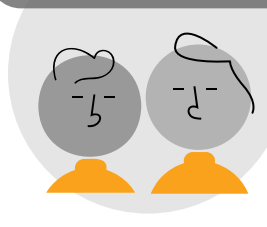


Researchers from the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP UBC) used linked data from: 1753 early adolescents (51% male, 49% female) from British Columbia, Canada who completed the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey in grades 7 and 8 to identify profiles of social connectedness before the COVID-19 pandemic was declared and during the second wave of the pandemic.

We examined associations between profile membership in grade 7 and mental well-being in grade 8, and between transitions in profile membership and mental well-being. Below we highlight the key findings and implications for policy and practice.

Social Connectedness: Domains and Profiles

Four Domains



Peer Belonging



Connectedness to Adults Home



Connectedness to Adults School



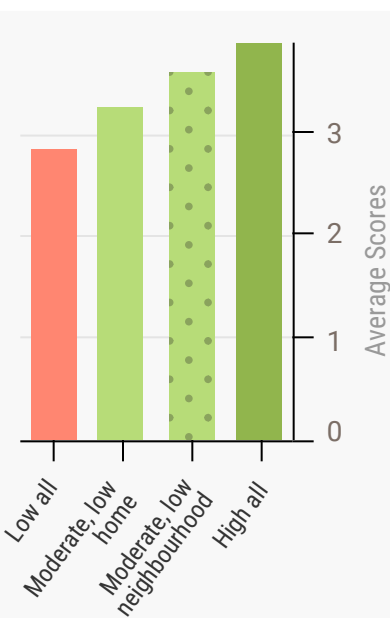
Connectedness to Adults Neighbourhood

Four Connectedness Profiles

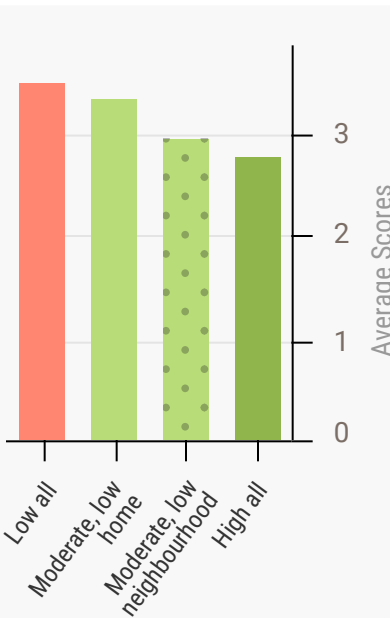
	Point 1 (Grade 7)	Point 2 (Grade 8)
High all	40%	39%
Moderate, low, neighbourhood	30%	31%
Moderate, low, home	14%	16%
Low all	14%	14%

Profile Membership and Mental Well-Being

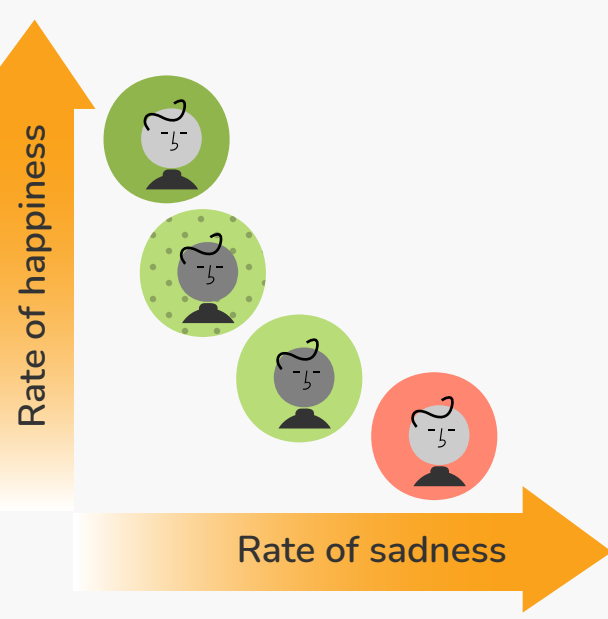
Grade 7 Profiles and Grade 8 Happiness



Grade 7 Profiles and Grade 8 Sadness



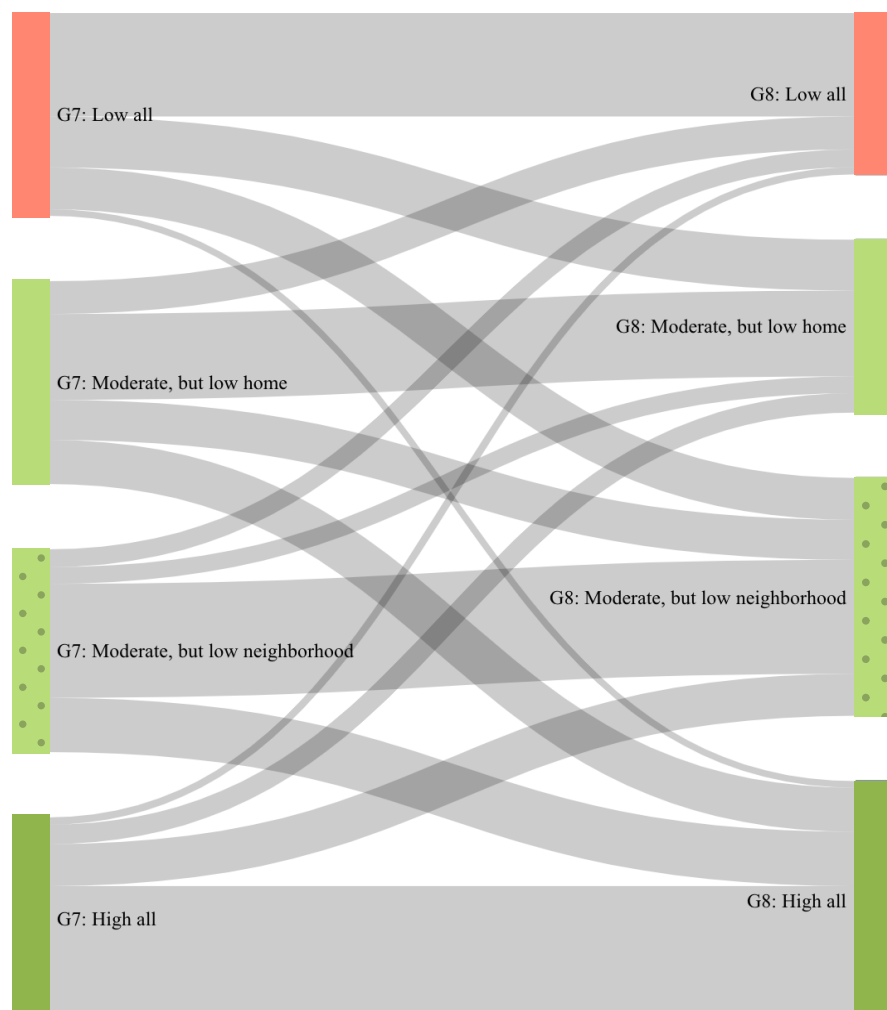
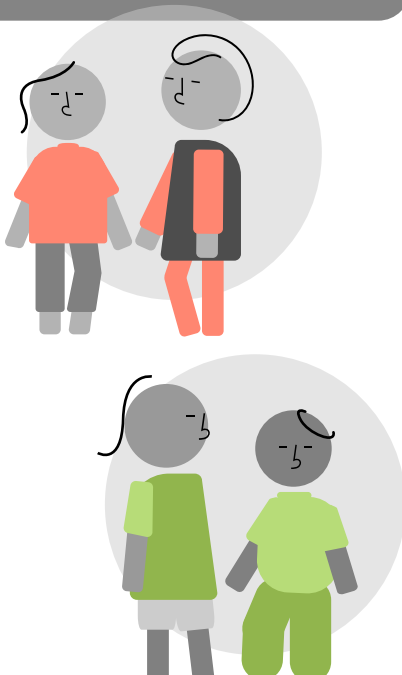
There was a stepwise and statistically significant association between participants' connectedness profiles in Grade 7 and their reported levels of happiness and sadness in Grade 8.



Participants in the "high all" profile had the highest happiness and lowest sadness rates, followed by those in the "moderate, but low connectedness to adults in the neighbourhood" profile, followed by those in the "moderate, but low connectedness to adults at home" profile, with participants in the "low all" profile having the lowest rates of happiness and highest rates of sadness.

Transitions in Connectedness from Grade 7 to 8

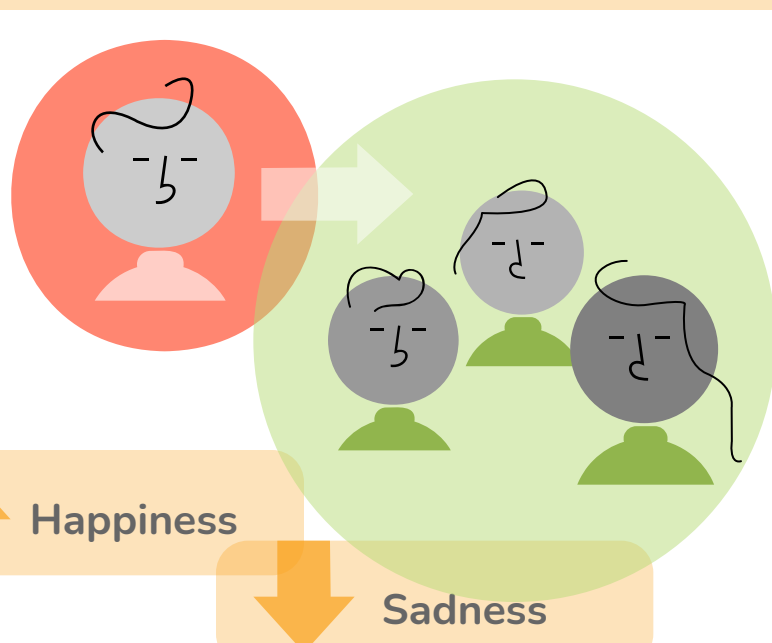
This graphic shows the transition patterns of participant connectedness profiles from Grade 7 to Grade 8. While there was some transition between profiles, participants were more likely to remain in the same profile from Grade 7 to Grade 8.



Percent of participants that remained in the same connectedness profile between Grade 7 and Grade 8:

- 66% "High all"
- 56% "Moderate, low neighbourhood"
- 51% "Low all"
- 42% "Moderate, low home"

Shifting to a profile with more connectedness was significantly and positively related to happiness and negatively related to sadness in Grade 8 even during the pandemic.



Implications

- Young adolescents with profiles of connectedness across multiple domains had higher levels of happiness (an indicator of satisfaction with life) and lower levels of sadness (an indicator of depressive symptoms)
- Social connectedness is vital for healthy development and well-being in early adolescence and can serve as a protective factor during crises such as a global pandemic.
- Our findings suggest that young adolescents benefit from opportunities to connect socially beyond their family context, across several social dimensions.
- Schools, communities, and policy makers can leverage the potential of social connectedness to support adolescents' capacity for resilience and recovery.