



# Protective factors and risk factors

Strengthening protective factors around young people has multiple lifelong benefits. Protective factors buffer against the effects of risk factors.

Use this checklist of some protective factors and risk factors to identify how you can support a young person.

## Protective factors

### Individual

- Internal locus of control
- Positive sense of identity and belonging
- Social skills
- Critical thinking and decision making skills
- Spiritual connection
- Hope for the future

### Peer

- At least one close, supportive friend
- Participation in positive peer activities (eg. sports, drama)

### Family

- Family connectedness
- Parent supervision and interest in development

### School

- School connection
- Vocational pathway
- Academic achievement

### Community

- Positive adult relationship outside of the family
- Positive activities
- Cultural connection
- Feeling safe in the community

## Risk factors

### Individual

- Emotional distress
- High levels of risk taking
- Poor social skills

### Peer

- Peer substance use / favourable attitudes to use
- Peers who engage in problem behaviours

### Family

- Parental substance use
- Poor family relationships
- Neglect or abuse
- Family poverty and isolation

### School

- Low school connection
- Low academic achievement
- Peer rejection

### Community

- Lack of support, training, employment opportunities
- Neighbourhood problems/poverty
- Lack of positive activities



# Identifying 'change talk'

We can build motivation by focusing on the language of change.

<b>Desire to change</b>

<b>Ability to change</b>

<b>Reason to change</b>

<b>Need to change</b>

<b>Commitment to change</b>

<b>Comments</b>