

# Youth Thrive: A Pathway to Well-being

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*Susan Notkin*  
*Center for the Study of  
Social Policy*  
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*#SeeChange*

# Agenda

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1

Overview of the Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors Framework

2

Policy, organizational and direct practice strategies to advance healthy adolescent development



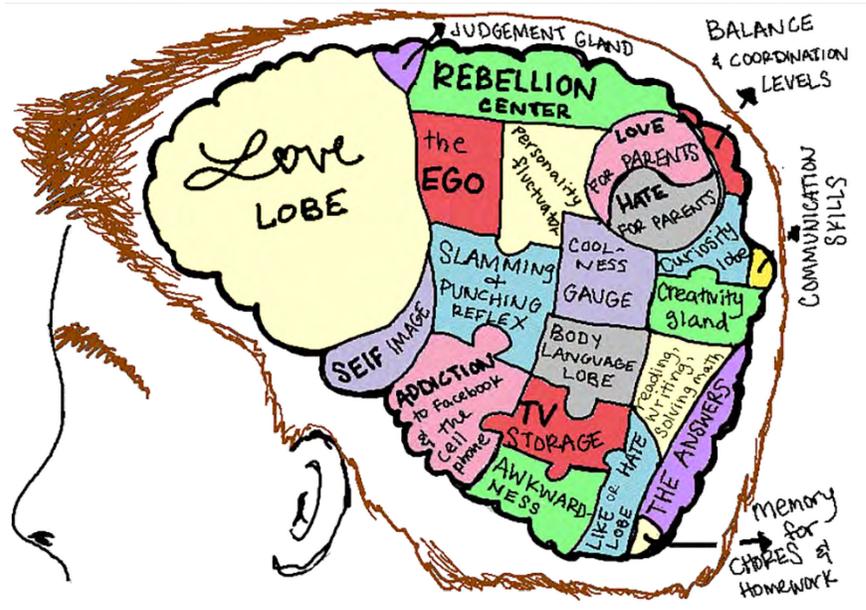


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**Youth Thrive**  
An initiative of CSSP

# 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



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THEORY OF CHANGE

## 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

# *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*



KNOWLEDGE OF  
ADOLESCENT  
DEVELOPMENT

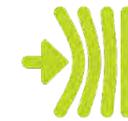
# Adolescent Development in a Nutshell!

- 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.*



**RESILIENCE**

*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*



**SOCIAL  
CONNECTIONS**



# Cognitive & Social-Emotional Competence



## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

e.g., planning,  
thinking ahead and controlling  
impulses



## SENSE OF SELF

a growing understanding about one's  
own developmental history and  
needs



## CHARACTER STRENGTH

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



## PERSONAL AGENCY

Taking responsibility for one's self  
and one's decisions and having  
confidence to  
overcome obstacles



## POSITIVE EMOTIONS

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

# Concrete Support in Times of Need

## Not as Easy as It Seems

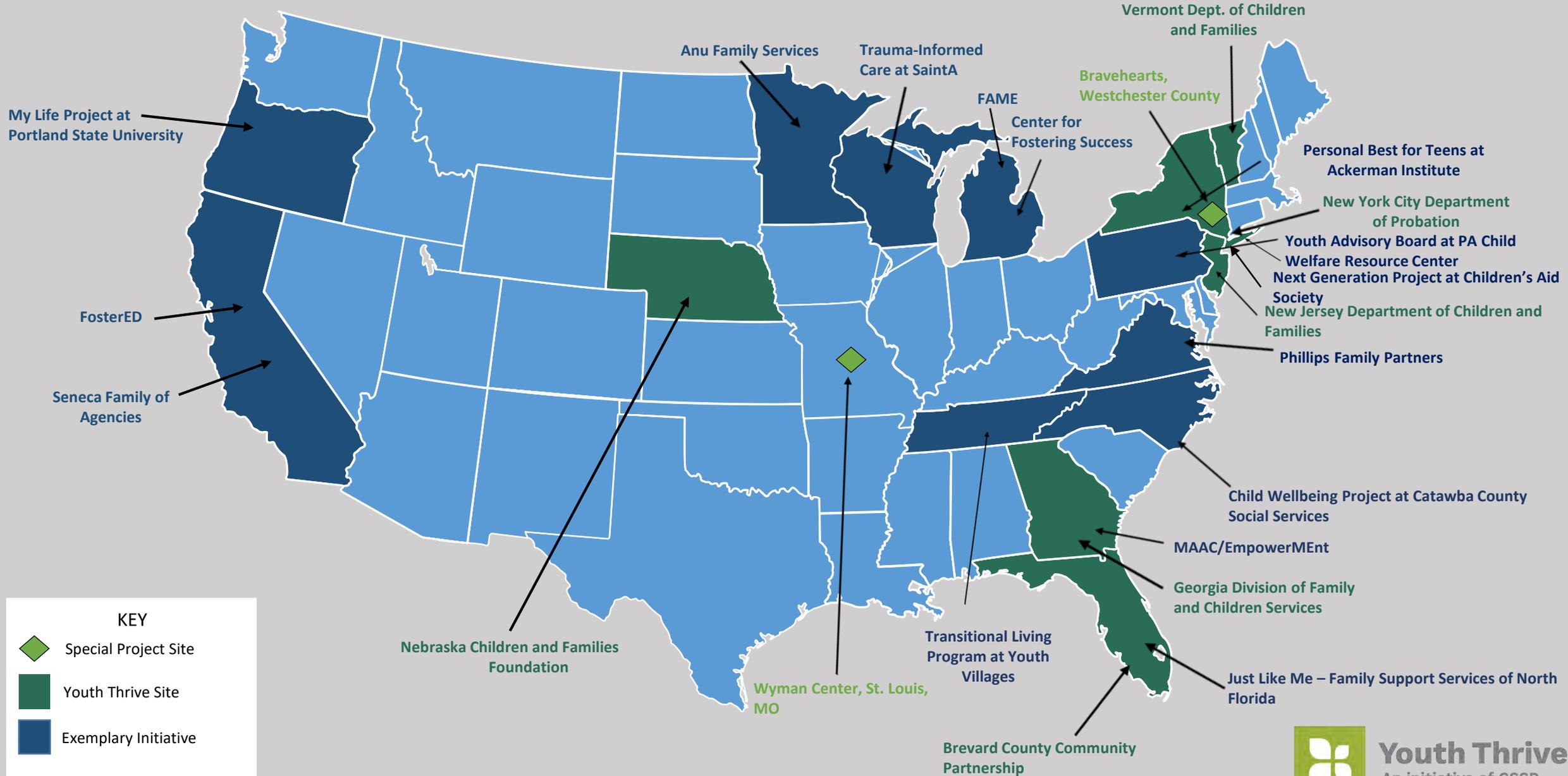
- Difficult for a young person to ask for help
- Think they **should** be able to figure this out on their own
- History of trauma or adversity
- Limited access to competent caring adults
- Missed opportunities to learn and practice important skills

## Promote Help Seeking

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



# 2019 Youth Thrive National Network



# 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

**Training**

**Contracts**

**Organizational  
Strategies**

**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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Ideas into Action

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# Questions?



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