



Adult Literacy and the Control Factor.

Presented by:

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Photo: Edwina Pickles/Good Weekend

“ Empowerment is not something bestowed through edict. It is gained through development of personal efficacy that enables people to take advantage of opportunities and to remove environmental constraints guarded by those whose interests are served by them. Those who exercise authority and control do not go around voluntarily granting to others power over resources and entitlements in acts of beneficence. A share of benefits and control must be negotiated through concerted effort and, oftentimes, through prolonged struggle. ”

Bandura (1997, p.477)





Yo Si Puedo (*Yes, I Can*)

- Cuban campaign method for raising population level literacy
- Uses local people to coordinate and facilitate
- Learning together
- Student cohort experience multiple disadvantage in health, justice, housing, income etc



Three Phases of *Yes, I Can*

Phase 1 – Socialisation & Mobilisation

Phase 2 – Literacy Classes

Phase 3 – Post-literacy Activities





When someone doesn't turn up, come to class, we go and check on why they didn't come to class. Maybe they were sick; it could be any reason why they didn't come.

If you don't keep going back and showing your support and you're there for them, you care; they'll just back off and won't come. If you keep showing that, they'll come back.



[Aboriginal trainer, Bourke/Enngonia]



Results so far...

- Improved school attendance, engagement with local authorities, health service utilisation, reduced encounters with the justice system
- Completion rate ~70%
- Around 120 graduates from Wilcannia, Bourke, Enngonia and Brewarrina
- Continuing in Weilmoringle & Brewarrina
- About to start in Walgett and Toomelah/Bogabilla



“
“
When I first started this Yes, I Can Programme, I was very scared because I was the eldest in a class of younger students. But now I am enjoying every moment of it. The Yes, I Can Programme taught me how to respect my fellow students and also taught me how to spell properly and write letters, also how to read books to my grandchildren. I also enjoyed the way teachers have taught us.”
”

[female participant, Bourke]



“ I did a lot of practice in the lessons and it taught me to do better in my reading and writing and it stopped me from being shame and learnt me how to spell and write sentences and paragraphs so I've learnt so much in this Yes, I Can program and it is so special because we have got our own mob teaching us. Thank you Yo si puedo. Yes, I Can is mad, thank you. ”

[male participant, Bourke].

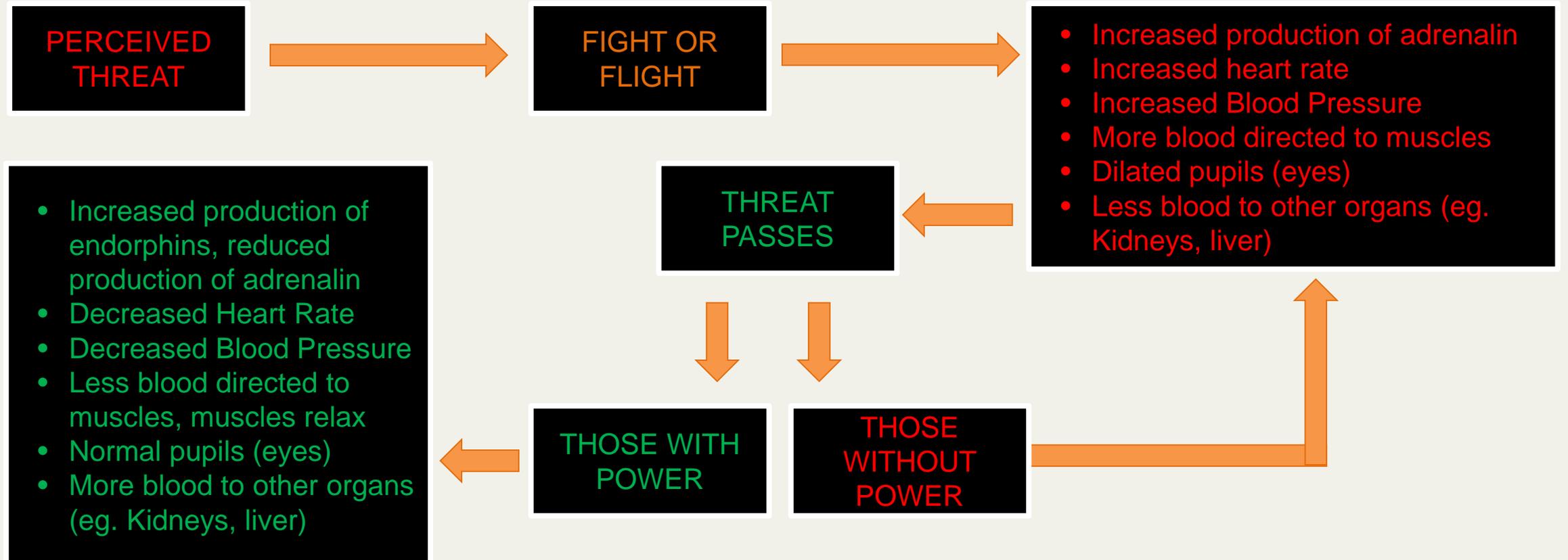


Relationship to Health

- Campaign as intervention to address social determinants of health
- Whitehall studies – Michael Marmott (see ABC Boyer Lectures, 2016)
- Control Factor



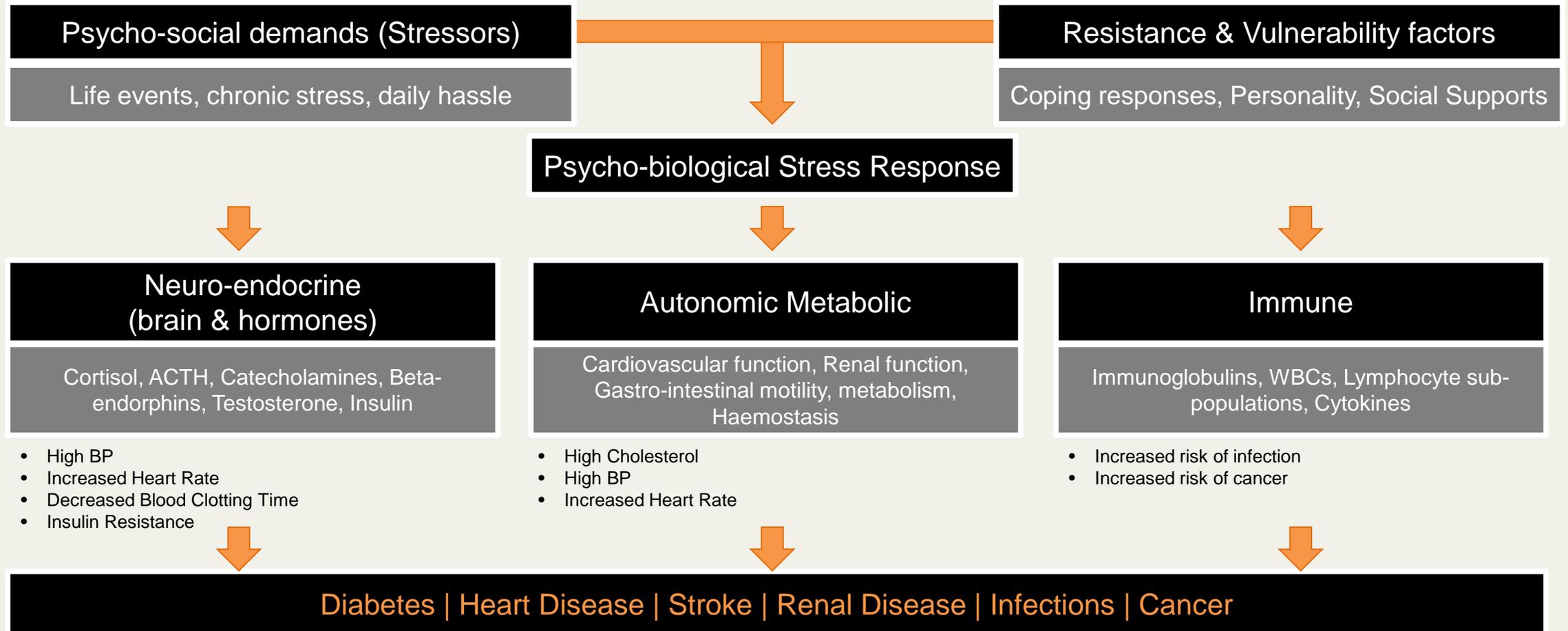
Biological Pathways 1 - Chronic Stress



Source: PlanHealth



Biological Pathways 2 - End point disease states

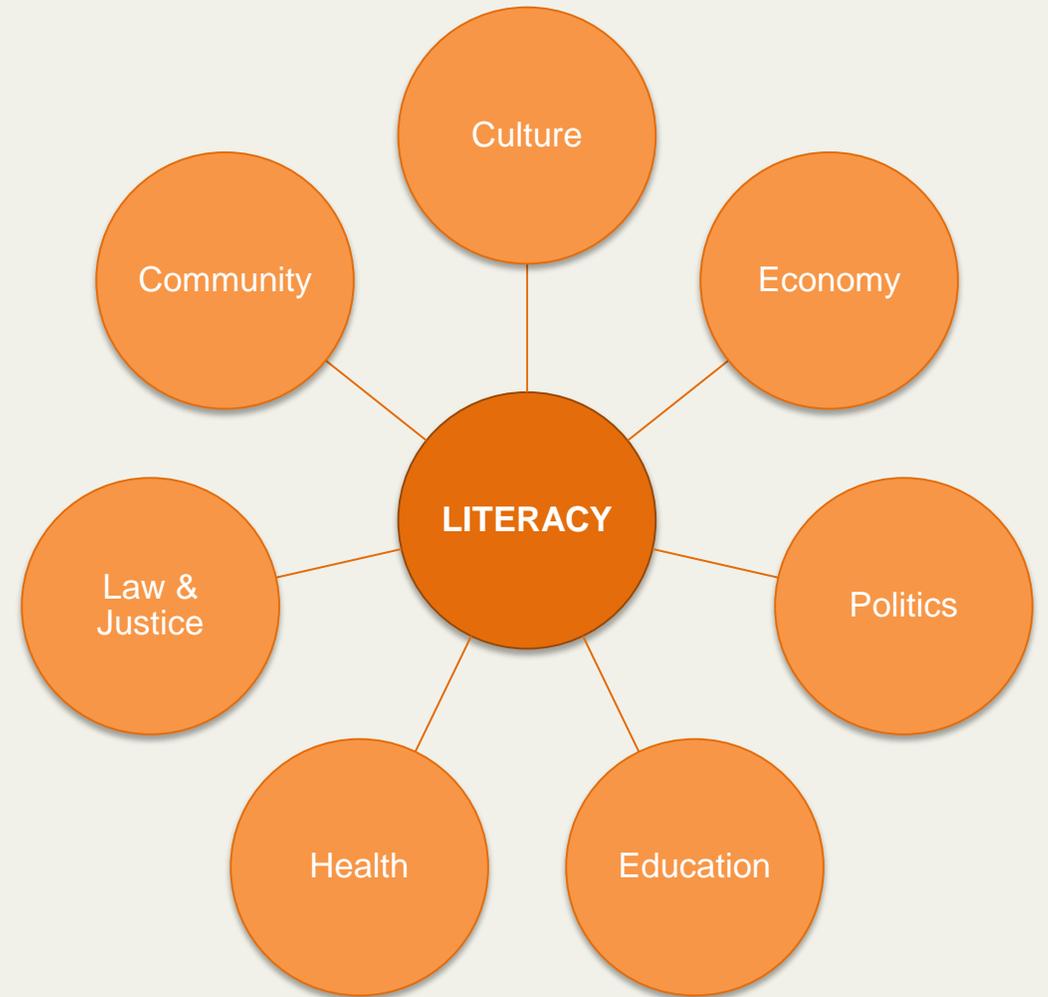


Source: Marmot M & Wilkinson RG *Social Determinants of Health*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999



Impact of the Campaign?

Improved engagement with the following 7 domains:



“ Bringing communities together, for some people that maybe a few months before hadn't even congregated in the same room or spoke to each other. I saw that as part of a healing, bringing Aboriginal people together. ”

[Aboriginal community leader, Brewarrina]

“ I would like to thank you all for giving me a chance to learn in the programme. I did not do much schooling as I was growing up and didn't get a good education but now I feel I can do anything. You helped me to do things I didn't think I could do like help my grandkids with their homework and writing letters but the best thing of all you made me feel good about myself. ”

[female participant, Enngonia]





It was challenging for me because I was always doubting myself that I could do the job. I doubted myself at the start and I thought no, I can't do it, I don't think I'll be able to do this. Going along, it just got interesting and interesting and I just stayed there and the more I stayed there, the more I came to love what I was doing. That's made me see things differently, see the community differently, just opened my eyes up, not only to, yeah, to be able to read and write, how much it involves around you. It empowers you. I didn't even speak up much the way I do now for Enngonia, the way I do now for Enngonia I didn't do it before the Yes, I Can!. Not only does it open you up, not only does it open yourself up as a person and see things differently but you see people coming from this level, low level to just somebody else. I guess it's like a blind person being able to see again. You just see things differently and not only does it do that, it also opens you up to be able to speak to all these other organisations around. It's the confidence that it gives you.



[Aboriginal trainer, Bourke and Enngonia]



Research projects underway include:

- ARC project to explore the relationship between adult literacy and the social determinants of health? How can we understand the control factor? How participants change their use of health services (UNE, UNSW, Lowitja, LFLF)
- Impact on engagement with justice system (UNE, Institute of Criminology)
- Impact on school behaviours (UNE PhD Investigation)



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