

The ‘Theory of Change’ – An Overview

The theory of change provides an overview of how aspects of the provision, including the quality of provision, link to socio-emotional skill development and therefore informs evaluation approaches.

When young people start to engage with youth provision, they bring with them a set of experiences and beliefs about themselves and the world around them, shaped by the contexts in which they are living and learning. This affects their baseline socio emotional skills and how they engage with the provision. Over time, the combination of young people’s active engagement and high-quality staff practices, promotes the growth of socioemotional skills. With sufficient participation in high-quality provision, the growth in the socio-emotional skills will transfer to other settings and be seen in how young people think and behave with family, friends and in school and in the future as they transition into adulthood. This Measurement Hub provides the resources and tools to measure each aspect of this change process.

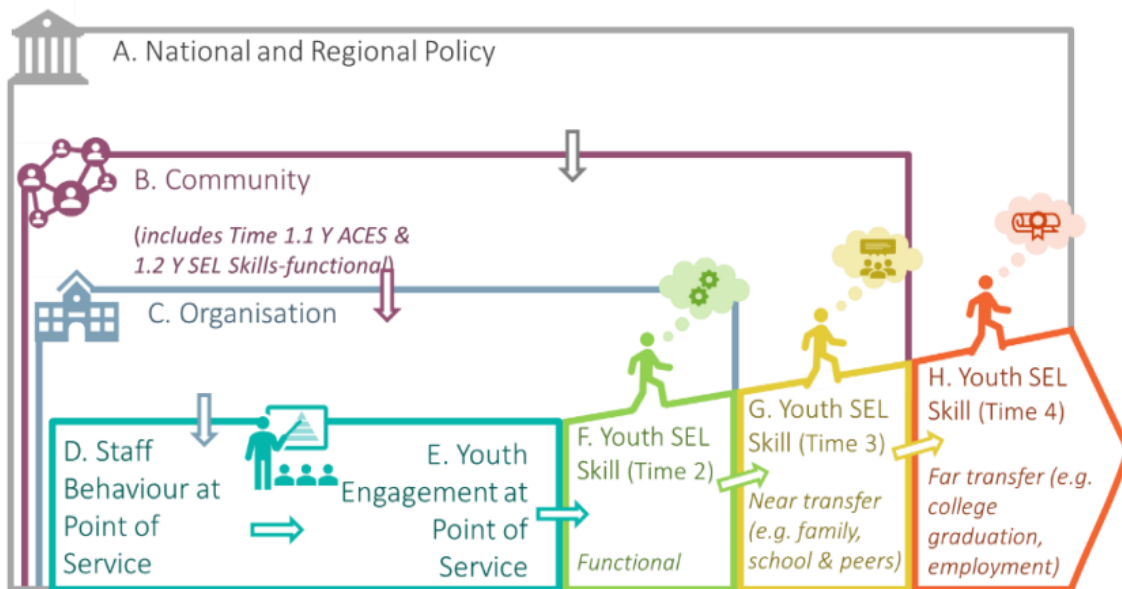


Fig 1: The multilevel person-in-context ~ neuroperson (MPCn) Theory of Change, developed by QTurn.

Socio-emotional skills

We primarily focus on the development of socio-emotional skills the staff practices that influence them and the transfer of these skills to other areas of the young person’s life – together we refer to these as ‘domains’.

Domain	
Emotion Management	<p>Young people’s socio-emotional skills: Abilities to be aware of, name, understand, and constructively handle both positive and negative emotions.</p> <p>Mental Skill Indicators: Focusing and shifting awareness; reappraisal; response inhibition.</p> <p>Behavioural Skill Indicators: Easily frustrated; remains calm in stressful situations.</p>

Empathy	<p>Young people’s socio-emotional skills: Abilities to relate to others with empathy, compassion; acceptance and understanding; and sensitivity to their diverse perspectives and experiences.</p> <p>Mental Skill Indicators: Abilities to understand how others feel; feel what others are feeling; and feel bad for others who are worse off or whose feelings are hurt.</p> <p>Behavioural Skill Indicators: Noticing when others are emotionally upset; showing empathy by reflecting others’ feelings; and responding to others’ feelings without taking them personally.</p>
Initiative	<p>Young people’s socio-emotional skills: Abilities to take action, sustain motivation; and persevere through challenges toward an identified role.</p> <p>Mental Skill Indicators: Abilities to take initiative; generate new solutions; persist during challenges; and risk failure.</p> <p>Behavioural Skill Indicators: Take initiative; set ambitious but realistic goals, stay on task despite distractions, and push through during a challenging task.</p>
Problem Solving	<p>Young people’s socio-emotional skills: Abilities to plan, strategise, and implement complex tasks, including critical thinking, goal setting, and responsible decision making.</p> <p>Mental Skill Indicators: Abilities to brainstorm and organise ideas; make alternative plans; make step-by-step plans; manage time; and keep track of goal progress.</p> <p>Behavioural Skill Indicators: Brainstorm ideas before developing a plan; evaluate alternative plans for reaching a specific goal; create plans with multiple steps; manage time; keep track of goal progress; and adjust to feedback.</p>
Responsibility	<p>Young people’s socio-emotional skills: Abilities to reliably meet commitments and fulfil obligations of challenging roles.</p> <p>Mental Skill Indicators: Abilities to take responsibility for their actions; be counted on to get their part done; do the things that they say they are going to do; and do their best when an adult asks them to do something.</p> <p>Behavioural Skill Indicators: Finish the task that they started, do the things that they said they are going to do, acknowledge mistakes and take action to address them, and do the things an adult asked them to do.</p>
Teamwork	<p>Young people’s socio-emotional skills: Abilities to collaborate and coordinate action with others, including through communication, teamwork, and leadership.</p> <p>Mental Skill Indicators: Abilities to do a fair share of group work, help others, seek help from others, respect others’ viewpoints, and hold others accountable.</p> <p>Behavioural Skill Indicators: Help or cooperate with others who are struggling, seek help from others, remind others to do their part, and keep track of their own and others’ group progress.</p>