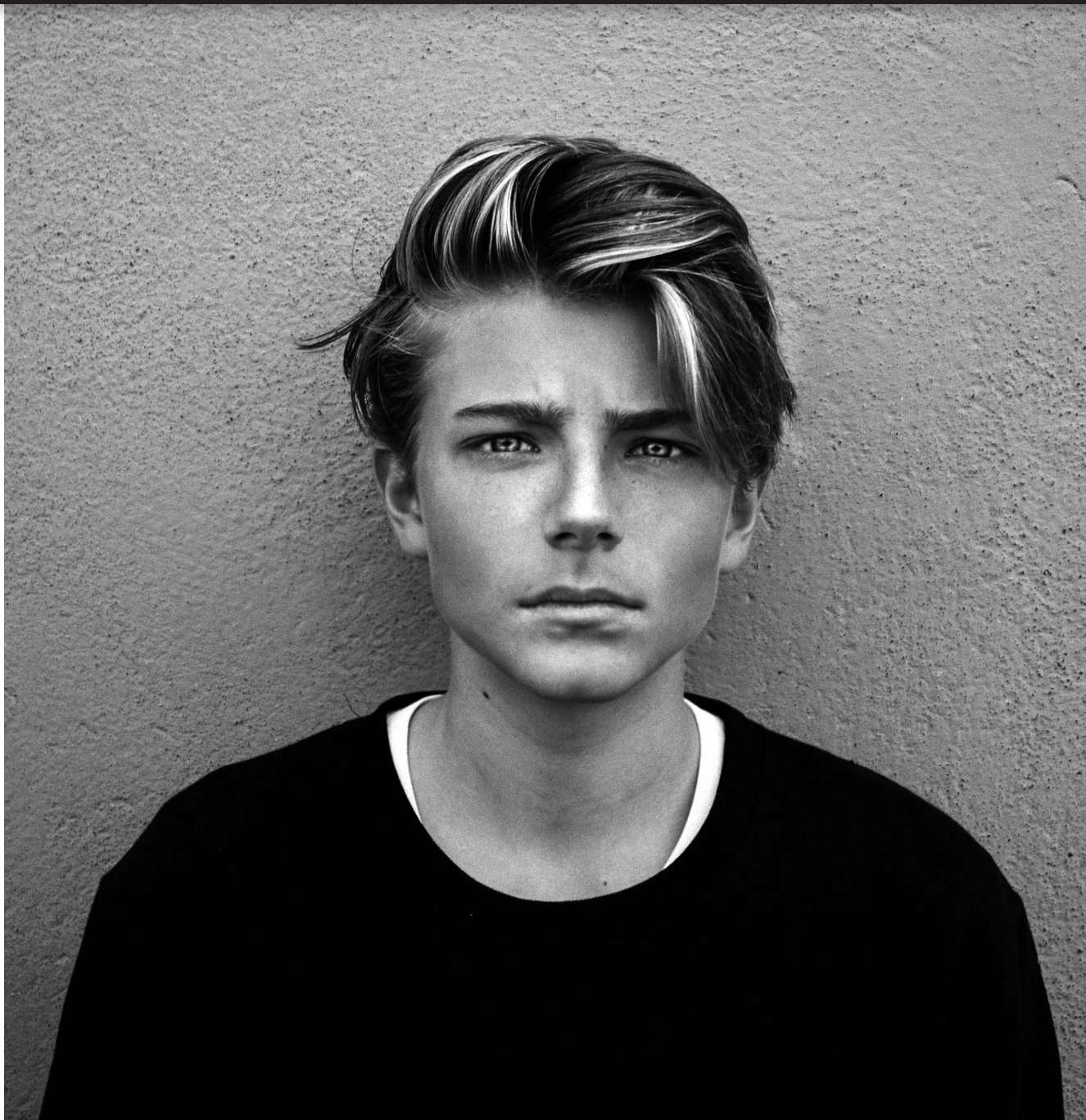




HILLSONG CITYCARE

STRENGTH



SIGNIFICANCE. RESILIENCE. PURPOSE.

INTRODUCTION

The **STRENGTH** program is about equipping adolescent men with the knowledge and skills to discover who they are and the person they want to become.

Adolescence is one of the most rapid phases of human development, and a stage of life where we are most conscious about our changing identity. It is also the age of onset for various factors such as mental illness, puberty, sexual encounters, bullying, drug and alcohol use and other risk-taking behaviours. Many young people in our communities do not know or believe they are valuable and unique individuals, and struggle to find acceptance amongst their peers and meaning for their life. According to data from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on adolescent mental health, depression is one of the leading causes of disability and suicide is the third leading cause of death for adolescents worldwide, and these rates have continued to rise in the last decade. A lack of a positive sense of self and hope for the future can result in impairments to physical, psychological and social functioning for youth, which can extend into adulthood. Therefore, investing into the health and wellbeing of adolescents now, can lead to healthy adults, families and communities in the future.

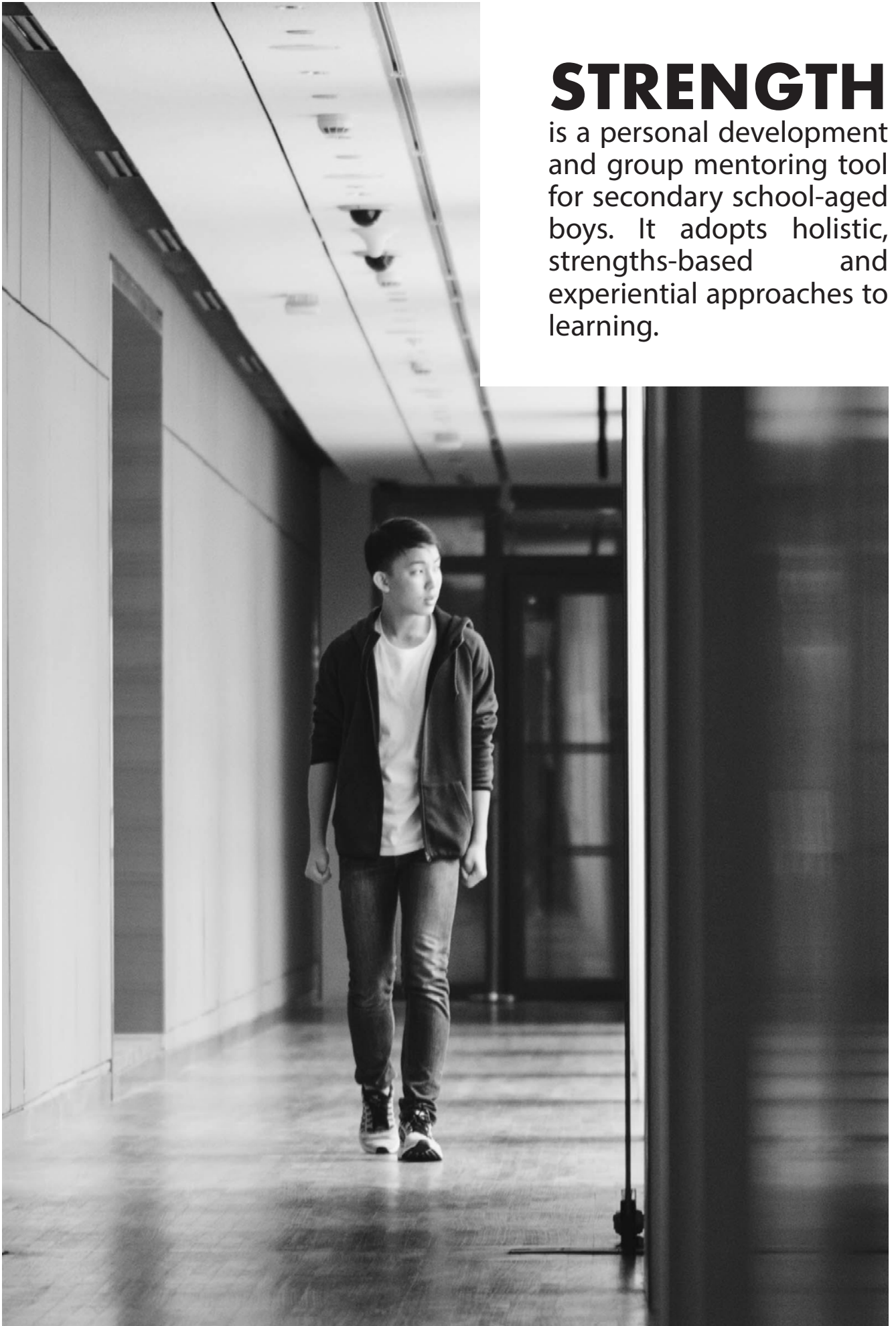
Community-based early intervention and prevention programs are needed to complement clinical and acute care services

Enhancing self-confidence, problem-solving skills and social-emotional skills can help prevent mental health problems and increase overall resilience. **STRENGTH** aims to address key issues faced by adolescent men such as interpersonal difficulties, anger and violence, pornography, bullying, and risk-taking behaviours. Given the influence of peer relationships in the developmental stage of adolescence, **STRENGTH** adopts peer mentoring and group-based activities to increase social belonging and to address sensitive topics in a non-judgemental space.

The structure of **STRENGTH** enables organisations to differentiate the content based on the individual learning needs of the participating young men. It addresses syllabus outcomes from key learning areas such as from the Personal Development Health and Physical Education curriculum and Life Skills curriculum. The program reinforces that every person has unique strengths, qualities and skills, and has something valuable to contribute to the world. It encourages young men to find the strength and courage within them to accept themselves, celebrate diversity, form their own convictions, make healthy choices and live to their full potential.

STRENGTH

is a personal development and group mentoring tool for secondary school-aged boys. It adopts holistic, strengths-based and experiential approaches to learning.



STRENGTH OVERVIEW

AIM

For each participant to develop understanding of their own personal value, strength and purpose, make healthy decisions, and realise their capacity to build a meaningful and contributing life.

OBJECTIVES

Equip participants to:

- Identify themselves as valuable and of worth
- Build confidence and self-esteem
- Develop respect and boundaries in relationships
- Recognise one's unique strengths, skills and abilities
- Identify and regulate emotions
- Build cognitive and behavioural strategies to increase resilience
- Identify personal values and set desired goals
- Increase one's sense of social connectedness and belonging
- Understand their life has meaning and they have something to contribute

THESE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED THROUGH...

3 FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS SIGNIFICANCE, RESILIENCE, PURPOSE

I HAVE SIGNIFICANCE

'Body, mind and soul, I am wonderfully made'

The focus for these sessions is for each participant to understand for themselves that they are valuable. The topics encourage participants to perceive themselves as worthy of acceptance, friendship and courage.

I HAVE RESILIENCE

'Choose life'

These sessions explore the power of choice and the power that decisions have on shaping a person's future. Topics include emotion regulation, problem-solving, and healthy boundary-setting, convictions and respect.

I HAVE PURPOSE

'I have a hope and a future'

Purpose is examined through exploring personal hopes, dreams and desires. This is accomplished through values clarification, goal-setting, group discussions, intrapersonal reflection and practical activities.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The development of the **STRENGTH** program draws on the expertise of individuals from various fields, including psychology, counselling, social work, youth work, community development and education. It adopts a cognitive behavioural framework, draws on the principles of positive psychology, and uses values-based strategies.

The program aims to equip individuals with cognitive and behavioural tools to address maladaptive and unhealthy thinking, and to encourage positive or healthy beliefs about the self, resulting in increased opportunities for positive emotions, relationships and experiences.

The program is concerned with developing whole, secure and flourishing individuals who are able to embrace their self-worth, strengths, build healthy relationships and community, and believe in their capacity to make a meaningful contribution to their world.

It is important to note that **STRENGTH** is not a psychological intervention, it simply draws on psychological theories and frameworks. The program should be seen as an adjunct to psychological and clinical interventions.

STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

STRENGTH focuses on addressing the strengths and skills the participants possess rather than their weaknesses or deficits. The strengths-based approach challenges participants to grow and change by identifying and using their strengths as a personal resource. Participants are encouraged to become the expert within their own life.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

STRENGTH applies experiential learning approaches to support the link between theory, concepts and practice; a sense of 'learning by doing'. The program engages participants through direct experience and focused reflection in order to clarify novel concepts, increase knowledge, and build new thoughts, ideas and skills.

SOCIAL LEARNING

The program fosters positive peer experiences through the use of peer participation, modelling by facilitators, and the use of group-based discussions and activities aimed at introducing novel thoughts, attitudes and behaviours. The program offers a non-judgemental and safe space that allows individuals to learn from one another, mentor one another, and collect shared experiences.

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE PRACTICE

STRENGTH facilitators are required to exercise cultural competence within their practice. The program is designed not only to acknowledge and increase understanding of diversity and differences, but to celebrate and cultivate it. The program hopes to instill an attitude of curiosity and learning from diversity.

SINGLE SEX VS MIXED-SEX GROUPS

The three core concepts of **STRENGTH** (significance; resilience; courage) are gender-neutral concepts that are inherently applicable to every individual. **STRENGTH** aims to create a space where dominant concepts related to one's identity are explored whilst unveiling a message of equal worth and value to develop a healthy sense of self.

STRENGTH was originally designed as a single-sex program due to the vulnerable nature of certain target population groups. However, this does not mean the program cannot be facilitated in mixed-sex groups, as gender-conscious work can occur in both single-sex and mixed-sex settings. It is up to the discretion of the facilitating organisation to determine the most suitable group structure. As long as a safe space can be created for participants, the outcomes can be reached.



Each **STRENGTH** session allows group members to participate in experiential and reflective activities, contribute to in-depth discussions, and engage in social interactions with other participants and facilitators.

SESSION OUTCOMES

SIGNIFICANCE

SESSION 1

LEAVE YOUR MARK

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Gain an understanding of the concept of value
- Develop an awareness of one's personal and intrinsic value
- Understand the value of self-care

SESSION 2

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Understand the distinction between comparison and inspiration
- Explore healthy and unhealthy friendships
- Discover the benefits of teamwork

SESSION 3

EVERYDAY HEROES

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Identify oneself as courageous
- Awareness of the negative impact of bullying
- Practice assertiveness

SESSION OUTCOMES

RESILIENCE

SESSION 4

CAN'T TOUCH THIS

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Recognise the value of developing resilience
- Build problem-focused and emotion-focused coping skills
- Practice acceptance and letting go

SESSION 5

TOO TOUGH TO GET ROUGH

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Better able to identify and label emotions
- Learn healthy ways of managing anger
- Understand the difference between reacting and responding

SESSION 6

POWER BALANCE

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Understand the importance of having respect for self and others
- Identify personal convictions and set healthy boundaries
- Distinguish between anger and violence

SESSION OUTCOMES

PURPOSE

SESSION 7

CAUSE AND EFFECT

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Gain understanding of the difference between healthy and unhealthy risk taking
- Consider the consequences of our decisions
- Recognise one's own potential, individual skills and talents

SESSION 8

THE MAN FOR THE DREAM

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Distinguish between values and goals
- Identify one's personal values and passions
- Understand the steps involved in goal setting

SESSION 9

LIVE THE ADVENTURE

By the end of this session each participant will be able to:

- Experience a sense of belonging and connectedness to a group
- Have a personal experience of achievement and accomplishment



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