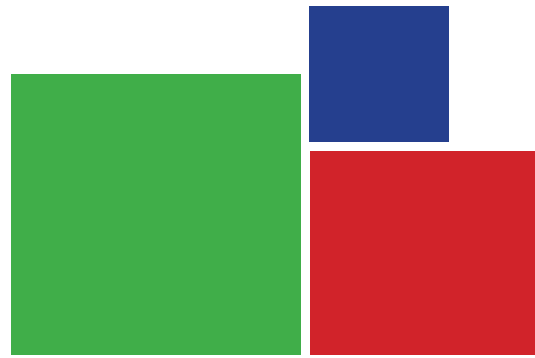


# Understanding **YOUTH**THRIVE™













Tip Sheet for Family Court Partners



## TIP SHEET



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## ABOUT THIS TIPSHEET



In 2011, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) reviewed the most recent research on resilience, positive youth development, neuroscience and trauma to examine how all youth, but specifically youth involved in intervening public systems, such as child welfare and juvenile justice, can be supported in ways that **advance healthy development** and build upon their **strengths**. The result is a framework called **Youth Thrive™** which identifies five **protective and promotive factors that help mitigate risk and build youth well-being**. The five factors are:

- **youth resilience**
- **social connections**
- **cognitive and social-emotional competence**
- **concrete support in times of need**
- **knowledge of adolescent development**

We developed the Tip Sheet for Family Court Partners to serve as a roadmap to enhance the conversations that professionals who appear in family court proceedings have with young people about their journey toward healthy adulthood. For more information on the Youth Thrive™ protective and promotive factors go to: <http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/youth-thrive>.

- **Who:** This tipsheet has been designed to provide an introductory summary to the Youth Thrive™ framework for judges, guardians ad litem, lawyers, parents, CASA workers, agency workers and youth. In the section that best fits your role you will find questions that you can ask to explore whether or not youth have the experiences, opportunities and services they need in order to thrive.
- **What:** The tipsheet includes sample questions that can be posed to youth, parents, professionals and other colleagues to ensure that young people receive the appropriate services and treatment they need to thrive.
- **When:** Actively and intentionally building the protective and promotive factors should be a primary focus of every interaction with a young person and should occur throughout the course of a youth's placement and into adulthood.

**When:** This tipsheet is particularly intended to be useful in preparation for, during and subsequent to a family court proceeding, during any crucial decision-making opportunities with youth and part of any case planning activity. The intention of this tipsheet is NOT that all questions in the sheet will be addressed at any one court proceeding or one case planning event. Instead, its purpose is to begin dialogue that can help promote youth well-being.

■ **Why:** When a youth is involved in a child welfare or juvenile justice system, there are several key players who have the responsibility of making critical decisions related to that young person's future. To ask the appropriate questions and to make informed decisions, those individuals will benefit from being aware of the most recent research related to what impedes and enhances young people's well-being.

■ **How:** Excessive exposure to risk can impede well-being. Actively building the five Youth Thrive™ protective and promotive factors can help to reduce risk and increase the likelihood of positive and improved outcomes. By prompting and guiding the user through specific questions, this guide will encourage the user to be more intentional about promoting a young person's healthy development and well-being.



## ■ FOCUS ON WELL-BEING

In recent years, there has been a push for child welfare and juvenile justice systems to focus more intentionally on a youth's well-being, which involves attention not just to the youth's safety, permanency and basic needs, but also to their social, emotional, behavioral, physical and spiritual health. This requires professionals who interact with youth to understand the youth's hopes and aspirations. This way, professionals can assist youth in taking advantage of opportunities where they can pursue their interests and find support when challenges arise. In this way, the five Youth Thrive™ protective and promotive factors represent a pathway to well-being. This guide will help the user identify key impediments and key building blocks for youth well-being.

## THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

To be effective advocates for youth, adults need to understand the fundamentals of what is going on during the period of adolescence and why adolescents act the way they do. Adolescence is a period of profound brain development and growth. The adolescent brain is adaptable and shaped by multiple experiences. This means that “adolescence is a time of great opportunity to help youth become responsible adults and to lay a foundation for youth that will help them make informed decisions.” (National Juvenile Justice Network, 2012, p.4) Research has shown that important structures in the adolescent brain develop unevenly.

- The limbic system develops in early adolescence. Structures in the limbic system are related to emotions, pleasure-seeking and processing social information.
- The prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until adulthood. Structures in the prefrontal cortex are related to impulse control, setting priorities and planning, decision-making and self-regulation.
- Research suggests that the unevenness in the development of the rational prefrontal cortex and the emotional limbic system may explain why some youth engage in sensation-seeking, risky or reckless behaviors and make decisions based on feelings rather than logic.
- Even though the rational prefrontal cortex develops later than the emotional limbic system, youth are still capable of planning, prioritizing and making decisions; the difference is that these capabilities may be guided more by emotions than intellectual reasoning.
- The repercussions of traumatic events often become most apparent during adolescence when individuals face challenges regulating their emotions and actions, developing healthy relationships and making decisions in respect to their futures (Langford & Badeau, 2013).
- Youth in the child welfare system are especially susceptible to these effects due to their potential exposure to numerous traumatic events (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2012).
- Toxic stress, characterized by intense, prolonged and frequent negative experiences, such as abuse can negatively impact early brain development, resulting in a number of cognitive deficits (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2014, 2005).
- Experiencing traumatic events can exacerbate the uneven development of the adolescent brain.



Youth involved in the child welfare system face a number of additional stressors, both before entering care and as a result of entering care, such as the trauma of being separated from family. Although stress and exposure to traumatic experiences can disrupt healthy development, these effects **can be mitigated**.

- Research indicates that there is a tremendous amount of brain growth that takes place during adolescence and into adulthood, making it a pivotal time to provide positive opportunities and experiences that help the brain to create new neural pathways (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012).
- Supportive and nurturing adults, as well as positive peer relationships, play key roles in promoting the development of resilience, self-confidence and self-regulation, all essential characteristics/components of well-being. These relationships also guide youth through coping skills necessary to handle tolerable stress, such as living with an ill relative, to decrease their stress levels and feel a sense of mastery (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012).

# THE FIVE YOUTH THRIVE™ PROTECTIVE AND PROMOTIVE FACTORS



## YOUTH RESILIENCE

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with stressors, challenges, or adversity; building on individual characteristics, strengths and interests.

- While resilience is a goal, it is also a process. It is not absolute, nor is it a personality trait. Instead, it is something that can be shaped and strengthened through positive experiences.
- Youth who can build resilience are more likely to lead healthy and productive lives. (Harper Browne, 2014).



## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Having healthy, sustained relationships with people, institutions, the community and a force greater than oneself that promote a sense of trust, belonging and that one matters.

- Youth need at least one caring and consistent adult in their lives.
- Adult relationships are necessary for providing support, nurturance and structure (Bagwell, Newcomb, & Bukowski, 1998; Brown & Larson, 2009; Steinberg, 2011).
- Peer relationships help youth to explore their individual identities apart from that of their families (Bagwell, Newcomb, & Bukowski, 1998; Brown & Larson, 2009; Steinberg, 2011).
- A connection to the community, such as to school or a faith-based institution, can aid youth in their cognitive and social development.
- A feeling of connection to an individual or an institution can lower the risk of negative behaviors, such as drug and alcohol abuse (Harper Browne, 2014)



## KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Understanding the unique aspects of adolescent development, including information on adolescent brain development and the impact of trauma; implementing developmentally and contextually appropriate best practices.

- Adolescence is a unique developmental period. It is important that parents and adults who work with youth have current, accurate information about adolescent development and use this knowledge to develop programs and policies that are designed to help youth acquire the knowledge, competencies and attitudes that contribute to healthy outcomes in adulthood (Harper Browne, 2014).
- It is also important that youth understand adolescent development because this helps them to realize that many of their individual experiences are “normal”—that is, developmentally typical—experiences shared by other youth.
- This information should cover knowledge across all adolescent developmental domains: physical (e.g., brain development, changes that occur during puberty); cognitive (e.g., promoting abstract thinking and improved problem-solving skills); social (e.g., building and sustaining healthy relationships with peers and adults; cultural knowledge); emotional (e.g., self-regulation, managing stressful situations); moral (e.g., developing mature values and behavioral controls used to assess acceptable and unacceptable behaviors); and identity (e.g., forging a healthy sexual orientation and gender identity, gaining independence from parents and other adults while maintaining strong connections with them).
- Those involved in the youth’s life should take into account the structural racial inequities which could have played a role in the youth’s current circumstances.



## CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

Understanding the importance of asking for help and advocating for oneself; receiving quality services (e.g., health care, housing, education) designed to preserve youths’ dignity, provide opportunities for skill development and promote healthy development. (Harper Browne, 2014).

- Although youth might at times be reluctant to seek help, self-advocacy is instrumental in building resilience.
- All youth should have both the tools and the opportunity to access:
  - basic necessities such as healthy food and a safe environment
  - individualized services, such as academic, legal, mental and physical health when needed.
- The Youth Thrive™ framework emphasizes that the supports given to youth be strengths-based and trauma-informed. Aiding the youth in reducing overwhelming emotions while also maximizing his or her sense of trust are a few of the essential elements of trauma-informed child welfare services outlined by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2012).
- Administering concrete supports with a trauma-informed lens is necessary in order to integrate recent adolescent neurological, biological, social and emotional research findings into practice.



## COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Acquiring skills and attitudes (e.g., executive functioning, character strength, future orientation, persistence and positive emotions) that are essential for forming an independent identity and having a productive, responsible and satisfying adulthood.

- The extent to which youth are able to successfully navigate the transition from adolescence to adulthood is largely based upon their earlier developmental experiences which fostered their cognitive and social-emotional skills (Harper Browne, 2014).
- The Youth Thrive™ framework emphasizes the core competence necessary for youth to successfully navigate their lives, specifically: self-regulation, executive functions, social cognition and character strengths.



# YOUTH THRIVE™ TOOL JUDGES

## Protective and Promotive Factor YOUTH RESILIENCE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A youth's capacity to manage stress and adversity is critical in dealing with life's challenges, frustrations and overcoming traumatic history.

### APPLICATION

- Consistent relationship with at least one safe, competent, reliable adult
- Opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful decision-making about their lives
- Constructive engagement in family, school and community
- Encouragement of youth voice, choice and personal responsibility

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent has the youth been provided with help/support in addressing trauma symptoms?
- Has anyone identified people in the young person's life who can help the young person make big, impactful life decisions? If not, what efforts are being made to help the young person secure people to fill that role?
- Is the youth productively managing challenges or frustrations (a poor grade at school, a fight with a friend or relative)? If not, what actions need to be taken or orders can I make to help the youth better manage challenges or frustrations?
- Is the youth's voice heard (a) at home (b) at work/school (c) with friends and family? If not, what actions need to be taken or orders can I make to help the youth's voice get heard?
- How can I identify and nurture a long-term relationship with a permanent adult connection?

## Protective and Promotive Factor SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

As a buffer against depression, early sexual activity, violence and substance abuse, youth need social connections with at least one consistent and caring adult and with peers to help them:

- Increase knowledge and develop skills
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Find meaning in life

### APPLICATION

- Regular visits with siblings and family
- Connections that support development of identity in areas of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- Opportunities for engagement with peers inside and outside of school
- Opportunities for engagement in extracurricular/community activities
- Life-long connection to a consistent caring adult
- Reduction of placement moves



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is there a lifelong caring adult in the youth's life? Does the youth have siblings, peers or adults to rely on? If not, what actions need to be taken or orders can I make to help the youth secure these connections?
- If the youth is in placement, was the youth placed with siblings, relatives or family friends? If not placed with family members, is the youth having regular visits with siblings and parents, and was the youth placed in the most appropriate placement and/or with a supportive caretaker? What actions need to be taken or orders can I make to provide the youth with a more appropriate placement?
- What family events does the youth have the opportunity to participate in? If needed, who can advocate for these opportunities?
- Is anyone talking to the youth about healthy relationships and sex? What extracurricular activities is the youth engaged in? What actions need to be taken or orders can I make to encourage extracurricular activities where the youth can develop social connections?
- Is the youth volunteering in the community or at school? Would the youth like to? If so, what efforts are being made to offer the youth that opportunity?
- Does the youth have the same opportunities for connecting with friends as a young person who is not in placement? If not, what arrangements can be made for those opportunities to be made available to the youth?
- Is the youth placed in the least restrictive placement? Has every effort been made to eliminate placement moves?

## Protective and Promotive Factor KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The adolescent brain develops unevenly – and adversity, trauma and disrupted relationships can impact brain development.

- What develops first? Structures of the brain that contribute to emotions, e.g. fear, anger and pleasure.
- What develops later? By the mid-to-late twenties, areas of the brain responsible for thinking ahead, balancing risks and rewards and controlling impulses.
- What's the effect of this developmental gap? Adolescents are prone to make impulsive decisions based more on feelings than logic and may engage in high-risk and dangerous behaviors.

### APPLICATION

- Opportunities to discuss personal family history
- Opportunities for youth to understand why they act the way they do
- Opportunities to discuss recent advances in brain science and adolescent development

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent does the youth want personal history information, and what efforts are being made to secure that information?
- To what extent has the youth, family team and professional staff been provided with information about adolescent development? If not, what efforts are being made to secure that information for everyone?
- To what extent does the youth, family team and professional staff understand the link between risk-taking behaviors and adolescent development? If not, who can provide that information to everyone?

## Protective and Promotive Factor CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Youth need to feel comfortable asking for help and need to be provided with concrete support and services which:

- Minimize stress
- Provide basic necessities needed to grow and thrive

### APPLICATION

- Support youth in navigating services
- Services must be:
  - ♦ Easily accessed
  - ♦ Coordinated
  - ♦ Culturally responsive
  - ♦ Affirming of identities
  - ♦ Respectful
  - ♦ Strengths-based
  - ♦ Trauma-informed
  - ♦ Developmentally appropriate
- Enrollment in Medicaid to age 26

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Has the young person had competent client-directed legal counsel at all stages of the case to assist with decision-making and to ensure the youth's due process rights are protected?
- What supports and services are being provided to the youth to maintain stability in (a) placement, (b) education and (c) extracurricular activities? What actions need to be taken or orders can I make to assist the youth with stability in each of these areas?
- Has the youth identified someone such as the parent or caretaker who he/she can speak to when he/she has important questions? What efforts are being made to support the parent or caretaker or to identify someone else?
- Is the youth about to make any important life changes? Is there a caring person to help with those changes? What efforts are being made to identify someone (or a number of people) if not?
- Has someone reviewed transition/independent living resources (such as [The FosterClub Transition Toolkit](#)) with the youth?

## Protective and Promotive Factor COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Youth need an array of skills to successfully navigate the challenges adulthood. To develop their cognitive and social-emotional competency, youth need access to experiences that allow them to:

- Explore their interests and try new experiences
- Better understand their personal, gender and cultural identity
- Practice more independence and responsibility

### APPLICATION

- Opportunities to discuss the youth's goals
- Opportunities for youth to independently make decisions and demonstrate responsibility
- Stability in school and placement
- Use of developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed treatment
- Enrollment in Medicaid to age 26

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What efforts am I making to ensure that the youth's voice is being heard in my courtroom?
- Have the youth's personal goals been identified? What efforts are being made to help the youth attain those goals?
- Is the youth functioning well at (a) home (b) work/school in terms of maintaining functional relationships, fulfilling responsibilities and making positive contributions to the family and work/school community? If there are areas of dysfunction in these relationships, what efforts are being made to help them be more functional?
- How is the youth doing in school? Is the young person in the most appropriate school setting for the youth's academic needs? Does the youth have educational/employment goals? Who is assisting the young person to reach those goals? What actions need to be taken or orders can I make to assist the youth in reaching those goals?
- Are there caring adults who support the youth's identity, and does the youth feel supported by those adults? In what ways are those adults supportive? Do the youth's parents and/or caregivers know and understand the youth's SOGIE (Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/Gender Expression)? Has the youth been supported in defining his/her/their identity and what gender pronoun to use (they/them/their, she/her/hers, he/him/his, etc.)? If not, what efforts are being made to enlist adults who would support the youth's identity development?
- Have the youth's intersectional identities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) been explored and considered in all assessments and/or services that the youth has received?





# YOUTH THRIVE™ TOOL

## YOUTH

**WHAT'S THE POINT OF THIS?** You are the expert of your experiences and your voice and participation in planning for your future is important. Below are suggested questions that can be used in planning for family court proceedings and in case planning. You can ask these questions of your lawyer, parent(s), guardian(s), caseworker and even yourself to make sure that you have all of the resources you need to thrive.

### Protective and Promotive Factor YOUTH RESILIENCE

#### WHAT IS IT?

The ability, tools and skills to help me manage stress and live a productive life ever after experiencing trauma and difficult times.

#### HOW?

- Have the chances to speak my mind and make my own choices
- Have a relationship with at least one safe, reliable and caring adult
- Be involved in activities with family, school and community
- Be a part of making important decisions that involve me

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Do I have people in my life who help me make big decisions? If not, who can I ask to help me find people to fill that role?
- Do I know how to effectively deal with challenges or frustrations (a poor grade at school, a fight with a friend or relative)? If not, how do I get help and from whom?
- Do I get to weigh in on things that impact my life (a) where I live, (b) at work/school, and (c) with friends and family? If not, what efforts can I make to get my voice heard? Who can help me with this?
- How do I identify and support a long-term relationship for myself with a permanent adult connection? Who can help me with this?
- Do I have anyone in my life who provides me with help/support in difficult times?

### Protective and Promotive Factor SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

#### WHAT IS IT?

A close relationship with at least one consistent and caring adult and friends can help me feel like I belong, find meaning in life and develop skills; these relationships can help me from becoming depressed, starting sexual activity before I'm ready, abusing drugs and alcohol and taking part in violent activities.

#### HOW?

- Find spaces and people that I am comfortable being myself around
- Discuss my goals with others
- Make decisions on my own and show that I am responsible

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Do I have a lifelong caring adult in my life? Do I have siblings, peers or adults I can rely on? If not, how can I find these connections? Who can help me with this?
- Was I placed with siblings, relatives or family friends? If not, do I have regular visits with my siblings and parents? If not, was I placed with a supportive caretaker? What steps can I take to advocate for this? Who can help me with this?
- What family events do I have the opportunity to participate in? If needed, how can I make sure I'm included in these events?
- Who can I talk with about healthy relationships, my sexual orientation and gender identity, and about sex? Who can help me identify someone to talk with?
- What extracurricular activities do I participate in? How can I find extracurricular activities that fit my interests? Who can help me with this?
- Would I like to volunteer in my community or school? How can I go about this? Who can help me with this?
- Do I have the same opportunities for connecting with friends as other people my age who are not in placement? If not, what opportunities would I like to be made available to me and who can I talk to about making those arrangements?

## Protective and Promotive Factor KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### WHAT IS IT?

Knowledge that my brain is not done developing – and that positive and negative things that happen to me can change the way my brain develops. An understanding that because my brain is developing, I sometimes rely on my emotions over reason to make decisions, which could lead to situations that aren't safe for me.

### HOW?

- Learn about my family history, if possible
- Learn about brain science and adolescent development
- Get help to understand that my actions are sometimes a result of the natural way my brain is developing

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Do I have information about my personal history? Who can help me obtain this information?
- Do I, and does my family team and professional staff, know what happens during adolescence? What steps do I need to take to get this information? Who can help me with this?
- Do I, and does my family team and professional staff, understand the link between risk-taking behaviors and adolescent development? If not, who can explain this to me?

# Protective and Promotive Factor

## CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

### WHAT IS IT?

A connection to people, services and help to make sure I am less stressed and that I have my basic necessities met. The ability to be comfortable asking for help when I need something.

### HOW?

- Get help from someone to find services and programs that can help me
- Services must be:
  - ♦ easy for me to find and get to
  - ♦ coordinated and work together to help me
  - ♦ culturally responsive
  - ♦ affirming of my identities
  - ♦ respectful of who I am
  - ♦ focused on my strengths
  - ♦ staffed by people who are able to understand and address my trauma
  - ♦ right for my age
- Make sure I am enrolled in Medicaid until I am 26

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What supports and services are being provided to help me continue in my (a) placement, (b) education and (c) extracurricular activities? What additional help do I need in each of these things?
- Do I have someone to ask when I have important questions? If not, what steps can I take to identify someone? Who can help me identify someone?
- Am I about to make any important changes in my life? If so, do I have a caring person to help with those changes? If not, how do I identify someone (or a number of people) to help me with this?
- Have I reviewed transition/independent living resources (such as [The FosterClub Transition Toolkit](#))? Is there anyone that I want to review the resources with me?
- Am I comfortable asking for help and advocating for myself? If not, who can I ask to help advocate for/with me?
- Are my experiences, pain and feelings about the past being appropriately addressed? If not, who do I feel comfortable talking to about them?
- Are my medical, dental and mental health needs being appropriately addressed? How can I advocate to ensure that my needs are addressed? Who can help me with this?
- Are my experiences, pain and feelings about the past being appropriately addressed? If not, who do I feel comfortable talking to about them?
- Do I feel comfortable advocating for treatment and about issues with medication and therapy? If not, who can advocate for/with me?

# Protective and Promotive Factor COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

## WHAT IS IT?

The skills I need to address the challenges of becoming an adult. Experiences that give me a chance to explore my interests and identity, to practice independence and to take on more responsibility to maximize my well-being.

## HOW?

- Discuss my goals with others
- Make decisions on my own and show that I am responsible

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is my voice being heard in court proceedings and in the case planning process?
- What are my personal goals? How can I identify and attain those goals? Who can help me with this?
- Am I functioning well at (a) home and (b) work/school in terms of maintaining functional relationships, fulfilling responsibilities and making positive contributions to my family and work/school community? If there are problems with these relationships, what efforts are being made to help them be more healthy?
- How am I doing in school? Have I been able to stay in my same school? Is my school meeting my academic needs? What are my educational/employment goals? Do I need help determining what they are? Do I need help reaching my educational/employment goals? Where can I find help with this?
- Who in my life supports all parts of who I am? Do they know and understand issues related to my sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression and how they relate to my development?
- Have my intersectional identities, or the ways that my identities overlap (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.), been explored and considered in all assessments and/or services that I have received? Who will help me make sure I receive appropriate support services with respect to my intersectional identities (the way that my identities overlap)?





# YOUTH THRIVE™ TOOL CASA/AGENCY WORKER

## Protective and Promotive Factor YOUTH RESILIENCE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A youth's capacity to manage stress and adversity is critical in dealing with life's challenges, frustrations and in overcoming traumatic history.

- Consistent relationship with at least one safe, competent, reliable adult
- Opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful decision-making about their lives
- Constructive engagement in family, school and community
- Encouragement of youth voice, choice and personal responsibility

### APPLICATION

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Has the youth been provided with help/support in addressing trauma symptoms?
- Who is available to help the youth make big decisions that impact the youth's life? What efforts can I make to help the youth secure someone to fill that role?
- In what ways does the youth productively manage challenges or frustrations (a poor grade at school, a fight with a friend or relative)? How can I assist the youth to better manage challenges/frustrations?
- In what ways is the young person's voice heard (a) at home (b) at work/school (c) with friends and family? If it is not, what can I do to make sure the youth's voice is heard?
- How can I identify and support a long-term relationship with a permanent adult connection?

## Protective and Promotive Factor SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

As a buffer against depression, early sexual activity, violence and substance abuse, youth need social connections with at least one consistent and caring adult and with peers to help them:

- Increase knowledge and develop skills
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Find meaning in life

### APPLICATION

- Regular visits with siblings and family
- Connections that support development of identity in areas of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- Opportunities for engagement with peers inside/outside of school
- Opportunities for engagement in extracurricular/community activities



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is there a lifelong caring adult in the youth's life?
- If the youth is in placement, was the youth placed with siblings, relatives or family friends? If not placed with family members, is the youth having regular visits with siblings and parents, and was the youth placed in the most appropriate placement and/or with a supportive caretaker? If not, what efforts can I make to help provide the youth with a more appropriate placement?
- How can I help the youth secure appropriate and reliable connections with siblings, peers or adults?
- What family events does the youth have the opportunity to participate in? How can I advocate for these opportunities?
- Who is talking to the youth about healthy relationships, sexual orientation and gender identity, and about sex? How often is someone spending time talking to the youth about these things?
- What extracurricular activities is the youth engaged in? How can I encourage participation in extracurricular activities where the youth can develop social connections?
- Is the youth volunteering in the community or at school? What efforts can I make to help the youth secure those opportunities if desired?
- Does the youth have the same opportunities for connecting with friends as a young person who is not in placement? If not, what arrangements can be made for those opportunities to be made available to the youth?

## Protective and Promotive Factor KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The adolescent brain develops unevenly – and adversity, trauma and disrupted relationships can impact brain development.

What develops first? Structures of the brain that contribute to emotions, e.g. fear, anger and pleasure.

What develops later? By the mid-to-late twenties, areas of the brain responsible for thinking ahead, balancing risks and rewards and controlling impulses.

What's the effect of this developmental gap? Adolescents are prone to make impulsive decisions based more on feelings than logic and may engage in high-risk and dangerous behaviors.

### APPLICATION

- Opportunities to discuss personal family history
- Opportunities for youth to understand why they act the way they do
- Opportunities to discuss recent advances in brain science and adolescent development

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent does the youth want personal history information, and what efforts are being made to secure that information? What efforts can I make to secure that information?
- To what extent has the youth, family team and professional staff been provided with information about adolescent development? What efforts can I make to secure that information for everyone?
- To what extent does the youth, family team and professional staff understand the link between risk-taking behaviors and adolescent development? If not, who can provide that information to everyone?

# Protective and Promotive Factor CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Youth need to feel comfortable asking for help and need to be provided with concrete support and services which:

- Minimize stress
- Provide basic necessities needed to grow and thrive

## APPLICATION

- Support youth in navigating services
- Services must be:
  - ♦ Easily accessed
  - ♦ Culturally responsive
  - ♦ Respectful
  - ♦ Trauma-informed
  - ♦ Coordinated
  - ♦ Affirming of identities
  - ♦ Strengths-based
  - ♦ Developmentally appropriate
- Enrollment in Medicaid to age 26

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What supports and services are being provided to the youth to maintain stability in (a) placement, (b) education and (c) extracurricular activities? What else is needed? How can I advocate to make sure the youth is getting and maintaining appropriate services?
- Who can the youth go to with important questions? How can I help the youth identify someone?
- If the young person is about to make any important changes, who can assist the young person with that change? How can I help the young person to identify someone (or a number of people)?
- Have I reviewed emancipation planning resources with the youth?
- Are the young person's traumatic experiences, pain and feelings about the past being appropriately addressed? If not, what efforts are being made to ensure that someone that the young person is comfortable with is addressing this trauma?
- To what extent has the youth's medical, dental and mental health needs been appropriately addressed? How can I advocate to ensure that these needs are addressed?
- Does the youth feel comfortable advocating for treatment and raising issues with medication and therapy? If not, what efforts can I make to advocate for the youth?

# Protective and Promotive Factor COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

To develop their cognitive and social-emotional competency, youth need access to experiences that allow them to:

- Explore their interests and try new experiences
- Better understand their personal, gender and cultural identity
- Practice more independence and responsibility

## APPLICATION

- Engagement in discussion of youth's goals
- Opportunities to identify and pursue interests
- Opportunity to independently make decisions and demonstrate responsibility
- Safe and nurturing environment to express identity
- Stability in school and placement
- Use of trauma-informed treatment

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What efforts am I making to ensure that the youth's voice is being heard in court proceedings and in the case planning process?
- What are the youth's personal goals? How can I help the youth identify and attain those goals?
- Is the youth functioning well at (a) home (b) work/school in terms of maintaining functional relationships, fulfilling responsibilities and making positive contributions to the family and work/school community? If there are areas of dysfunction in these relationships, what efforts are being made to help them be more functional?
- How is the youth doing in school? Is the youth in the most appropriate school setting for the youth's academic needs? What are the youth's educational/employment goals? How can additional advocacy be used to help the youth reach those educational/employment goals?
- To what extent is the young person's identity development supported? Are there other caring adults who support the youth's identity development? In what ways are those adults supportive? Do the adults and/or caregivers know, understand and affirm the youth's SOGIE (Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/Gender Expression)? Has anyone supported the youth in defining his/her/their identity and what gender pronoun to use (they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his, etc.?) If not, how can I help to enlist adults who would support the youth's identity development?
- Has the young person's intersectional identities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) been explored and considered in all assessments and/or services that the youth has received?



# YOUTH THRIVE™ TOOL AGENCY ATTORNEY

## Protective and Promotive Factor YOUTH RESILIENCE



### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The effects of toxic stress can be mitigated by experiences that build a youth's capacity for resilience and help the youth manage stress and function well when faced with adversity and trauma.

### APPLICATION

- Consistent relationship with at least one safe, competent, reliable adult
- Opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful decision-making
- Constructive engagement in family, school and community
- Encouragement of youth voice, choice and personal responsibility

### ? GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent has the youth been provided with help/support in addressing trauma symptoms?
- To what extent does the worker know whether there are people in the young person's life who help make big decisions? If not, what efforts can the worker make to help the young person secure people to fill that role?
- To what extent does the worker know whether the youth productively manages challenges or frustrations (a poor grade at school, a fight with a friend or relative)? How can the worker assist the youth to better manage challenges/frustrations?
- To what extent does the worker know whether the young person's voice is heard (a) at home, (b) at work/school and (c) with friends and family? If it is not, what efforts can the worker make to help the young person's voice be heard?
- How can I identify and nurture a long-term relationship with a permanent adult connection?

## Protective and Promotive Factor SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

As a buffer against depression, early sexual activity, violence and substance abuse, youth need social connections with at least one consistent and caring adult and with peers to help them:

- Increase knowledge and develop skills
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Find meaning in life

### APPLICATION

- Regular visits with siblings and family
- Connections that support development of identity in areas of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- Opportunities for engagement with peers inside/outside of school
- Opportunities for engagement in extracurricular/community activities

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is there a lifelong caring adult in the youth's life? To what extent does the worker know whether the youth has siblings, peers or adults to rely on? If not, what efforts is the worker making to help the youth secure these connections?
- If the youth is in placement, was the youth placed with siblings, relatives or family friends? If not placed with family members, is the youth having regular visits with siblings and parents, and was the youth placed in the most appropriate placement and/or with a supportive caretaker? Is it necessary to provide a more appropriate placement?
- What family events does the youth have the opportunity to participate in? If needed, how can the worker advocate for these opportunities?
- To what extent does the worker know whether anyone is talking to the youth about healthy relationships and sex? Can the worker identify someone?
- To what extent does the worker know what extracurricular activities the youth is engaged in? How can the worker encourage participation in extracurricular activities where the youth can develop social connections?
- To what extent does the worker know whether the youth is volunteering in the community or at school? What efforts are being made to offer the youth opportunities?
- To what extent does the worker know whether the youth has the same opportunities for connecting with friends as a young person who is not in placement? What efforts can the worker make to encourage that those opportunities are made available to the youth?

## Protective and Promotive Factor KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The adolescent brain develops unevenly – and adversity, trauma and disrupted relationships can impact brain development.

What develops first? Structures of the brain that contribute to emotions, e.g. fear, anger and pleasure.

What develops later? By the mid-to-late twenties, areas of the brain responsible for thinking ahead, balancing risks and rewards and controlling impulses.

What's the effect of this developmental gap? Adolescents are prone to make impulsive decisions based more on feelings than logic and may engage in high-risk and dangerous behaviors.

### APPLICATION

- Opportunities to discuss personal family history
- Opportunities for youth to understand why they act the way they do
- Opportunities to discuss recent advances in brain science and adolescent development

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent does the worker know if the youth wants information about personal history and, if so, what efforts is the worker making to secure that information?
- To what extent has the worker provided the youth, family team and professional staff with information about adolescent development? What efforts has the worker made to secure that information for everyone?
- To what extent does the worker, the youth, family team and other professional staff understand the link between risk-taking behaviors and adolescent development? If not, who can provide that information to the worker and everyone else?

# Protective and Promotive Factor

## CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Youth need to feel comfortable asking for help and need to be provided with concrete support and services which:

- Minimize stress
- Provide basic necessities needed to grow and thrive

### APPLICATION

- Support youth in navigating services
- Services must be:
  - ♦ Easily accessed
  - ♦ Culturally responsive
  - ♦ Respectful
  - ♦ Trauma-informed
  - ♦ Coordinated
  - ♦ Affirming of identities
  - ♦ Strengths-based
  - ♦ Developmentally appropriate
- Enrollment in Medicaid to age 26

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What supports and services are being provided to the youth to maintain stability in (a) placement, (b) education and (c) extracurricular activities? What efforts is the worker making to assist the youth with stability in each of these areas?
- Does the worker know who the youth can go to with important questions? What efforts are being made to identify someone (or a number of people)?
- If the youth is about to make any important life changes, does the worker know whether there is a caring person to help with those changes? If not, what efforts is the worker making to identify someone?
- Has the worker reviewed transition/independent living resources (such as [The FosterClub Transition Toolkit](#)) with the youth?
- To what extent does the worker know whether the young person's traumatic experiences, pain and feelings about the past being appropriately addressed? What efforts is the worker making to ensure that someone that the youth is comfortable with is addressing that trauma?
- To what extent has the youth's medical, dental and mental health needs been appropriately addressed? What efforts is the worker making to ensure that these needs are addressed?
- Does the worker know how comfortable the youth is in asking for help, advocating for treatment and raising issues with medication and therapy? If not, what efforts are being made to advocate for the youth?

# Protective and Promotive Factor

## COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

To develop their cognitive and social-emotional competency, youth need access to experiences that allow them to:

- Explore their interests and try new experiences
- Better understand their personal, gender and cultural identity
- Practice more independence and responsibility

### APPLICATION

- Opportunities to discuss the youth's goals
- Opportunities for youth to independently make decisions and demonstrate responsibility
- Easy re-enrollment of youth in school after placement
- Use of trauma-informed treatment

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent does the worker know whether the youth has personal goals? What efforts are being made to help the youth identify and attain those goals?
- To what extent does the worker know if the youth is functioning well at (a) home (b) work/school in terms of maintaining functional relationships, fulfilling responsibilities and making positive contributions to the family and work/school community? If there are areas of dysfunction in these relationships, what efforts are being made to help them be more functional?
- To what extent does the worker know how the youth is doing in school and whether or not he/she is in the most appropriate school setting for the youth's academic needs? Does the worker know the young person's educational/employment goals? How can the worker help the youth reach those goals?
- To what extent does the worker know whether there are caring adults who support the youth's identity, and whether the youth feels supported by those adults? Does the worker know in what ways those adults are supportive? Do the youth's parents and/or caregivers know and understand the youth's SOGIE (Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/Gender Expression)? If not, what efforts is the worker making to enlist adults who would support the young person's identity development?
- Have the youth's intersectional identities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) been explored and considered in all assessments and/or services that the youth has received?





# YOUTH THRIVE™ TOOL GALS/ATTORNEY FOR THE YOUTH

## Protective and Promotive Factor YOUTH RESILIENCE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The effects of toxic stress can be mitigated by experiences that build a youth's capacity for resilience and help the youth manage stress and function well when faced with adversity and trauma.

### APPLICATION

- Consistent relationship with at least one safe, competent, reliable adult
- Opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful decision-making
- Constructive engagement in family, school and community
- Encouragement of youth voice, choice and personal responsibility

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent has the youth been provided with help/support in addressing trauma symptoms?
- Who is available to help the youth make big decisions? What efforts can I make to help the youth secure people to fill that role?
- In what ways does the youth productively manage challenges or frustrations (a poor grade at school, a fight with a friend or relative)? How can I assist the young person to better manage challenges/frustrations?
- In what ways is the young person's voice heard (a) at home, (b) at work/school and (c) with friends and family? If none, what can I do to help the young person's voice be heard?
- How can I identify and support a long-term relationship for the youth with a permanent adult connection?

## Protective and Promotive Factor SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

As a buffer against depression, early sexual activity, violence and substance abuse, youth need social connections with at least one consistent and caring adult and with peers to help them:

- Increase knowledge and develop skills
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Find meaning in life

### APPLICATION

- Regular visits with siblings and family
- Connections that support development of identity in areas of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- Opportunities for engagement with peers inside/outside of school
- Opportunities for engagement in extracurricular/community activities



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is there a lifelong caring adult in the young person's life?
- If the youth is in placement, was the youth placed with siblings, relatives or family friends? If not placed with family members, is the youth having regular visits with siblings and parents, and was the youth placed in the most appropriate placement and/or with a supportive caretaker? If not, what additional advocacy is necessary to provide the youth with a more appropriate placement?
- How can I help the youth secure appropriate and reliable connections with siblings, peers or adults?
- What family events does the youth have the opportunity to participate in? How can I advocate for these opportunities?
- Who is talking to the youth about healthy intimate relationships? How often is someone spending time talking to the youth about healthy relationships and about sex? How can I help make that connection for the youth?
- What extracurricular activities is the youth engaged in? How can I encourage participation in extracurricular activities where the youth can develop social connections?
- What volunteer activities is the youth engaged in in the community or at school? What efforts can I make to help the youth secure those opportunities?
- Does the youth have the same opportunities for connecting with friends as a young person who is not in placement? If not, what arrangements can be made for those opportunities to be made available to the youth?

## Protective and Promotive Factor KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The adolescent brain develops unevenly – and adversity, trauma and disrupted relationships can impact brain development.

What develops first? Structures of the brain that contribute to emotions, e.g. fear, anger and pleasure.

What develops later? By the mid-to-late twenties, areas of the brain responsible for thinking ahead, balancing risks and rewards and controlling impulses.

What's the effect of this developmental gap? Adolescents are prone to make impulsive decisions based more on feelings than logic and may engage in high-risk and dangerous behaviors.

### APPLICATION

- Opportunities to discuss personal family history
- Opportunities for youth to understand why they act the way they do
- Opportunities to discuss recent advances in brain science and adolescent development

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent does the youth want information about personal history and, if the youth wants more information, to what extent has that been provided? What efforts can I make to secure that information?
- To what extent has the youth, family team and professional staff been provided with information about adolescent development? What efforts can I make to secure that information for everyone?
- To what extent does the youth, family team and professional staff understand the link between risk-taking behaviors and adolescent development? If not, who can provide that information to everyone?

# Protective and Promotive Factor CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Youth need to feel comfortable asking for help and need to be provided with concrete support and services which:

- Minimize stress
- Provide basic necessities needed to grow and thrive

## APPLICATION

- Support youth in navigating services
- Services must be:
  - ♦ Easily accessed
  - ♦ Culturally responsive
  - ♦ Respectful
  - ♦ Trauma-informed
  - ♦ Coordinated
  - ♦ Affirming of identities
  - ♦ Strengths-based
  - ♦ Developmentally appropriate
- Enrollment in Medicaid to age 26

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are there any special circumstances about the youth's placement or treatment history that create a current risk of harm, or is there past trauma that needs to be addressed? Is the young person currently in a situation that might subject the youth to the use of restraints, psychotropic medications or dangerous placement conditions?
- What supports and services are being provided to the youth to maintain stability in (a) placement, (b) education and (c) extracurricular activities? What else is needed? How can I advocate to make sure the youth is getting and maintaining appropriate services?
- Who can the youth go to with important questions? How can I help the youth identify someone?
- If the youth is about to make any important life changes, who can assist the youth with those? How can I help the youth to identify someone (or a number of people)?
- Have I reviewed emancipation planning resources with the youth?
- Are the youth's traumatic experiences, pain and feelings about the past being appropriately addressed? If not, what efforts are being made to ensure that someone with whom the youth is comfortable is addressing the youth's trauma?
- To what extent has the youth's medical, dental and mental health needs been appropriately addressed? How can I advocate to ensure that these needs are addressed?
- Does the youth feel comfortable advocating for treatment and raising issues with medication and therapy? If not, what efforts can I make to advocate for the youth?

# Protective and Promotive Factor COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

To develop their cognitive and social-emotional competency, youth need access to experiences that allow them to:

- Explore their interests and try new experiences
- Better understand their personal, gender and cultural identity
- Practice more independence and responsibility

## APPLICATION

- Engagement in discussion of youth's goals
- Opportunities to identify and pursue interests
- Opportunity to independently make decisions and demonstrate responsibility
- Safe and nurturing environment to express identity
- Stability in school and placement
- Use of trauma-informed treatment

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What efforts am I making to ensure that the youth's voice is being heard in court proceedings and in the case planning process?
- What are the youth's personal goals? How can I help the youth identify and attain those goals?
- Is the youth functioning well at (a) home (b) work/school in terms of maintaining functional relationships, fulfilling responsibilities and making positive contributions to the family and work/school community? If there are areas of dysfunction in these relationships, what efforts are being made to help them be more functional?
- How is the youth doing in school? Is the youth in the most appropriate school setting for the youth's academic needs? What are the youth's educational/employment goals? How can additional advocacy be used to help the youth reach those educational/employment goals?
- Are there caring adults who support the youth's identity, and does the youth feel supported by those adults? In what ways are those adults supportive? Do the youth's parents and/or caregivers know and understand the youth's SOGIE (Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/Gender Expression)? If not, how can I help to enlist adults who would support his/her identity development?
- Have the youth's intersectional identities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) been explored and considered in all assessments and/or services that the youth has received? Has the youth been supported in defining his/her/their identity and what gender pronoun they want to use (they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his, etc.)?





# YOUTH THRIVE™ TOOL PARENT ATTORNEYS

## Protective and Promotive Factor YOUTH RESILIENCE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The effects of toxic stress can be mitigated by experiences that build a youth's capacity for resilience and help him/her manage stress and function well when faced with adversity and trauma.

### APPLICATION

- Consistent relationship with at least one safe, competent, reliable adult
- Opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful decision-making
- Constructive engagement in family, school and community
- Encouragement of youth voice, choice and personal responsibility

### ? GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Has the youth been provided with help/support in addressing trauma symptoms?
- Are there people in the young person's life who help make big decisions? If not, what efforts can my client or others make to help the youth secure people to fill that role?
- Does the youth productively manage challenges or frustrations (a poor grade at school, a fight with a friend or relative)? How can my client or others assist the youth to better manage challenges/frustrations?
- Is the youth's voice heard (a) at home, (b) at work/school and (c) with friends and family? What efforts can my client or others make to help the youth's voice be heard?

## Protective and Promotive Factor SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

As a buffer against depression, early sexual activity, violence and substance abuse, youth need social connections with at least one consistent and caring adult and with peers to help them:

- Increase knowledge and develop skills
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Find meaning in life

### APPLICATION

- Regular visits with siblings and family
- Connections that support development of identity in areas of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- Opportunities for engagement with peers inside/outside of school
- Opportunities for engagement in extracurricular/community activities

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is there a lifelong caring adult in the young person's life?
- If the youth is in placement, was the youth placed with siblings, relatives or family friends? If not placed with family members, is the youth having regular visits with siblings and parents, and was the youth placed in the most appropriate placement and/or with a supportive caretaker? Is additional advocacy necessary to provide the youth with a more appropriate placement?
- Does the youth have siblings, peers or adults to rely on? If not, how can my client or others help the youth secure these connections?
- What family events does the youth have the opportunity to participate in? If needed, how can I, my client or others advocate for these opportunities?
- Is anyone talking to the youth about healthy relationships, sexual orientation and gender identity, and about sex? Is my client prepared to play that role or can my client identify someone who is?
- What extracurricular activities is the youth engaged in? How can my client or others encourage participation in extracurricular activities where the youth can develop social connections?
- Is the youth volunteering in the community or at school? Would the youth like to? If so, how can my client or others make that a possibility for the youth?
- Does the youth have the same opportunities for connecting with friends as a young person who is not in placement? If not, what arrangements can my client make for those opportunities to be made available to the youth?

## Protective and Promotive Factor KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The adolescent brain develops unevenly – and adversity, trauma and disrupted relationships can impact brain development.

What develops first? Structures of the brain that contribute to emotions, e.g. fear, anger and pleasure.

What develops later? By the mid-to-late twenties, areas of the brain responsible for thinking ahead, balancing risks and rewards and controlling impulses.

What's the effect of this developmental gap? Adolescents are prone to make impulsive decisions based more on feelings than logic and may engage in high-risk and dangerous behaviors.

### APPLICATION

- Opportunities to discuss personal family history
- Opportunities for youth to understand why they act the way they do
- Opportunities to discuss recent advances in brain science and adolescent development

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent does the youth want personal history information, and what efforts are being made to secure that information? If none, how can I assist my client in providing that information to the youth? Who else can help with this?
- To what extent has the youth, family team and professional staff been provided with information about adolescent development? If not, how can I assist my client in providing that information to the youth and everyone else? Who else can help with this?
- To what extent does the youth, family team and professional staff understand the link between risk-taking behaviors and adolescent development? If not, who can provide that information to everyone?

# Protective and Promotive Factor

## CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Youth need to feel comfortable asking for help and need to be provided with concrete support and services which:

- Minimize stress
- Provide basic necessities needed to grow and thrive

### APPLICATION

- Support youth in navigating services
- Services must be:
  - ♦ Easily accessed
  - ♦ Culturally responsive
  - ♦ Respectful
  - ♦ Trauma-informed
  - ♦ Coordinated
  - ♦ Affirming of identities
  - ♦ Strengths-based
  - ♦ Developmentally appropriate
- Enrollment in Medicaid to age 26

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What supports and services are being provided to the youth to maintain stability in (a) placement, (b) education and (c) extracurricular activities? How can I advocate to make sure the youth is getting and maintaining appropriate services?
- Does the youth have someone to go to with important questions? Is it my client? If not, how can I help my client play this role and, if my client can't, how can I help my client identify someone who can?
- Is the youth about to make any important life changes? If so, will the youth turn to my client to help with those changes? If not, how can I help my client identify someone (or a number of people) who can?
- Are the youth's traumatic experiences, pain and feelings about the past being appropriately addressed? If not, what efforts can my client make to ensure that someone with whom the youth is comfortable is addressing that trauma?
- To what extent has the youth's medical, dental and mental health needs been appropriately addressed? How can I advocate to ensure that these needs are addressed?
- Does the youth feel comfortable advocating for treatment and raising issues with medication and therapy? If not, what efforts can I make to ensure that someone is advocating for the youth?

# Protective and Promotive Factor COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

To develop their cognitive and social-emotional competency, youth need access to experiences that allow them to:

- Explore their interests and try new experiences
- Better understand their personal, gender and cultural identity
- Practice more independence and responsibility

## APPLICATION

- Opportunities for youth to independently make decisions and demonstrate responsibility
- Stability in school and placement
- Use of trauma-informed treatment

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Does the youth have personal goals? How can my client or others help the youth identify and attain those goals?
- Is the youth functioning well at (a) home (b) work/school in terms of maintaining functional relationships, fulfilling responsibilities and making positive contributions to the family and work/school community? If there are areas of dysfunction in these relationships, what efforts can my client or others make to help them be more functional?
- How is the youth doing in school? Is the youth in the most appropriate school setting for the youth's academic needs? Does the youth have educational/employment goals? Is additional advocacy necessary to help reach the youth's educational/employment goals?
- Does my client support the youth's identity, or are there other caring adults who support the youth's identity? Does the youth feel supported by my client or those adults? In what ways are they supportive? Does my client and/or the youth's caregiver know and understand the youth's SOGIE (Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/Gender Expression)? Has the youth been supported in defining his/her/their identity and what gender pronoun to use (they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his, etc.)? If not, what efforts are being made to enlist adults who would support the youth's identity development?
- Have the youth's intersectional identities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) been explored and considered in all assessments and/or services that the youth has received?





# YOUTH THRIVE™ TOOL

## PARENTS

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?** Your child is the expert of their own experiences and your child's voice and participation in planning for the future is important. Below are suggested questions that can be used in planning for family court proceedings and in case planning. You can ask these questions of your lawyer, child, caseworker, parole officer and even yourself to make sure that your child has all the resources necessary to thrive.

### Protective and Promotive Factor

## YOUTH RESILIENCE

#### WHAT IS IT?

The ability, tools and skills to help my child manage stress and live a productive life even after experiencing disruption and difficult times.

- Opportunities for my child to:
  - ♦ speak their mind
  - ♦ have a relationship with at least one safe, reliable and wise adult
  - ♦ become involved in activities within the family, school and community
  - ♦ be a part of making important decisions

#### HOW?

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Am I available to help my child make big decisions? If not, do I need help finding others to fill in?
- In what ways does my child productively manage challenges or frustrations (a poor grade at school, a fight with a friend or relative)? How can I help my child better manage challenges/frustrations? If I can't play that role, how do I find others to fill in?
- In what ways is my child's voice heard (a) at home, (b) at work/school and (c) with friends and family? How can I help my child's voice be heard?
- Does my child have anyone to provide help/support in difficult times?

### Protective and Promotive Factor

## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

#### WHAT IS IT?

A close relationship with at least one consistent and caring adult and friends who can help my child feel a sense of belonging, find meaning in life and develop skills; these relationships can help my child from becoming depressed, starting sexual activity before my child is ready, abusing drugs and alcohol and taking part in violent activities.

#### HOW?

- Opportunities for my child to:
  - ♦ find comfortable spaces and people
  - ♦ discuss goals with me and others
  - ♦ make decisions
  - ♦ have opportunities to demonstrate responsibility



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- If my child is in placement, is my child placed with siblings, relatives or family friends? If not placed with family members, is my child having regular visits with me and/or with siblings, and was my child placed in the most appropriate placement and/or with a supportive caretaker? If not, what can I do?
- How can I help my child secure appropriate and reliable connections with siblings, peers or adults?
- What family events does my child have the opportunity to participate in? If needed, how can I advocate for these opportunities?
- How often am I spending time talking to my child about healthy relationships, my child's sexual orientation and gender identity, and about sex? Should someone else my child trusts play that role? How can I help address this?
- What extracurricular activities is my child engaged in? How can I encourage participation in extracurricular activities where my child can develop healthy social connections and who can assist me?
- What volunteering activities is my child engaged in in school or the community? What efforts can I make to offer my child those opportunities and who can assist me?
- Does my child have the same opportunities for connecting with friends as a young person who is not in placement? If not, what arrangements can I make for those opportunities to be made available to my child?

## Protective and Promotive Factor KNOWLEDGE OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

### WHAT IS IT?

Knowledge that my child's brain is not done developing – and that positive and negative things that happen to my child can change the way my child's brain develops. Because of when and how the brain develops, adults are better able to use reason to make decisions and young people tend to rely more on feelings to make decisions, so sometimes young people end up involved in dangerous activities.

### HOW?

- Opportunities for my child to:
  - ♦ learn about our family history, if possible
  - ♦ learn about brain science and adolescent development
  - ♦ get help to understand why young peoples' actions can be a result of the natural way their brain is developing

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- To what extent does my child want information about our family's history and, if my child wants more information, to what extent has that been provided? What efforts can I make to provide or secure that information?
- To what extent has my child, the family team and professional staff been provided with information about adolescent development? What efforts can I make to secure that information? Who can help me with this?
- To what extent do I, my child, the family team and professional staff understand the link between risk-taking behaviors and adolescent development? Who can provide that information to me, my child and everyone else?

# Protective and Promotive Factor

## CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

### WHAT IS IT?

The ability and comfort level my child has in asking for help. A connection to services and help to make sure that my child is less stressed and that my child's basic needs are met.

### HOW?

- Opportunities for my child to:
  - ♦ get help from someone to find services and programs that can help my child
  - ♦ find services that:
    - are easy to find and get to
    - are coordinated and work together to help
    - are culturally responsive
    - affirm my child's identities
    - respect my child
    - focus on my child's strengths
    - have staff who are able to understand and address my child's trauma
    - right for my child's age
  - ♦ be automatically enrolled in Medicaid until age 26

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What supports and services are being provided to my child to maintain stability in (a) placement, (b) school and (c) extracurricular activities? What efforts am I making to assist my child in each of these areas? Who can help me with this?
- Who does my child go to with important questions? To what extent can I play that role? What efforts can I make to help identify someone or obtain an advocate to play that role and teach my child how to do this?
- If my child is about to make any important life changes, to what extent can I help with those changes? If necessary, what efforts can I make to help identify other people (or a number of people) who can help?
- Are my child's experiences, pain and feelings about the past being appropriately addressed? If not, what efforts can I make to ensure that someone with whom my child is comfortable is addressing them?
- To what extent have my child's medical, dental and mental health needs been appropriately addressed? How can I advocate to ensure that these needs are addressed?
- Does my child feel comfortable advocating for treatment and raising issues with medication and therapy? If not, what efforts can I make to ensure that someone is advocating for/with my child?

# Protective and Promotive Factor

## COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

### WHAT IS IT?

Experiences that give young people a chance to explore interests and identity, to practice independence and to take on more responsibilities to maximize well-being.

### HOW?

- Opportunities for my child to:
  - ♦ discuss goals with me and others
  - ♦ make independent decisions
  - ♦ have opportunities to show responsibility

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are my child's personal goals? What efforts am I making to help my child identify and attain those goals? Who can help me with this?
- Is my child functioning well at (a) home (b) work/school? Is my child fulfilling responsibilities and making positive contributions to the family/work/school community? What efforts can I or others make to help my child be more successful?
- How is my child doing in school? Is my child in the most appropriate school setting? What are my child's educational/employment goals? How can I help my child reach those goals? Who can help me with this?
- To what extent do I and/or my child's caregivers know, understand and are able to affirm my child's identities? Do we know and understand issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression and how they relate to my child's development? What gender pronoun does my child want to use (they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his, etc.)? What other adults support my child's identity development?
- Have my child and I discussed the ways that identities overlap (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.)? Who can help me address potential mistreatment of my child resulting from my child's intersectional identities, such as treatment during court proceedings, or any impact on sentencing or services?





## RESOURCES

### For Parents & Caregivers

Jensen, F. E., & Nutt, A. E. (2015). *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults*. Harper Collins.

### For Youth, Parents, Caregivers & Agency Workers

The FosterClub Transition Toolkit a tool for developing youth-driven transition plan out of foster care (2015). Retrieved from: [https://issuu.com/fosterclub/docs/transition\\_toolkit\\_v2.6\\_small/1](https://issuu.com/fosterclub/docs/transition_toolkit_v2.6_small/1)

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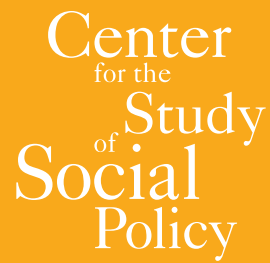
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