



Using Data from the Youth Thrive Survey to Improve Practice

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What makes the Youth Thrive survey different from other youth surveys?

This resource explores how teaming meetings build and strengthen young people's Protective and Promotive Factors (PPFs) and includes considerations for how to elevate young people's voice and engagement in teaming meetings.

- Measures the presence of the Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors—Youth Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Adolescent Development, Concrete Support in Times of Need, and Cognitive and Social-Emotional Competence—which research indicates are core components for well-being.
- It does not focus on outputs, such as the number of young people who have completed high school. Instead it brings attention to the underlying strengths and abilities young people need to thrive.
- Unlike other surveys that focus on deficits, the Youth Thrive Survey is strengths-based and focuses on the positive attributes and experiences of young people.
- It aligns with the tenets of healing-centered engagement and identifies “what’s right” with young people to help heal from past traumas.¹

Using the Youth Thrive Survey in Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement Efforts

How does the Survey help with Quality Assurance (QA)?

The Youth Thrive Survey collects data on young people that can be matched with administrative data or data from other sources to have a more comprehensive understanding about the young people being served. For example, when matching with administrative data, an agency or organization can analyze cohorts of young people—such as the Protective and Promotive Factors (PPFs) of young people in congregate care compared to those in home-based settings; by race and ethnicity, such as the PPFs of

Black youth compared to White youth; by age groups, such as the PPFs of young adolescents and young adults; and by zip code or neighborhood. This information can then be analyzed and used as part of quality improvement efforts.

How does the Survey help with Quality Improvement (QI)?

- An agency/organization can analyze data collected to identify trends, strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in how support young people and use that information to determine priority areas, inform action plan development, decision making, policy development, and practice improvement efforts. For example, when analyzing cohort information, the data may reveal that young people in congregate care settings scored lower in the Social Connections Protective and Promotive Factor. An agency/organization can use that information to examine existing policies and practices and co-develop with young people an action plan for improving how young people in congregate care settings build and sustain relationships with family members, peers, and/or their community.
- The Youth Thrive Survey also can serve as a longitudinal data collection tool; it can be administered to young people multiple times throughout their involvement with the youth-serving system. For example, if a program has the goal of strengthening young people's well-being, the Youth Thrive Survey may be administered to young people at the start, middle, and end of the program to determine if the program is meeting its intended goal. This information can also be used to inform decision-making, such as if the program should continue to be funded or expanded.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT?

Quality Assurance (QA) is data collection and analysis to learn about who is being served and what an agency/organization does. This includes:

- Capturing, measuring, and communicating specific data points (e.g., number and percent of young people in care who are Black, AI/NA, and/or Latinx/e; number and percent of young people in a congregate care setting versus home-based care).
- Collecting data required by laws, mandates, funder requests; and/or as part of program or model fidelity.

Quality Improvement uses data captured by quality assurance activities into action. This includes:

- Analyzing information to identify trends and inform decision making, policies, practice improvement efforts, and young people's and system's needs and strengths.
- Using the information to develop action plan(s), including discussions about what "better" means and how to get there.

Keep in mind that survey scores represent just one source of information on how the young person or program is doing. Agencies/organizations are encouraged to review the survey results in the context of other information about the young people served. Programs should always consider gathering qualitative data to support or inform quantitative information that is available.

How can the Youth Thrive Survey help to improve practice?

The Youth Thrive Survey provides the opportunity to shift how young people are supported and valued.

For Youth Workers. Refer to the [Survey Tip Sheet for Professionals](#). It includes ideas and considerations for how to support young people to take the survey, how the survey can help in one's own work, and the best ways to discuss the results from the survey with young people.

For Agency/Organization. An agency/organization that is interested in learning more about how it works with young people and is building young people’s protective and promotive factors may:

- Integrate the survey into [Quality Service Reviews](#) to assess an agency/organization’s performance in working with young people.
 - If conducting individual interviews with young people: the review team may ask the young person and youth worker to complete the Youth Thrive Survey. The young people’s scores may be used to discuss the young person’s experience with the youth-serving agency.
 - If conducting a focus group with young people: prior to or at the start of a focus group, young people may be asked to complete the Youth Thrive survey. The program can use aggregate data to identify or focus in on specific topics to better understand the focus group’s experience with the youth-serving agency. For example, are there particular questions that the group scored high or low in that will help inform how the agency/ organization is working with young people.
- Utilize the scores to better understand youth outcome data. For example, are young people not graduating from high school—the Youth Thrive Survey can be used to analyze concrete support in times of needs; if permanency rates are low, the Youth Thrive Survey can assess the young person’s social connections.
- Use the data to inform strategic planning. For example, if young people are scoring low in Concrete Support in Times of Need, an agency/organization may identify this as a priority area and collaborate with young people to develop a plan of action for addressing this challenge.
- Use the aggregate data to move away from descriptions of young people that are harmful or negative towards imagery and/or accounts that feature young people’s assets and reinforce everyone’s role in supporting young people’s well-being. Young people involved in youth-serving systems have many strengths and the Youth Thrive Survey highlights them. Descriptions and data about young people’s positive attributes may be used throughout the agency/organization to bring attention to young people’s potential, goals, and aspirations.

¹ Dr. Shawn Ginwright first coined the term “healing centered engagement” in 2018 in his article “The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement,” published in *Medium*. To learn more about healing centered engagement, read [“Crosswalk: Youth Thrive and Healing Centered Engagement.”](#)

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