



# **YOUTH THRIVE™ & Families Thrive:**

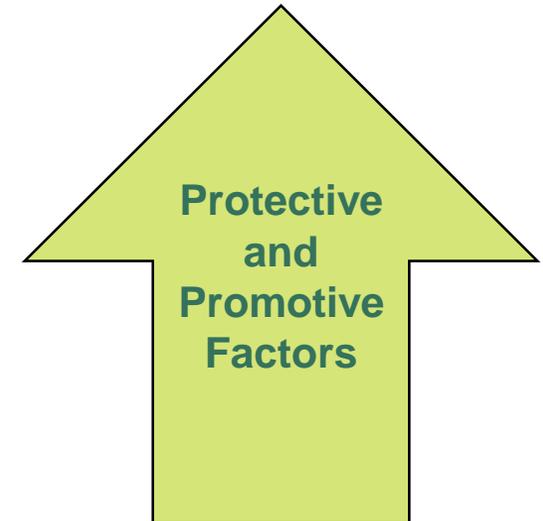
## **Using Training to Improve Child Welfare Practice**

Martha Raimon & Lisa Primus

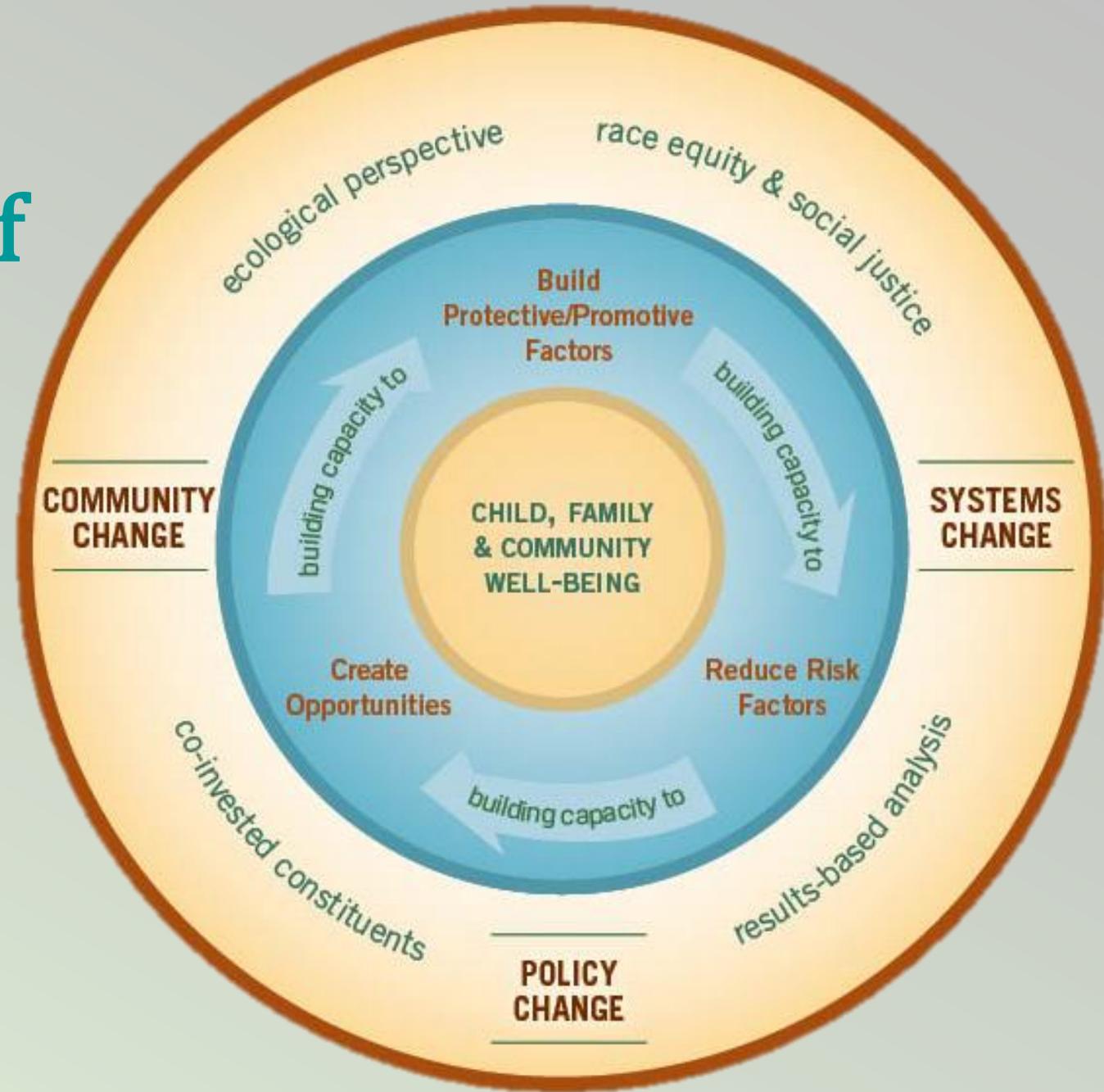
# A Protective and Promotive Factors Approach



- **Protective Factors:** conditions or attributes that **mitigate or eliminate risk**
- **Promotive Factors:** conditions or attributes **actively enhance well-being**



# CSSP Theory of Change



When children are young, the family environment is very important. That's why Strengthening Families emphasizes parents' protective factors as a pathway to children's well-being.



**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children



**PROTECTIVE FACTORS strengthening families**  
A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

**Protective and Promotive Factors Training Across Development**

**PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS**

**YOUTH THRIVE**  
PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

**YOUTH THRIVE PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS**

- Youth Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Adolescent Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Cognitive and Social-Emotional Competence in Youth



As children grow, their own sense of self and experiences in family, peer, school and community contexts are very important. Youth Thrive emphasizes protective and promotive factors as a pathway to well-being during adolescence and in the transition to adulthood.

# Protective & Promotive Factors

Child & Adolescent  
Development

Social Connections

Cognitive & Social-  
Emotional Competencies

Concrete Supports in  
Times of Need

Resilience

Guiding Premises

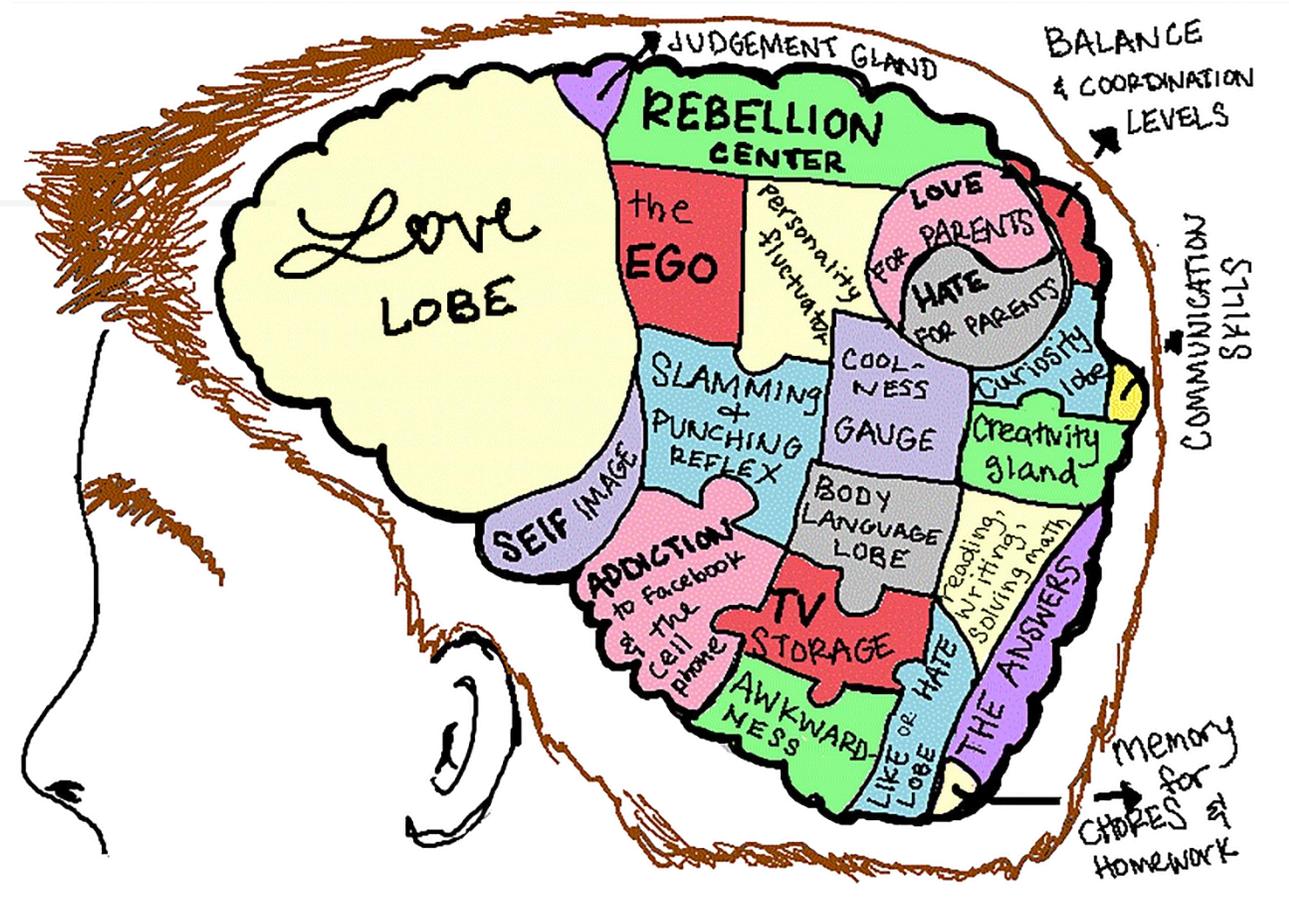
# An Approach, Not a Model



- Research-based and evidence-informed
- Applied in any setting that serves youth 9-26 years of age
- Implemented through small but significant changes in policies, practice, licensing, contracting and training

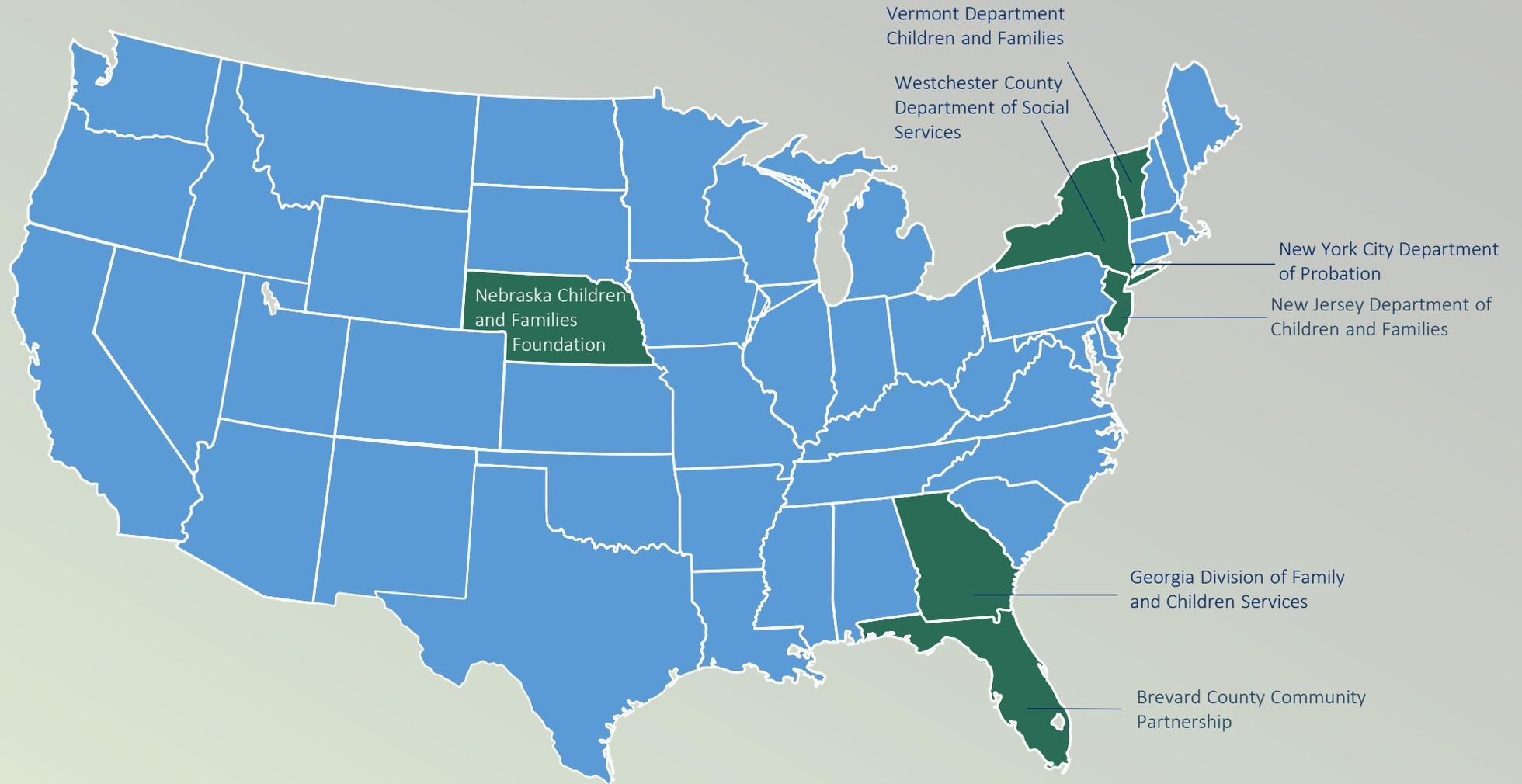
# Alignment with Developmental Science

- Paying attention to what research tells us:
  - Critical period of development – early childhood and adolescence
  - Importance of nurturing relationships throughout childhood and adolescence
  - Effect of trauma on development, behavior and outcomes
- Providing tools and guidance to align practice with what we know about child and youth development



THE AVERAGE  
TEENAGE BRAIN

# Youth Thrive Learning Community





# Resilience

- Learned process -- not a personality trait
- Builds up through exposure to challenges
- Helped by supportive environment & people
- Nurtured through deliberate policies & practices

# Social Connections

## Social Connections Offer

- Emotional support
- Informational support
- Instrumental support
- Spiritual support

## How Do Young People Tell Us They Have Issues with Relationships?

- Avoiding contact
- Fading into the background
- Showing anger
- Making threats
- Negating our importance
- Setting up negative reactions
- Destroying property
- Making insulting comments

These are strategies for self-protection.

# *Knowledge of Adolescent Development*

## *Understand:*

- *adolescent biopsychosocial development with particular attention to brain development*
- *ways to promote healthy development*
- *the impact of trauma and toxic stress*



## Positive Stress, Stress & Toxic Stress

- *Positive Stress*: Biological and emotional responses that results from brief negative experiences; necessary for the development of a healthy stress response system
- *Stress*: Biological and emotional responses to challenging, threatening or traumatic experiences
- *Toxic Stress*: Biological and emotional responses that results from strong, frequent and prolonged adversity

# 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
  - Grounded in respect and trust



# Cognitive & Social-Emotional Competence



## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

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



## POSITIVE EMOTIONS

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



## PERSONAL AGENCY

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



## 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

# Protective & Promotive Factors

Child & Adolescent  
Development

Social Connections

Cognitive & Social-  
Emotional Competencies

Concrete Supports in  
Times of Need

Resilience

Guiding Premises

# BE DIRECT!

## Don't hide behind vague concepts

### From:

- Cultural humility
- Diversity



### Calling out:

- Racism
- White Supremacy
- Privilege
- Implicit bias

# Change the Narrative

## Lesson 2

We tend to describe adolescents by their behavior. You might hear things like: manipulative, dishonest, aggressive, explosive and attention-seeking. ***Note that these are all negative descriptions. Behavior could also be described and understood as: protective, sign of protest, insightful, determined, cautious and outspoken.***”

- Replacing words that are insensitive and can evoke images of violence.

### **Original:**

Armed with new understanding. . .

### **Edited Version**

*Equipped* with new understanding. . .

Ensuring that examples are inclusive of the experiences of youth of color, indigenous youth and LGBTQ youth.

# Guiding Premises

1. People are best supported by practitioners who understand and recognize the importance of **self-awareness** and **self-care** in their own professional practice.



# Guiding Premises

2. People are best supported by practitioners who are **aware of the impact of traumatic stress and understand the need to use trauma-informed methods**. It is most concerned with what has *happened* to the person and the subsequent impact to development rather than on the youth's behavior (Bloom, 1997, Bloom, Farragher, 2013).

# Guiding Premises

3. People are best served by practitioners who focus on assets and use **strengths-based approaches** with an awareness of current research regarding neuroscience and child and adolescent development.



# Guiding Premises

4. People are best supported by practitioners who **understand that attachments, connections and relationships are a primary source of growth and learning**. It is in relationships and through the use of relationships that we experience ourselves, learn, practice new skills and grow as humans.



# Guiding Premises

5. People are best supported by practitioners who **understand the role of race, racism and bias** and the ways in which race, other identities, privilege and power shape a person's life, as well as the practitioner's own life.



# Guiding Premises

6. People are best supported by practitioners who **understand and provide culturally responsive services**. Being culturally responsive means we take into account our culture, the culture of those individuals we serve, of the larger community and the culture that is created within our programs and organizations.



# Group Activity

1. What does the premise mean to your group?
2. How does your current practice support this premise?
3. What are examples of the premise in your practice? (what would you see, hear or feel?)

# YOUTH THRIVE™ Training

- Focuses on what young people need to THRIVE as productive and healthy citizens:
  - Best practices and trends in adolescent brain development;
  - Strategies for building the protective and promotive factors with youth; and
  - Skill building for caregivers, professionals and supportive adults.
- Delivered in a **3-day** format or sub-divided into smaller units.
- Presented by Instructors authorized by CSSP who have completed the Training for Trainers program.
- Incorporates experiential activities and self-reflection exercises.
- Includes a Participant Manual.

# Families Thrive Training

- Focuses on what young parents and their children need to Succeed and Thrive:
  - Best practices and trends in early childhood and adolescent brain development;
  - Strategies for building the protective and promotive factors with young parents, their children and families; and
  - Skill building for caregivers, professionals and supportive adults.
- Delivered in a **4-day** format or sub-divided into smaller units.
- Presented by Instructors authorized by CSSP who have completed the Training for Trainers program.
- Incorporates experiential activities and self-reflection exercises.
- Includes a Participant Manual.

# Work Currently In Progress

- Creating on-line learning modules that cover some of the knowledge content of the Youth and Families Thrive courses to reduce in-class time.
- Enhancing the participant manuals to include tip sheets targeted towards the following audiences:
  - Expectant and parenting youth;
  - Caregivers of expectant and parenting youth; and
  - Community response workers.
- Developing a 1 ½ day bridge training so that existing Youth Thrive trainers can be authorized as Families Thrive trainers.
- Implementing an certification system for trainers to be approved as Master Trainers authorized to train new trainers of both Youth Thrive and Families Thrive.

# Strategies for Implementing Youth Thrive

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- **NYC Department of Probation, Juvenile Division is using PPFs with its Individual Assessment Plans (IAP);**
- **New Jersey's Department of Children and Families modified their Transitional Living Plans to incorporate youth voice;**
- **Vermont incorporated Youth Thrive language into contracts for services statewide; and**
- **Nebraska engaged stakeholders in the Youth Thrive approach.**

# Questions?

<https://www.cssp.org/>

<https://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies>

<https://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/youththrive>

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