A dark blue silhouette of a world map is centered in the background of the slide. The map shows the outlines of all continents, with a slightly lighter blue color for the oceans.

# What shapes adolescent health? *Insights from a risk and protective framework*

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# The Shifting Realities

- A generation ago AIDS was unknown; today it is the second leading cause of mortality in the second decade
- More than a generation ago infectious diseases were the major killers of youth; today, except for HIV, social, behavioral and environmental factors predominate;
- A generation ago many more young people lived in rural areas, fewer went to school, and most married earlier than today.

# Demographic Trends



- Today, 27% of the world's population is between the ages of 10-24 years;
- 86% of all youth live in developing countries;
- In many developing countries young people make up 25-30% of the population—double that of many industrialized countries;
- By 2030 two-thirds of the world's population will live in cities.

# Non-Communicable Diseases and Conditions are on the Rise

- Obesity and the dual burdon of obesity and malnutrition
- Cigarette Smoking
- Diabetes
- Injury and associated disabilities
- Earlier sexual debut

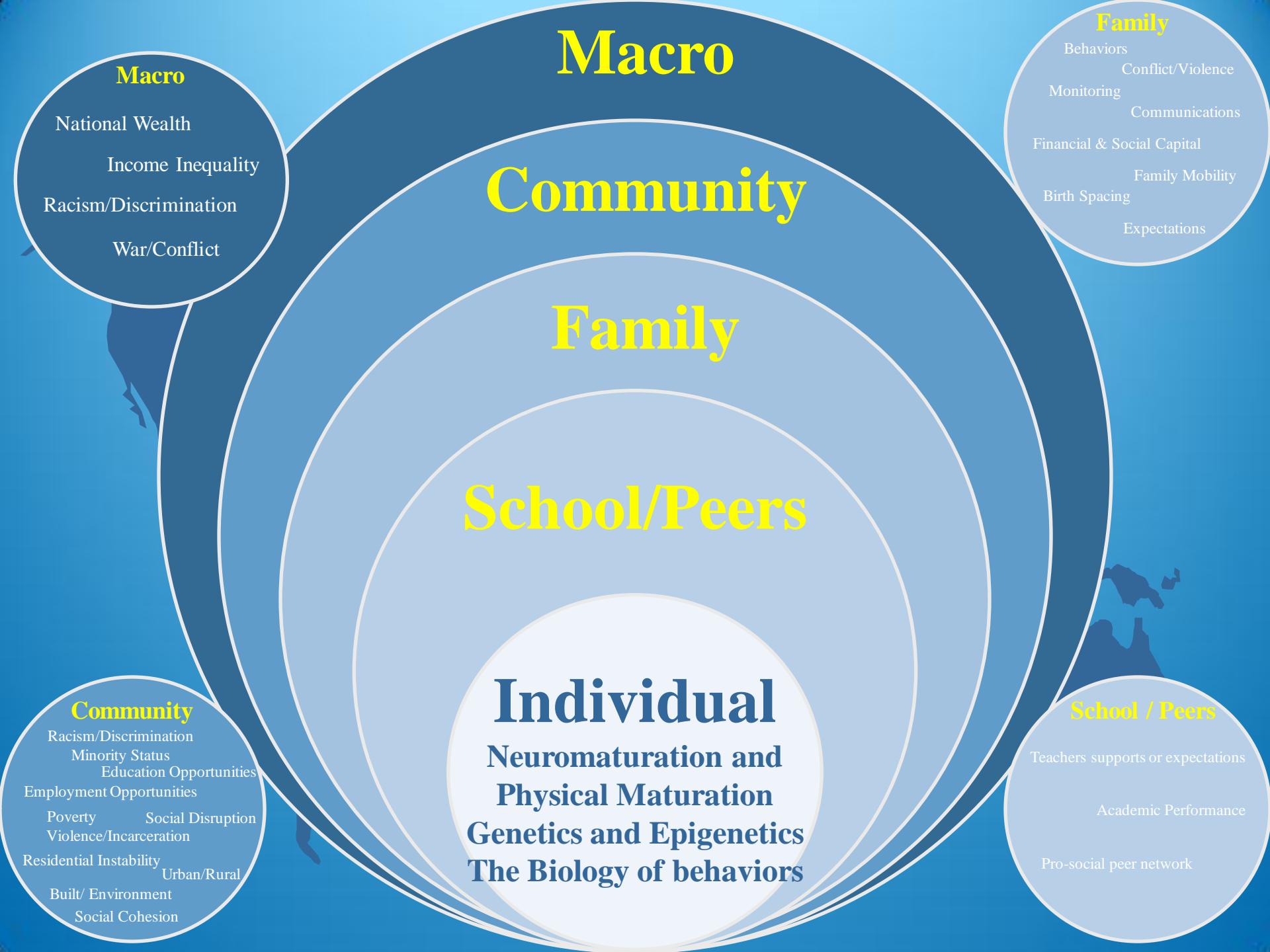
# Mental Health Disorders are on the Rise

- WHO estimates that 1 in 5 youth have significant mental health problems
- The marginalization of youth and lack of voice contribute to mental health problems
- WHO estimates that juvenile mental health problems will increase 50% in the next 20 years.

# Goals for healthy adolescent development

- Academic engagement
- Emotional and physical safety
- Control over reproductive future
- Positive sense of self/self efficacy
- Life and decision-making skills
- Physical and mental health

(Blum, Astone, Decker et. al., in press)



# Macro

National wealth

Structural social stratification

Structural gender inequalities

Income inequalities

Racism/Discrimination

Political instability



## Macro

National Wealth

Income Inequality

Racism/Discrimination

War/Conflict

# Community

Community Assets

Gender Norms

Safety/Violence

Cultural Beliefs and Attitudes

Poverty

Collective Socialization

Community Risks

Built/ Environment

Residential Instability

Social Cohesion

# Community impacts a range of health outcomes



- Sexually transmitted infections
- Mental Health
- Substance use and abuse
- School achievement
- Life expectancy

# Mechanisms of Community Influence



- Neighborhood institutional resources
- Collective socialization
- Neighborhood deprivation
- Contagion or epidemic effects

## Macro

National Wealth

Income Inequality

Racism/Discrimination

War/Conflict

# Family Behaviors

Conflict/Violence

Monitoring

Connectedness

Communications

Financial & Social Capital

Family Mobility

Birth Spacing

Expectations

## Community

Racism/Discrimination

Minority Status

Education Opportunities

Employment Opportunities

Poverty

Social Disruption

Violence/Incarceration

Residential Instability

Urban/Rural

Built/ Environment

Social Cohesion

# Family Connectedness is associated with

- Later age of sexual initiation;
- Lower pregnancy rates;
- Less violence perpetration;
- Less tobacco and alcohol use;
- Less suicidal thoughts and attempts.

# The association between parent connectedness and adolescent health risk behaviors: 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders

	Suicidality	Violence	Cigarette use	Alcohol use	Age of first sex**
<b>Parental Connectedness</b>	<b>-.24***</b>	<b>-.13***</b>	<b>-.13***</b>	<b>-.14***</b>	<b>.85</b>
<b>Parental presence</b>	<b>-.06***</b>	<b>-.07***</b>	<b>-.06***</b>	<b>-.13***</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Parental expectations for school</b>	<b>-.08***</b>	<b>-.07***</b>	<b>-.05*</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>

(parameter estimates, \* = level of significance; \*\*Odds Ratio)

# Positive Family Relations: Brazil

	Males			Females		
	n	%	P	N	%	p
<b>Smoking</b>	79	9.8	.001	127	12.8	.001
<b>Drug use</b>	64	7.9	.001	44	4.4	.001
<b>Age at 1<sup>st</sup> sex &lt;15 yr</b>	300	38.4	.01	110	11.2	.001
<b>Pregnancy</b>	13	1.9	.05	27	3.0	.01
<b>Suicidal</b>	164	20.3	.001	270	20.3	.001
<b>Suicide attempt</b>	54	6.6	.01	75	7.5	.001

(Anteghini, Blum et al 2001)

## Macro

National Wealth

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## Family

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# School / Peers

Teachers supports or  
expectations  
Safe Schools  
Academic Performance  
Pro-social  
peer network

## Community

Racism/Discrimination

Minority Status

Education Opportunities

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Poverty

Social Disruption

Violence/Incarceration

Residential Instability

Urban/Rural

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Social Cohesion



# School Enrollment and Connection

- Better contraceptive use
- Later age of first pregnancy
- Later age of marriage
- Greater access to health information
- Less substance use
- Less depression/suicidality

# The Protective Role of School Connectedness Among Caribbean Youth

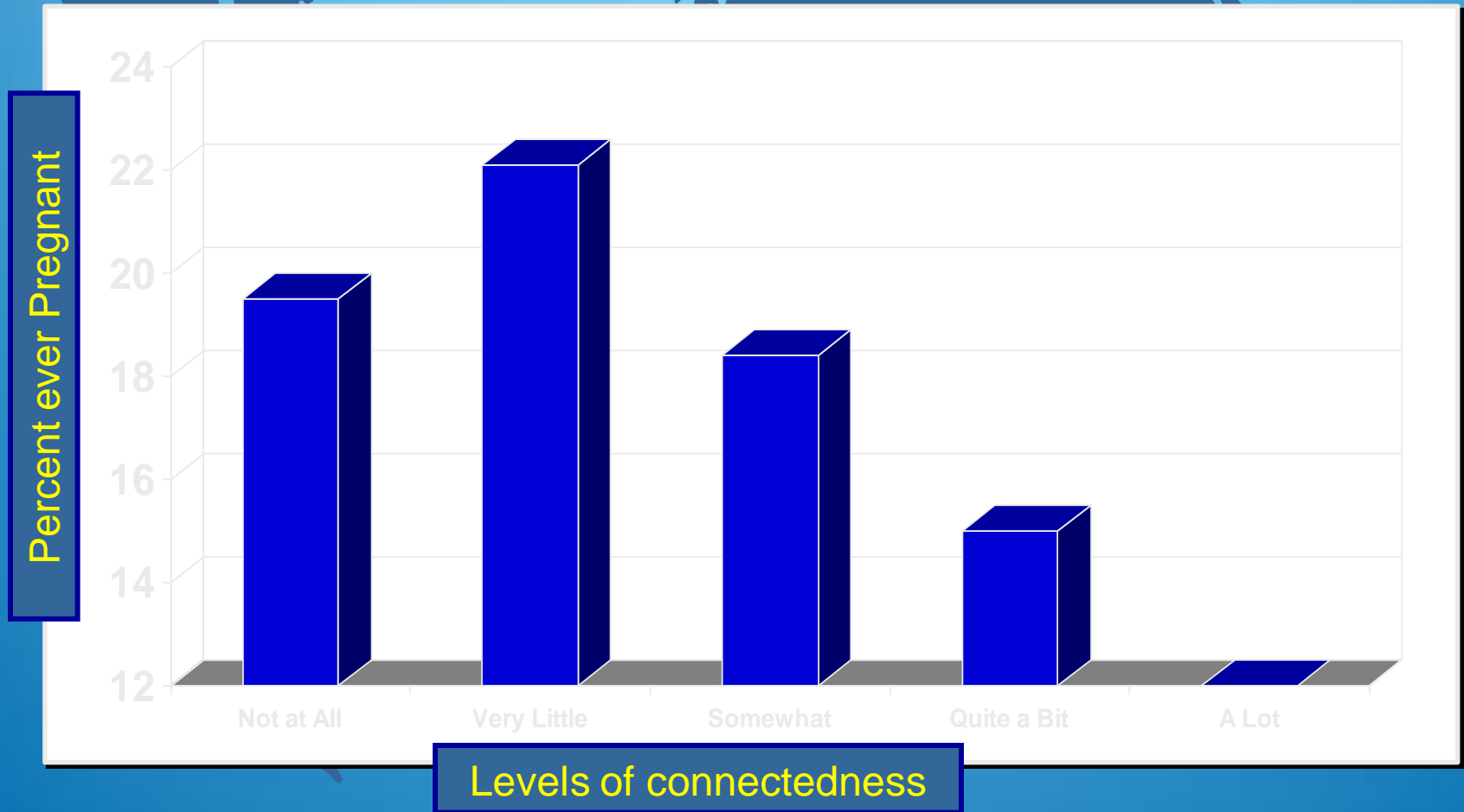
Risk Behavior	Males		Females	
	Low*	High*	Low*	High*
Sexual debut	79.0	49.2	84.8	19.6
Violence	68.1	39.9	71.9	11.6
Regular alcohol use	62.1	8.6	78.7	2.1
Smoke cigarettes	51.3	9.1	66.6	9.8

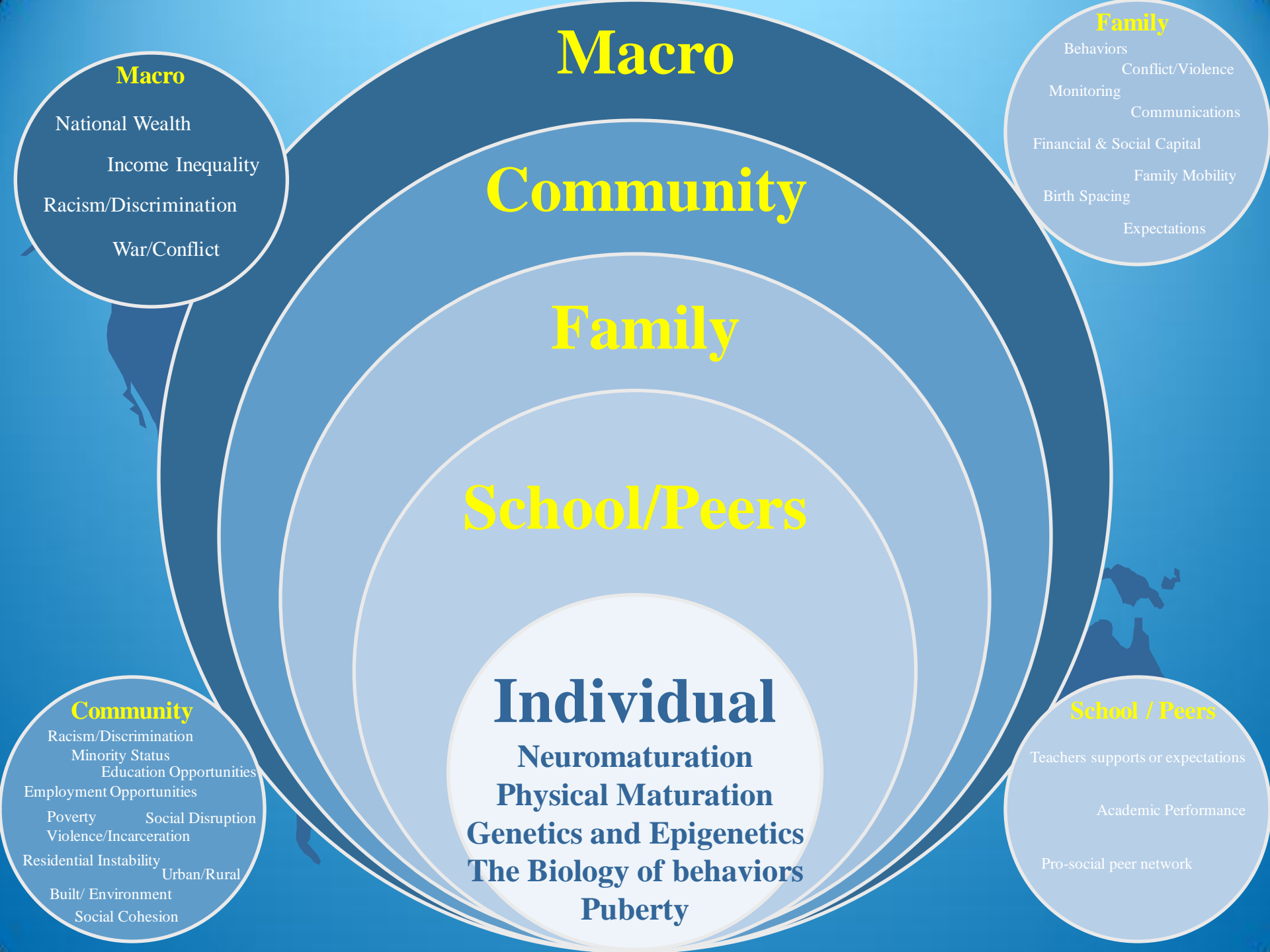
Blum, Ireland, 2004

\* Net of any other protective factors and holding risk factors constant

# School Connectedness and Pregnancy

**Students who feel connected to school are less likely to become pregnant**





# Contexts Matter in the lives of Young People



# What Matters for Youth?



- Community Matters
- Family Matters
- Peers Matter
- School Matters



# Community Matters— geography is destiny

- Growing up in low resource communities is associated with every negative youth outcome— independent of national resources
- Behaviors are often environmentally influenced
- Poor communities are associated with: more social disorganization, less communal efficacy, more discrimination, less social and financial capital.

# Positive Communities create...

- ◆ Safety and structure;
- ◆ Belonging and group membership;
- ◆ Personal empowerment;
- ◆ Control over one's life;
- ◆ Competence;
- ◆ Closeness with peers and nurturing adults.







# Positive Parenting Matters

- Globally, family has been shown to be the most protective factor in the lives of young people
- Elements of positive parenting: connectedness, emotional availability and responsiveness, high behavioral and educational expectations, behavioral monitoring.

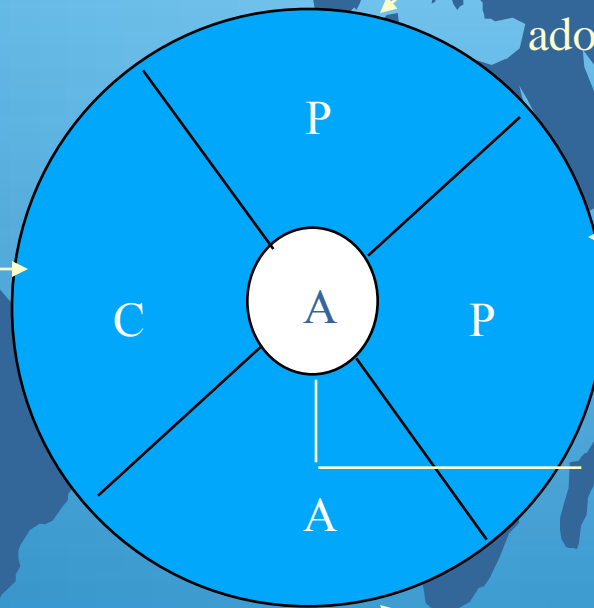


# School Matters

- Being in school
- Feeling part of the school
- Experiencing school as safe
- Perceiving teachers as supportive and caring
- Experiencing high expectations

# PCAP: A Model for Promoting Youth Health and Development

**Contributions:**  
The opportunities to contribute to family, neighborhood, community, youth involvement



**People:** An adult who cares, who is connected; a network of adults who are involved in the life of the adolescent

**Place:** A place for youth to congregate, to recreate with adult supervision, to develop friendships.

**Adolescent**

**Activities:** School and community activities that develop a sense of connection/belonging and skills