



**Youth Thrive**  
An initiative of CSSP

**YOUTH THRIVE TRAINING INFORMATION**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is Youth Thrive?**

Youth Thrive™ is a research-informed [Framework](#) and an **action-oriented Initiative** designed to better **promote healthy development and well-being for youth and young adults, ages 9-26 years**. Developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, [Youth Thrive](#) believes **all** young people should be valued, loved, and supported to reach their goals. To achieve this, Youth Thrive works with youth-serving systems, young leaders, non-profit organizations, public agencies, jurisdictions, and others across the country. Youth Thrive offers training, tools, materials, and strategies to change policies, programs, and practice. Our mission is to build on what we know about adolescent development, value young people's perspectives, and give youth the opportunities and resources they need to succeed.

The overarching goal of the Youth Thrive Framework is to achieve positive outcomes by mitigating risk and enhancing healthy development and well-being of older children, teenagers, and young adults. The Framework is based on a comprehensive review and synthesis of research on key topics related to adolescence, including neuroscience, positive youth development, resilience, stress, trauma, and healing. Based on that review, Youth Thrive identified five **Protective and Promotive Factors** that increase the likelihood that adolescents can develop into healthy, thriving adults.

The Protective Factors are:

1. **Youth Resilience:** Managing stress and functioning well when faced with stress, challenges, or adversity.
2. **Social Connections:** Having healthy, sustained relationships with people, places, communities, and a force greater than oneself that promote a sense of trust, belonging, and that one matters.
3. **Knowledge of Adolescent Development:** Understanding the unique changes and assets of adolescence and implementing policies and practices that reflect a deep understanding of development.
4. **Concrete Support in Times of Need:** Making sure youth receive quality, equitable, respectful services that meet their basic needs (health care, housing, education, nutrition, income). Teaching youth to ask for help and advocate for themselves.
5. **Cognitive and Social-Emotional Competence:** Acquiring skills and attitudes that are essential for forming an independent, positive identity and having a productive and satisfying adulthood.

Youth Thrive is **not** a specific program or intervention. It is an approach that is relevant to everyone who works with young people including: community-based youth services; youth engagement, service and leadership programs; schools and afterschool programs; as well as public systems and agencies, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, homeless services, or mental health agencies.

To learn more about Youth Thrive, please go to: [Youth Thrive Information](#)

### **What is Youth Thrive Training?**

To advance its goals, Youth Thrive supported the development of a comprehensive training curriculum, collaboratively created by Jean Carpenter-Williams of the National Resource Center for Youth Services (NRCYS) at the University of Oklahoma and Frank Eckles of Youth In Focus. The curriculum presents the Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors Framework and the research on which it is based in an accessible and useable format.

CSSP staff and training consultants work with young leaders, state and local jurisdictions, and a wide range of organizations to plan and tailor Youth Thrive training to specific needs, opportunities, and circumstances.

We strongly advocate for young people to be involved in the planning and delivery of all types of Youth Thrive training and that youth participants -- who are not on staff or in a paid positions -- be paid for their time in training through cash stipends. Please talk with a Youth Thrive team member if you have questions or need more information about stipends for youth.

### **Is Youth Thrive Training Available On-line or Virtually?**

Youth Thrive training was developed pre-Covid, as an in-person, live training. Several of our training options (described below) – specifically the Overview, Youth Thrive 4 Youth, and Families Thrive -- are now available as synchronous, on-line trainings using Zoom as the meeting platform. We anticipate having an on-line, synchronous, version of the Staff Training available at the end of 2022. We expect Training-of-Trainers (TOT) options to remain an in-person training.

All of the Youth Thrive on-line versions of training are currently delivered by live trainers, not as pre-recorded training. We do **not** have asynchronous, self-managed, fully virtual or pre-recorded versions of any Youth Thrive trainings at this time.

### **What are the specific types of Youth Thrive Training available?**

Over time, we have developed several different Youth Thrive Training options and products that are available to agencies, organizations, and youth-led initiatives. Youth Thrive Training options are the following:

#### **1. Youth Thrive Overview**

For approximately 25 participants, the Overview provides foundational information, common language, and insights about values, policies, and practices that exemplify Youth Thrive. The three Overview sessions provide an opportunity to engage, familiarize, and involve leaders of youth-service systems, agencies, organizations, partners, and advocacy groups in core Youth Thrive concepts. Participants will understand Youth Thrive content and see where and how Youth Thrive can complement, reinforce, and advance positive youth-service activities going forward.

***The Overview is 5 hours of content and is usually offered in 2 or 3 shorter sessions, especially if held on-line. Overviews are often offered before an organization, jurisdiction, or partnership holds direct staff training. It is particularly useful for managers and supervisors to understand the concepts, tools, and language needed to implement Youth Thrive strategies.***

## 2. Staff Training *also known as Direct Training*

For up to 25 trainee participants, the Youth Thrive Staff/Direct training is organized around the five Protective Factors and Guiding Premises for working with youth and young adults and covers:

- Context and information on current ideas and best practices in working with youth and young adults
- New understanding of adolescent development including brain science and how to support well-being
- Insights about harmful realities that impede progress, specifically racism and other discrimination
- Engaging activities to experience, explore, and apply new concepts
- Reflective exercises to think through how to integrate ideas, tools, and techniques into existing programs and practice.

***Direct Staff training is 2-3 full days of content. Length of training depends on participants familiarity and knowledge of adolescent development and strengths-based approaches. An additional training day allows time to cover more basic content as well as additional practice time.***

## 3. Youth Thrive 4 Youth (YT4Y)

Developed specifically for young people, Youth Thrive 4 Youth (YT4Y) is an interactive, strengths-based, training curriculum created by young professionals with lived expertise in child welfare and other youth-serving systems. Led by teams of two young professional trainers, YT4Y gives groups of 20-25 young people the information they need to better understand what they are going through during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Participants learn about what can support their own healing, health, and wellbeing. They gain insights into development – their own as well as friends, siblings, and peers – and build new connections.

YT4Y is organized around the five Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors. The content is appropriate for most high school-age youth and young adults, ages 14-26. Youth Thrive 4 Youth training is useful and relevant to Youth Advisory Boards for child welfare and other public systems, youth leadership, service and advocacy groups, peer mentors, as well as youth participating in an array of community-based, summer or afterschool activities.

YT4Y is facilitated by young adults **for** young people. While older adults are sometimes involved in planning the training, and a few may attend to provide support and continuity, **youth and young adults should make up most of the participants in the room.** YT4Y is relevant to all young people, regardless of system involvement, though it may be particularly useful to young people who have been involved in child welfare, legal, or mental health systems. YT4Y intentionally approaches all topics with consideration of how race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, and other factors impact young people and their development.

***Youth Thrive 4 Youth is 8 hours of training content and can be done in one-full day, or in several 2-hour sessions over several weeks, or eight 1-hour workshops.***

#### 4. Families Thrive

Families Thrive is a separate training curriculum that integrates information from CSSP's **Strengthening Families Framework** -- the companion protective factors Framework and initiative for families with children birth to age 8 -- and **Youth Thrive**. Families Thrive offers one, comprehensive training experience that presents the research on the developmental needs of children from early childhood through school age into adolescence and emerging adulthood. This training highlights the protective and promotive factors shown to promote healthy development in young children and youth. **Families Thrive** devotes a module to each of the five Protective Factors and teaches practical techniques for applying the framework in programs, practices, and communities. Families Thrive is available as either a direct staff training or a training-of-trainers (TOT). It is available as an in-person training or in a live, synchronous, on-line format.

***Families Thrive is 4-5 full days of training. Families Thrive is provided by an organization called Youth in Focus. For more information contact: [cwilson@yifocus.org](mailto:cwilson@yifocus.org)***

#### 5. Training of Trainers (TOT)

For up to 20 participants, the Training of Trainers (TOT) curriculum prepares participant to lead Youth Thrive Staff Trainings (#2 above). TOT provides an in-depth presentation of the Youth Thrive Protective and Promotive Factors Framework and the research on which it is based in an interactive, accessible format (21 hours total). TOT **participants become Youth Thrive trainers** who, in turn, use the Youth Thrive Staff Training curriculum and supporting materials to train direct service staff going forward – such as youth service practitioners, caseworkers, supervisors, program operators, youth advocates, community and school-based staff and others working with young people.

Experienced Youth Thrive Trainers lead TOT sessions, giving individualized, constructive feedback and supporting new trainers. In addition to covering the core content in Youth Thrive Staff Training described above, TOT participants prepare and lead a section of Youth Thrive training in **Teach-Back Sessions**, presenting parts of the curriculum and receive coaching from experienced Youth Thrive trainers during the TOT.

***Training of Trainers is a minimum of 3 full days of training time that includes a day for Teach-Back sessions and planning for future training implementation. TOT may be longer depending on needs of the group.***

#### What do participants get from the training of trainers (TOT)?

Trainers who enroll in the Youth Thrive TOT receive the following:

- **Trainer's Guide** – Detailed, step-by-step curriculum guide for each of the seven modules that includes: learning goals, information on content, sequencing, timing, activities, materials needed and general facilitation instructions (183 pages).
- **Participant Manual** – Description of key concepts, activity worksheets and resources for participants in future trainings (79 pages).
- **PowerPoint slides** for each module (over 200 slides).
- **Bibliography and Resource list** – A wealth of additional information for those who want to explore Youth Thrive concepts and research in greater depth.
- **Feedback from Youth Thrive trainers** – Opportunity to present parts of the curriculum and receive feedback from experienced Youth Thrive trainers during the TOT; membership in a

community of practice to access additional feedback, virtual coaching and resources via phone contact and/or webinars to share ideas and information and to troubleshoot problems with other Youth Thrive trainers.

### **Who should participate in the Training of Trainers?**

Training of Trainers (TOT) is designed specifically for staff and young leaders who have some experience with adult education and familiarity with best practices in training. We recommend participation by individuals who meet the following criteria:

- Prior experience leading and delivering training and/or other teaching and presentation skills
- Familiarity with staff training curriculum content, group facilitation, and training process
- Values and perspective that are compatible with the Youth Thrive framework
- Experience, insight, and enthusiasm for adolescent and young adult development.

Because the Youth Thrive training curriculum contains a lot of demanding content, we see it as a resource for people who have the interest, skills, commitment, and opportunity to provide the training themselves to a significant number of workers/staff. TOT is **not** the right opportunity for individuals who are interested in an initial orientation to the Youth Thrive framework. We encourage people interested in learning about Youth Thrive generally to access the many free resources available on our [website](#).

### **Should youth and young adults participate in Youth Thrive Staff and TOT Training?**

Yes, we strongly encourage and support the participation of young adults in **all** Youth Thrive Training options, including Youth Thrive TOT and staff training. The Youth Thrive training experience greatly benefits from the participation of young people, especially those who have had experience in the child welfare, legal, mental health, or other public systems. Depending on the specific situation, it may be helpful and appropriate for youth, especially young leaders, advocates and early career professional (e.g., peer mentors) to participate in the Youth Thrive Staff Training. Youth voices and perspectives are enormously beneficial to all aspects of Youth Thrive's work. Ideally, youth who participate should have already engaged in other training, leadership development or advocacy activities (e.g., Youth Advisory Boards, student government, community service).

As noted above, Youth Thrive believes that youth participants who are not on staff or in a paid positions should be paid for their time participating in training through cash stipends. Please talk with a Youth Thrive team member if you have questions or would like more information about stipends for youth.

### **What are the expectations of new Youth Thrive trainers?**

We ask those who participate in the Youth Thrive Training of Trainers to agree and commit to the following:

- Provide Youth Thrive training by conducting at least two direct service trainings and reaching approximately 50 individuals who have direct contact with youth over the next two years.
- Submit basic information and periodic updates to a database on Youth Thrive training activities that will be maintained and updated by NRCYS.
- Participate in occasional conference calls or webinars to share information, strategies and plans and receive virtual coaching for future training with other trainers.

**Once I'm trained, can newly trained trainers organize and charge others for Youth Thrive training?**

Yes, we want and expect newly trained trainers to use the curriculum with direct service staff and others who work with and/or support young people. We know that quality training is a valuable resource and can be a significant catalyst for change – the best trainers need to be compensated for their work. It is difficult to set a standard price that applies to all situations as training costs vary depending on the number of trainers, number of participants, location, cost of facilities, and whether food is provided, if travel is involved and so on. We ask that trainers using the Youth Thrive curriculum be fair and reasonable in setting prices, recognizing that CSSP invested the upfront costs for the curriculum and materials development.