



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



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Chair

# Relationships, Youth Wisdom and the Power of Youth Work

**Prof Pat Dolan**  
**Youth Work Matters**  
**29<sup>th</sup> May 2025**



# Debunking the Myths and some positives

The Negative Narrative –  
' Sturm und Drang' Hall 1904

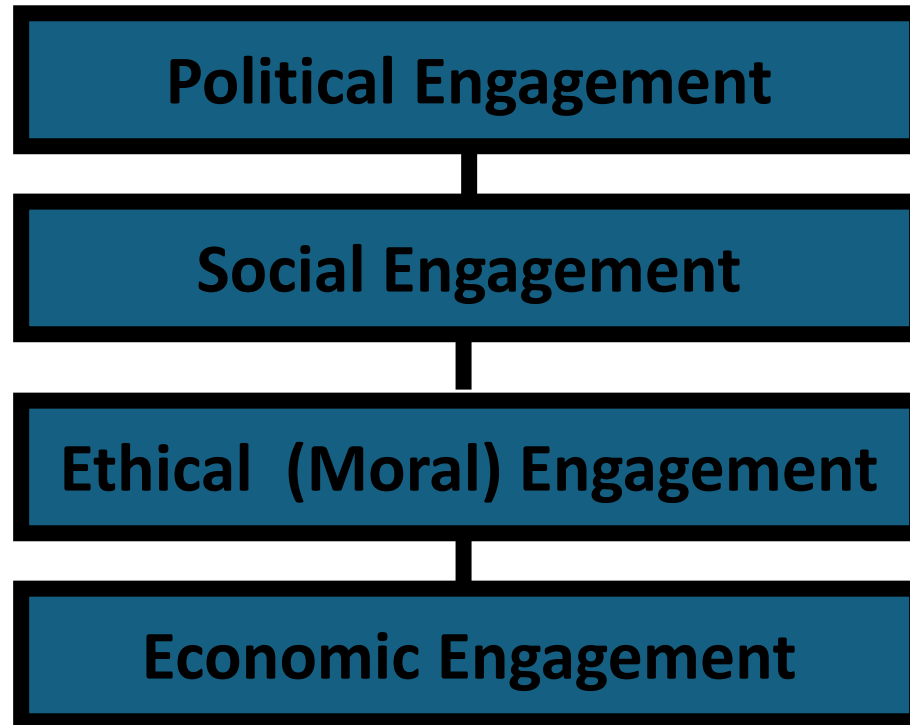
Prevalence of difficulties and  
rates of recovery (80% -20%  
-13% Fact)

(Offer and Schnort-Reichel  
1992; Camino and Zeldin  
2002; Coleman 2011;  
Flanagan 2020).

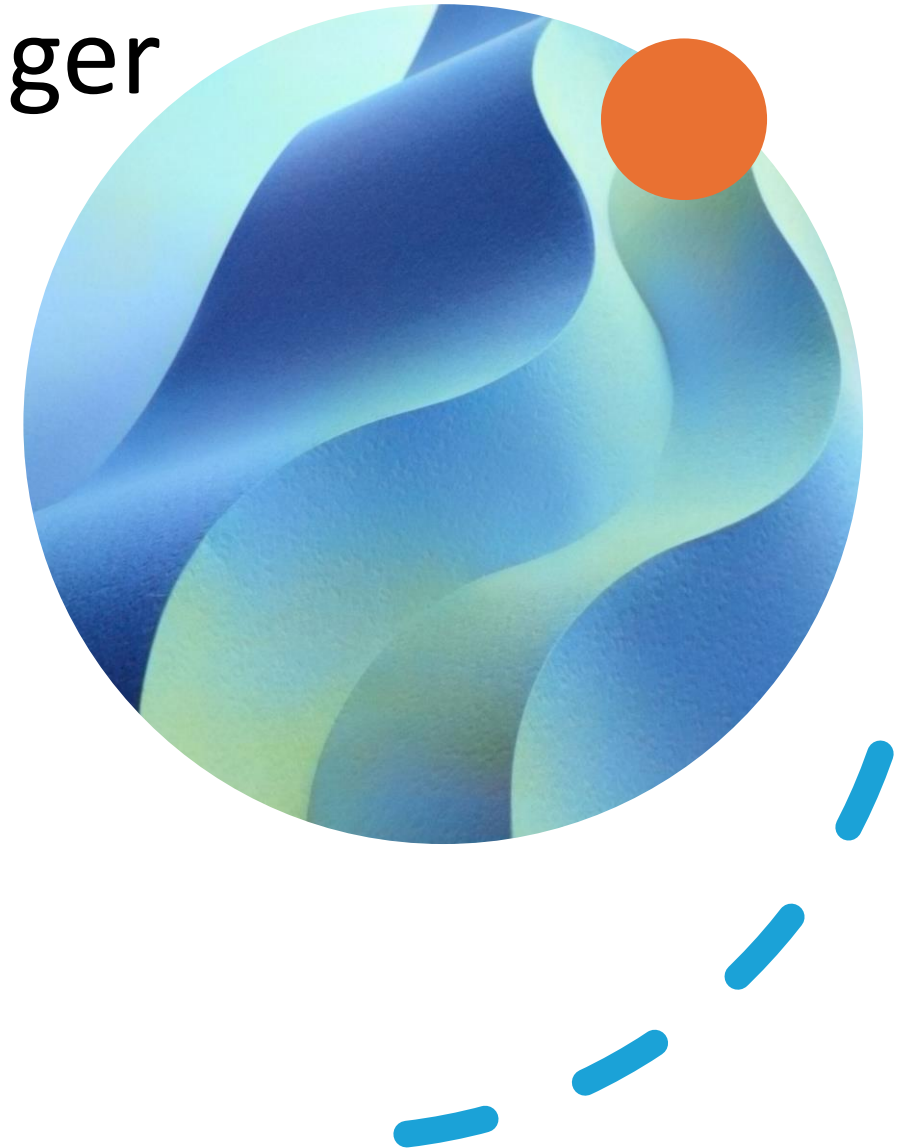
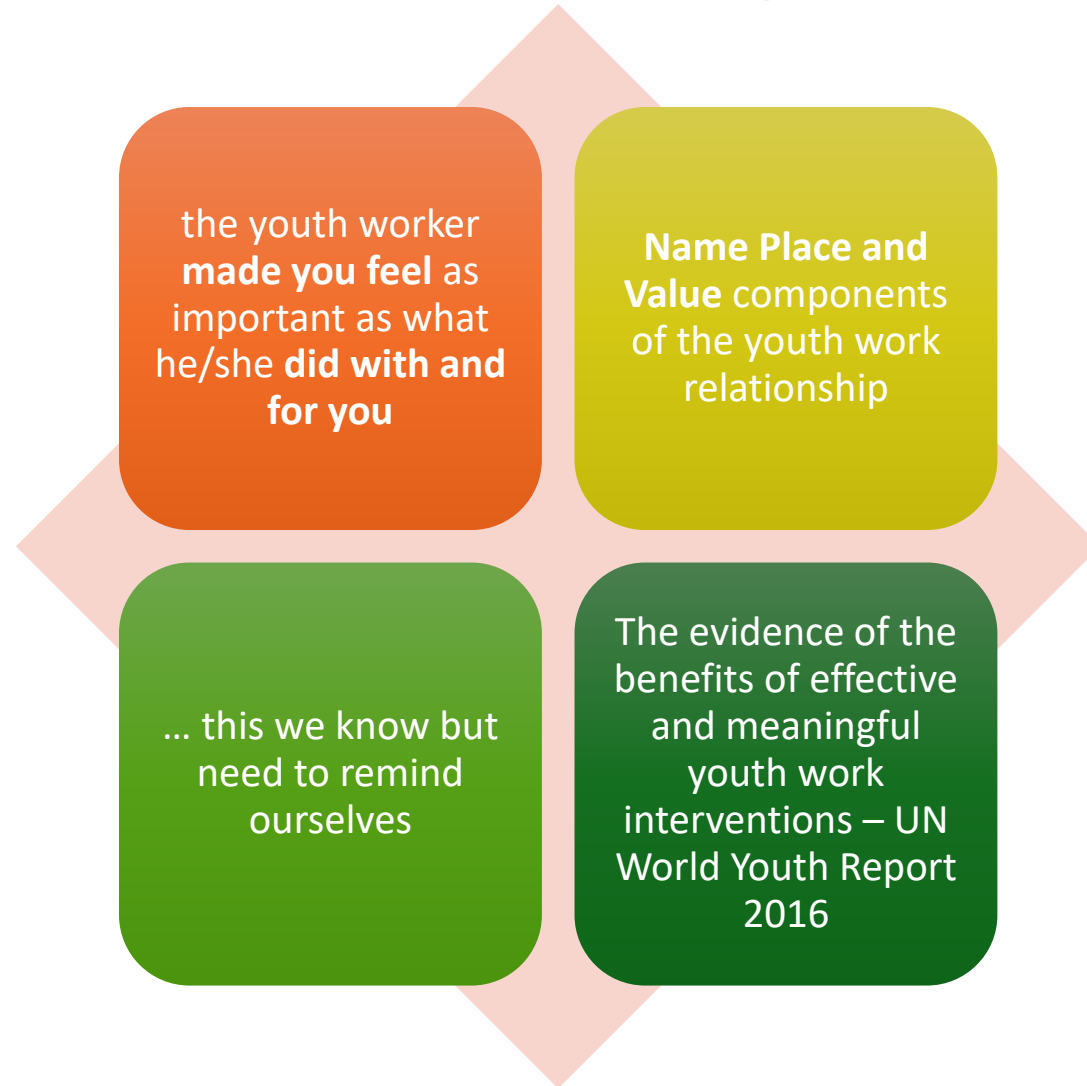
...but not minimising the  
crucial need for  
interventions and effective  
youth work service provision  
for those in adversity or at  
risk of it

2025 - Recent Research with  
Rethink Ireland and good  
news on the power of soft  
skills and Social return on  
investment – (Forkan et al  
2025)

# Forms of Civic Action



# Relationships the game changer



A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

**Youth Wisdom  
and Youth Work**

**Counterating the  
Anxious  
Generation**

- **Often Overlooked or under-assumed!**
- **Evidence of 16 years of research utilizing Youth as Researchers - Youth Voice and Participation research (Kennan and Dolan 2016)**
  - **10 years of Youth Empathy Education Research (Silke et al 2022)**
- **20+ years of youth work research with Foróige (Dolan et al 2005)**

**Listening /Acting on Youth Voice Enables all!**  
**The Wincroft Youth Project 1965**



# Global learning from Covid\_19 UNESCO

Four Key Intersecting Points for Success (from a review of the Evidence in Youth work interventions

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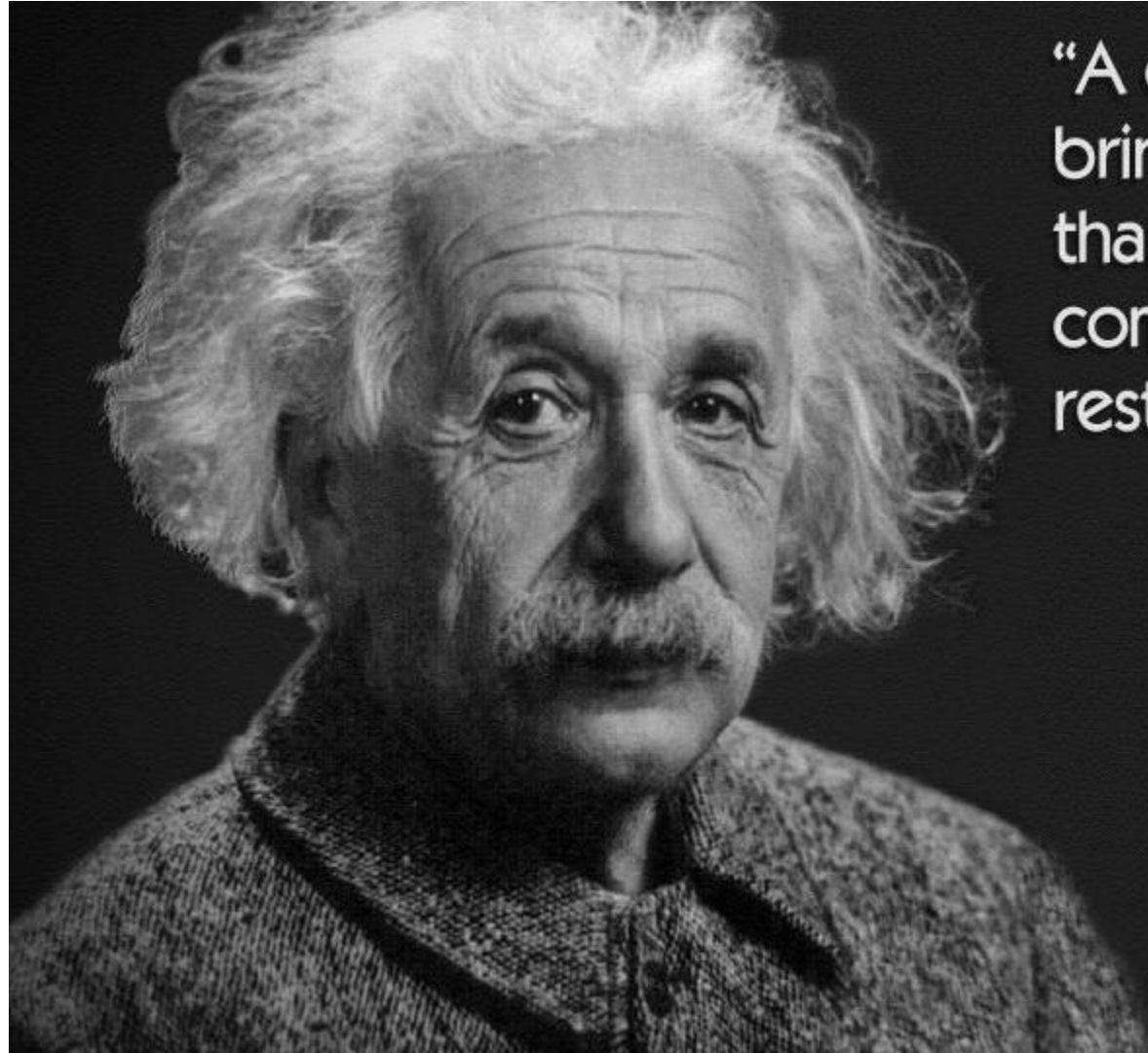
Audit for:

- 1. Included Engaged and Belonging**
- 2. Meaningful positive relationships - presence approach**
- 3. Social Networks where youth are recipients and donors of support**
- 4. Compassionate relationships with empathy**

(Adapted from Dolan 2024)







“A calm and modest life  
brings more happiness  
than the pursuit of success  
combined with constant  
restlessness.”

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

# Wisdom message of Maria Branyas

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- “Human interactions are key
- And...
- Avoid toxic People”





# Mr. Rogers

- **Feel good about who we are**
- **Helped with our feelings**
- **Helped with our relationships with others**
- **Helped us wonder and learn**
- **Helped us be ready for new experiences**
- **Honest about difficult subjects**

