Agenda

1. Overview of the Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors Framework

2. Policy, organizational and direct practice strategies to advance healthy adolescent development
Youth Thrive: An Approach, Not a Model

• Research-based framework that applies to all youth and young adults 9-26 years of age
• National initiative focused on improving youth well-being within public systems
  • Implemented through small but significant changes in policies, practice, licensing, contracting and training
A Protective and Promotive Factors Approach

- **Protective Factors**: conditions or attributes that mitigate or eliminate risk
- **Promotive Factors**: conditions or attributes that actively enhance well-being
- **Risk Factors**: Stressful conditions, events or circumstances that contribute to bad outcomes
INCREASE PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS
- Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Youth Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Social, Emotional, Cognitive Competence

REDUCE RISK FACTORS
- Psychological and health stressors
- Inadequate or negative relationships with family members, adults outside youth's family and peers
- Insufficient or inadequate opportunities for positive growth and development
- Unsafe, unstable, inequitable environments

DYNAMIC OUTCOMES
- Hopeful, optimistic, compassionate, curious identity
- Ability to form and sustain family and social networks
- Ability to form and sustain caring, committed relationships
- Success in school and workplace
- Service to community or society

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Youth and adults need to understand:

• adolescent biopsychosocial development with particular attention to brain development
• ways to promote healthy development
• the impact of trauma and healing methods
Adolescent Development in a Nutshell!

• The brain isn’t fully cooked in early childhood
• Adolescence is the second greatest period of brain development
• Experience shapes development
• Use it or lose it
• Trauma and adversity aren’t destiny
Resilience is the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma.
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
EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: e.g., planning, thinking ahead and controlling impulses.

SENSE OF SELF: a growing understanding about one’s own developmental history and needs.

PERSONAL AGENCY: Taking responsibility for one’s self and one’s decisions and having confidence to overcome obstacles.

CHARACTER STRENGTH: e.g., curiosity, gratitude, grit, optimism, self-control, social intelligence and zest.

POSITIVE EMOTIONS: e.g., joy, love, hope, optimism, trust, faith and compassion.

Cognitive & Social-Emotional Competence

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Concrete Support in Times of Need

Not as Easy as It Seems

- Difficult for a young person to ask for help
- Think they should be able to figure this out on their own
- History of trauma or adversity
- Limited access to competent caring adults
- Missed opportunities to learn and practice important skills

Promote Help Seeking

- Coordinated support and services:
  - Individually focused
  - Culturally responsive
  - Work from a strengths-based perspective
  - Grounded in respect and trust
Policy Strategies

• Medicaid to 26 for youth in foster care
• Rethinking consequences—no life imprisonment without parole for juveniles
• Family First Prevention Services Act (ILP and Education and Training Vouchers to age 23)
• Raise the Age

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Organizational Strategies

- Training
- Contracts
- Case Plans
- Youth Voice
How Do We Measure the Protective and Promotive Factors?
Youth Thrive™ Survey

- Valid and reliable
- Youth self-assessment:
  - 12 to 26 years of age
  - 66 items and 11 background questions
  - Web-based instrument
- Takes less than 15 minutes to complete
- Measures positive constructs
- Multiple uses:
  - Assessment
  - Evaluation
  - Continuous quality improvement
Application to Practice

- Relationships matter!
- Family engagement
- Engage youth in designing and driving health promotion campaigns
- Safe spaces
- Offer options for youth to make decisions that impact their lives and communities
- Engage youth as ambassadors, advisors, teachers, mentors
- Safe spaces
- Provide opportunities for youth to connect with peers and friends
- Create opportunities for youth to give back

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Questions?
Connect with Us

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