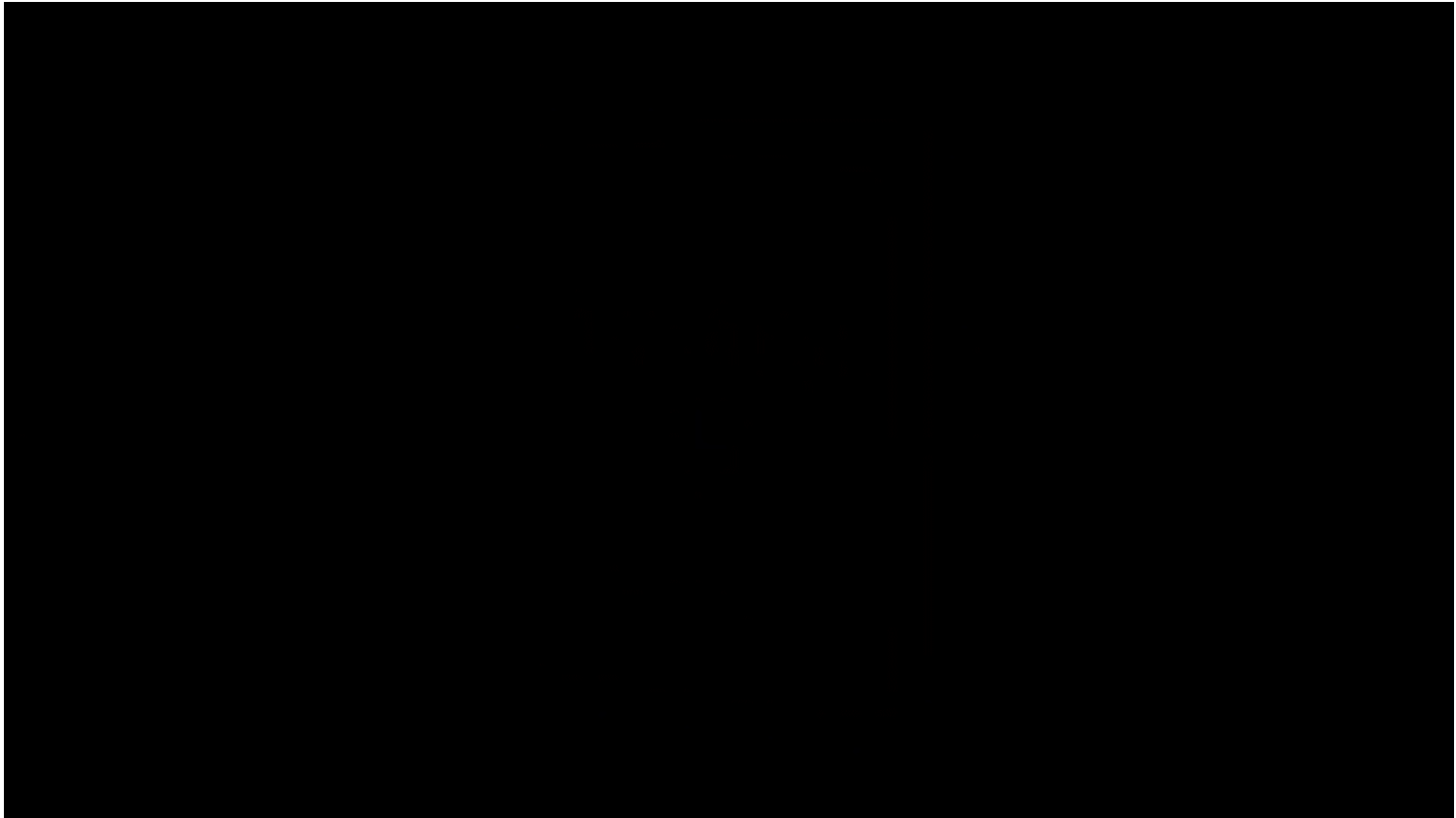


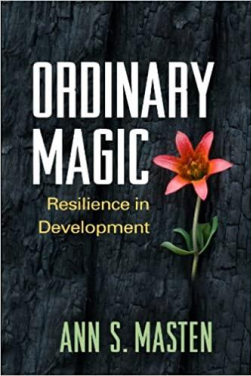
# DAN ROMER

- Neuroplasticity in adolescence but not PFC deficit focussed
- Risk taking = moving from verbatim to gist based decision making over the lifespan
- 2 types of risk takers in adolescence – sensation seekers vs impulsive action



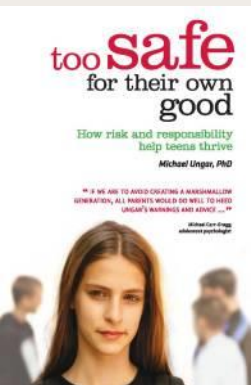
# DAN SIEGEL ON THE “ESSENCE OF ADOLESCENCE”





# ANN MASTEN

- Neurobiology of resilience
- Ecological and social factors in resilience



# MICHAEL UNGAR

- Risk taking and “responsibility seeking” need to be resourced and supported
- Adversity and challenge are key to operationalising/activating resilience in young people

# TASKS OF ADOLESCENCE

In general adolescence is a time when there is a range of developmental tasks to undertake to successfully negotiate the transition.

These are:

- **Achieving independence from parents and other adults**
- **Developing a realistic, stable, positive self-identity**
- **Forming a sexual identity**
- **Negotiating peer and intimate relationships**
- **Development of a realistic body image**
- **Formulation of their own moral, value system**
- **Acquisition of skills for future economic independence**

From The NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health and Transcultural Mental Health Centre (2008)

# VULNERABILITY IN ADOLESCENCE

There are some things that young people need to do as they develop into adults that make them particularly **vulnerable**.

## **They want to:**

- Do things that are pleasurable
- Take risks (learn/grow/develop)
- Experiment
- Fit in

## **At the same time, they are still developing:**

- Impulse control, emotional regulation, problem solving
- “database” of experience to draw on to assess situations
- Ability to perceive risks and value negative consequences

And they are much more sensitive to potential rewards than the risks that may accompany them.

# DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

Services and workers who aim to be developmentally appropriate would look to incorporate the following practices:

- Flexible – accessible, engaging and continuous
- Experiential – offer opportunities for young people to learn through experiences, rather than de-contextualised talking – hence the credo of the youth worker – “walking alongside the young person”.
- Relationship-based approach
- Person-centred and holistic
- Ecological and systemic – person is considered in their context.
- Emphasis on strengths and solutions

# DEVELOPMENTALLY-CONDUCTIVE PRACTICE

## **Developmentally conducive practice**

- aims to provide alternative experiences that help young people catch up in, or reshape areas of development that have been delayed or distorted.

It endeavours to provide and promote skills, resources, connections and capacities that will reduce the need for young people to rely on problematic behaviours like substance use, offending, self injury etc. to meet their needs.





The Centre  
for Youth AOD  
Practice  
Development

# RESILIENCE BASED PRACTICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AOD ISSUES

Practice

Education

Advocacy

Research

# WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

“Resilience is not only an individual’s capacity to overcome adversity, but the capacity of the individual’s environment to provide access to health-enhancing resources in culturally relevant ways.”

*-Ungar, 2005*

- The same factors that interact to foster and protect healthy development and optimal functioning also support resilience.
- All young people can develop their capacity to be resilient given the right conditions



# DOMAINS OF NEED

**Safety** Protection from harm & the capacity to respond to crisis

**Stability** Security and the capacity to meet basic needs

**Agency** Control over health compromising issues and behaviours

**Participation** Engagement in satisfying, socially valued activity

**Connections** Helpful relationships with people, culture and places

**Identity** A coherent sense of self and one's place in the world

# INTERNAL RESOURCES

## LIVING SKILLS

Health literacy  
Resourcefulness  
Cultural competence  
Numeracy & literacy

## SELF MANAGEMENT

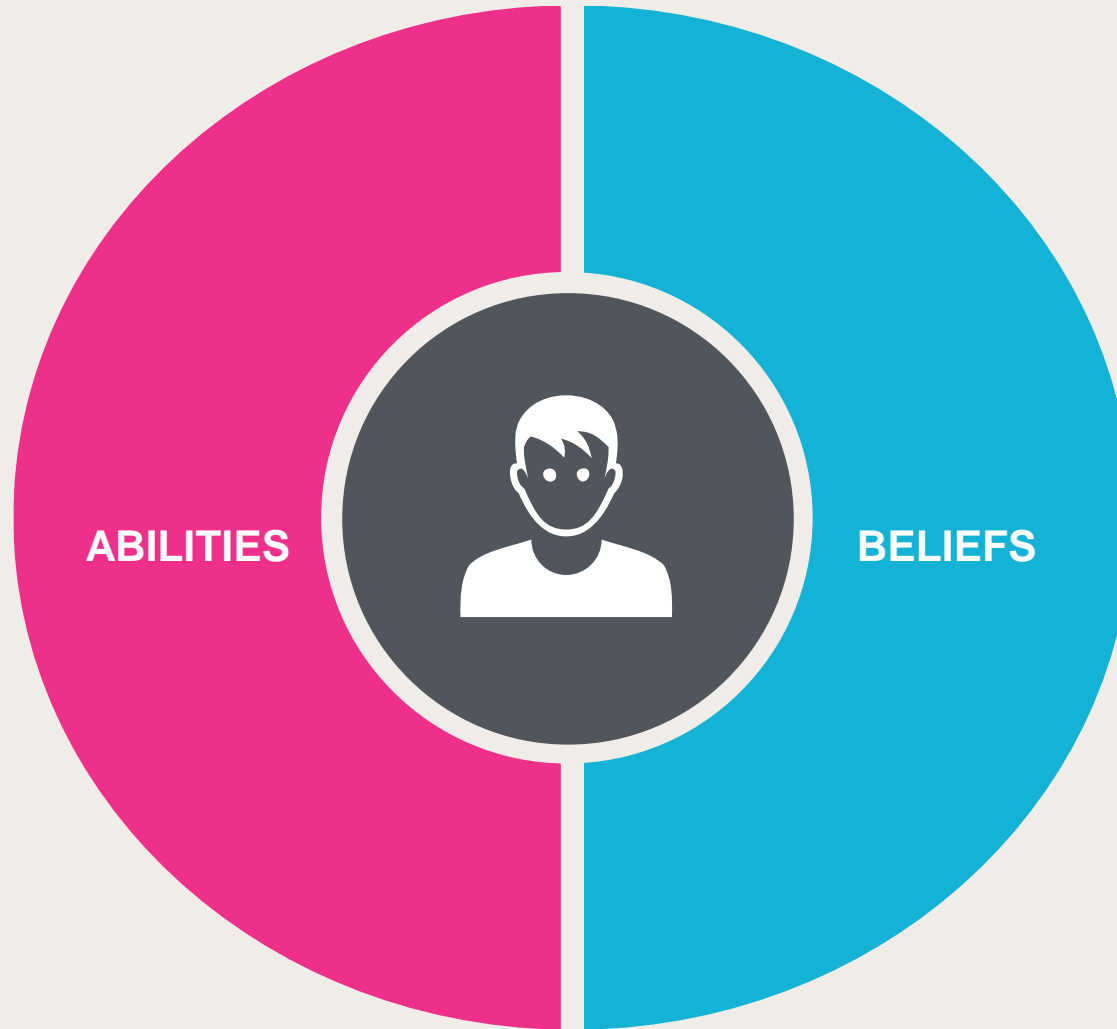
Insight and acceptance  
Emotional regulation  
Impulse control  
Problem solving  
Understanding experiences

## INTERPERSONAL

Self & other awareness  
Communication skills  
Assertiveness skills  
Balance needs of self & others

## ATTRIBUTES

Talents  
Intelligence  
Concentration & attention  
Fitness & health  
Appearance  
Temperament



## SELF CONCEPT

Self-esteem  
Self-efficacy  
Values & attitudes  
Interests & commitments  
World view

## MEANING

Sense of security  
Sense of purpose  
Sense of belonging  
Hope & optimism

# EXTERNAL RESOURCES

## MATERIAL

- Income
- Safe environments
- Housing
- Food & clothing
- Information technology
- Transportation

## PEOPLE

- Family & kinship networks
- Friendship networks & partners
- Caring adults
- Community networks

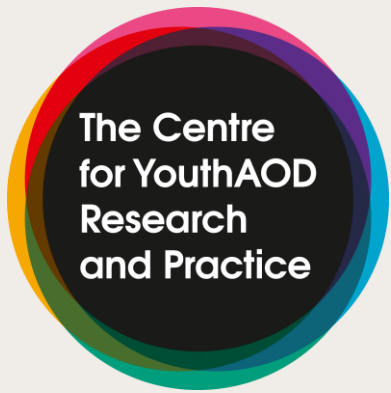


## COMMUNITY

- Culture
- Spiritual organisations
- Enabling places
- Education, employment & training
- Sport, recreation & leisure
- Broader social movements

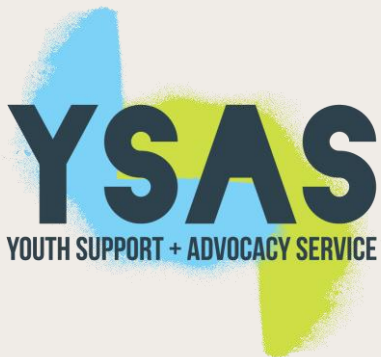
## SERVICES

- Health care
- Dental care
- Mental health services
- AOD services
- Homelessness services
- Counselling & support services
- Emergency services



# Youth AOD Training

## WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL



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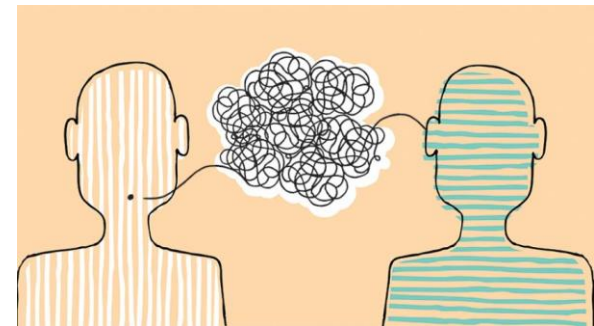
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Practice

# MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

- Talk about a young person's experiences & how drugs fit in – try and explore the context of use. What was happening the minute, hour, day, week before use? Is use social and communal or solo and isolated?
- Start by asking what they like about drug use or other “problematic behaviours” as this will give you an idea what they get out of it
- Take a ‘non-expert’ position. You might know a lot about drug use but the young person is the expert on their drug use. You can also find out a lot about their AOD knowledge, beliefs and attitudes.



# MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

- Protect the relationship over quizzing young person about their drug use / problematic behaviour.
- Don't undermine the young person who has developed a sense of 'mastery' with drug use. This is important to both identity and self esteem so we need to develop alternative sources of mastery first.
- Keep in mind differences in perception of time and consequences e.g. 'long-term', and in 'what matters'
- Be useful. Show that there is value in what you offer or represent

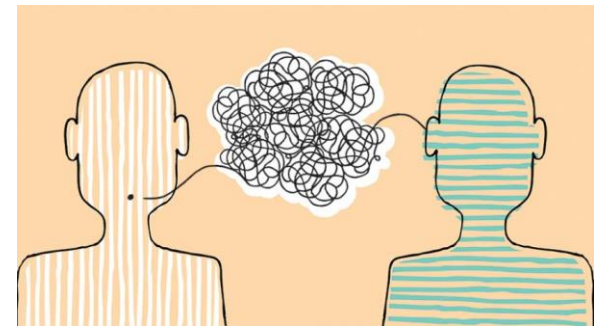


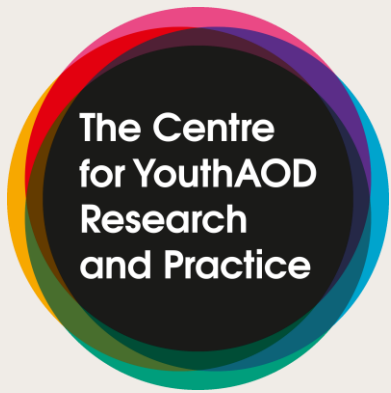
# MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

**Remember** - Relationship building and non-judgmental approach essentially gives permission for young people to be open and honest about their substance use – they need to be able to trust that their sharing of vulnerability will be met with a meaningful response that reduces harm and opens further dialogue.

**AOD Work is not just specialist work!** It is relationship based and seeks to understand the function behind the use. All workers and supports have an influence, impact and opportunity to model behavior, to build relationships and to help the young person understand the function of their use and what might work in it's place.

**Every experience matters** – so in fact anyone working with young people has these opportunities in some context and to some degree...





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## OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER...



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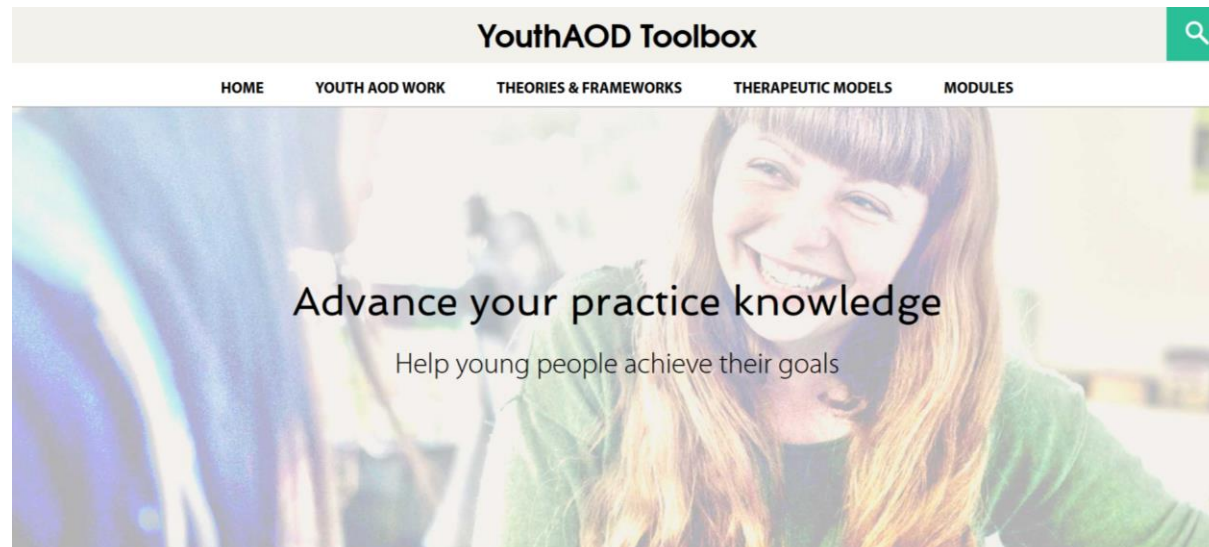


# QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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# YOUTH AOD TOOLBOX

<https://www.youthaodtoolbox.org.au/>



# OUT OF HOME CARE TOOLBOX

OoHCToolbox.org.au



Everything you need to know at your fingertips.



Listen

Don't have time to read?  
Listen to a transcript.



Watch

Watch videos of  
experienced practitioners.



Read

Dig deeper into topics  
of interest.



Browse

Check out links to  
helpful sites.



Download

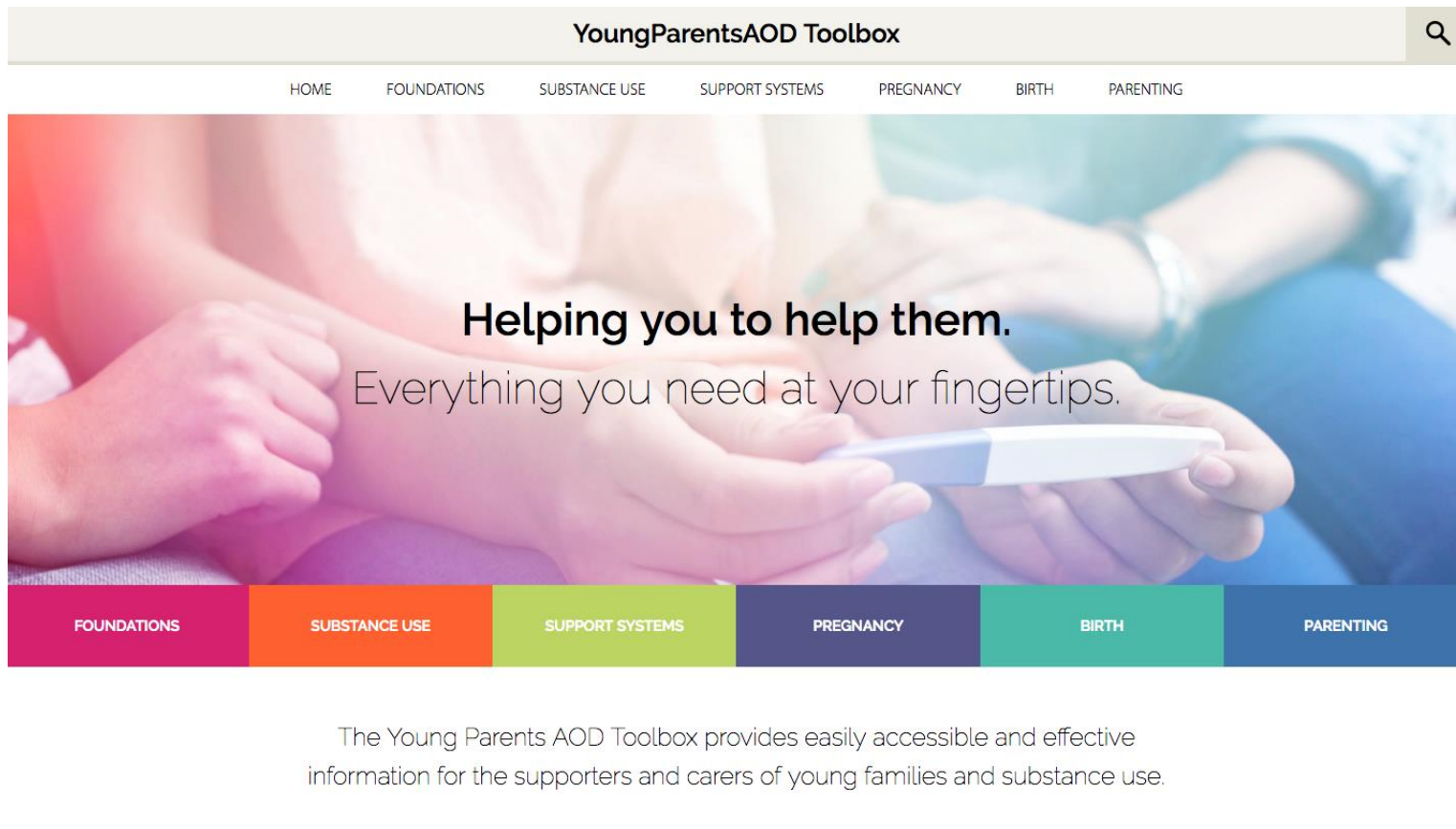
Download handy  
information to use later.

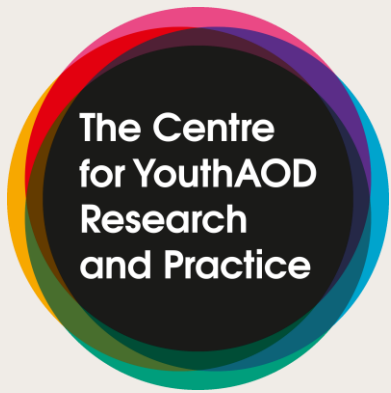


A ysas.org.au initiative. OoHC Toolbox was made with the support of the Sidney Myer Fund.



# YOUNGPARENTSAOD.ORG.AU





# Youth AOD Training

**THANK YOU**

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