



# Importance of family protective mechanisms in fostering youth prosocial behavior

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June 2016, ECPP









# Prosocial behavior

- "voluntary behavior intended to benefit another"

*Eisenberg et al., 2007*

- „a social behavior that benefit(s) other people or society as a whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering"

*Arthur et al., 1986*

# Prosocial behavior – Personality variables

Altruistic personality:

- **Empathy** (responsible, tolerant, socialized, conforming, self-controlled)
- **Belief in a just world** (good behavior is rewarded, personal rewards from helping)
- **Acceptance of social responsibility**
- **Internal locus of control**
- **Low egocentrism**

- Not many studies were focused on understanding relationship between family protective mechanisms and prosocial behavior of youth exposed to one of the normative stresses, the one of entering high school.
- **Family as a system represents one of the most important contexts** for preventing MEB and promoting mental health and positive development of children and youth.

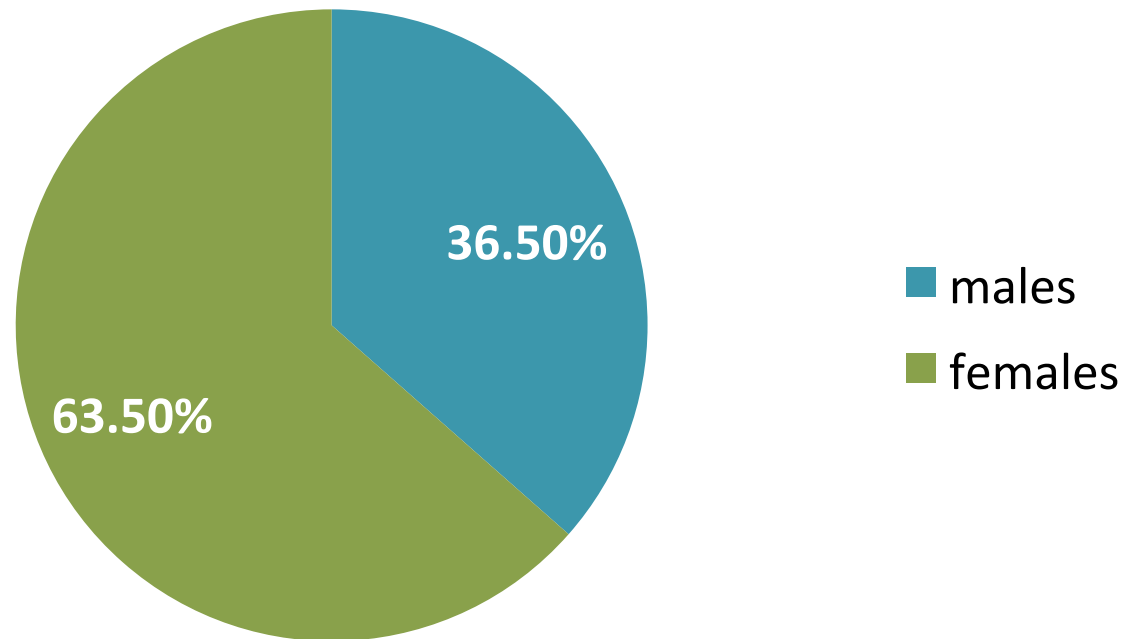
*Hoeve et al., 2009, 2011; McCabe et al., 2005; Kazdin, 1994*

- During the **second half of 2015**, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences has carried out the project  
**“Research of the Family Resilience”**  
(University of Zagreb)



# SAMPLE

- 1st grade high school students from two cities in Croatia (N=304)



## FAMILY RESILIENCE

- Family Resilience Assessment Scale (Sixbey, 2005)

Family Communication and Problem Solving

Utilizing Social and Economic Resources

Maintaining a Positive Outlook

Family Connectedness

Family Spirituality

Ability to Make Meaning of Adversity



## Family Communication and Problem Solving (27 items)

- Our family structure is flexible to deal with the unexpected
- We all have input into major family decisions
- We are adaptable to demands placed on us as a family
- We define problems positively to solve them
- We can work through difficulties as a family
- ...

## Utilizing Social and Economic Resources

(8 items)

- We ask neighbors for help and assistance
- We feel secure living in this community
- We know we are important to our friends
- We think this is a good community to raise children
- We receive gifts and favors from neighbors
- We can depend upon people in this community
- We feel people in this community are willing to help in an emergency
- We know there is community help if there is trouble

## Maintaining a Positive Outlook

(6 items)

- We believe we can handle our problems
- We can solve major problems
- We can survive if another problem comes up
- We feel we are strong in facing big problems
- We trust things will work out even in difficult times
- We have the strength to solve our problems

## Family Connectedness

(6 items)

- Our friends value us and who we are
- We don't feel taken for granted by family members
- We don't keep our feelings to ourselves
- We often listen to family members concerns or problems
- We show love and affection for family members
- We think we should connect with people in this community

## **Family Spirituality**

(4 items)

- We attend church/synagogue/mosque services
- We have faith in a supreme being
- We participate in church activities
- We seek advice from religious advisors

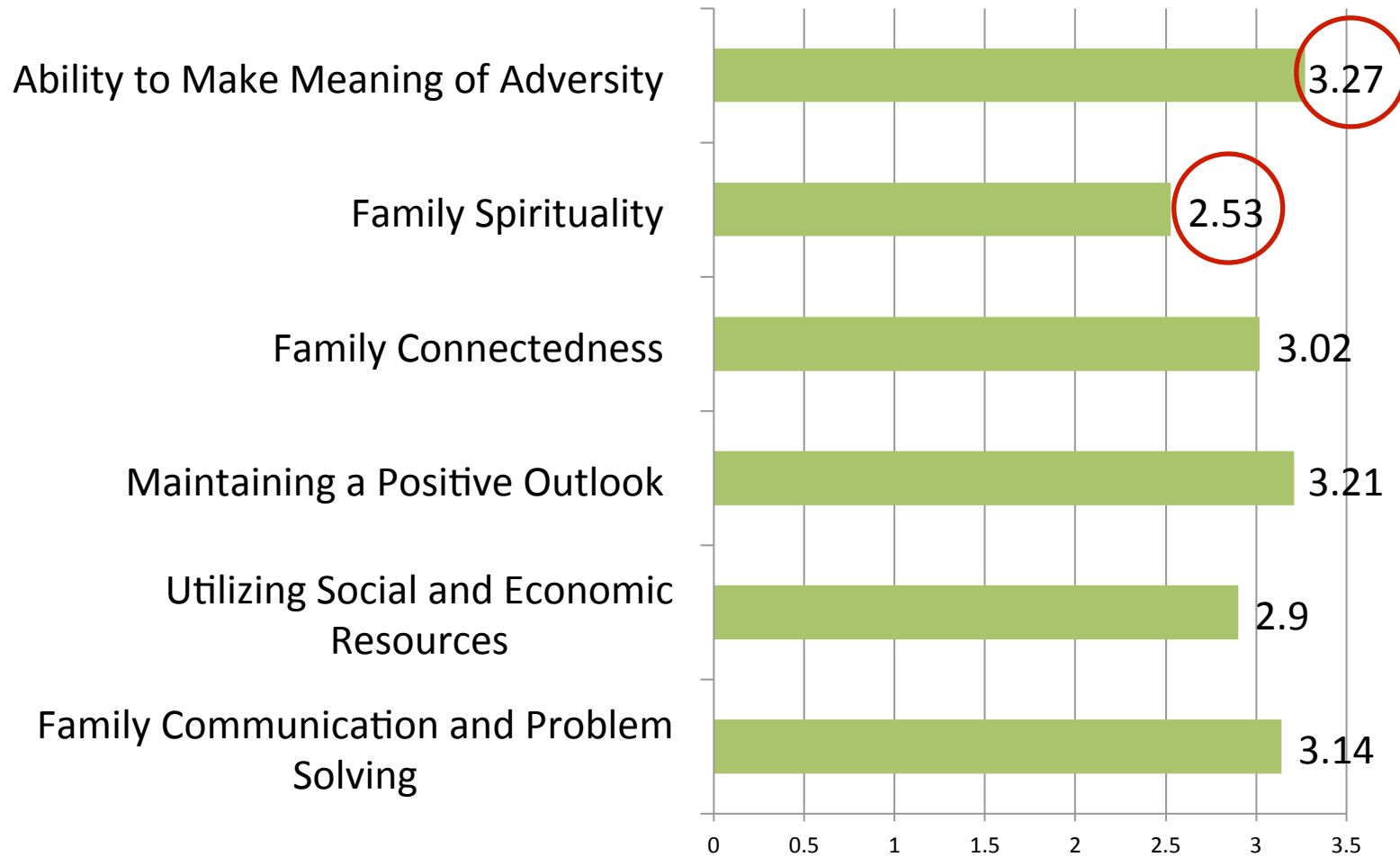
## **Ability to Make Meaning of Adversity**

(3 items)

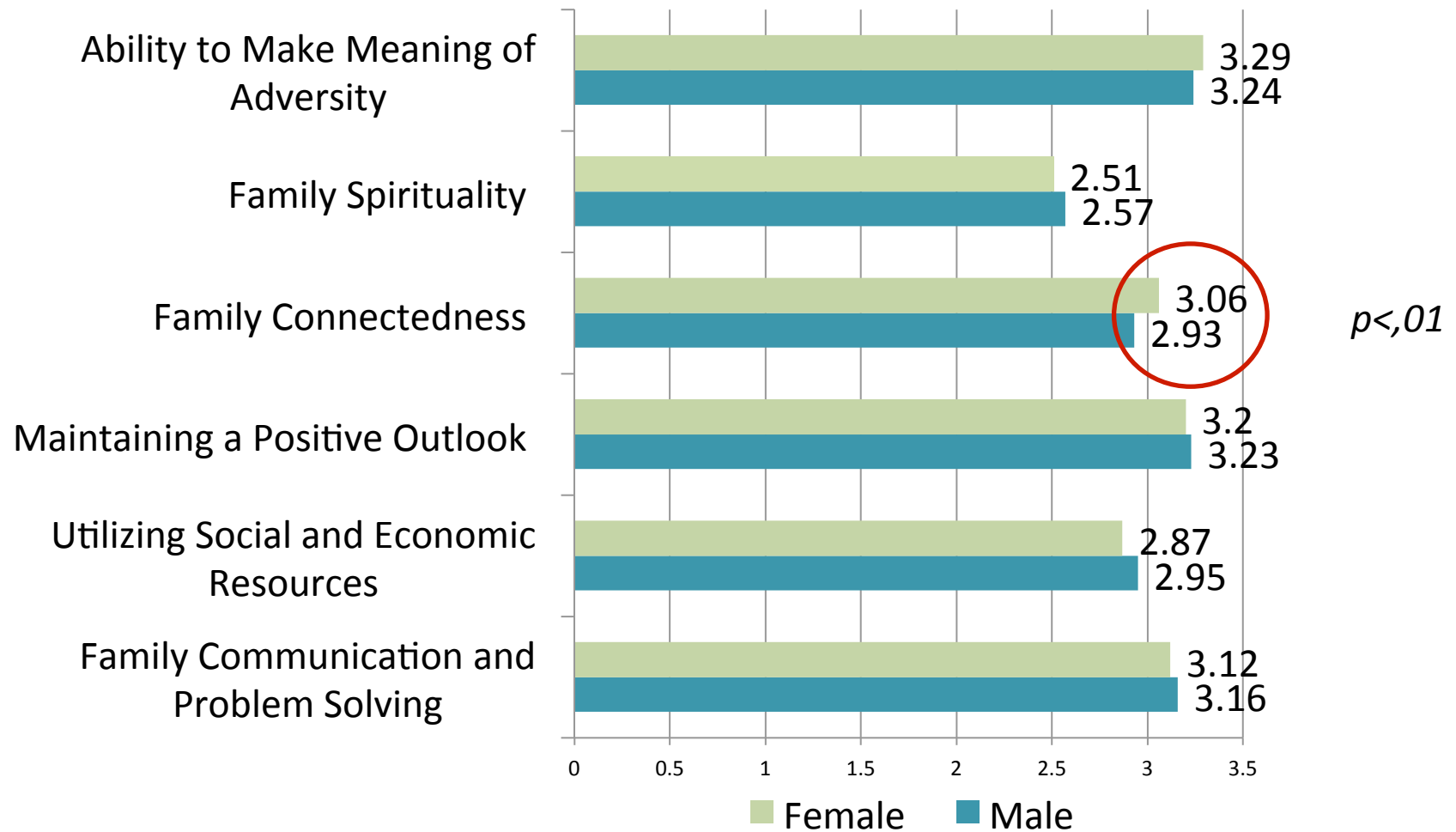
- The things we do for each other make us feel a part of the family
- We accept stressful events as a part of life
- We accept that problems occur unexpectedly



# FAMILY RESILIENCE - descriptive



# FAMILY RESILIENCE – gender differences



## FAMILY RESILIENCE

Family Communication and Problem Solving

Utilizing Social and Economic Resources

Maintaining a Positive Outlook

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Family Spirituality

Ability to Make Meaning of Adversity

PROSOCIAL  
BEHAVIOR

## PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

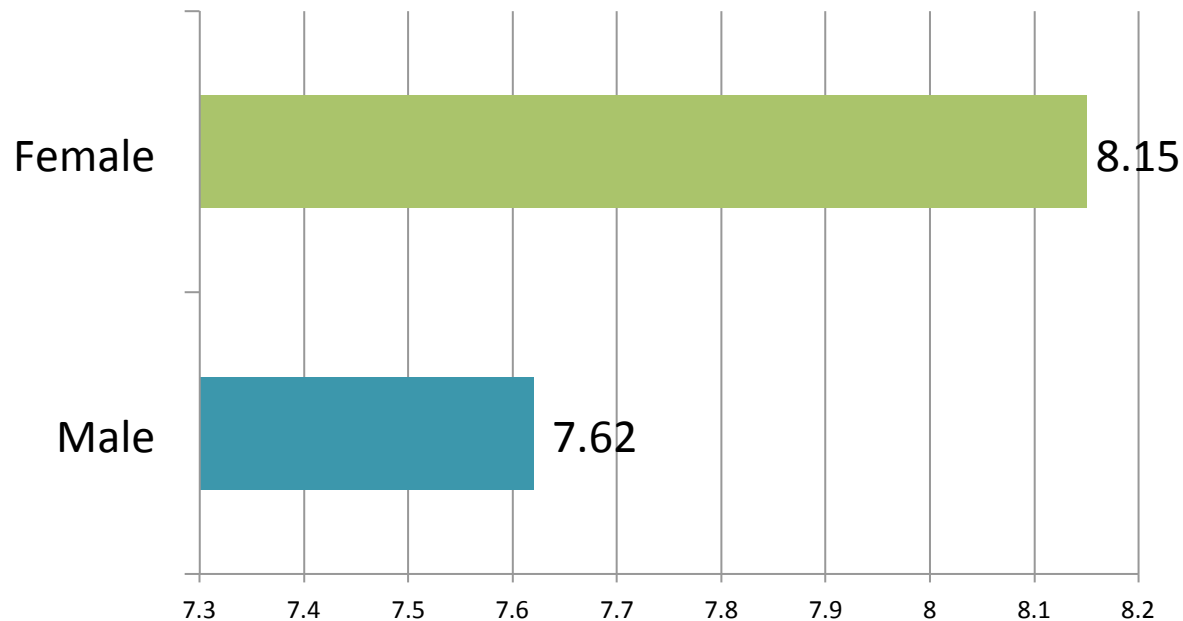
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997)

- **Considerate of other people's feelings**  
*(I try to be nice to other people)*
- **Shares readily with others**  
*(I usually share with others)*
- **Helpful if someone is hurt**  
*(I am helpful if someone is hurt...)*
- **Kind to younger children**  
*(I am kind to younger children)*
- **Often volunteers to help others**  
*(I often volunteer to help others)*

# PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

## – descriptive and gender differences

M	SD	MIN.	MAX.
7,96	1,63	3	10



$p < ,01$



## FAMILY RESILIENCE – PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

MODEL	B	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Gender	,57	,162	2,335	,021
Stress	-,010	-,032	-,466	,642
FACTOR 1	,157	,039	,348	,728
FACTOR 2	,272	,080	,971	,333
FACTOR 3	,178	,049	,471	,638
<b>FACTOR 4</b>	,725	,194	2,524	<b>,012*</b>
FACTOR 5	,217	,085	1,183	,238
FACTOR 6	,469	,117	1,528	,128

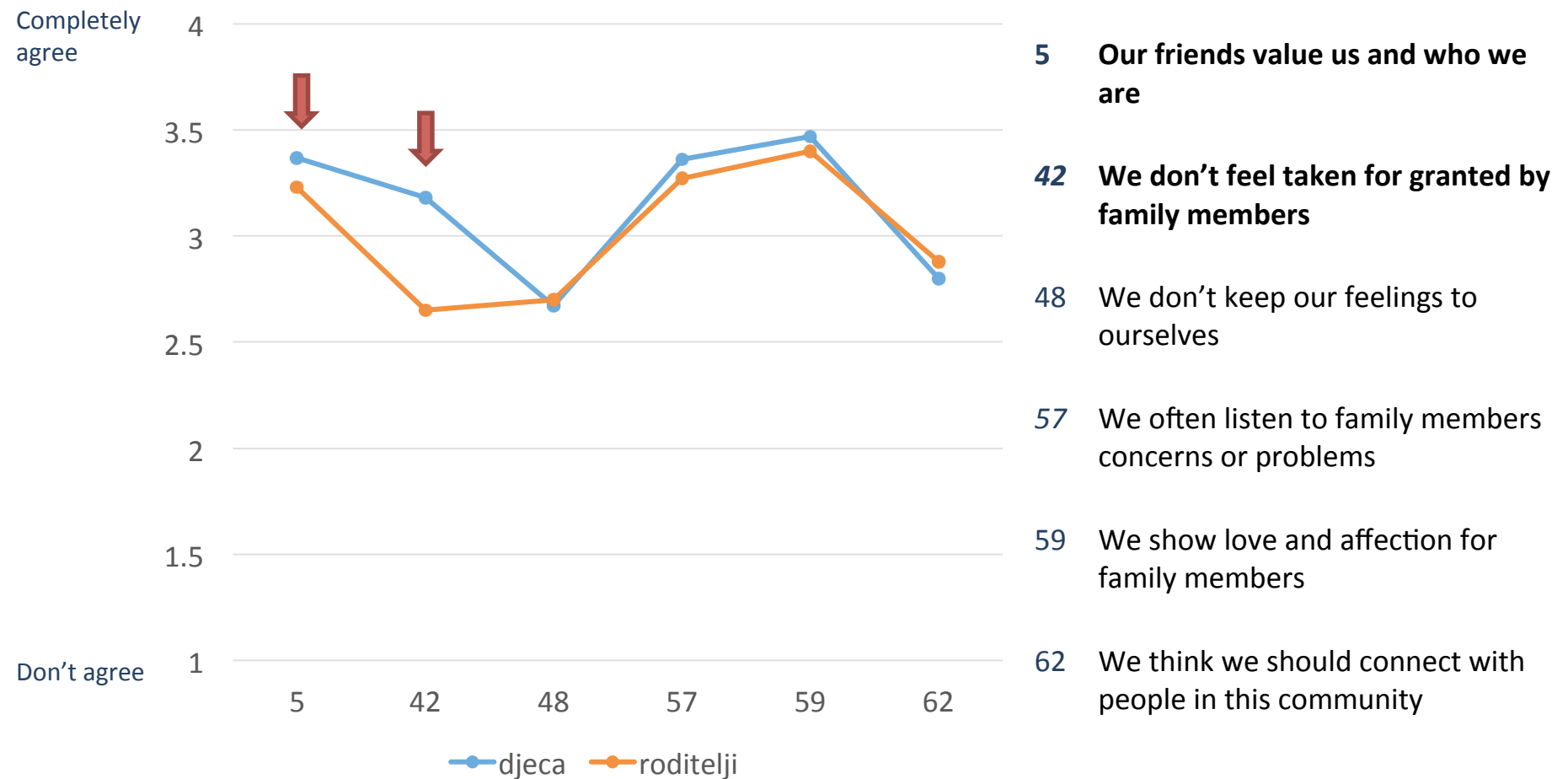
# FAMILY CONNECTEDNESS

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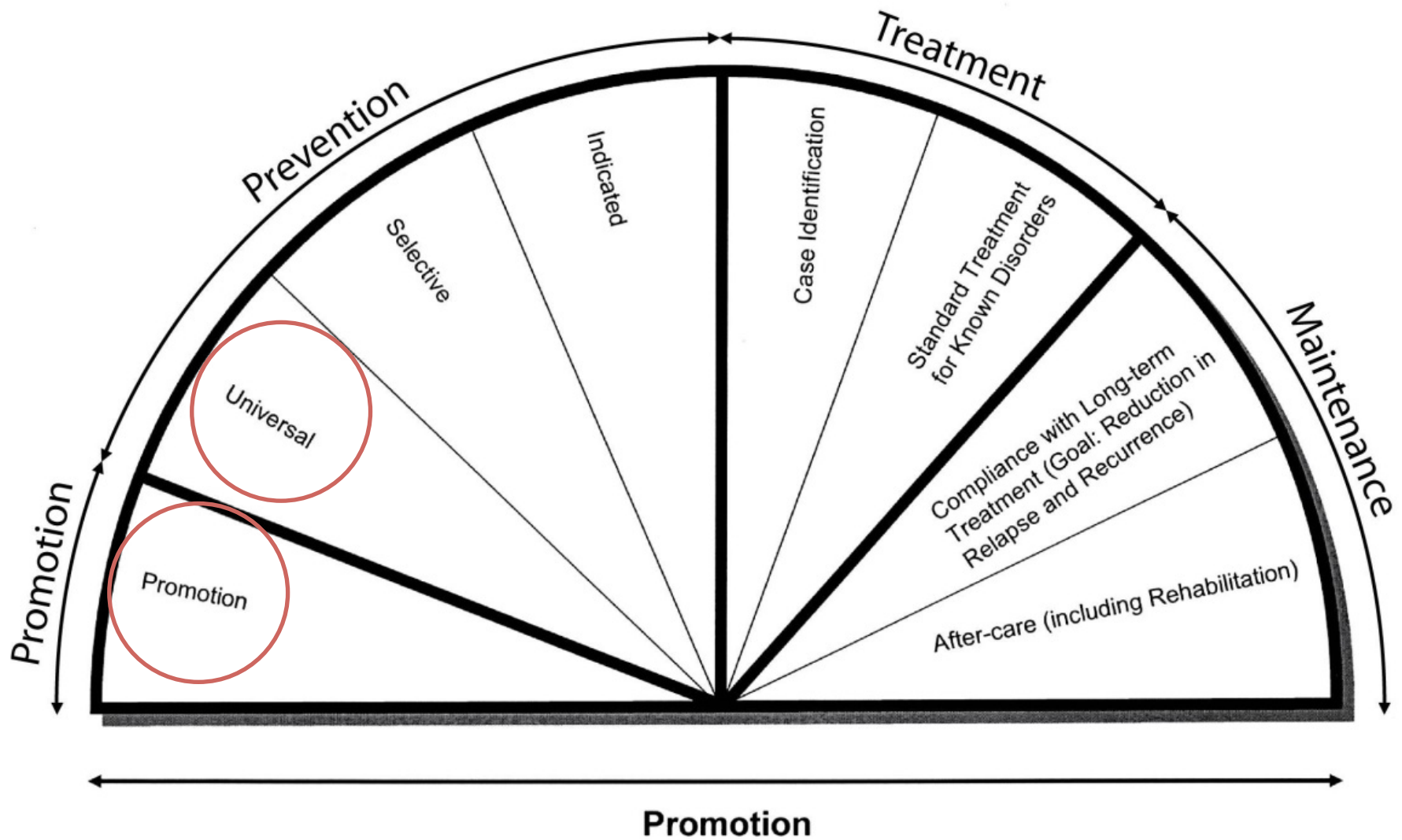
**PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF YOUTH**

# FAMILY CONNECTEDNESS





Family prevention programs might help in building more prosocial society



Spectrum of Interventions for MEB Problems and Disorders

(O'Connell, Boat and Warner, 2009; Barry, 2001)





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