

SOCIAL ACTION

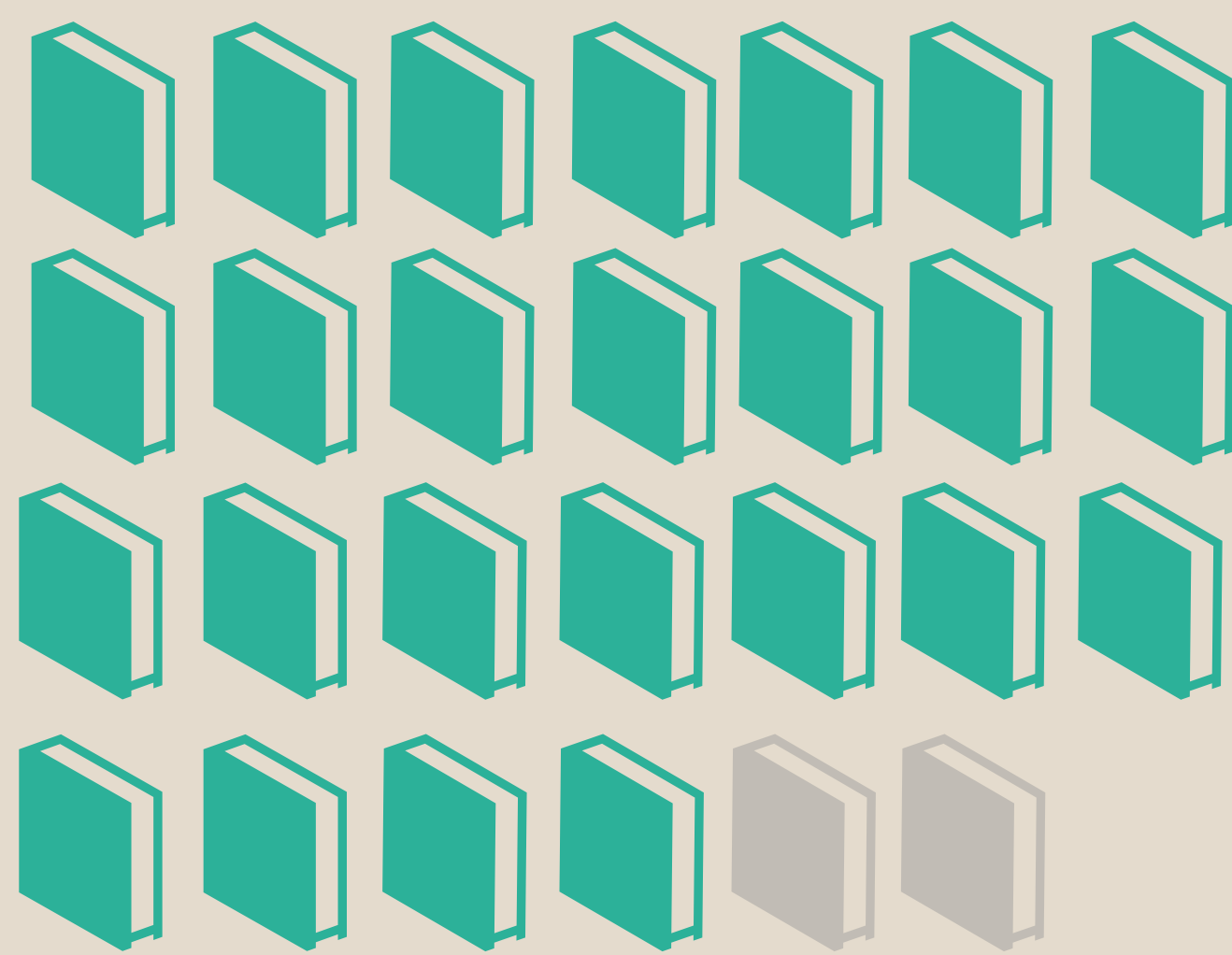
an active ingredient promoting youth mental health

Social action refers to a set of coordinated actions that seek to promote positive change on a social or political issue important to a community

- Activism
- Participation in local campaigns
- Volunteering

DOES IT WORK?

92% studies



Found positive impacts in diverse aspects of well-being
OR
indicated lower levels of depressive symptoms, anxiety, stress or feelings of helplessness for young participants in social action

These associations are persistent even after long periods of time



I feel happy and confident being with all these people, making the world a better place [...]. When I'm involved in these actions I feel well, like I'm taking care of my mental health [...], and like things are getting back on track ”

Going forward and taking action generates wellbeing because you feel like you are someone who acts when facing a problem ”



HOW?

When engaging in social action with a critical consciousness a young person can

experience:

- Empowerment
- Collective healing

and develop:

- Valuable relationships
- Stronger self-confidence
- Sense of community

Research methodology

Systematic review



+600 papers screened
27 papers analysed

Participatory methods



9 workshops with
11 young advisors



16 consultations with stakeholders

FOR WHOM?

Social action can be especially beneficial to marginalised youth

Some studies found that social action benefits may vary across different minority groups but more research is needed on this

IN WHICH CONTEXTS?

Safe and supportive environments and organized collective actions showed more positive impacts

Potential harms

Excessive pressure

Increasing frustration

Higher levels of anxiety

Most of the negative impacts are related to systemic inequities and oppressions, rather than to social action itself



Advantages of promoting social action as an active ingredient



Can take pressure off of clinical services



Strongly engaging for young people



Keeps costs low



Allows young people to be involved in targeting and promoting change in relation to the issues that they believe are the root cause of how they feel