What Students Want: Building More Holistic Supports for Postsecondary Success

Yessica Guadalupe Vargas & Zabiina Norman
July 18, 2024

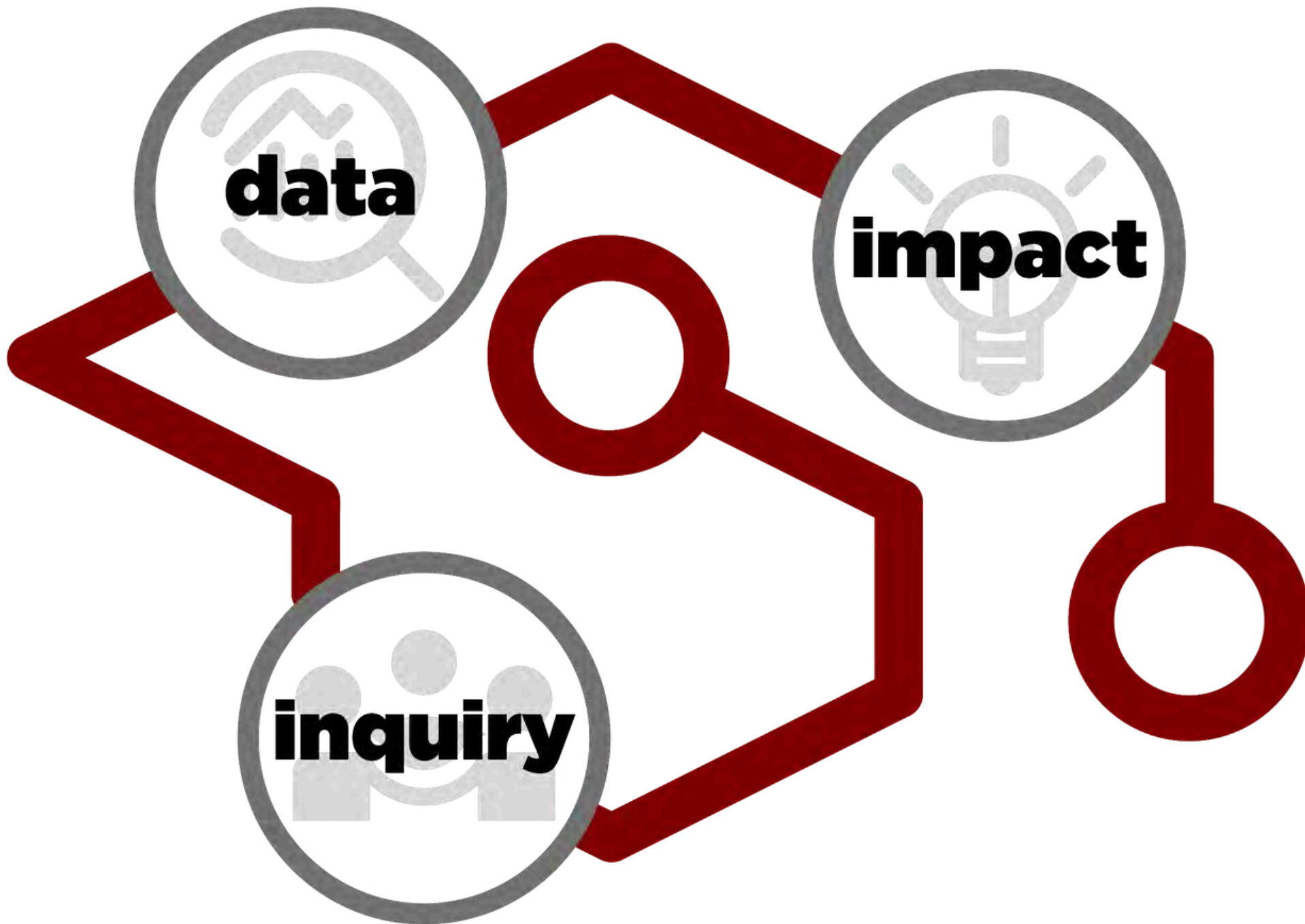Live interview with Zabiina Norman

GO AL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING™

the To&Through project

Agenda

- Live interview
- Intro: To&Through & Student Stories
- Intro: Foundations for Young Adult Success report
- Qualitative Data + Research on what helps young people succeed
- Student Recommendations

the To&Through project

data
We **analyze and share quantitative and qualitative data** on the educational journeys of Chicago Public Schools students

inquiry
We **work alongside education stakeholders** from across the system **to make meaning of data** in ways that support and shift practice

impact
We help realize equitable learning experiences, pathways, and outcomes for CPS students from the middle grades through college graduation

GO*AL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

Street Data

A NEXT-GENERATION MODEL FOR
Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation

SHANE SAFIR | JAMILA DUGAN

Foreword by Christopher Emdin

CORWIN

YOUTH VOICE MATTERS

experts by experience

RESEARCH REPORT MAY 2021

Navigating the Maze
Understanding CPS Graduates' Paths Through College

GOAL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project

Street Data

A NEXT-GENERATION MODEL FOR
Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation

SHANE SAFIR | JAMILA DUGAN

Foreword by Christopher Emdin

CORWIN

experts
by
experience

RESEARCH REPORT MAY 2021

Navigating the Maze
Understanding CPS Graduates' Paths Through College

GOAL 2025 | COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

YOUTH VOICE MATTERS

dna info CHICAGO ▾ NEIGHBORHOODS ▾ NEWS ▾ FEATURES ▾

SOUTH CHICAGO & EAST SIDE Education

Washington High Students Stage Sit-in To Fight Ouster of Beloved Principal

By Joe Ward and Alex Nitkin | December 18, 2015
1:20pm | Updated on December 18, 2015 7:01pm

EAST SIDE — Angry over their principal being ousted, George Washington High School students on Friday staged a sit-in to protest his contract non-renewal at the hands of the Local School Council.

Students left class at around 10:30 a.m. Friday at Washington, 3535 E. 114th St., and sat in the hallways, refusing to go back to class, students and parents said.

Students walked out of class Friday to support their principal, ...

◄ View Full Caption   submitted photo

More than 300 of the school's 1,500 students walked out of class Friday, said Jessica

GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
PRIDE THROUGH EXCELLENCE
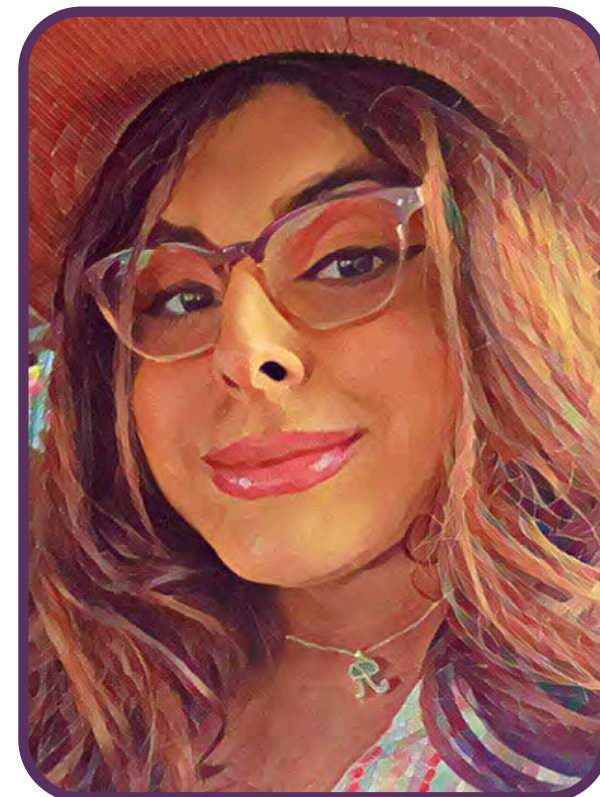1958
GW

SVC

LSC

Mikva Challenge

the To&Through project

The Series So Far

Navigating the Maze

Written by Adayan Munsuarrietta
Led by: May Malone
2021
(5 Stories)

Life Beyond High School

Written by Arturo Ballesteros & Ashley Fung
Led by: May Malone
2022
(9 Stories)

Growing Pains & Gain from Middle Grades

Written by Yessica Guadalupe Vargas
2023
(4 stories)

Connecting & Guiding Alumni towards Graduation

Written by Noor Myran
2023
(3 stories)

Class of '?' Graduating in four (or more) years

Written by Yessica Guadalupe Vargas
2023
(6 stories)

GOAL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project
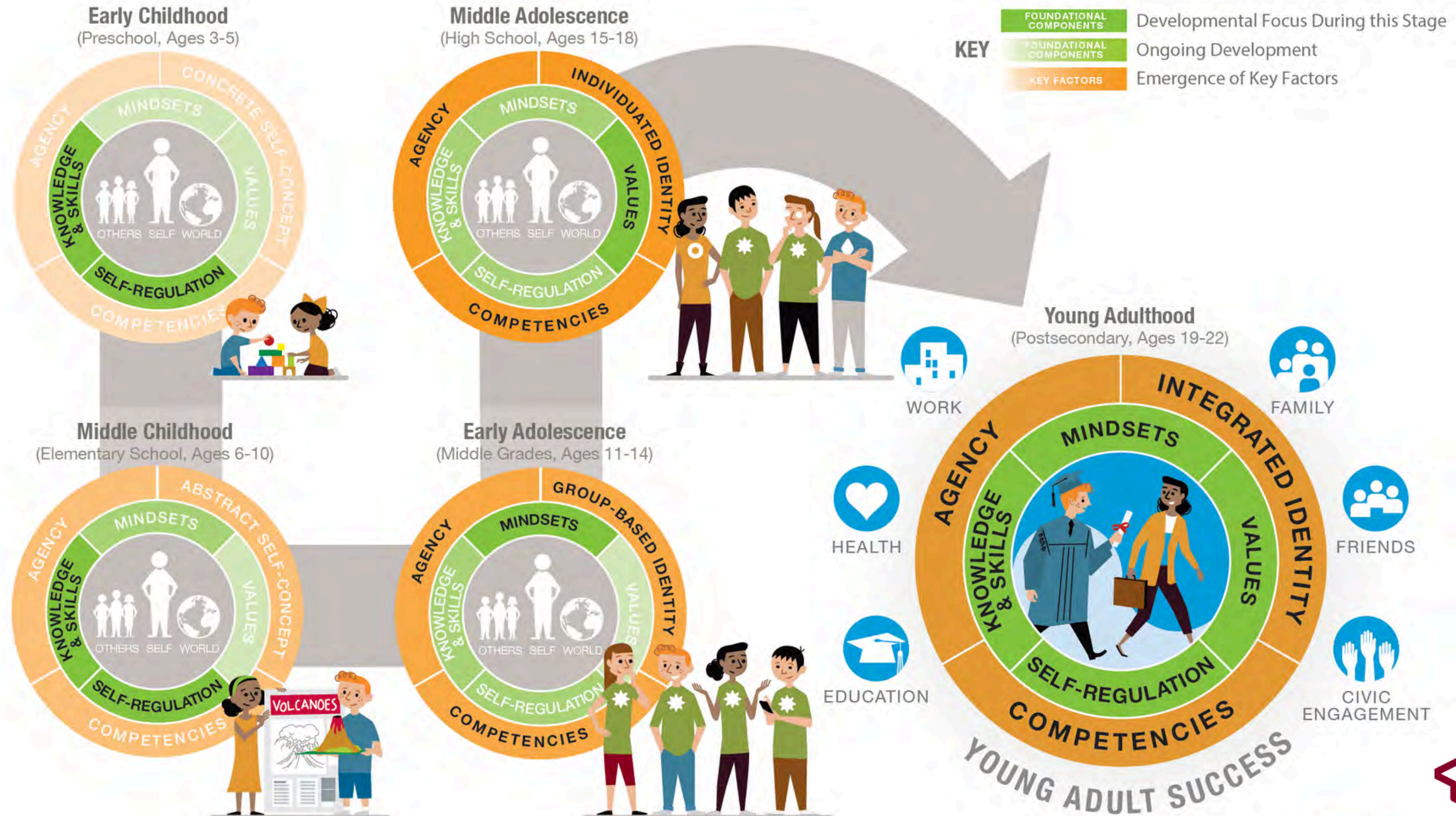
Soft Qualitative Analysis

- Synthesized all 27 Stories focusing on **what worked for students & what students wished they had more of**

- One of the recurring themes was that students thrived when they had holistic supports that <u>centered them as young people, not just as students.</u>

Foundations for Young Adult Success

- What are the ingredients necessary for young adults to succeed?

- The report captures a holistic view of children's developmental needs from early on in childhood to young adulthood. It focuses on the kinds of experiences and supportive relationships that guide positive development.

- Released in 2015
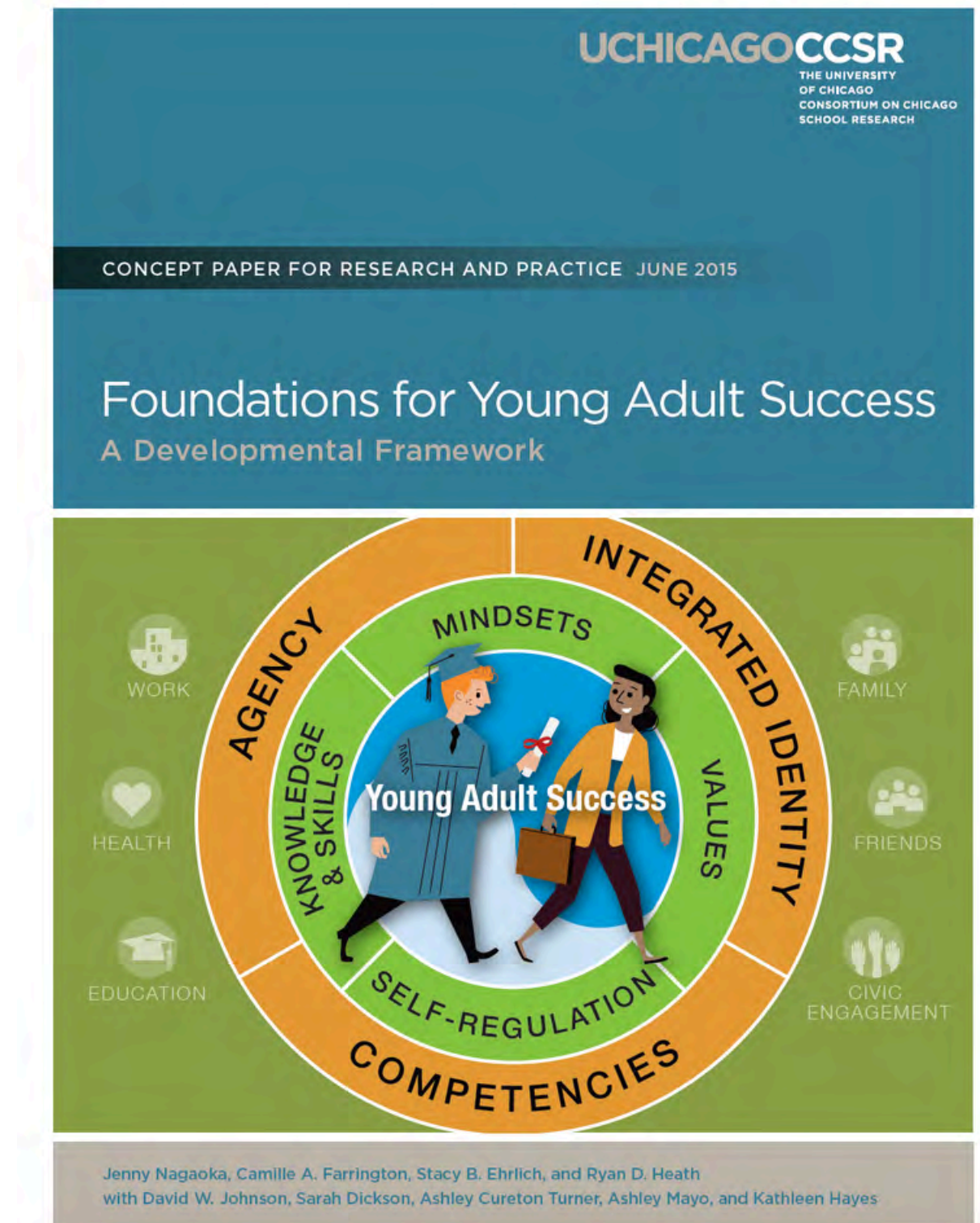
Focus of Development Changes as Children Grow Older
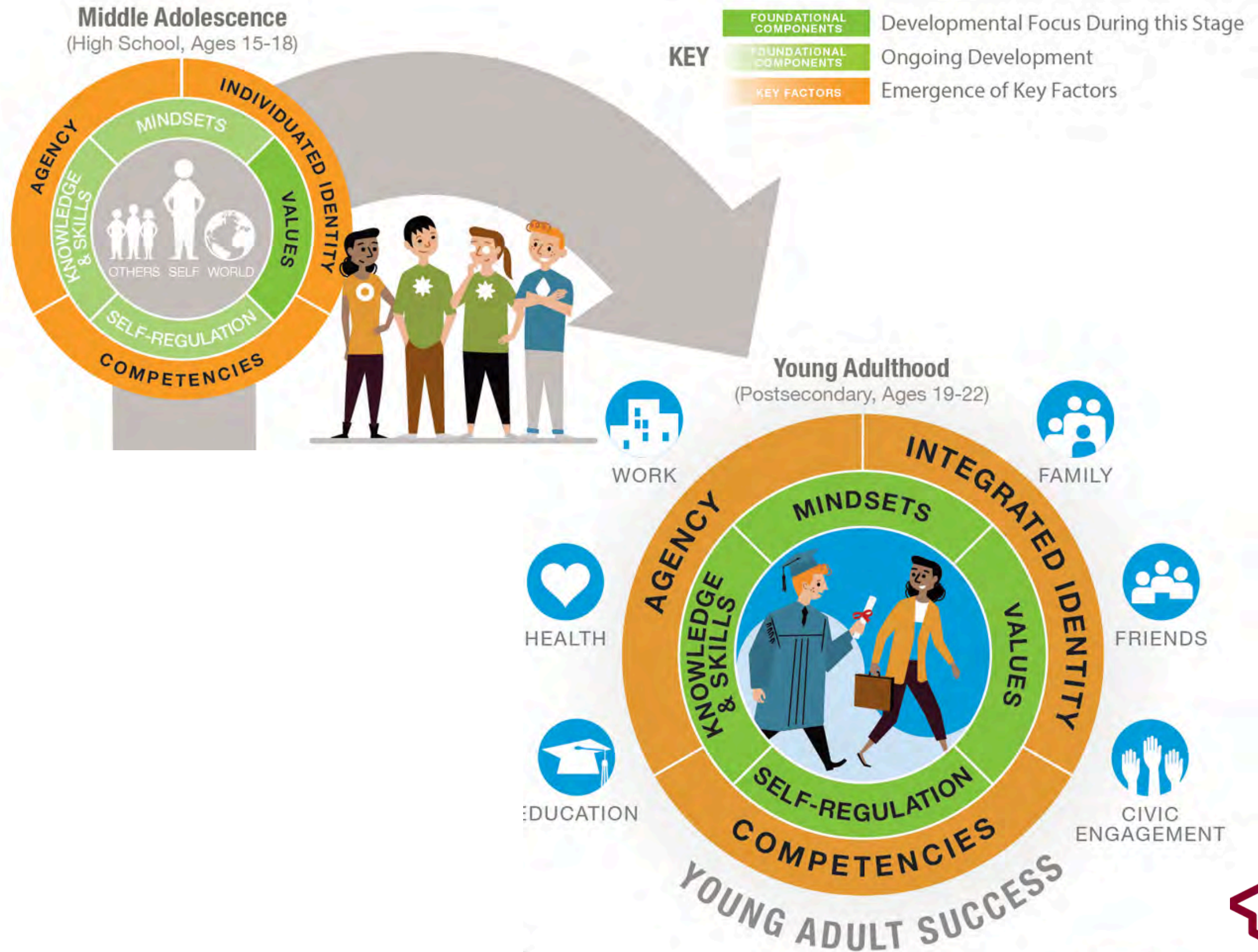
Developmental Context: Middle Adolescence
(High School, Ages 15-18)

## Developing Values & Individuated Identity

Values
"to identify and reflect on what they value about themselves, their peers and family members, and the world at-large. They "begin to view themselves in terms of personal beliefs and standards…" [1]

Individuated Identity
Growing their own sense of identity [2] independent of those around them

Who am I? What can I do in the world? [3]

GO'AL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project
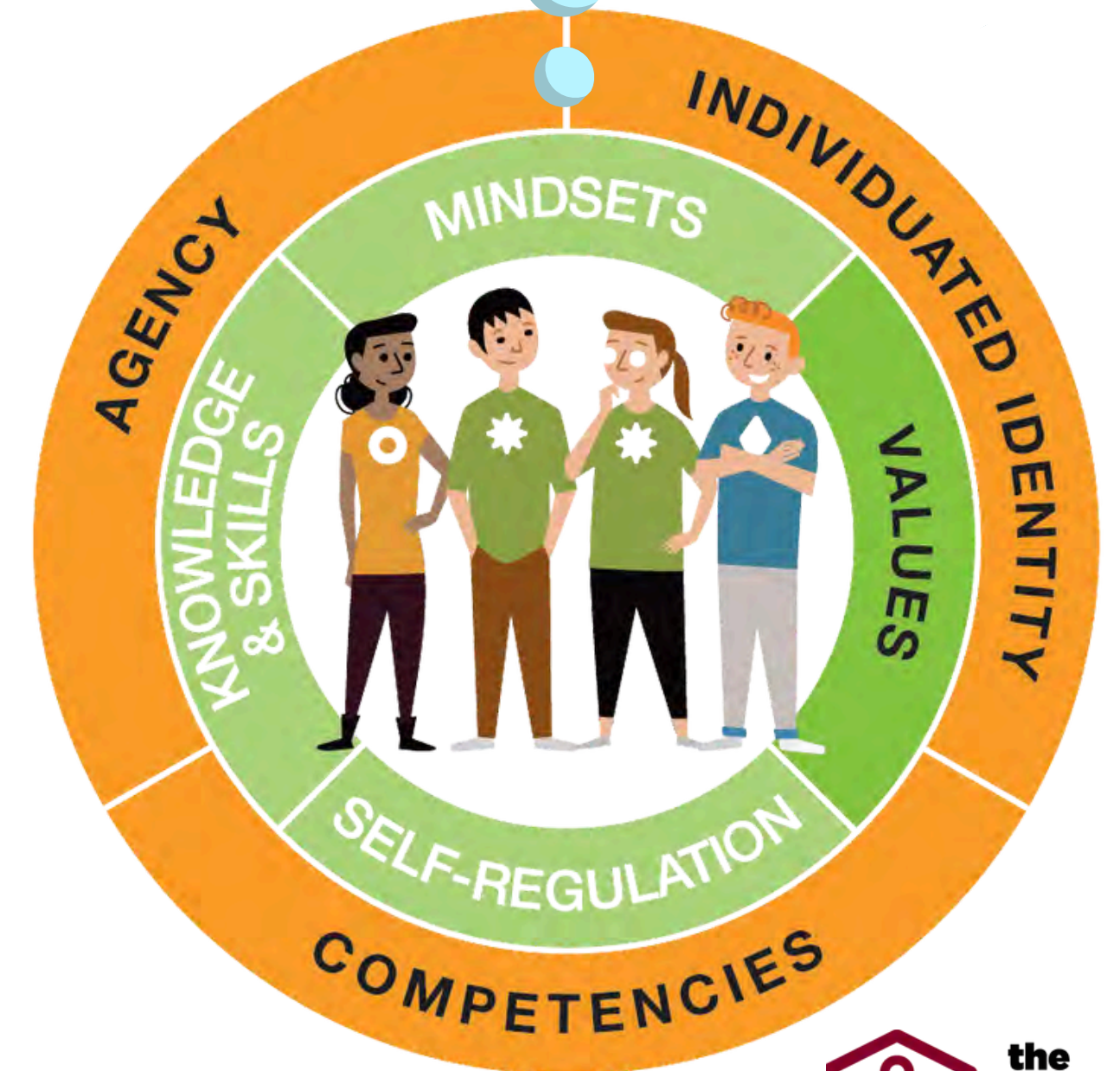
How Experiences Shape Development:
Middle Adolescence (High School, Ages 15-18)

"I think one important part of building out an identity is that you practice and play around in things and think about who you want to be in them. And you try on different roles. Think about all the different personalities you can take on when you're babysitting, or you're working at the movie theater with kids you don't go to school with, or you're doing whatever. Kids need time and room to do that and to figure out: How do I see myself? Can I still be true to myself..." [4]

Who am I? What can I do in the world? [3]

GO▲L 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project
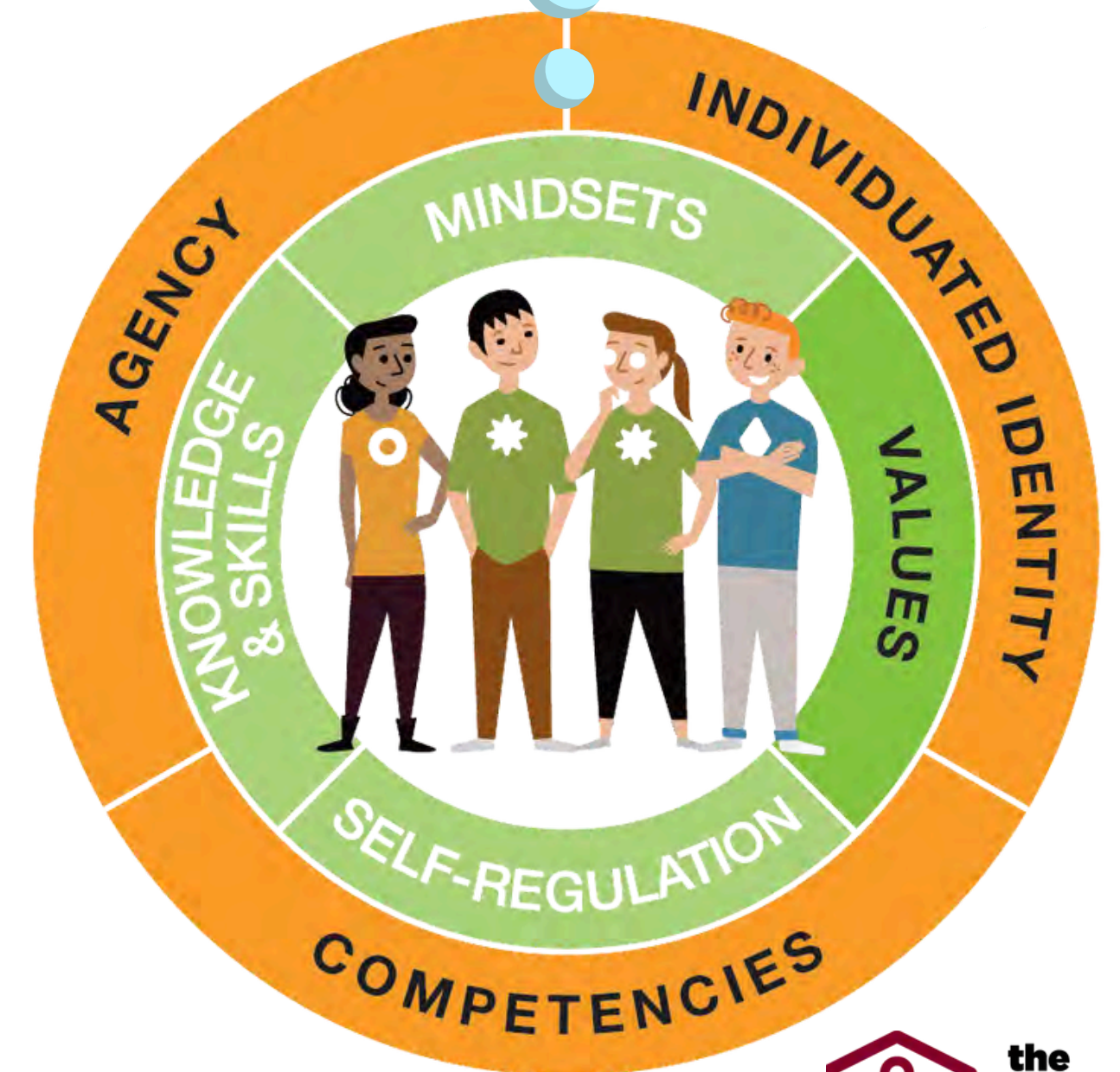
Developmental Context: Young Adulthood (Postsecondary, Ages 19-22)

Youth are intertwining their different social identities into a cohesive integrated identity. Inspires direction for their growing agency![5]

"Young adulthood is a critical time period in determining the future of one's life. The process of integrating identity is best supported by exposing young people to a variety of opportunities and possibilities"[6]

What are my goals for my future? How do I become more independent?

How Experiences Shape Development: (Postsecondary, Ages 19-22)

"As adolescents get closer to adulthood, they experience more pressure to make choices about their future."[5]

1. Make commitments to particular values and beliefs and integrated identity
2. They adopt a ready-made identity
3. They stop and take extra time exploring[5]

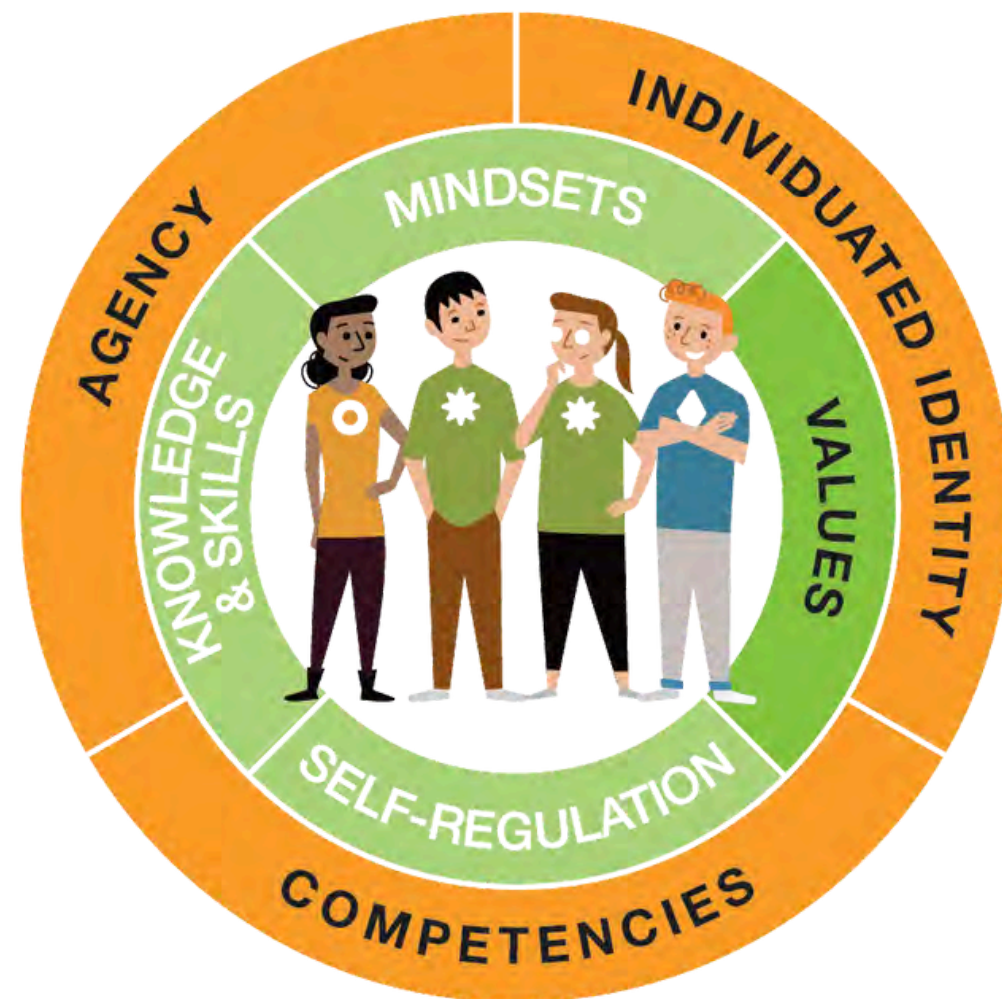*What are my goals for my future? How do **I** become more independent?*

Turn & Talk

How do these two development frameworks show up in your work?

Middle Adolescence (High School, Ages 15-18)

Youth are reflecting on what they value about themselves, their peers and family members. Growing their own sense of identity independent of those around them.

Who am I? What can I do in the world?

Young Adulthood (Postsecondary, Ages 19-22)

Youth are intertwining their different social identities into a cohesive integrated identity. Inspires direction for their growing agency!

What are my goals for my future? How do I become more independent?

What helps students succeed?

Qualitative Data & Research Analysis

What helps students succeed

Adults who can be…

"That guardian angel. Even if it's a teacher… the janitor, anybody really who has a love or care for you."- **Sean**

The Search Institute Framework #1 guidepost for impactful developmental relationships among Youth and Adults

Express care to be present, warm, invested, interested, and dependable[7]

What helps students succeed

Adults who can be…

"That guardian angel. Even if it's a teacher… the janitor, anybody really who has a love or care for you." - **Sean**

*"[My mentor] was very kind. They were the first to say, 'it's okay to not have everything together. It's okay not to know what you wanna do. You don't have to have all the answers.' That for me was like a super validating cause in my household; we never talked about mental health. We didn't talk about changing what you wanna do… They were the first person to actually number one validate my identity first of all, and then to also validate the fact that, 'it's okay to f*ck up. It's okay to mess up.'"*

- *Nicole*

the To&Through project

What helps students succeed

Adults who could support students as a....

Cheerleader   **Thought Partner**   **Navigator**

The Search Institute Framework guidepost for impactful developmental relationships among Youth and Adults

Provide support	to encourage, to guide, to model, and to advocate on youths' behalf [7]
Share power	to demonstrate respect, to give voice and listen carefully, to respond thoughtfully, and to collaborate openly with youth [7]
Expand possibilities	to explore new ideas and experiences, to connect youth to helpful others, and to navigate challenging experiences or barriers that deflect youth from their goals [7]

the To&Through project

What helps students succeed

Adults who could support students as a....

Cheerleader   **Thought Partner**   **Navigator**

"The work of mentorship is going to be even more important now, because yes we have more people being funneled into college, but we also need more people willing to help guide young people through these processes"

— **Yvette**

"A lot of [my teachers] were mentors to me. Even after graduating they'll still hold my hand through the [college] process. I graduated roughly five years ago, and to know that I still got'em to lean on, it's definitely big for me."

— **Jarfaire**

"I could go to any of [my advisors/ professors] to ask a question. If I had a theory, I could go pitch it to them and they'd tell me, 'we can make it work.'"
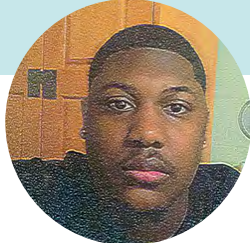
— **Allan**

What helps students succeed

Strong sense of belonging and student community

Peer to Peer Support   **Healthy Friendships**   **Identity Affirming spaces**

"[My peers and I] were always helping each other with class work, and if somebody missed class on a day its like 'here is the notes for this class.' We would help each other. And that's honestly how we all passed, basically helping each other."

- Zayquan

"When I moved from India I was so scared to make friends, but when I came here it was a whole different story. I made friends easily and I have these two good friends... they're some of the best things I got from high school."
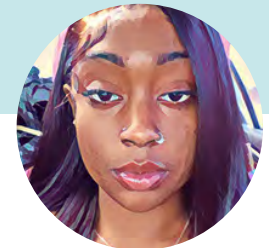
- Syed

"Adult support is vital to helping children build healthy peer relationships and negotiating these new tasks; the ability to develop positive friendships with peers through the use of interpersonal skills and behaviors will facilitate positive outcomes later in life." [8]

GO/AL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project
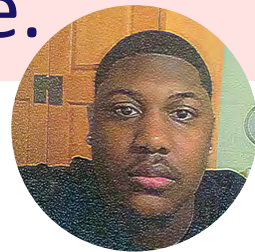
What helps students succeed

Opportunities to explore their passions and career interests

"I've heard of engineers my whole life, but genuinely I did not know what an engineer did...So it's important to really show students what they can do."
- **Marshai**

"If it wasn't for me hearing about college back in grammar school, I don't think I would have gone."
- **Zayquan**

"They need to be exposed to and explore "future possible selves" that they might not have previously imagined for themselves..."[3]

Alumni Recommendations: how can we better support young people

Creating welcoming spaces to build student community especially across lines of difference

"I need people to understand that the experiences for queer people are not the same. People of color, Black women, Black trans women, trans women in general. We suffer a lot of different things mentally. We suffer a lot of different things physically. it's not always a safe environment for people....I'm not asking for diversity training, but I'm asking for an understanding as to who we are as people."

Click text bubble for audio!

Roxanne

GO*AL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project

Honest conversations and information about college

"Students definitely need a lot of truth and honesty when it comes to the things that the schools and institutions and higher ups want for the students so bad. How do you want that for them so bad, but you can't even begin to help prepare them for the things that you say that they should have?... It ain't all butterflies and sugar cups out here."

Click text bubble for audio!
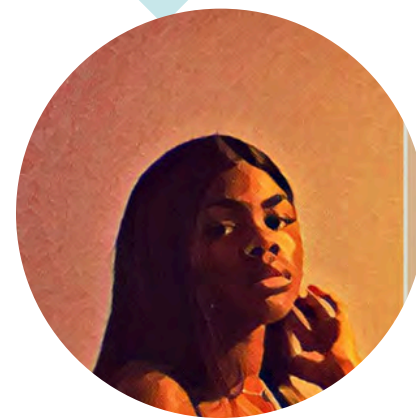
Kristian

GOAL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project

How can higher education institutions better support young people?

Students need more

Robust equitable financial supports tailored towards first generation college young people
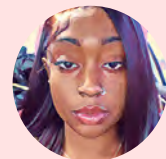
Financial aid:

That increases if tuition increases

Arthur

For food/housing insecurity

Marshai

In case students have to take extra time

Allan

For books

Ilyas

For emergencies

Kenia

For DACA & Undocumented students

Sergio

"I went to go visit and while at the visit, they saw I didn't qualify for FAFSA. While I was on the tour, I came back and one of the counselors had called the financial aid office and they gave me a free grant for like $2,000. So right then and there, being there and getting to know the counselors and seeing how much they were invested in me, they just made the decision very easy."

Moises

Students need more
resources for their HOLISTIC well-being

- **Ensuring campus offers resources explicitly tailored for embracing students identities, especially Students of Color**

"The last thing I'm trying to do is to be fighting with an institution that doesn't want to support me when they say that they want me there, so that's why I left… It's not about if I could or couldn't [handle it]. I just didn't feel like I needed to put myself through any kind of traumatic experiences in the name of trying to get a college degree." - *Kristian*

"I was really struggling in a lot of my courses. I was struggling with my mental health [between] going to work, paying for school and then actually going to school. Being a full-time student and having a full-time job was a lot." - *Nicole*

- **More Mental Health resources**
- **Ensuring resources are available to ALL students (Commuter/Working etc)**

the To&Through project

Universities need to restructure their financial and academic structures, centering accessibility for first-generation college young people of color

Financial aid and academic major requirements can be too restrictive and inaccessible for first-generation college students or students of color who are new to navigating academia.

Snippet of Roxanne's Journey

Click her photo for audio!

GO*AL 2025 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING

the To&Through project

Universities need to restructure their financial and academic structures, centering accessibility for first-generation college young people of color

Major Selection Process

"Young adulthood is a critical time period in determining the future of one's life. The process of integrating identity is best supported by exposing young people to a variety of opportunities and possibilities—of roles, perspectives, educational and career paths, and future possible selves— <u>and encouraging them to explore these options, rather than constraining their choices or pushing them to quickly choose a long-term path."</u> [6]

Explore Student Stories and the Research Report!

Read the full student stories and the the series accompanying lesson plans and facilitators guides!

Foundations for Young Adult Success

Citation

Nagaoka, Jenny, et al. "Foundations for Young Adult Success." The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2015

1. Pg 71
2. Pg 72
3. Pg 73
4. Pg 72-73
5. Pg 74
6. Pg 75
7. Pg 53
8. Pg 65

Foundations for Young Adult Success