



**YMCA of
Northeastern
Ontario**



THE CASE FOR SPORT AS AN INTERVENTION FOR FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION IN YOUTH

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INTRODUCTION



- Mental health conditions are increasingly prevalent among young people
 - 7.5 million Canadians (~1 in 5) report a mental health challenge before the age of 25
 - 70% of Canadians living with mental illness see their symptoms begin before age 18
 - COVID-19 restrictions have only exacerbated these concerns
- Sport engagement - a vehicle for mental health promotion

OUR PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY



OUR PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY: RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

- Community sport programming and youth physical and mental health following COVID-19 restrictions
 - 2-year longitudinal study
 - Northern and urban settings
 - Lens of social identity



YMCA



YMCA Globally into Canada

The YMCA
has served
the World
globally since
1844 in
London,
England



The first
YMCA in
North
America
opens in 1851
in Montreal



The YMCA in
Canada begins
war services
in 1866



The YMCA
begins Swim
Lessons in
1906 in
Toronto



The YMCA
begins offering
Child Care
Services for
working
parents in
1968



YMCAs of the North into YMCA of Northeastern Ontario

The YMCA of
Sudbury was
established in
1935



The YMCA of
North Bay
was
established in
1958



The YMCA of
Timmins was
established in
1991



North Bay
and Sudbury
amalgamated
in 2017,
forming the
YMCA of
Northeastern
Ontario



The Timmins
Y joined in
2021

COVID-19 – How the Y Stepped Up

The Challenge	What We Did
While schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, children still needed a way to get active and moving from home.	We launched a free virtual physical activity resource called YGym in English and French. This meant that kids could get active with certified YMCA coaches from home.
Staying at home meant that members were feeling isolated and were missing their YMCA routine.	We started calling members to check in and make sure they had everything they needed, starting with our oldest and most vulnerable members.
Our members needed a way to maintain their health and wellness from home.	We launched YMCA at Home, a free virtual platform where anyone could access fitness, health and wellness videos.
Sudbury's vulnerable population needed a space to access resources and get away from the elements.	The Sudbury YMCA opened their doors and acted as a warming and cooling centre where computers, telephones and washrooms could be accessed for free.
Kids needed a place to have fun, connect with others and stay active during the summer months.	The YMCA offered YMCA Summer Day Camp, where kids could play, connect, and have fun in a safe and welcoming environment so parents could get back to work.
Older adults were facing challenges learning technology so they could connect with their families and reduce isolation.	We launched the Digital Inclusion, Social Connection and Opportunities Hub (DISCO) in partnership with The Village at Canadore College, where seniors could access technology for free and learn how to use them safely.





What are we up to now?

Swim Lessons

Sports Programs

Child Care

Fitness Programs

After School & Homework Clubs

Employment Services

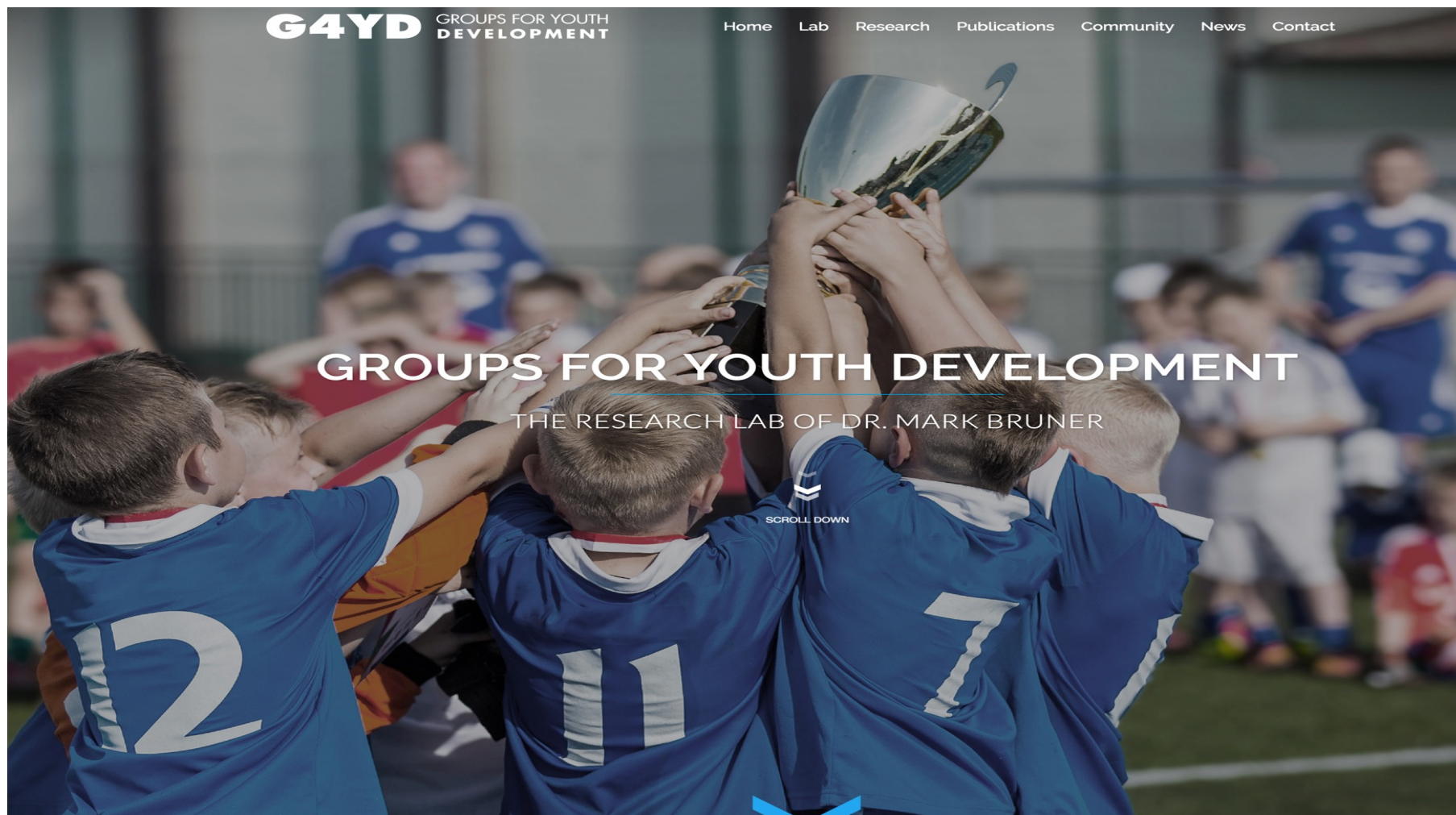
Community Outreach

Immigrant Services



“The ability to offer our youth a **healthy alternative** like the YMCA helps to keep them **safe** and gives them **opportunities** to pursue avenues, such as lifeguard training, that they may not have had otherwise. Thanks YMCA!” - Cheryl V., School Administrator

GROUPS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



G4YD GROUPS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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GROUPS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

THE RESEARCH LAB OF DR. MARK BRUNER

SCROLL DOWN



THE POWER OF 'WE'

- When athletes work together (i.e., strong cohesion) there are increased benefits for the athlete and the group (Bruner et al., 2014; Carron et al., 2002)
- What about when athletes strongly identify with a group, team, or organization?



SOCIAL IDENTITY

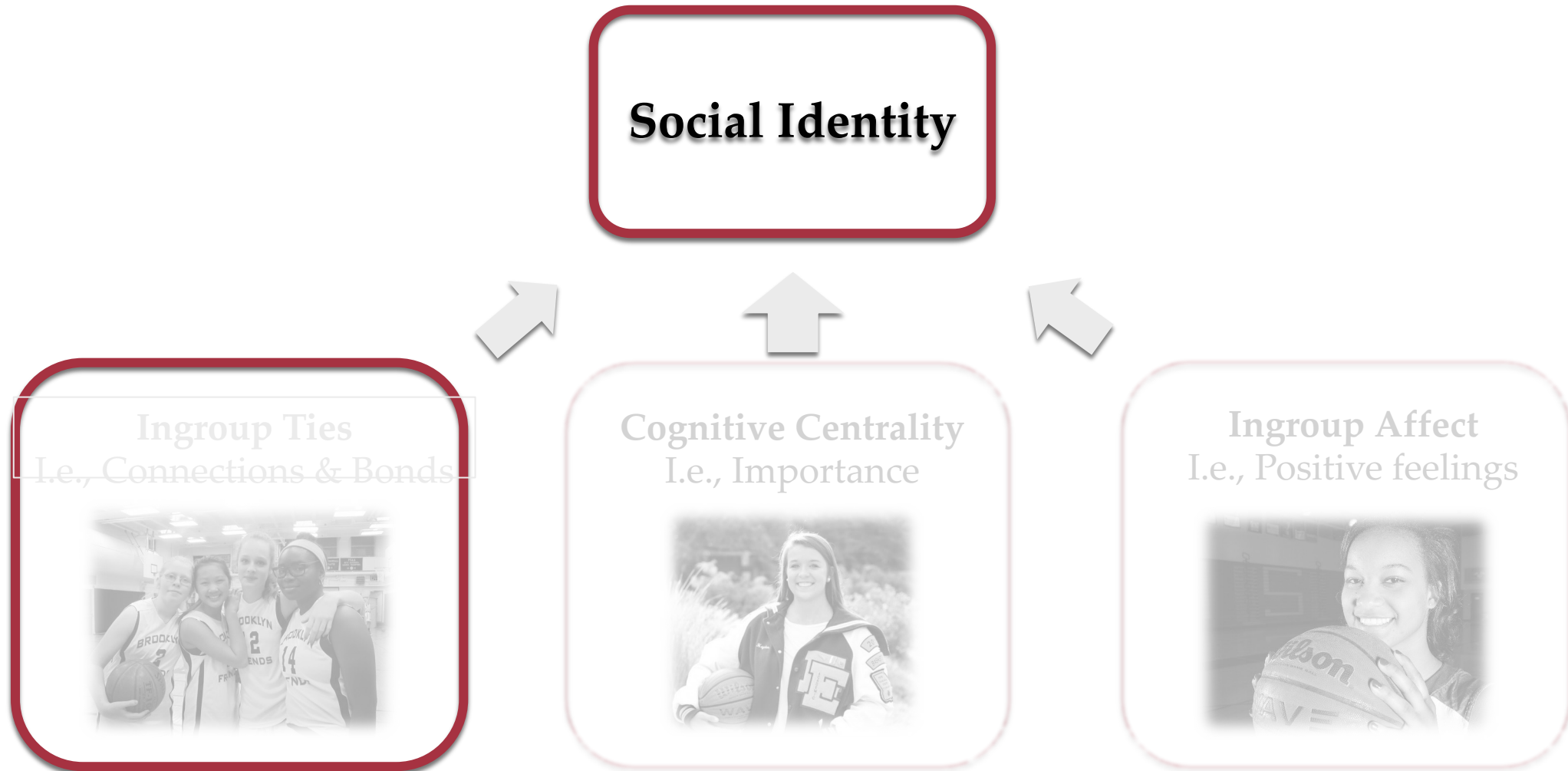
Personal

Social

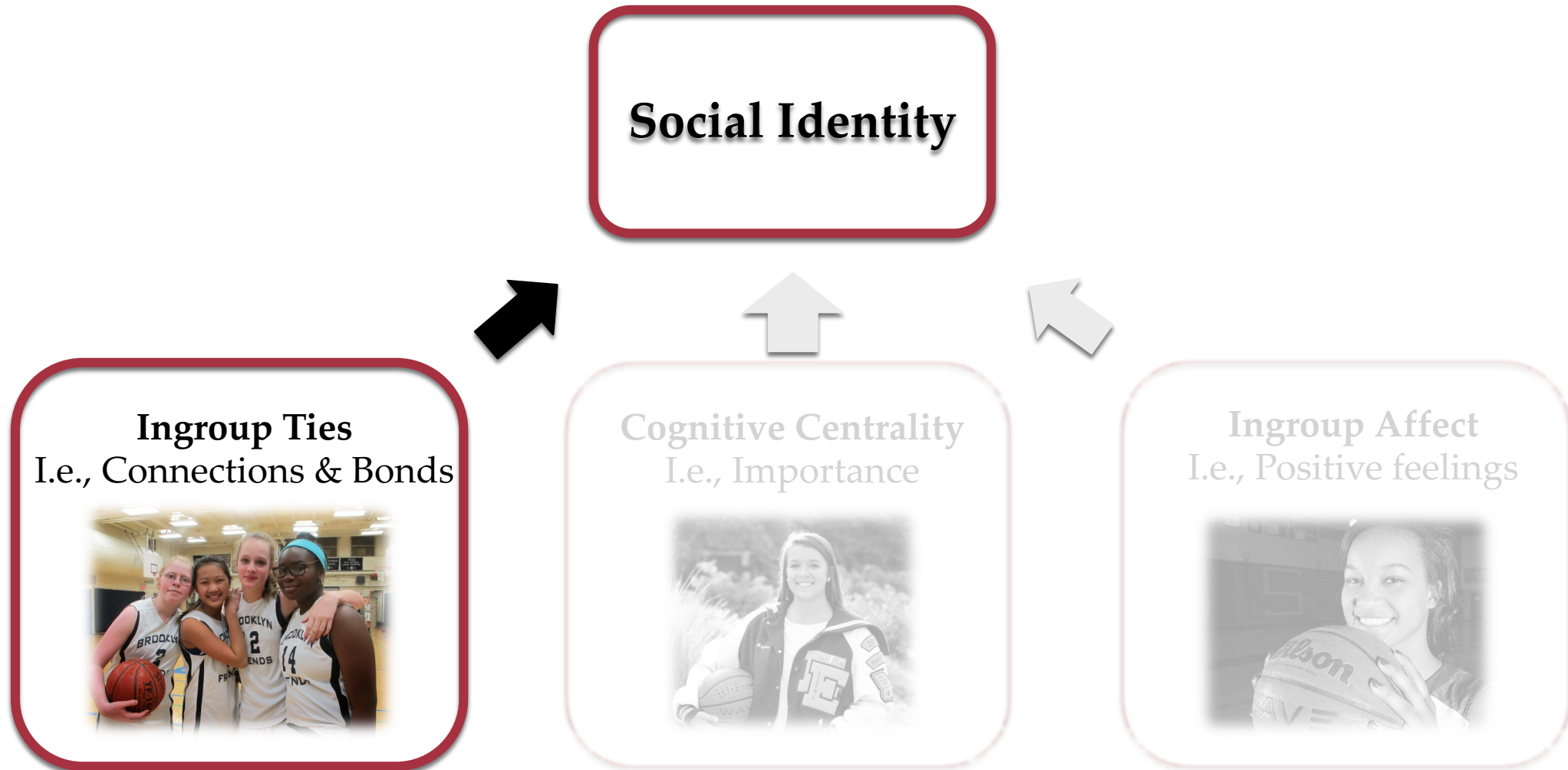
“An individual’s self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”

(Tajfel, 1981, p. 255)

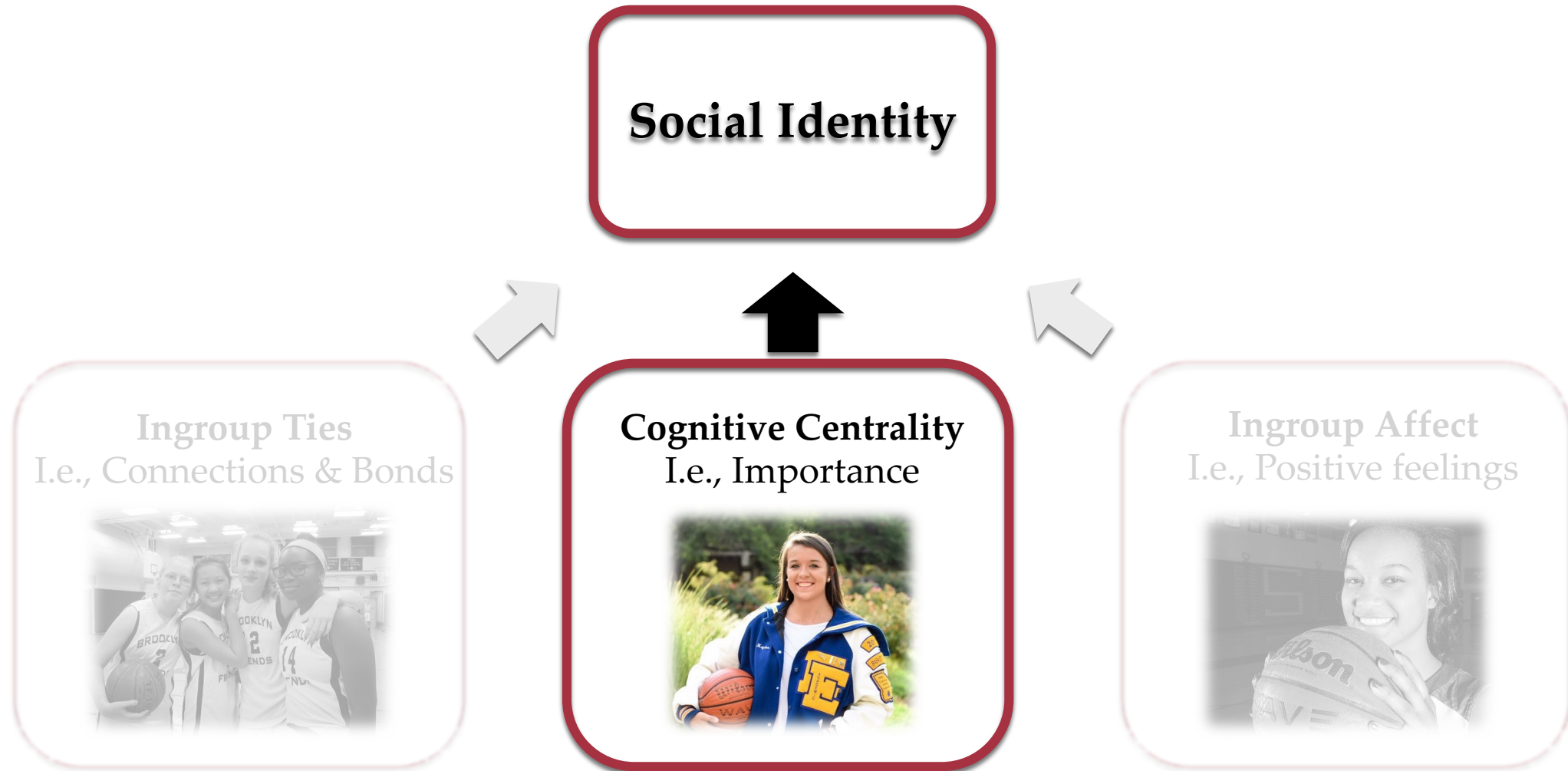
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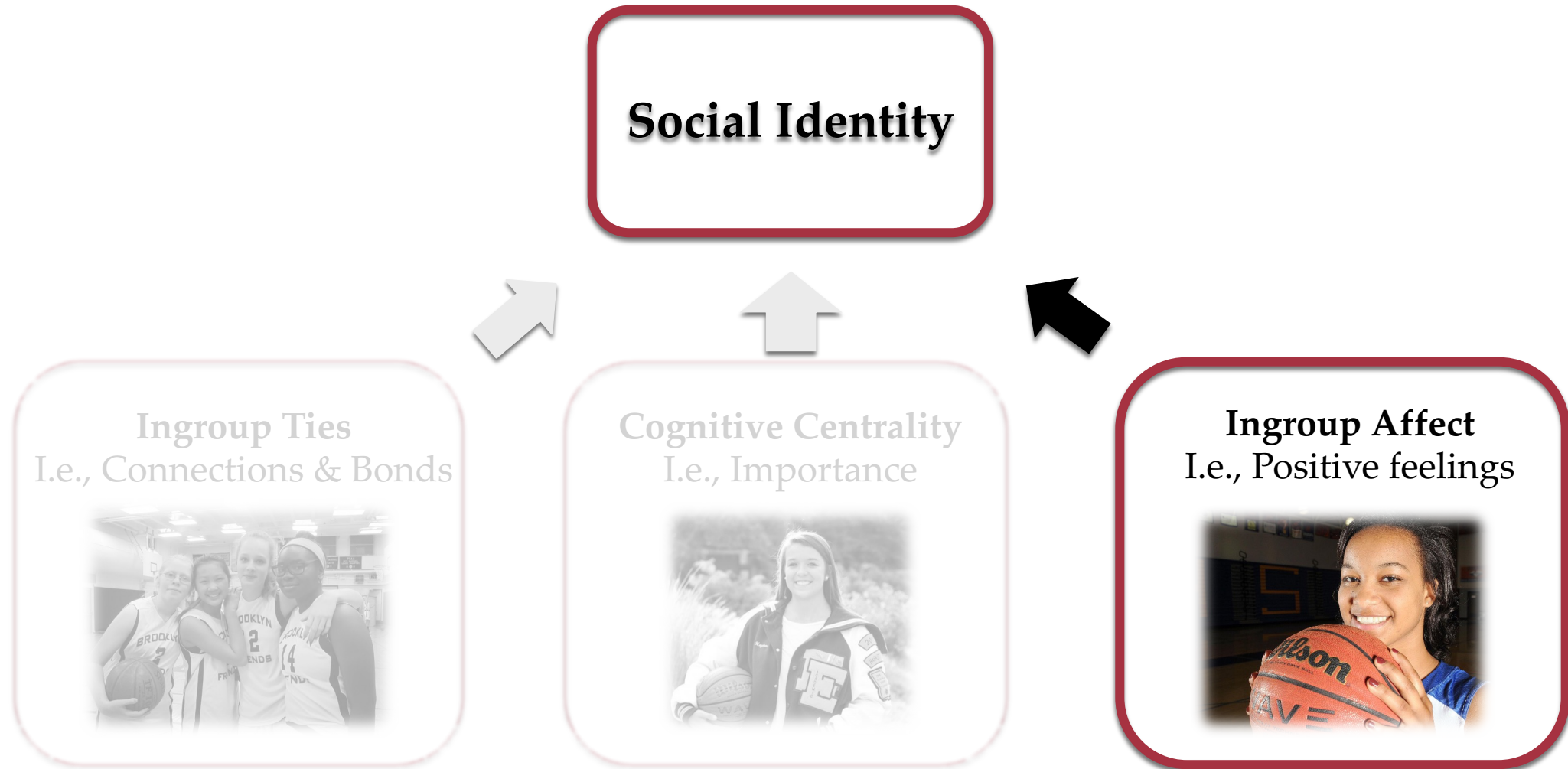
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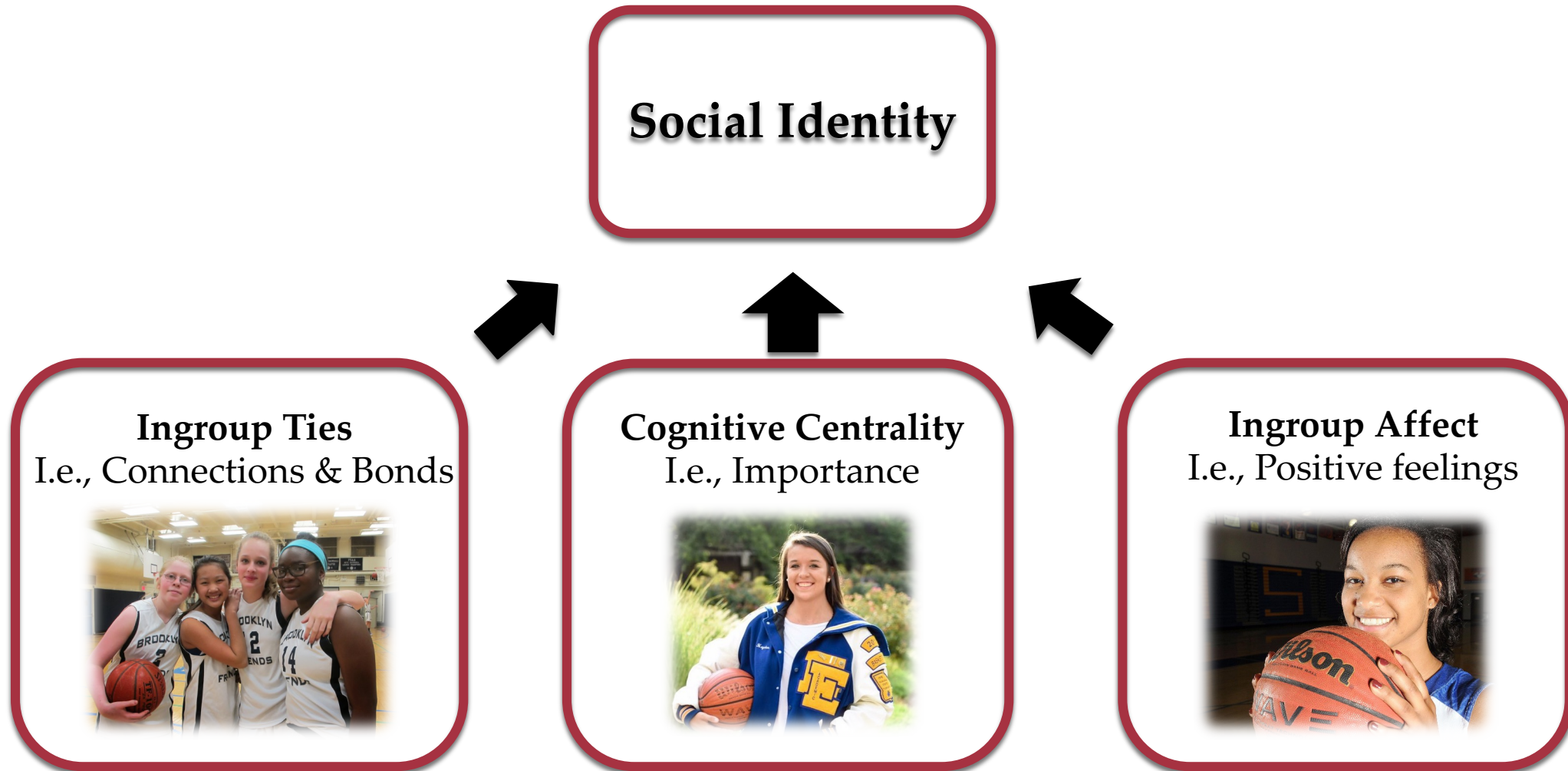
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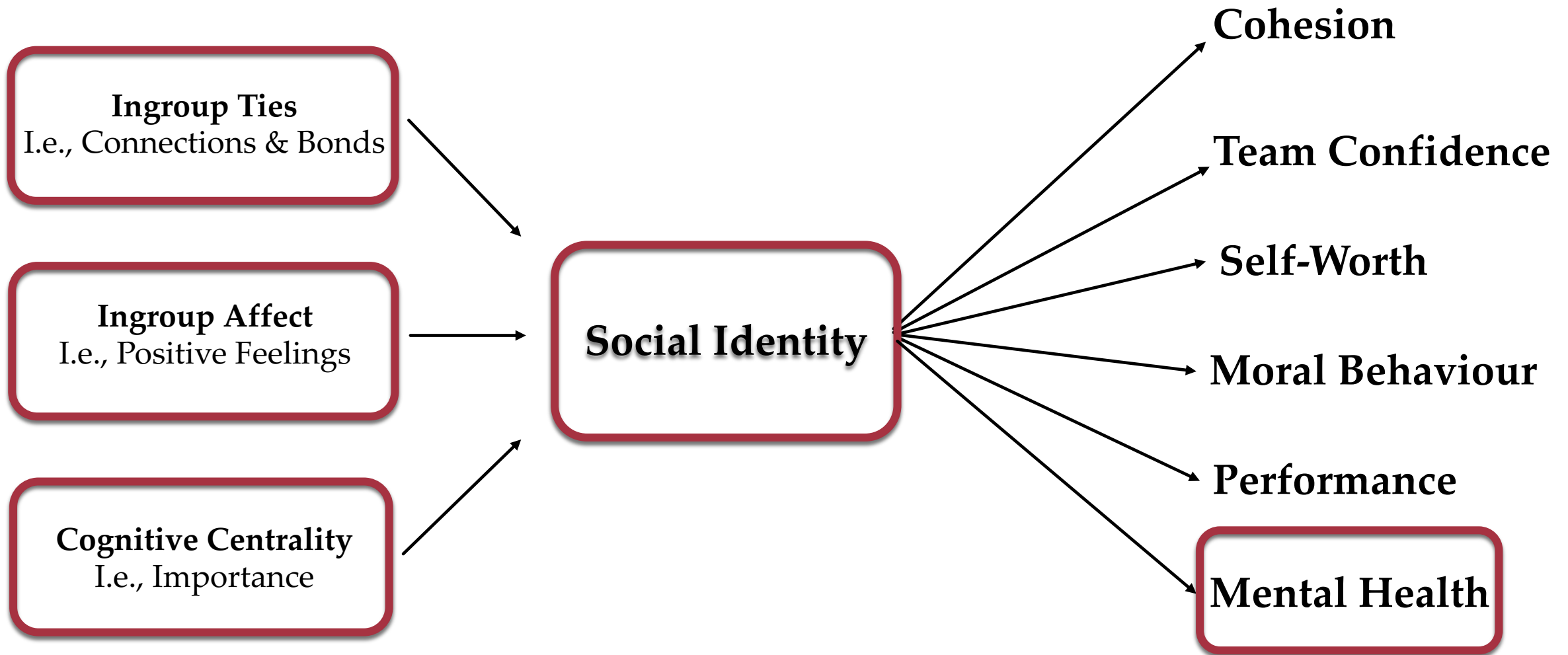


SOCIAL IDENTITY



SOCIAL IDENTITY





MENTAL WELLNESS



Mental Wellness

- Adolescent Mental Health Continuum Short Form (Keyes, 2002)
 - 14-Items
 - E.g., “During the past month, how often did you feel happy?”
- Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10; Connor & Davidson, 2003)
 - 10-items
 - E.g., “I am able to adapt when changes occur”

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS



YMCA



Participants
 $n = 154$



Age
 $M = 11.04$



Gender
37% Girls

MLSE Launchpad



Participants
 $n = 68$

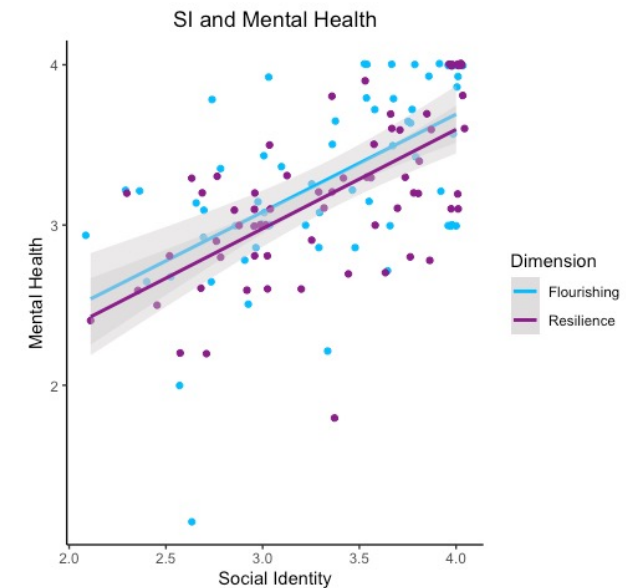
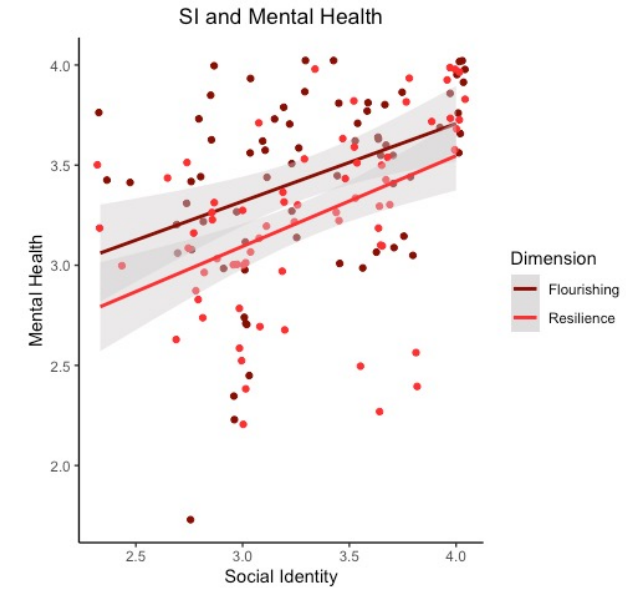
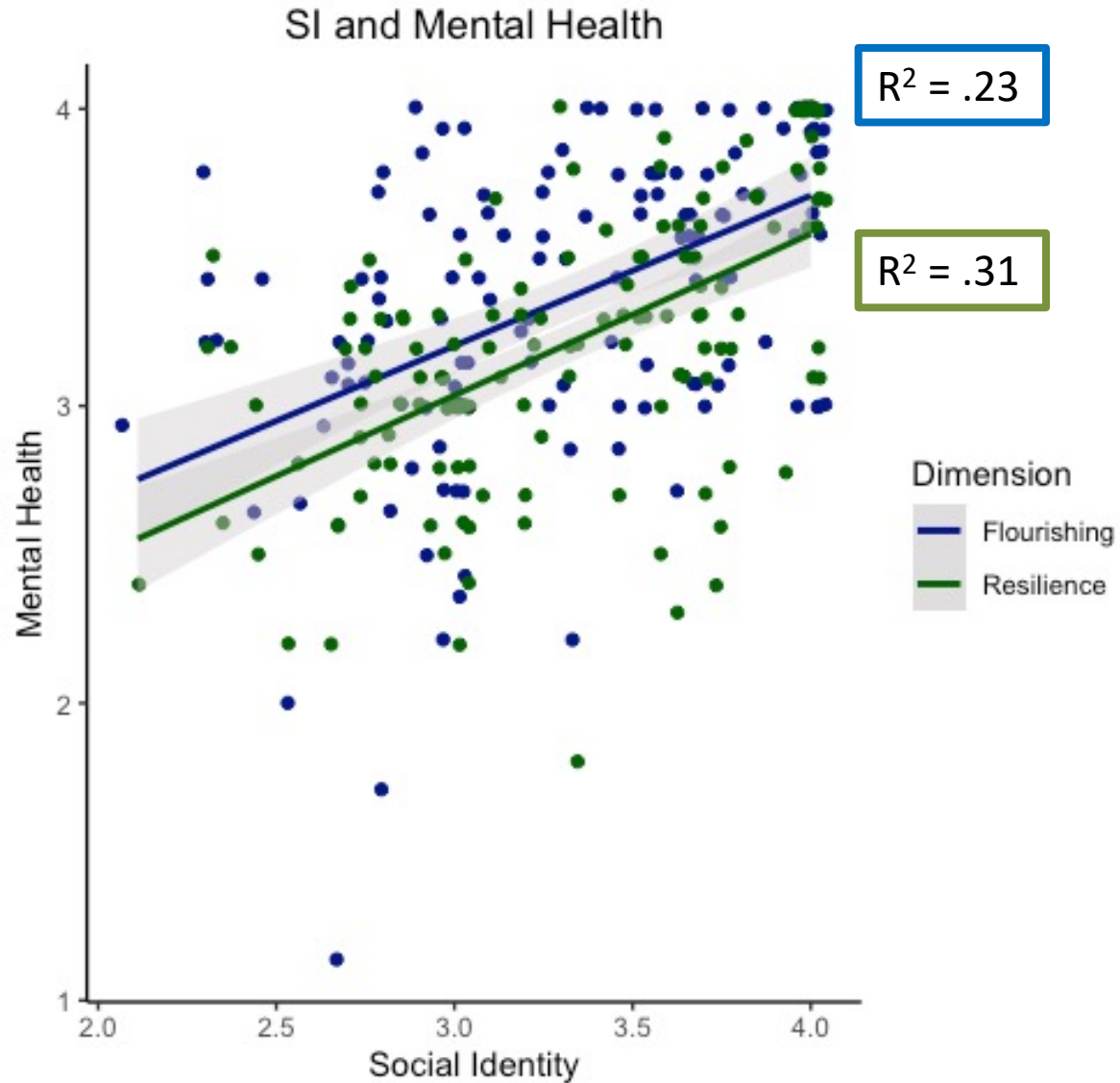


Age
 $M = 10.73$

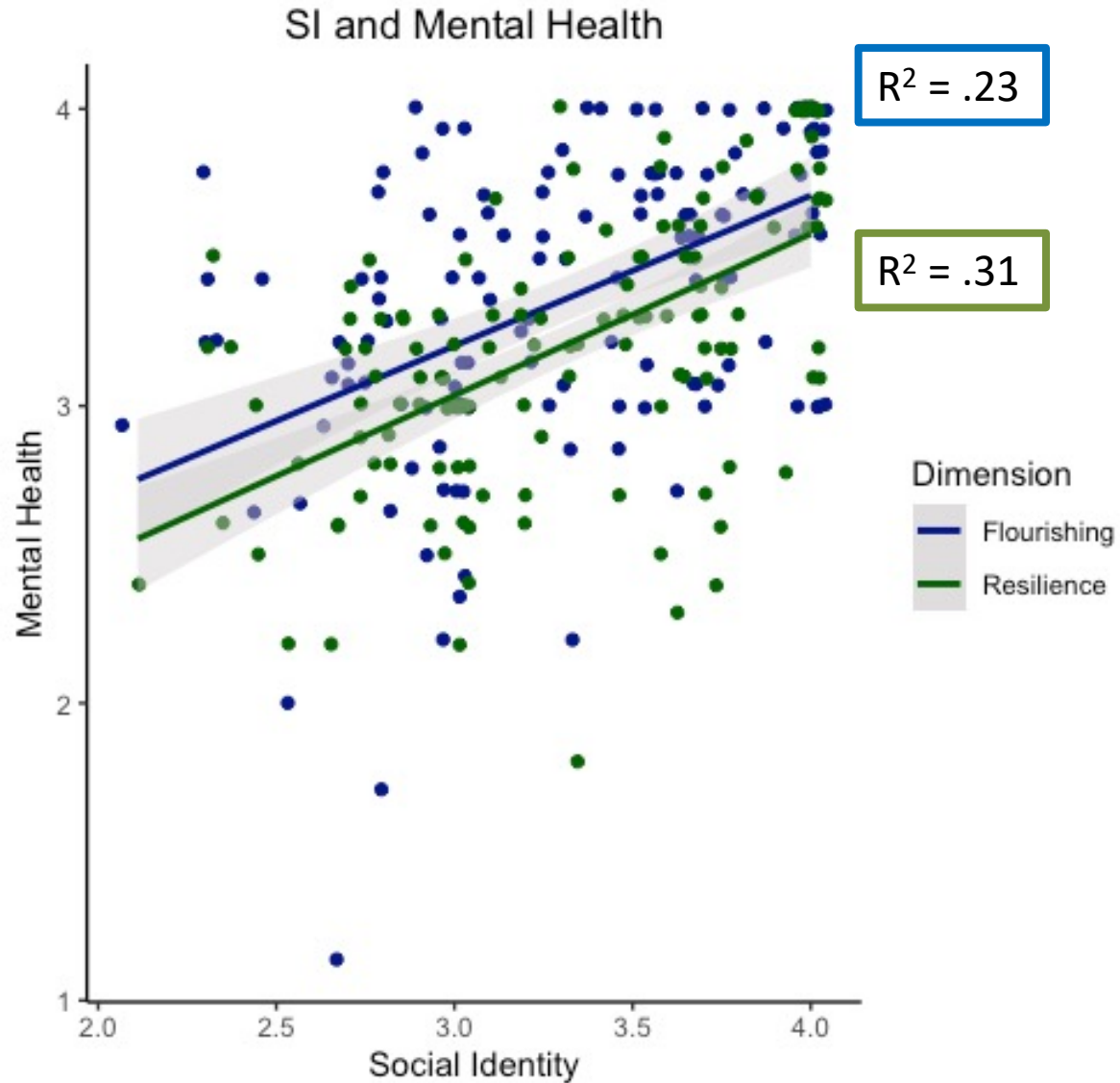


Gender
46% Girls

Findings - Regression



Findings - Regression



	Flourishing	Resilience
Ingroup ties		✓
Cognitive Centrality		
Ingroup affect	✓	

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

- Better understanding of how social identity relates to youth mental wellness
- Provide important evidence of impact for organizations and funders
- Help guide and inform future programming to promote positive social identity and mental wellness





THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

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Corey Keyes' Dual Continuum Model

