



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



# **Empathy and Engaged Youth Citizenship, What it means and Why it matters**

**Prof Pat Dolan Emeritus Professor  
UNESCO Child and Family  
Research Centre University of  
Galway  
with  
Dr Sean Campbell CEO Foróige  
Ireland**





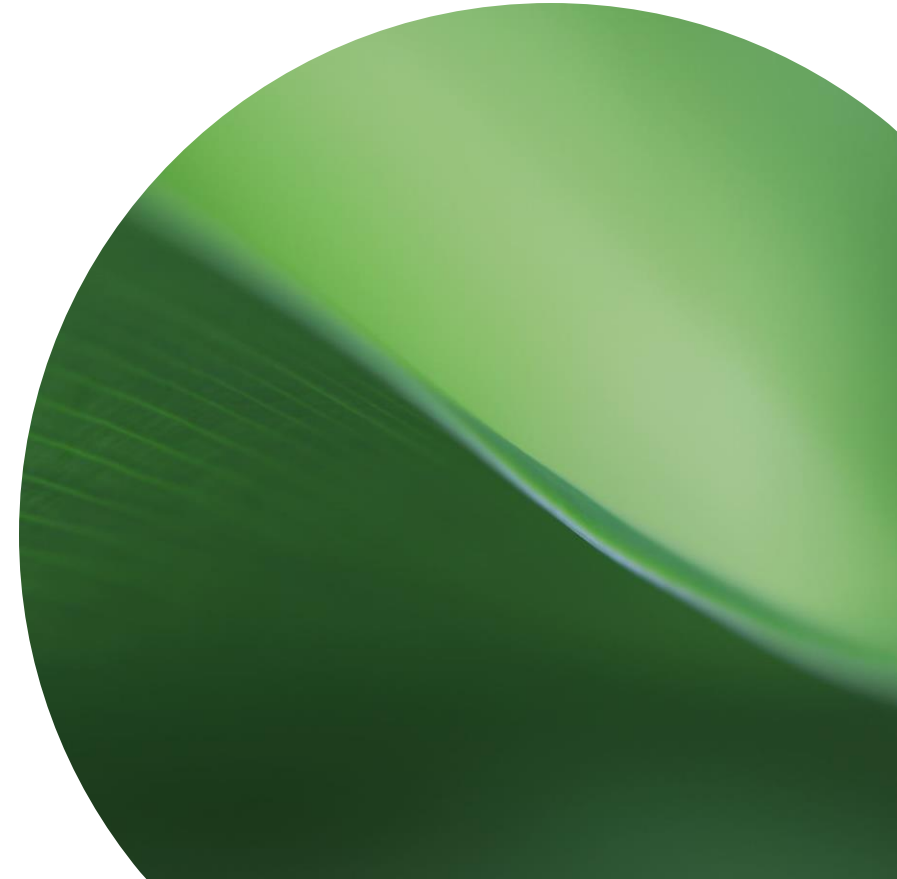
Kindness by youth  
for others as an  
enabler of self-  
resilience and social  
support



PYD Theory  
Lerner's '5 Cs' for  
the development of  
intergenerational  
relationships.



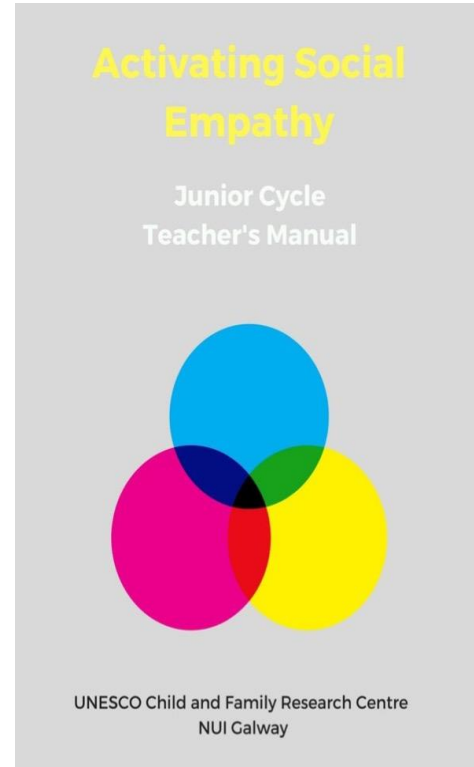
New reciprocal  
socio ecological  
systems through  
Intersectionality

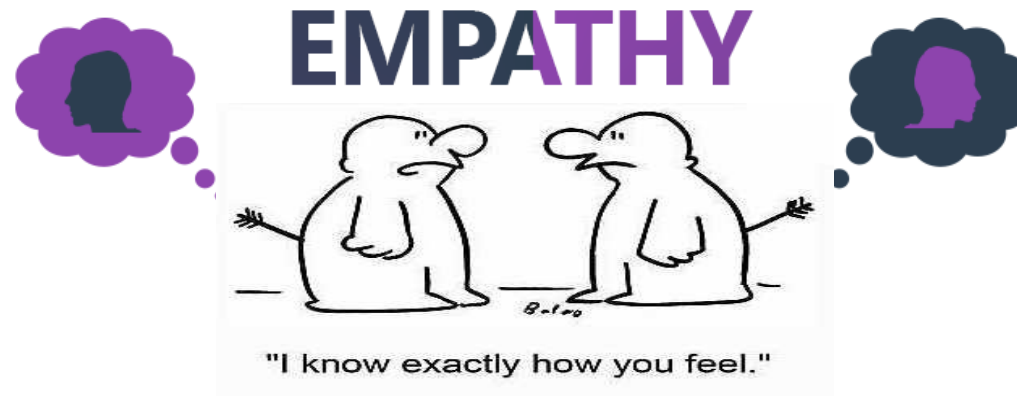


# Building on Decades of Close Collaboration and Proven Partnerships



- **Systematic Literature Review on Empathy and SEL**
- **Major (Quan and Qual) Study of Youth Views on what matters in their lives**
- **Proven Programme Designed and Trialled and (RCT)**
- **Schools and Community Youth Work Signature ‘Activating Social Empathy’**
- **‘IONBHA - The Empathy Book for Ireland in every school in Ireland**
- **Public engagement through our Patron, and 2024 Oscar Winner, Cillian Murphy.**





- **EMPATHY** - The ability to understand and share the emotions and feelings of others (*Feshbach, 2014; Joliffe & Farrington, 2007*).
- **PROSOCIAL RESPONDING** – Altruistic responses or actions which aim to benefit others (*Eisenberg et al., 2010*).



# Empathy

1. Ability **to perceive** another's emotions Innate, (Baston et al., 1997).
2. Ability\desire **to understand** other's inner emotions Cultivate  
(Coplan, 2011; Decety & Moriguichi, 2007)
3. Ability **to feel** another's emotion 'self from other' Create

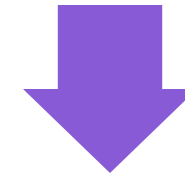
**Leads to active empathy.**

(Adapted from Berardi et al 2020)

**PYD /multi-  
dimensional  
Identities  
'Crenshaw'**



**For most  
marginalised**



**Differing Lives  
Events  
Relationships**



**Belonging and  
self-esteem  
efficacy**

# **Gently suggesting a new Paradigm in PYD**





Evidence from a Systematic  
Literature review Silke Dolan  
et al 2022

## What Factors Influence the Development of Empathy, Social Responsibility & Civic Engagement among Adolescents?

- **EMPATHY** (*Joliffe & Farrington, 2007*).
- **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
- (*Flanagan, 2003*)
- **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT** -  
(*Brennan and Dolan 2016;*  
*2024*)



# Activating Empathy ... being hopeful

Advert - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cAzAf6s3ic>

Empathy Action - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RstrTABVqBc&t=4s>

In my Shoes- <https://youtu.be/oqS9GtCJBBs>

# Exploring Self and Intergenerational Empathy



## **Content:**

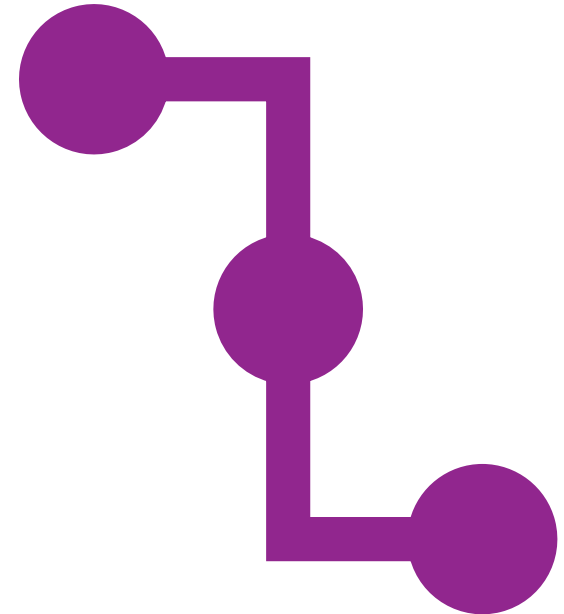
- **Understanding Empathy**
- **Practicing Empathy**
- **Overcoming Barriers to Empathy**
- **Putting Empathy in Action**

**(Silke et al 2022)**

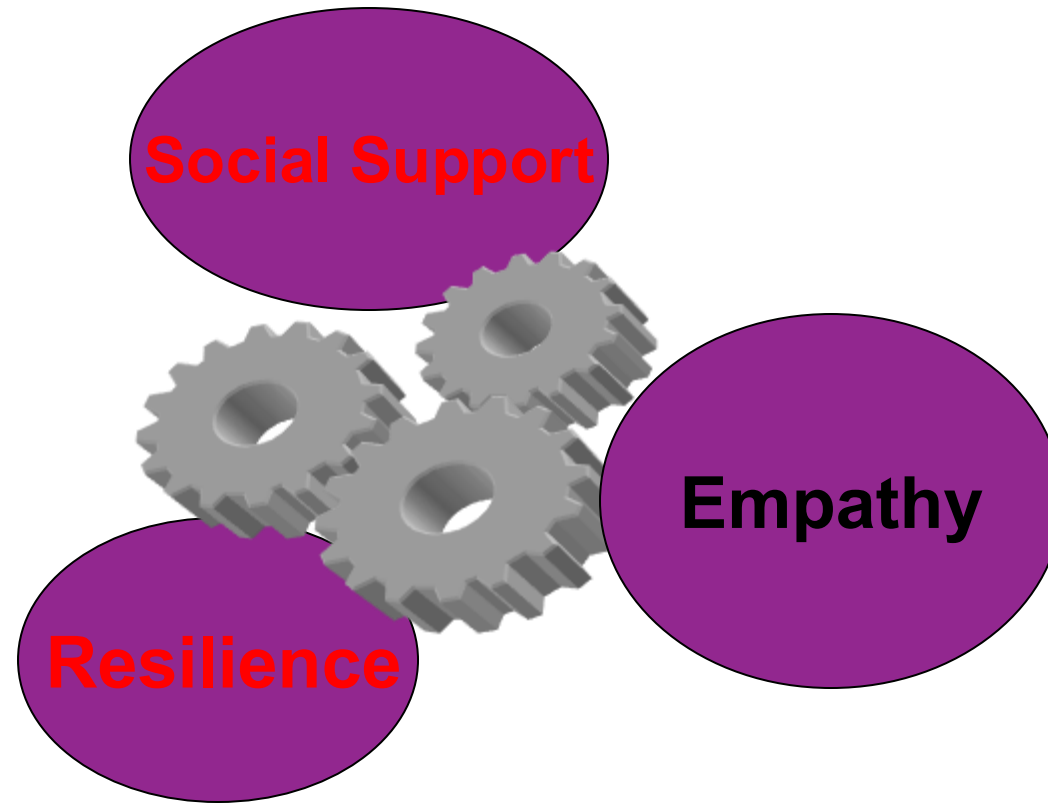
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University and Foróige Ireland**

# Relationship Factors and Empathy Risks

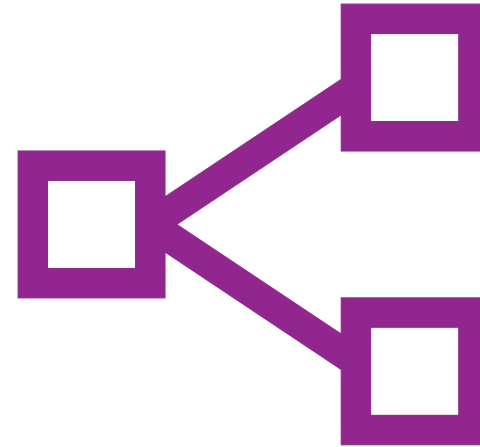
- Competence
- Confidence
- Connection
- Caring
- Character



# A Gentle Connection of Core Social Theories



- **Empathy Fatigue**
- **False Empathy**
- **Distress - Self  
Compassion**





## **Baart's Presence Model 'In Key Words'**

- **Be free for**
- **Open**
- **Attentive**
- **Connected**
- **Change perspective**
- **Be available to**
- **Patient/time**
- **Loyal/ dedicated**

# Self Care Menu

**Wellbeing is Inside You**

**Resilience comes from  
Inside / Outside You**

**Empathy is Between you  
and 'other'**



# Forms of Civic Engagement and Action

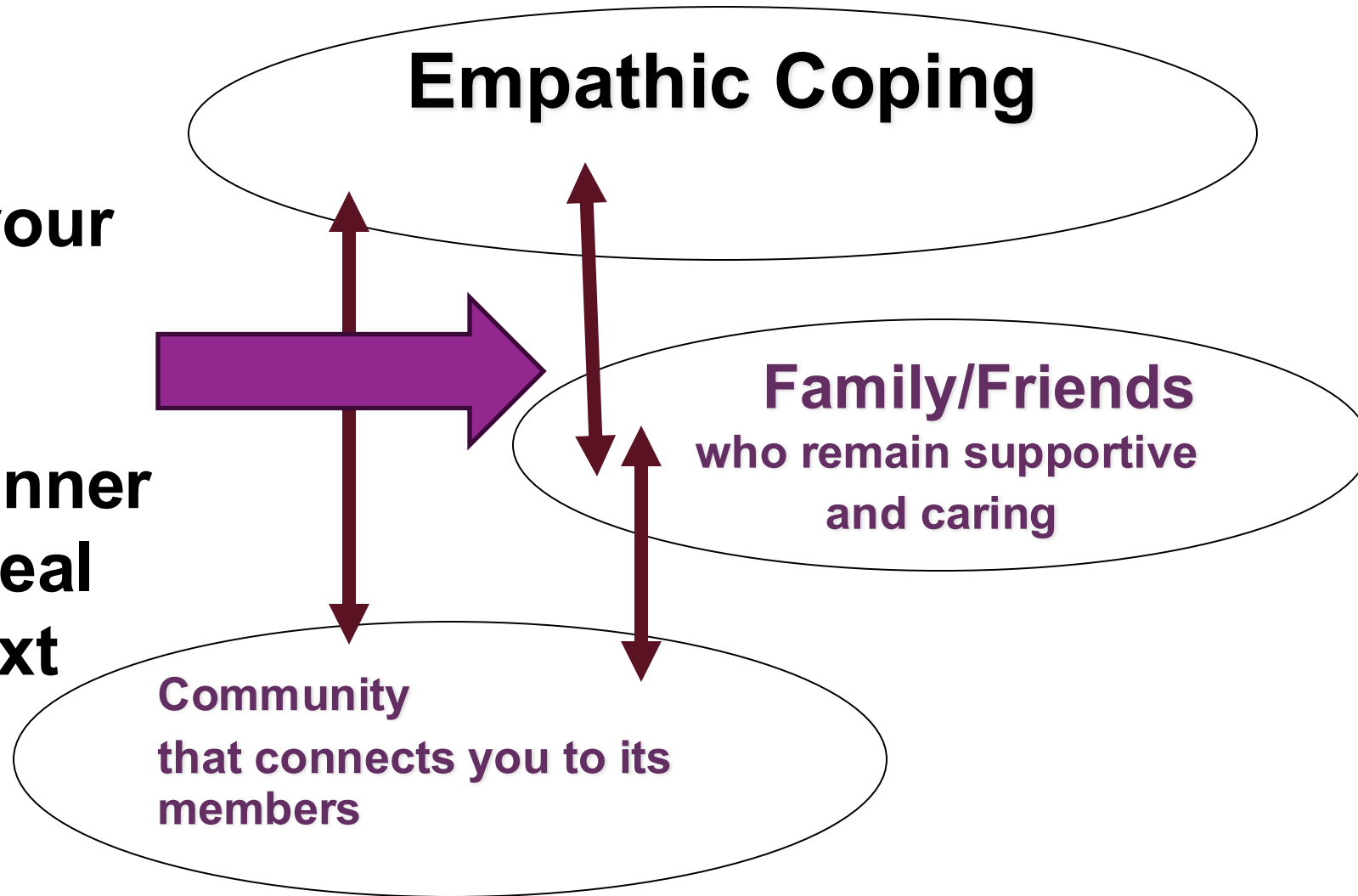
**Political Engagement**

**Social Engagement**

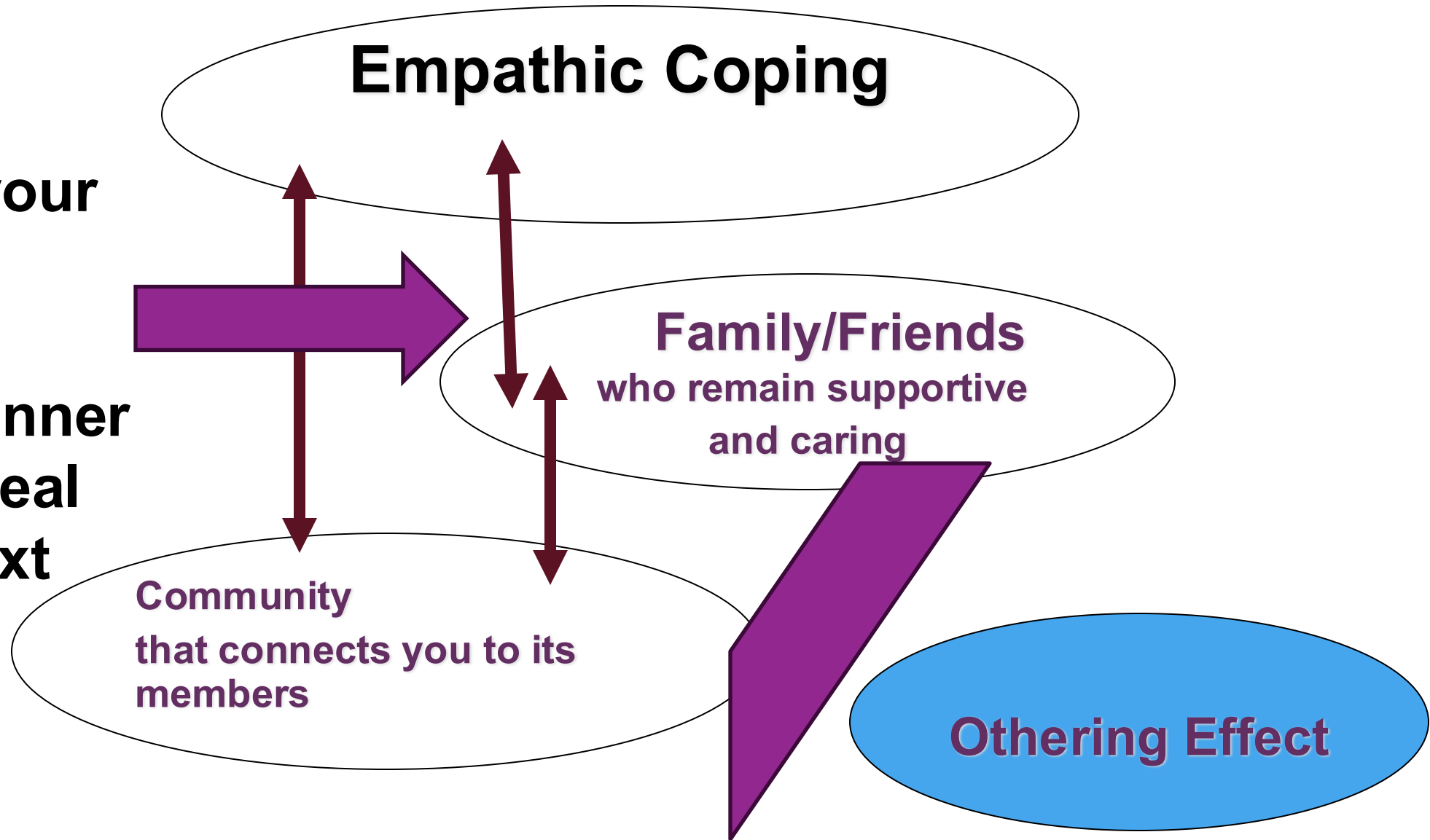
**Ethical (Moral) Engagement**

**Economic Engagement**

**Sources of your  
Happiness**  
**The**  
**Bronfennbrenner**  
**model in a Real**  
**World Context**



**Sources of your  
Happiness**  
**The**  
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**model in a Real**  
**World Context**



# Overview of Foróige

Seán Campbell, CEO, Foróige

*Penn State University, April 2025*



## About Foróige

**53,000**

**YOUNG  
PEOPLE**

**5,500**

**VOLUNTEERS**

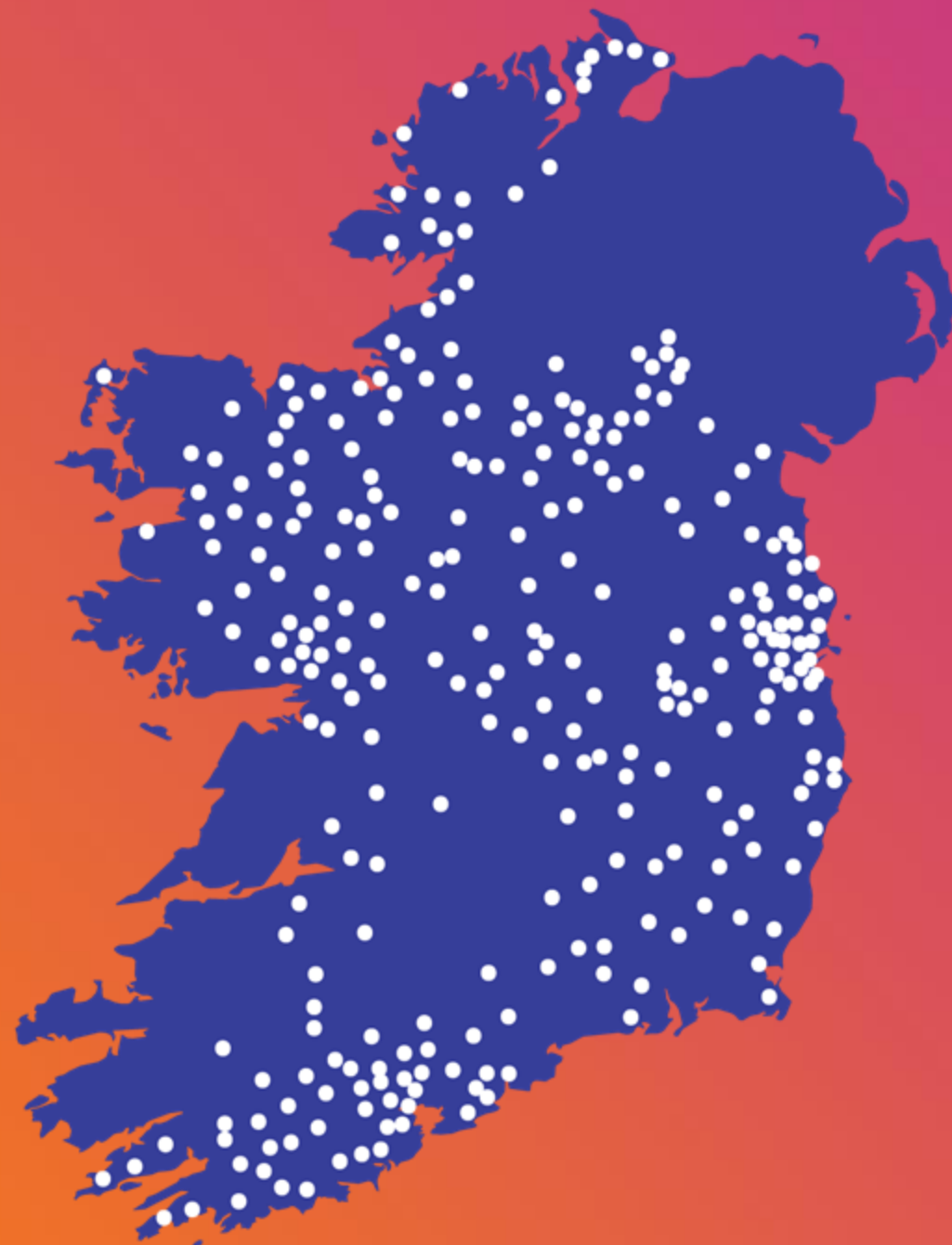
**650**

**PROFESSIONAL  
STAFF**

- **FORÓIGE CLUBS**
- **YOUTH PROJECTS AND  
YOUTH SERVICES**
- **NATIONAL PROGRAMMES**
- **MENTORING**







## Programmes



**Empathy:** Develops empathy skills

**A Life of Choices:** Targets youth involved or at risk of involvement in offending behaviour, teaching prosocial behaviour and positive choices

**Be Healthy, Be Happy:** A holistic health and well-being programme

**Citizenship:** Empowers young people to become actively involved in their communities and make a positive impact

**Brief Intervention Programme:** An early intervention programme for first-time drug and alcohol users

**Foróige Against Bullying (FAB):** Foróige's anti-bullying programme

**Foróige Future Proof Programme:** A climate justice programme

**Foróige's Leadership for Life:** Develops leadership skills, with university accreditation opportunities

**Foróige Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE):** A youth entrepreneurship programme

**Ready, Steady, Life:** A programme focused on personal development and independent living skills

**Relationships Explored and Life Uncovered (REAL U):** A relationship and sexual health education programme



**GoSafely:** Promotes safer digital resource use

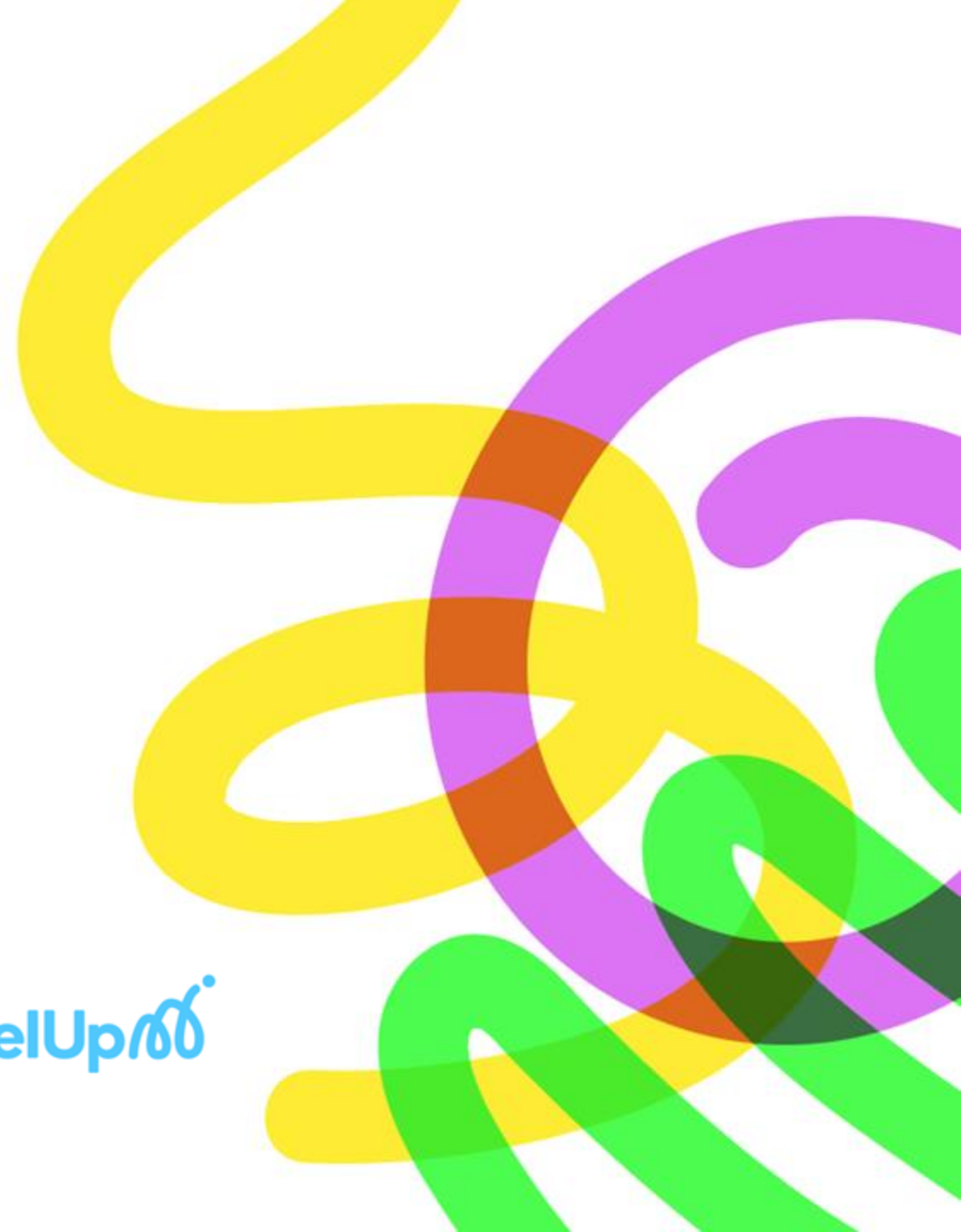
**GoLevelUP:** Introduces digital skills for 10–14 year olds

**GoLevelUP 2.0:** Builds on GoLevelUP skills for 14–18 year olds

**GoVirtual:** Includes virtual reality and online engagement

**GoBuild:** Develops practical STEM skills

**GoSonic/Sound Surfers:** Uses audio technology to activate empathy



**Leadership for Life  
Programme**

**Activating Social  
Empathy  
Programme**

**Embed Empathy into all  
Foróige Programmes and  
Work Practice**

**YAR: Ireland**  
**Youth Perceptions on  
Homelessness**



**Youth as  
Researcher  
Projects**

**YAR: United States**  
**Racial Disparities in Policing**



**YAR: Global**  
**Youth Perceptions on  
the COVID-19  
Pandemic**

**new research on connection between YaR and Empathy  
(Malcolm 2024 and forthcoming)**

Our Vision and Plan to Partner with PSU to  
Create a...

**UNESCO OBSERVATORY  
FOR YOUTH EMPATHY AND  
ENGAGED CITIZENSHIP**





# JANUSZ KORCZAK: GUARDIAN OF INNOCENCE



**A DOCUMENTARY  
BY NIAMH HEERY**







OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

# The Value of a Patron!





**A Final few words of wisdom  
Learning from the “Masterful Mr. Rogers”**