

# Identifying & Working With “At-Risk” Youth

**Youth Pathways and Transitions Team  
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**with**

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# **The Day's Objectives**

- **Provide an overview of the CAYAC/YPT Project**
- **Introduce and discuss resiliency as a way of understanding “at-risk” students**
- **Review characteristics of the teacher of “at-risk” students**
- **Introduce and practice “the power of knowing”**
- **Discuss scenarios & Answer Question**

# **CAYAC ... What is it?**

- **Child and Youth Action Committee**
- **Made up of child & youth serving government departments:**
  - **Health**
  - **Education**
  - **Community Service**
  - **Justice**
  - **Health Promotion**
  - **Sport & Recreation**
  - **et al. (HRM, Regional Police, etc.)**

# **CAYAC ... Youth not in school project**

- **Deploy CAYAC social worker at YPT**
- **Provide high impact services**
- **Develop interagency model**
- **Engage wide range of partners**
- **Provide feedback to partners**
- **Research & evaluation**

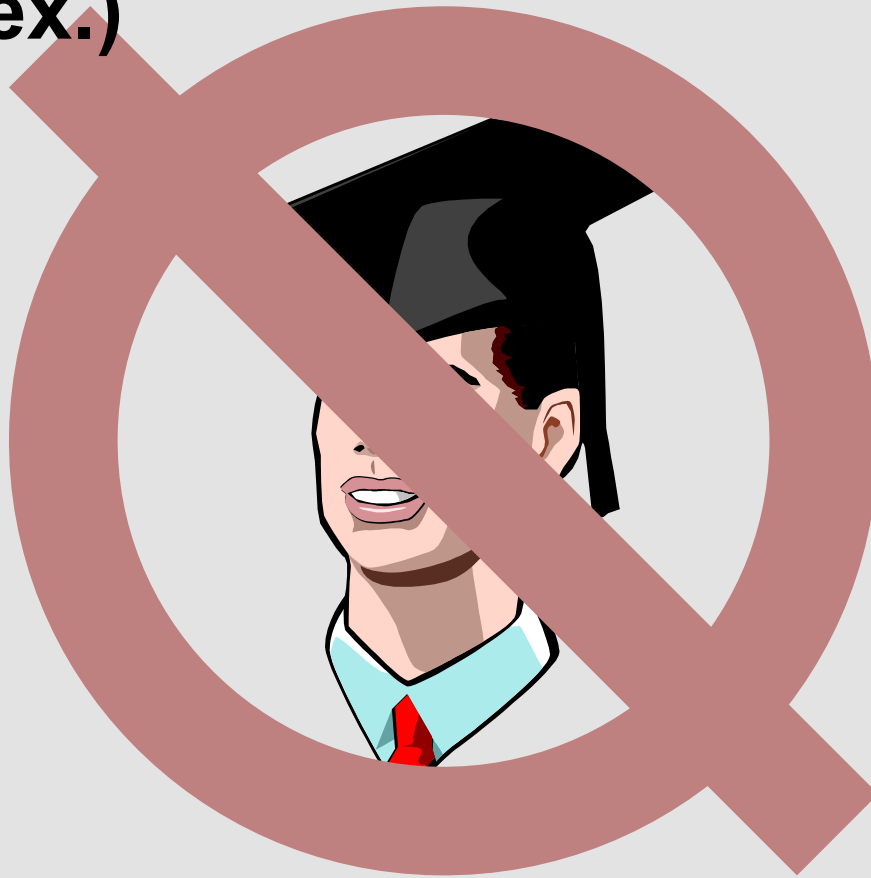
# “At-Risk” ... A Conceptual Definition

- Traditional definition focused on deficits, symptoms, behaviour
  - Violent, aggressive, truant, non-compliant, non-achieving, substance using, trafficking, delinquent, etc.



# “At-Risk” ... A Conceptual Definition

- Traditional definition focused on lack of school achievement and drop out likelihood. (federal initiatives in the 1980's, ex.)



# **“At-Risk” ... A Conceptual Definition**

- **Traditional definition has several deficits:**
  - **Focuses disproportionately on intrinsic factors**
  - **Leads to interventions which target symptoms and ignores strengths**
  - **Ignores the constructivist nature of student mal-achievement**

# **Towards a better working model**

- **A better working model would:**
  - **Include both intrinsic and extrinsic**
  - **Focus on known health determinants/strengths**
  - **Provide guidance for holistic interventions**
  - **Respect that student mal-achievement has a larger context**

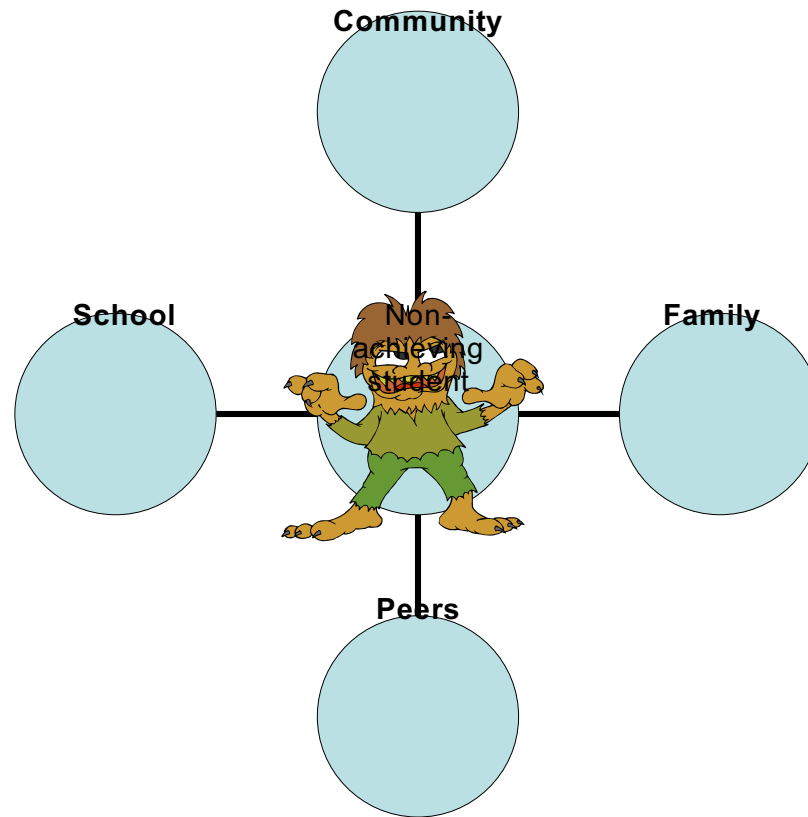
# Resilience ... A definition

- **... resiliency - the capability of individuals and systems (families, groups and communities) to cope with significant adversity or stress in ways that are not only effective, but tend to result in an increased ability to constructively respond to future adversity. . . . it is an innate “self-righting mechanism”.**

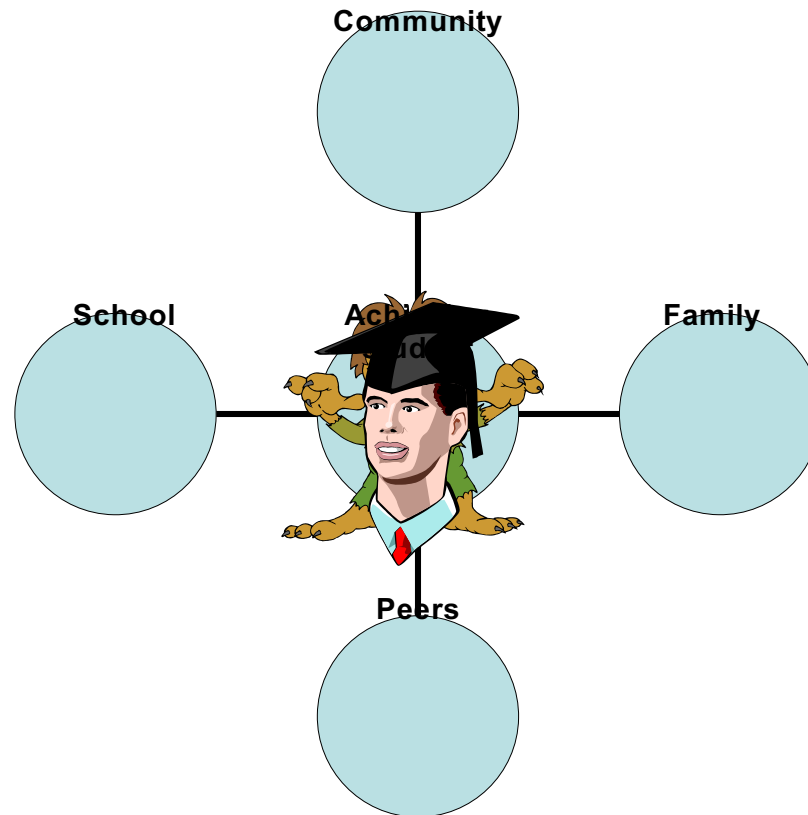
# From “At-Risk” to Resilience



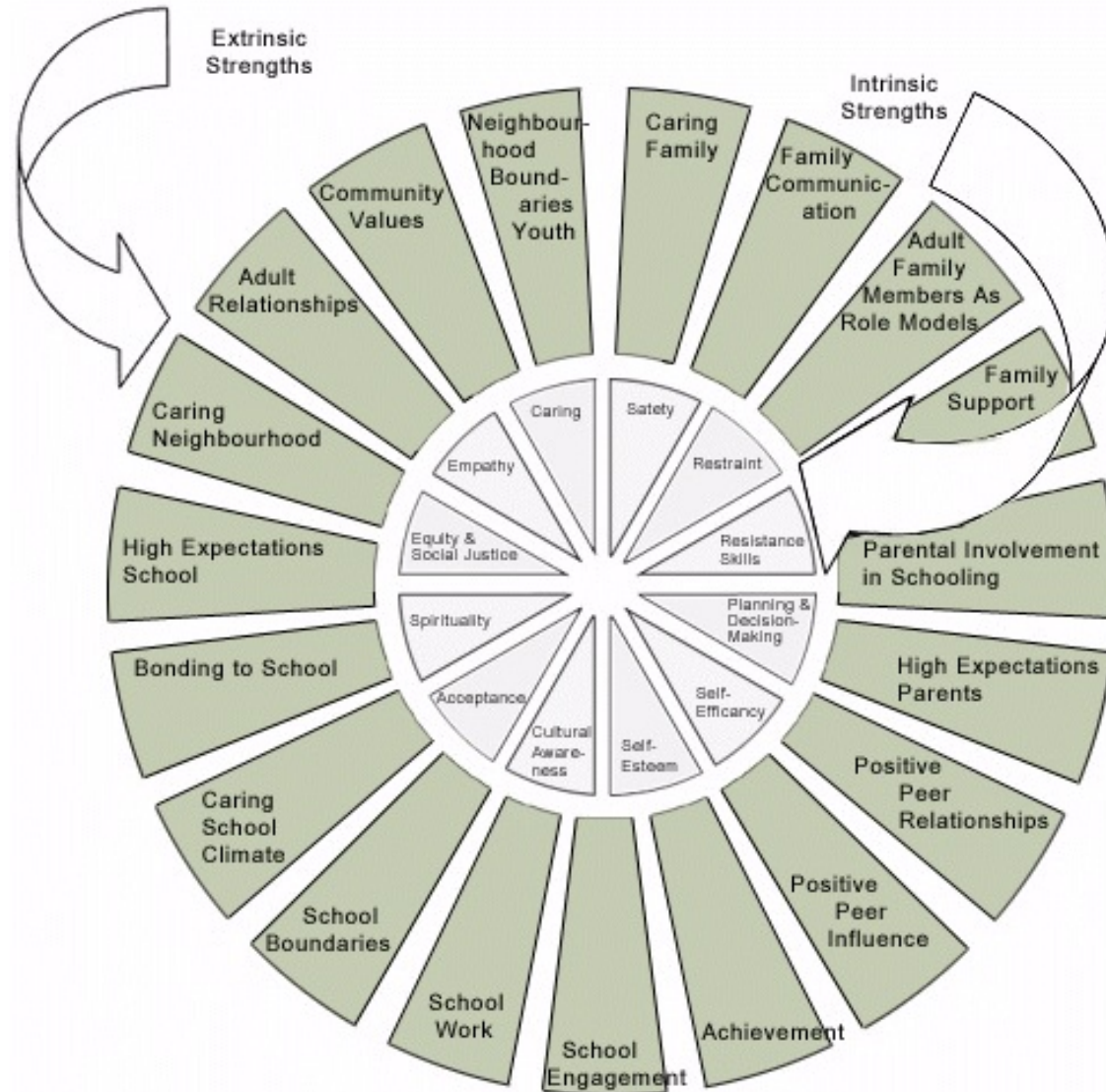
# From “At-Risk” to Resilience



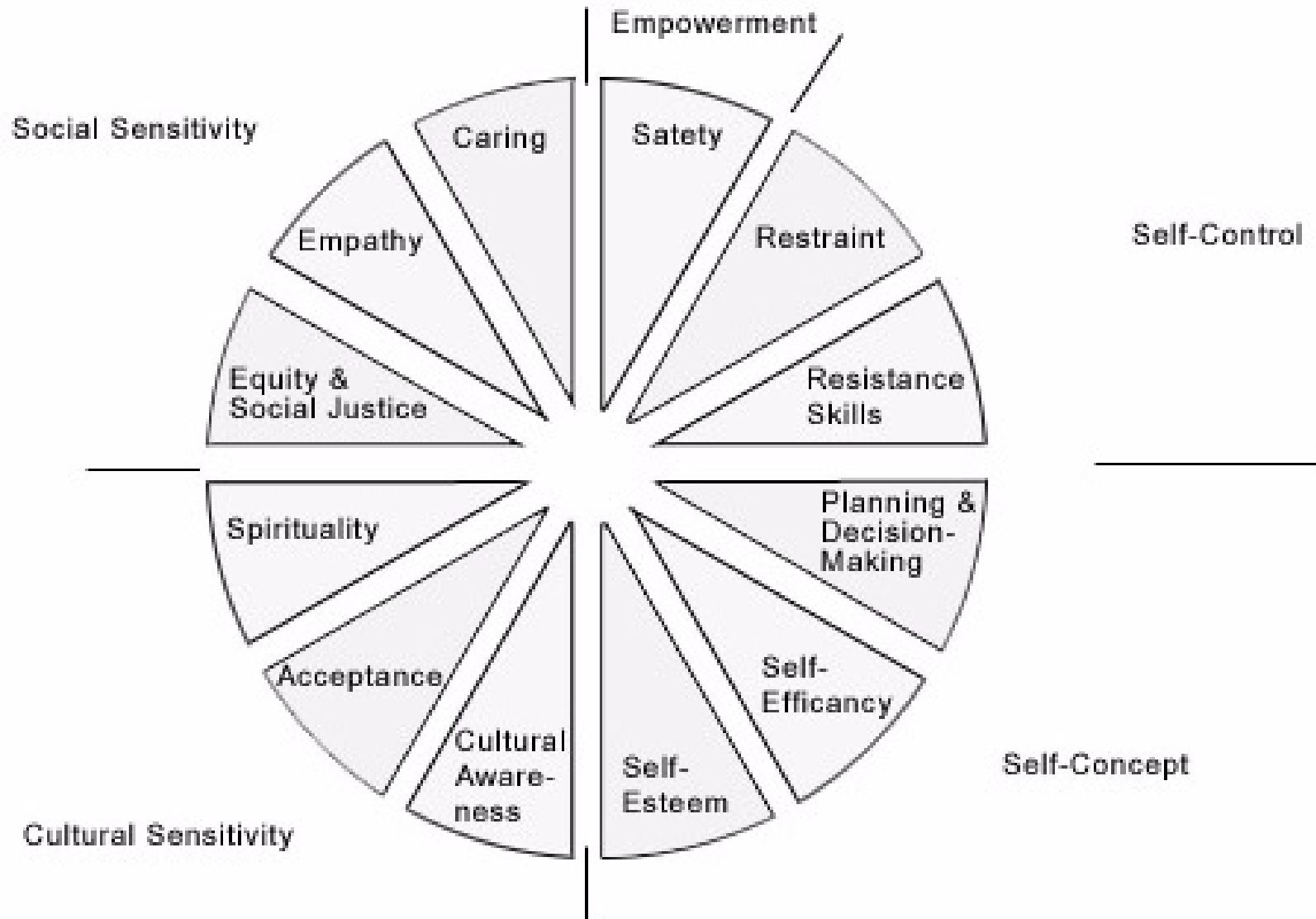
# From “At-Risk” to Resilience



# The Resiliency Model



# Intrinsic Factors



# Extrinsic Factors



# So what?

- **A wise man once said:**
- 
- **There's nothing so practical**
- **As a good theory**
- 
- **But how do we employ this theory in our practice as teachers in order to support student resilience?**

# Resilience and Provincial Mandate

- **There are several links between the resilience model and PSP:**
  - . . . to enable [students] to develop their potential . . . to contribute to a healthy society . . . (A-3)
  - A sound education provided in partnership with the home and the community forms the basis for students to become health and caring persons. (A-3)

# Resilience and Provincial Mandate

- **There are several links between the resilience model and PSP:**
  - **All students need learning experiences that help them to understand themselves and to co-operate, negotiate, and build strong relationships with others. (A-7)**

# Supporting student resilience ...

- **Some propositions.**
- **The teacher who would support student resilience should:**
  - **Be a competent and professional teacher**
  - **Understand the complex construction of student non-achievement**
  - **Measure success in the broader context of student resilience**

# Supporting student resilience ...

- **Some propositions.**
- **The teacher who would support student resilience should (cont.):**
  - **Understand the critical role of relationship in the helping role with field dependent students**
  - **Understand the critical role of relevance when engaging students**
  - **Cooperate with and accommodate a broad range of interventions**

# Supporting student resilience ...

- **Some propositions.**
- **The teacher who would support student resilience should (cont.):**
  - **Have specific training in the cause, course and interruption of negative student behaviours**
  - **Be culturally competent**
  - **Be a well balanced, mature, tolerant and accepting individual**
  - **Be a leader among their colleagues in promoting holistic support of students**

# **Relationship & Relevance**

**Those who measure the impact of various helping services have observed that 83% of change that people make in a helping relationship is attributable to two factors:**

# Relationship & Relevance

...

**A caring, supporting relationship  
between helper and client**

**and**

**the degree to which the “help” was  
directed to issues of relevance to the  
client.**

# **Primary skills/methods**

**Building Relationships  
&  
Being Relevant**

**Both require what I have come to call**

**. . . .**

**The Power of Knowing**

# **Rules for Building Relationships**

- **Be approachable, accepting and non-judgemental**
- **Seek to understand, adopt an attitude of learning towards students**
- **Express affection genuinely**
- **Meet student needs effectively (see attachment cycle)**
- **Reflect students' feelings effectively**

# Rules for building relevance

- **Seek to understand, adopt an attitude of learning towards students (see “Accept Underlying Feelings)**
- **Make connections from curriculum to students’ aspirations and experience**
- **Map what is happening in the lives your students (see self-in context)**



# **Truth in old sayings.**

**Affection and positive regard are suspect and superficial unless accompanied by real knowledge of the person. Consider these two adages:**

# **Truth in old sayings.**

**To know me is to love me . . . To love me is to know me.**

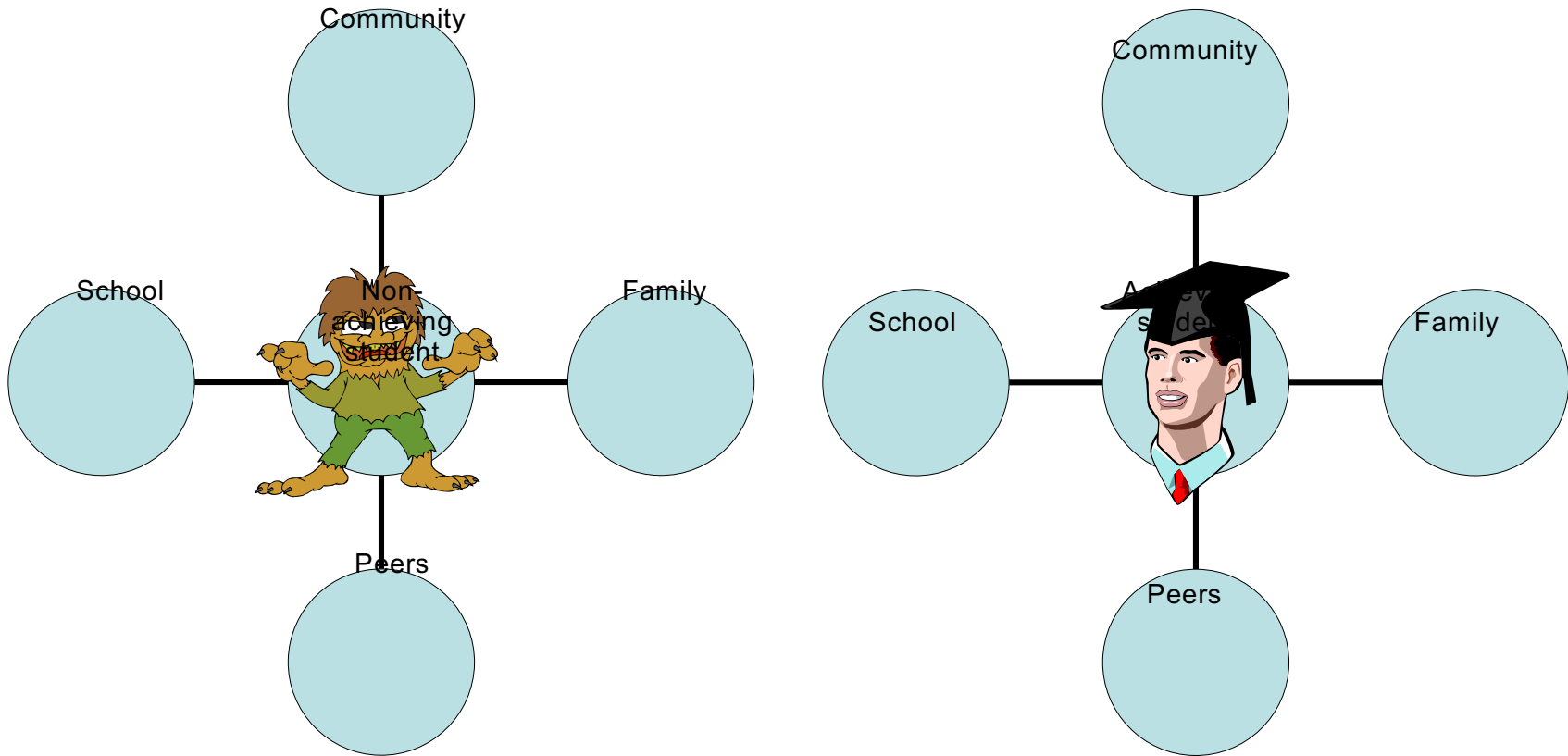
**A friend is a person who knows all about you and loves you anyway.**

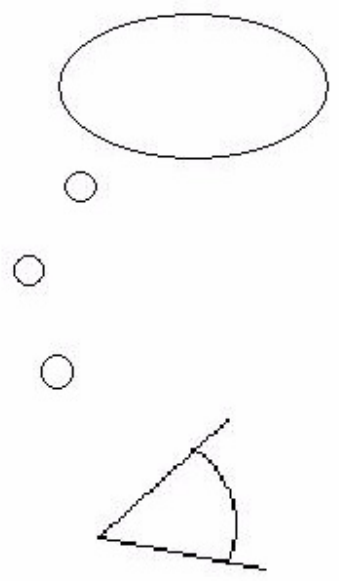


# **The Day's Objectives – in review**

- **Provide an overview of the CAYAC/YPT Project**
- **Introduce and discuss resiliency as a way of understanding “at-risk” students**
- **Review and discuss characteristics and competencies of the teacher of “at-risk” students**
- **Introduce and practice “the power of knowing”**
- **Answer Question**

# From “At-Risk” to Resilience







# Partners to Support Extrinsic Work

