

IN BRIEF

Unique Strengths, Shared Strengths *Developmental Assets Among Youth of Color*

The Questions

Are developmental assets* important for healthy development for young people from all racial/ethnic groups, regardless of socioeconomic status? Does the importance of particular categories of assets vary across racial/ethnic groups?

The Bottom Line

New Search Institute research shows that African American, American Indian, Asian American, Latino/Latina, White, and Multiracial youth all benefit similarly from experiencing more of the 40 developmental assets in their lives, regardless of their socioeconomic status. At the same time, the importance of particular categories of assets varies by race/ethnicity, suggesting the need for focused, ongoing dialogue within communities of color about their unique strengths and opportunities for nurturing healthy children and youth.

The Evidence

Analyses of Search Institute's aggregate dataset of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth (including 69,731 youth of color) surveyed in 318 U.S. communities during the 1999-2000 school year found the following:

- As shown in Figure A, developmental assets protect youth from all racial/ethnic groups studied from engaging in 10 different high-risk behaviors, including violence, alcohol use, and illicit drug use.
- Developmental assets also promote thriving behaviors (such as valuing diversity, maintaining good health, and succeeding in school) among young people from all racial/ethnic groups.

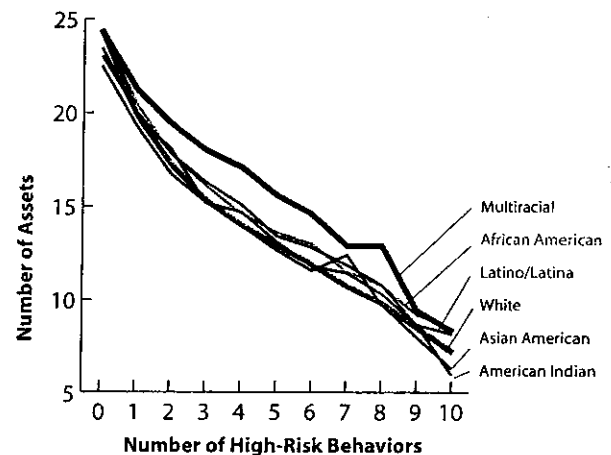
*Developmental assets are positive factors in young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that have been found to be important in promoting young people's healthy development. The complete framework is found in Display 1 of the full report, and more information is available at www.search-institute.org/assets.

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FIGURE A

Risks and Assets, by Race/Ethnicity

On average, young people with more developmental assets engage in fewer high-risk behaviors (out of 10 that are measured) than youth with fewer assets.



SOURCE: Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth during the 1999-2000 school year.

- These relationships hold true even after accounting for socioeconomic status.
- At the same time, developmental assets do not necessarily work in the same ways for all youth. For example, constructive-use-of-time assets seem more strongly correlated with school success for American Indian and Asian American youth than for others.

This page is condensed from Sesma, A., Jr., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2003). Unique strengths, shared strengths: Developmental assets among youth of color. *Search Institute Insights & Evidence 1* (2), 1-13, which is available for free downloading at www.search-institute.org/research/Insights.