



CARE CORNER

Engagement: What Does It Mean For Our Adolescents?

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Scope of discussion

Engagement

Concepts and ingredients for positive engagement


Case Study

Sharing on a vocational engagement initiative designed with youth centricity in mind

Definition of Engagement

engagement

noun

UK  /ɪnˈɡeɪdʒ.mənt/ US  /ɪnˈɡeɪdʒ.mənt/

engagement noun (MARRIAGE)

[C]

an agreement to marry someone:

- They **announced** their engagement at the party on Saturday.
- an engagement party

engagement noun (INTEREST)

[U]

the fact of being involved with something:

- He was known for his engagement **with** the problems of the most difficult students.
- their lack of engagement **in** politics

[U]

the process of encouraging people to be interested in the work of an organization, etc.:

- This article outlines the council's communication and **public** engagement strategy.
- The charity is currently recruiting for an experienced engagement **officer**.

Meaningful Youth Engagement

Planning with youths at the heart of the service:
Prescriptive vs Collaborative

Young people are involved in the process 'to
construct their learning environment and
experience' (Joselowsky, 2007)

Meaningful engagement allows individuals to:

Think and act independently
and with agency

Create their own individual
meaning and purpose

Understand how one's tasks
fit into a bigger picture

Ingredients for Meaningful Engagement

Relationships

Fostering positive Young Persons - Adult relationships is the pretext for meaningful engagement

Intentionality

Putting our mind and heart to have meaningful engagements fosters a good outcome

Communication

Two-way conversations help to consider the young persons in our policy and programme design



Case Study:



**Engagement through
vocational interest**



Design Thinking

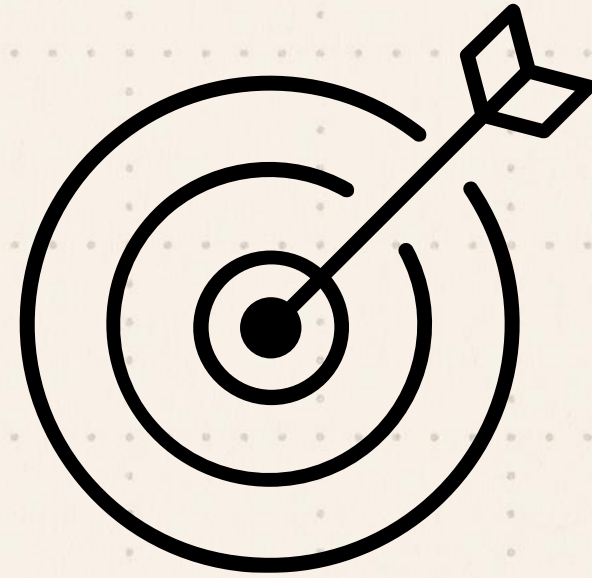
At the heart of Design Thinking is the intention to **improve products by analyzing how users interact with them** and investigating the conditions in which they operate.

Design Thinking offers us a means of digging that bit deeper to uncover ways of improving user experiences **by understanding user needs and wants.**

Design Thinking



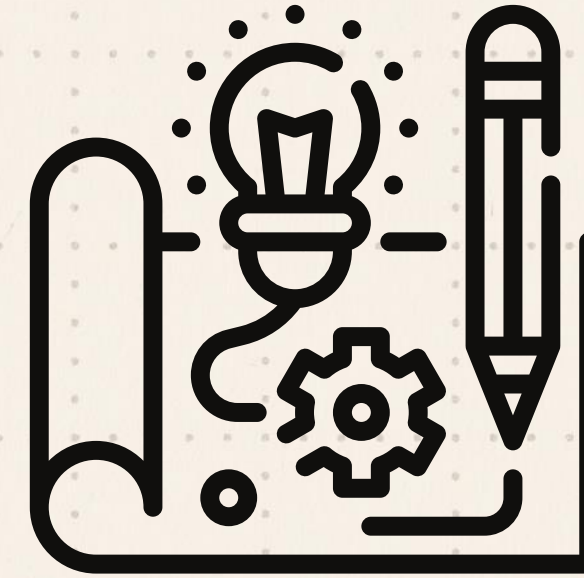
Empathise



Define



Ideate



Prototype



Test



Adolescent Centricity

In our conceptualization, the consideration of the adolescent needs and wants are key and crucial in delivering an effective programme/policy

Seeking data points by engaging with different partners for greater understanding

Utilising a multi-modal medium of service design and delivery for greater participation

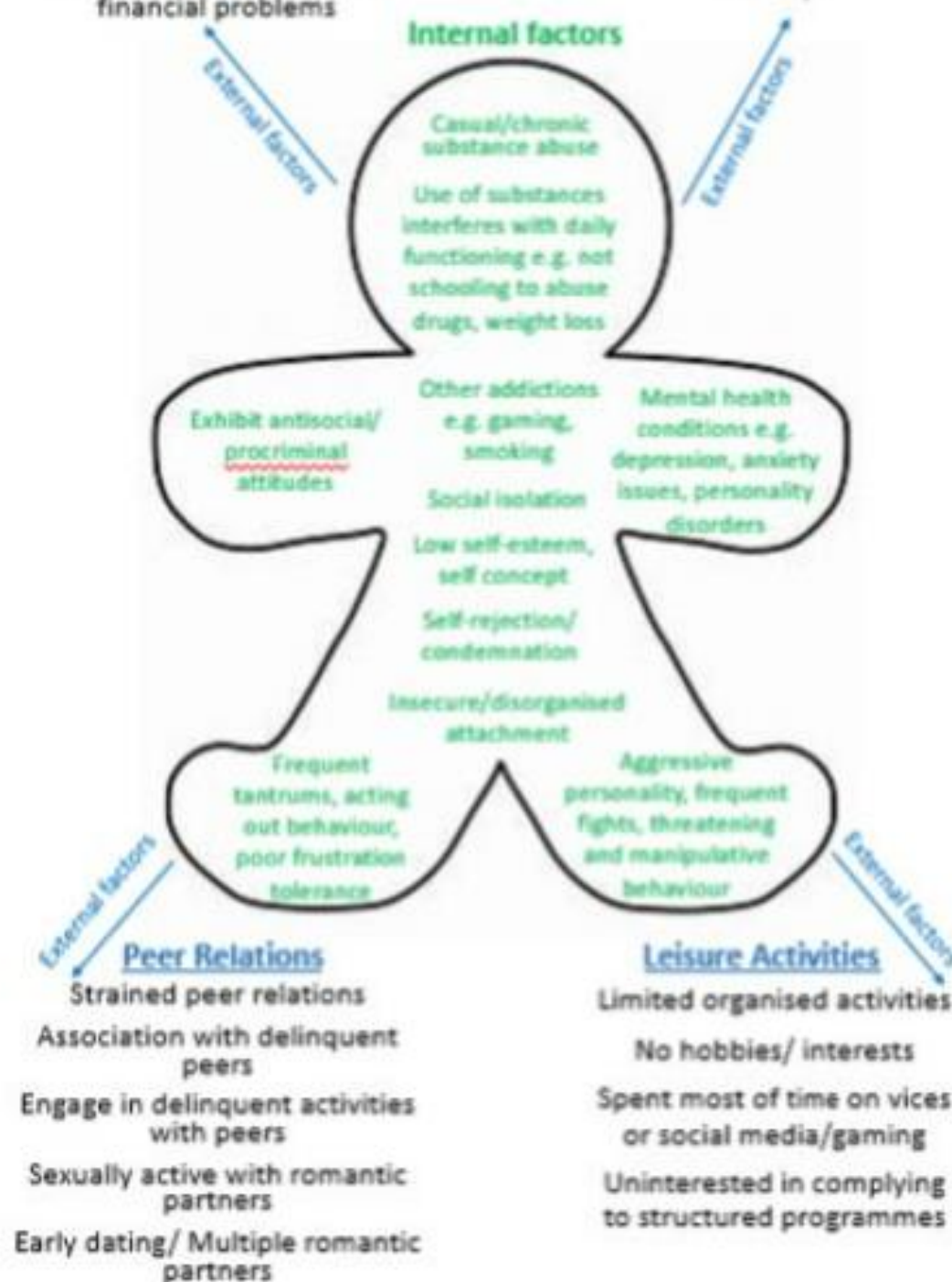
Persona of Youth

Family Circumstances

Inadequate adult/parental supervision and/or discipline
 Poor relationship with parents, neglectful/absent parenting
 Beyond parental control, youth tends not to comply to rules
 Inappropriate discipline, family violence/abuse
 Poor spousal relationship
 Family history of offences/financial problems

Education/Employment

Not meaningfully engaged in school/employment
 Low achievement in school
 High absenteeism/
 School drop out
 Disruptive school behaviour
 Poor relationship with teachers/peers (e.g. bully victim)



What motivates youths?

- Feeling connectedness to a relationship/ larger community
- Being recognised and affirmed for their skills/talents/strengths
- Source of income/sustenance
- Platform to be heard, freedom of choice, freedom of expression

What is their perfect school?

- Lesser restrictive school rules, more freedom to explore and express themselves
- Able to learn their choice of interests, topics
- Able to create their own curriculum, research on their choice of topics
- Having unstructured time for learning from each other, as compared to fixed timetables
- Hands-on activities and out-of-classroom experiential learning
- Opportunities to experience various vocational pathways
- One-to-one time with mentor for emotional support or planning towards career pathway

Why aren't youths doing what they want to do/ their aspirations?

- Restricted by fixed educational system and pathway
- Lack of opportunities. Opportunities largely are given based on merit, meritocracy-driven nation
- Innovation and free expression not encouraged in local school setting
- Lack of relevant knowledge and skills, vocational skills not taught in mainstream school
- Lack of resources and support e.g. finances, space, time,
- Lack of confidence, ideas/dreams being rejected and undermined by Asian parents/teachers

What skills do out-of-school youths have/ are keen to learn?

- Hands-on skills e.g. building/carpentry, fixing, repairing of scooters/bikes
- Information Technology skills e.g. IT web design, computer programming, gaming, YouTubing, managing social media
- Creative/Design skills e.g. art and craft, designing, floristry, D&T, photography, animation, illustration, graffiti
- Lifestyle skills e.g. culinary, baking, sewing, barista
- Serving skills e.g. customer service, waitressing, coffee-making, hospitality, retail
- People skills e.g. sales, motivational speaker, emceeing, mentoring, coaching
- Athletic skills e.g. cycling, running, soccer, swimming, dancing, basketball
- Musical skills e.g. piano, singing, song writing, guitar, violin etc.
- Entrepreneurship skills e.g. start-up ideas, innovation, business mindset, identifying social needs or a society lack

What makes a young person want to fix bicycles/peddle bicycles for seniors?

- If youths are keen on learning hands-on skills e.g. fixing/repairing work or athletic skills e.g. cycling
- If youths believe in the social cause of helping seniors/ if youths find meaning in the work
- If youths feel validated about their ability to contribute to the cause
- If youths are keen to earn an income, and if income is provided
- If youths are keen to gain new experiences
- If youths find relational connectedness with other peers, mentors or seniors in the programme e.g. able to look up to a mentor or learn from a senior

Inter Organizational Collaboration



Senior Mentors





In summary...

Adolescent at the heart of everything

Consult different partners for data points

Communicate and take into account-adolescent needs

Relationships are crucial and important

To be intentional in every interaction with our young persons

To be attuned, adapt to changes and adjust to needs