Supporting Questions for Youth

The following questions are provided as a tool to assist you in gathering more meaningful Youth Centered Information. This tool is optional.

These questions are not intended to be asked consecutively as if holding an interview. They are meant to help you reflect on the things you already know and give examples of questions you might ask, when appropriate and necessary, in order to discover the young person’s perspective and the perspective of their guardian in a particular area.

Ask the youth, their family or guardian, and those who are close to them what their current priorities are; what is happening right now that the youth or family wants to keep the same or do more of? What are they pleased about? Are there issues of concern that need to be addressed? Are there things that might need to change?

Seek to understand more about what matters to the young person and their family or guardian by asking follow-up questions, like those included here.

**Communication**

*Is there a particular way that the youth likes best to receive or express information? Spoken? Written? Signed? In a particular language?*

*How does the youth feel about their own communication? What do they see as their strengths? Where would they like to enhance or improve skills? Where would they like more support?*

*What are the ways the youth is really effective in expressing thoughts and emotions? Writing? Singing?*

*Dancing? Laughing? Crying? Silence? Movement? Stillness? How can others find ways to look and listen closely and understand what the youth is expressing?*

*Does the youth feel heard? Do they feel they able to express themselves openly and safely?*

*Are there things the youth wants to feel more comfortable communicating? Emotional support? Comfortable environment? Time to really think about they want to convey?*

*Do they want others to communicate with them in a particular way? Calm voice? Repeating information?*

*Using a particular language? In writing? With signs? With pictures?*

*How does the youth communicate needs, wants and emotions?*

*How do people know the youth is happy? What do they look like?*

*When the youth gets angry or sad, how do others know?*

*Is the youth able to communicate pain or tell someone when they are feeling ill?*

*What learning opportunities does the family/guardian have to best support the youth in exploring ways to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and needs to others? How can the family maximize available resources?*

*Does the youth know when it’s okay or appropriate to talk, who it’s okay to talk to, or what to say?*

**Life in Current Living Arrangements**

*Where does the youth live?*

*What does the youth like about their current living situation?*

*What does the youth not like or wish they could change about their current living situation?*

*Where would the youth like to live? How would they like to be living?*

*What opportunities does the youth have to learn about new places and people to widen their world and*

*expectations for their life?*

*Are there changes that need to happen for the youth to live happily?*

*Does the youth have the amount of privacy in their home they wish to have at any time to visit alone with*

*friends? Talk on the phone in private?*

*What keeps the youth from having the amount of privacy they would prefer?*

*Does the youth have a key to their home?*

*Are routines around the home important to the youth? Describe these routines.*

*What does the youth like doing around the house?*

*What does the youth not enjoy doing?*

*What helps the youth have a good day when arriving home from work or school?*

*What skills or supports does the youth want to have to contribute to the household chores and*

*responsibilities?*

*What learning opportunities does the family/guardian have to best support the youth in learning independent*

*skills? How can the family maximize available resources?*

*What has been the youth’s favorite job or work around the house?*

*How does the youth like to spend their free time?*

*What hobbies does the youth have?*

*What does the youth like to do in the spring, or summer, or fall, or winter?*

*What makes the youth most happy, most content or really enjoy their life at home?*

*What are things the youth doesn’t want to live without?*

*Are there any restrictions on the youth’s freedom in their home? Why and what are they?*

*Does the youth have friends and visitors over to their home? What agreements are in place about when and*

*who visits?*

*Where does the youth spend most of their time when they are home?*

*Are there specific items the youth values or has a close attachment to?*

*Are there any skills the youth wants to gain or things they want to learn in order to increase their*

*independence?*

*How does the youth like their room decorated?*

*Does the youth feel they are free to access the typical areas of the home like the kitchen, dining area and*

*laundry?*

*Does the youth feel respected in their home?*

*What is the after school or evening routine?*

*Will the youth keep living with their parents, or would they like to have their own home or apartment (after*

*school ends/when they are an adult)? Can the youth think of someone they might want for a roommate?*

*If the youth goes to college after high school, will they live in the dorms, at home, or someplace else?*

*What kind of help does the family need in order to support the youth in the home, or until the youth becomes*

*an adult?*

*Does the youth know what to do in case of an emergency (fire, home invasion, etc.)?*

*Is the youth’s home accessible and safe for the youth to move around freely?*

*Does the family/guardian express a desire to gain additional skills and resources to support the youth in a*

*safe and healthy home environment, including connecting with other families?*

*Does the family/guardian express a desire for extra help in order to keep the family together in the current*

*living arrangement? How can the family maximize available resources?*

**Pre-Employment/Work**

*Talking about what you want to be is a rite of childhood. Typically, the answers range from astronaut to video*

*game tester to a celebrity chef. While such a question starts a young person dreaming, often it also provides*

*valuable information to consider employment possibilities.*

*What does the youth want to be when they grow up?*

*What chores does the youth do around the house?*

*What interests does the youth have?*

*What personality traits or characteristics tell us what the youth likes or is good at?*

*What are the youth's desires, strengths and interests?*

*Do activities and school programs match the youth’s desires, strengths and interests?*

*What helps the youth have a good day when at school?*

*What does an average day look like? What should continue? What should change?*

*What chores does the youth like to do best?*

*What does the youth talk about when asked how school went today?*

*Volunteer activities – things that may build job skills*

*Is there someone in the youth’s life who can help them explore job options or career paths?*

*What is the youth doing that will help them have a job later? (chores, school work, etc.)*

*Does the youth take part in volunteer activities?*

*Are there new jobs the youth wants to try?*

*What does the employment environment need to consider to keep the youth healthy and safe?*

*What employment skills does the youth have?*

*What experiences with integrated work has the youth had in the past?*

*Does the youth have a job now?*

*Does the youth like their job? What do they like about their job? Not like?*

*Does the youth’s job match their desires, strengths and interests?*

*What jobs are bad matches? What jobs or tasks should change? What helps the youth have a good day at*

*work?*

*Does the youth want to advance in their current job?*

*Is the youth working as much as they want?*

*Is the youth making as much money as they want to make?*

*Is there something at break or lunch time that is most important? If so, be specific.*

*What does an average day look like? What should continue? What should change?*

*Is there something that worries or concerns the youth or those who support them about having an integrated*

*job?*

*What are some of the other barriers? Transportation? Financial concerns? Family responsibilities?*

*Are the other people in the youth’s life supportive of the youth and their work?*

*What type of adaptive equipment could assist in increasing job duties?*

*Has benefits planning been completed to ensure work parameters are known?*

*Does anything get in the way of the youth being (more) productive at work? What are the barriers?*

*Does the youth feel information is discussed (with) them and not (about) them in their place of employment?*

*Does the youth have a transition plan to prepare them for adult life?*

*Does the family/guardian have necessary guidance/information to help support the youth in navigating the*

*transitioning processes?*

**School and Lifelong Learning**

*What does the school day look like?*

*What does the youth want to learn to have things that are important to them?*

*What jobs has the youth asked to learn?*

*What activities or crafts has the youth asked to learn?*

*What jobs or activities has the youth indicated they'd like to try?*

*Is the youth currently in school? What school? What grade?*

*Does the youth like school? Are there things that could change for school to be better?*

*What does the youth need to learn to work more independently?*

*Could the youth benefit from learning to create or manage a budget?*

*Has the team learned from other planning sessions or team meetings (PATH, ELP, SIS, etc.) areas where*

*increased skill or knowledge would benefit the youth?*

*Are there other learning opportunities or education to be considered?*

*What is the youth's favorite subject at school?*

*What school activities does the youth like to participate in?*

*How does the youth get from home to school?*

*What types of supports does the youth need at school. Is there any type of specific equipment needed?*

*Does anything get in the way of the youth being more productive at school? What are the barriers?*

*What helps the youth have a good day at school?*

*Does the youth have a tutor? If not, would they want one?*

*Is the youth interested in higher education? Are there supports in place so the youth can pursue higher*

*education?*

*Does the youth have a transition plan to prepare them for adult life?*

*Does the family/guardian have necessary guidance/information to help support the youth in navigating the*

*transitioning processes?*

*Does the youth have information about financial aid if they want to pursue higher education?*

*Does the youth have opportunities for orientation/introduction to higher education or vocational/career*

*education?*

*Does the youth have opportunities to participate in the school’s after school program? What supports does*

*the youth need to fully participate?*

**Community and Social Life**

*Are there particular people the youth spends time with at school?*

*How does the youth interact with friends?*

*What types of environments does the youth enjoy (large, small, quiet, noisy, etc.)? Not enjoy?*

*Does the youth have as many friends as they would like?*

*Does the youth access their community regularly? (Where and when?)*

*Does the youth get involved in community activities on their own? If not, who helps them and how?*

*What would the youth like to do independently but is not doing right now or needs support to do it?*

*How could the youth be more involved in activities or events in their community?*

*What activities does the youth enjoy doing?*

*Are there groups or clubs the youth wants to join? If so, what supports are needed to participate?*

*Does the youth, their family or others know what activities are available in the community?*

*Is the youth able to access materials to learn of the activities occurring in their community?*

*How does the youth contribute to their community?*

*Does the youth want to volunteer in their community?*

*Where are the youth’s favorite places to go around town? What about out of town?*

*Where does the youth have the most fun?*

*What activities does the youth not enjoy? Why?*

*Are there specific characteristics of supporters that the youth prefers or would like to avoid?*

*Does the youth need assistance dressing for the weather/season?*

*Are there any special clothing considerations for the youth?*

*Are there restrictions on the youth’s freedom to independently access the community? What are they and*

*why?*

*Are there things important to the youth that conflict with their safety supports or being a valued member of*

*the community?*

*Are there any specific subjects or activities the youth likes to have conversation about?*

*What supports, if any, are needed while interacting with others?*

*What would assist the youth to be involved in their community?*

*Does the youth know when to register to vote and want to learn more about the political process?*

*Is the family/guardian of the youth connected with other families in the community? How can the family*

*maximize available resources?*

**Relationships**

*What are the relationships the youth currently has in their life?*

*Who are the youth's friends?*

*Who are the youth’s favorite people to be around at home, at work or at school?*

*Who does the youth help and support?*

*Who does the youth try to avoid? Why?*

*Are there concerns from others about relationships in the youth's life?*

*Are there people others think should be avoided?*

*Who are people the youth would like to be around?*

*Are there important family relationships in the youth’s life?*

*Would the youth like to get closer to anyone particular?*

*How does the youth keep in touch with their favorite people?*

*Are there people the youth wishes to have more time with?*

*Are there supports that need to be put into place for the youth to be with the people they chose?*

*Does the youth express being lonely? Has anyone asked them if they are lonely?*

*Are there old friends the youth wishes to connect with?*

*Are there people who the youth wants to talk more with?*

*Does the youth feel good about their relationships?*

*What would the youth like to change about any particular relationship?*

*Does the youth feel safe and comfortable with the relationships they have at home or school?*

*Does the youth feel they have a trusted friend to confide in about private or special things?*

*Does the youth feel they have someone to go to when they need advice?*

*Does the youth get sought out by particular people for friendship?*

*Does the youth have stories they like to share about friendship or family?*

*What does the youth like to do when spending time with others?*

*Does the youth interact with others online, such as through social media or online games?*

*Is the family/guardian of the youth connected with other families in the community? How can the family*

*maximize available resources?*

**Characteristics of people who support this child best**

*Are there particular people that the youth works best with?*

*Does the youth have specific requests about the skills and abilities a helper has?*

*What makes the youth sad? What makes the youth frustrated? Are there particular people that bring this out*

*in the youth?*

*Are there personality traits the youth enjoys being around?*

*Are there personalities the youth prefers to avoid?*

*Does the youth want to work with someone who has any special interests? Or is the youth opposed to*

*working with someone who doesn’t have the same interests as they do?*

*Are there physical traits that make the youth feel uncomfortable and they wish to avoid?*

*Does the youth feel respected by the people who support them?*

*Does the youth express satisfaction with their provider, or feel comfortable asking for a new provider?*

*Does the youth know who to ask when they want to change the person who is helping them?*

*Does the youth have specific requests about the skills and abilities a helper has?*

*Does the youth or family/guardian have requested training information for the helper to pursue?*

*Does the youth or family/guardian have information to help find helpers? How can they maximize available*

*resources?*

*Does the youth have a need for a helper who speaks a specific language?*

**Health and Wellness**

*What is needed for the youth to be healthy and safe?*

*What does "healthy and safe" mean to the youth and their family?*

*What about the youth’s routines (morning, work, afternoon or evening) do people need to know that keeps*

*the youth healthy and safe?*

*Do the youth and their family feel heard and respected by their doctor and other medical professionals in*

*their life?*

*Was the youth involved in choosing the medical professionals in their life?*

*What works best when the youth goes to a doctor appointment?*

*What environmental factors help the youth stay healthy and safe?*

*What does the youth do to improve their wellness? (Exercise, meditation, nutrition management, other*

*activities or regimens)*

*Describe any supports that assist the youth in managing their medications or treatments. Does the youth*

*have a pill reminder? Need a little oversight? Verbal reminders or cueing? Injections done by someone*

*else?*

*Does the youth take medication independently?*

*Does the youth understand what their medication does for them and is the youth able to make an informed*

*choice knowing the benefits and side effects of taking medication?*

*Are there cultural considerations around medical care that are important to know?*

*Are there transportation needs getting to and from medical appointments?*

*Are there conflicts between health supports and what is important to the youth?*

*Are there current health and safety supports that could be learned by the youth, assisting them in becoming*

*more independent?*

*Are there any health and safety needs for which the youth does not follow the physician's recommended*

*orders?*

*Does the youth feel they have appropriate privacy regarding their medical information? At home? At work?*

*At school?*

*Is the youth transitioning from a pediatrician to a primary care provider? Is the youth involved in choosing*

*their doctor?*

*Does the youth have opportunities to learn about healthy foods and nutrition, and how to make healthy*

*snacks?*

*Does the youth have opportunities to learn about therapies that can be replaced with regular physical*

*activities such as working out in a gym, swimming, using a treadmill or elliptical, doing aerobics or yoga, or*

*taking a dance class?*

*Does the youth understand the changes in their body and their reproductive health?*

*Does the youth and their family/guardian understand the youth's health insurance coverage, and how they*

*get coverage into adulthood?*

*Does the youth qualify for Medicaid or Medicare to help with medical costs? Does the youth and their family/*

*guardian have basic understanding of public benefits, or want to have information to consider applying?*

*Does the family/guardian need help to look for health care practitioners who focus on children or adults?*

*Is the family/guardian of the youth connected with other families in the community? How can the family*

*maximize available resources?*

**Financial Life**

*Who manages the youth’s money?*

*Does the youth have any interest in money?*

*Is there anything special the youth would like to buy or have?*

*What skills does the youth have using money?*

*Are there supports that are needed for the youth to carry money?*

*Does the youth need financial benefits counseling?*

*What control does the youth have with their money? How do they choose what they will buy and how much*

*they will spend?*

*Does the youth want to have more control over their money?*

*Is the youth currently receiving Social Security benefits?*

*Does the youth want to learn about savings and investments for their future?*

*Does the youth have information about financial aid if they want to pursue higher education?*

*Does the youth have opportunities to learn more about being financially independent in their adult life?*

**Protection and Advocacy**

*Does the youth feel heard? Do they feel they are able to express themselves openly and safely?*

*Does the youth feel they get to have a say in decisions about how to live life?*

*How can the youth make more choices and decisions? About activities? About home life?*

*What supports (daily living, medical, behavioral) does the youth disagree with?*

*Are there any safety concerns that should be addressed to protect the youth from exploitation?*

*How does the youth advocate for themselves?*

*Are there ways to support increased advocacy?*

*Is the youth involved with advocacy groups or would they be interested in joining such a group?*

*Does the youth ask for the things they want and need to feel good and be happy?*

*Does the youth feel confident to tell others what they don’t like or makes them feel bad?*

*Has the youth been given information about their rights, responsibilities, options and availability of resources*

*in a way that will help them make informed decisions?*

*Does the youth know who the trusted individuals are when they need help or need to report a concern?*

*Is something important to the youth not happening because specific health and safety supports are in place*

*that prevent it from happening?*

*Does the youth feel safe and know what to do or who to go to if they do not feel safe?*

*Do the youth and their family know how to request a change in provider, make complaints, request a change*

*in their living situation, etc.?*

*Is the youth making choices and decisions for themselves with support from family, teachers, and others in*

*their life? If not, why not?*

*Does the youth have opportunities to learn more about safety and security issues? Does the family/*

*guardian?*

*Does the youth know how to stay safe when they are out with friends or in new places?*

*Does the youth or the family/guardian know who to call or tell if they are being bullied or victimized?*

*Has the youth and the family/guardian been provided information on alternatives to guardianship, to prepare*

*them for transitioning to adult life?*

**Cultural Considerations**

*What language is spoken in the youth's home?*

*Describe any of the youth’s spiritual, religious and/or cultural considerations.*

*Does the youth like to go to a particular church, temple, mosque (or other)? If so, who are the people the*

*youth is connected to there?*

*What other spiritual or cultural activities mean something to the youth?*

*Does the youth need privacy to respect their cultural, spiritual or religious traditions?*

*Are there spiritual or cultural events/considerations the youth may want to participate in?*

*Does the youth have a favorite holiday? What is it? How do they celebrate it?*

*Are there family traditions the youth wishes to uphold and pass on?*

*Are there considerations about food that are important to know so the youth can maintain their cultural*

*traditions and uphold their spiritual or religious values?*

*Are there considerations about clothing that are important to know so the youth can maintain their cultural*

*traditions and uphold their spiritual or religious values?*

*Are there other items the youth must acquire or maintain respectfully to meet cultural, spiritual or religious*

*needs?*

*Are there stories that are important for the youth to hear or tell to maintain their cultural or spiritual*

*traditions?*

*Does the youth have an advance directive? Does the youth or their family/guardian need information to help*

*make decisions on their health care wishes?*

*Does the youth have a preference/expectation of others to communicate or interact with them based on their*

*identity?*

*Does the family/guardian want to connect with other families in the community?*

**Sexuality and/or Intimate Relationships**

*What skills does the youth have for safe relationships? Is the youth able to advocate for themselves and*

*keep themselves safe?*

*Are there classes the youth is interested in to learn more about safe relationships?*

*Is the youth interested in having a girlfriend or boyfriend?*

*Are there concerns from others about the youth’s ability to have a safe intimate relationship?*

*Do others’ beliefs about the youth’s sexuality conflict with the youth’s ability to have the life they desire?*

*Does the youth have opportunities to go out on dates?*

*Are there peer support groups or resources the youth could access?*

*Is the youth learning to use social media safely and responsibility (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat,*

*etc.) to connect with and maintain contact with friends?*

*Does the youth or their family/guardian need information to help the youth prepare for their choices?*

*Does the family/guardian want to connect with other families in the community?*

**Mental Health**

*Is the youth showing warning signs of mental health problems?*

*Does the youth have a mental health diagnosis?*

*Is the youth currently seeking or receiving mental health services? From whom?*

*Does the youth feel like the services they are receiving are effective?*

*Does the youth have concerns about their mental health for which they want support?*

*Do others have concerns about the youth’s mental health?*

*Are others concerned the youth is putting themselves or others at risk?*

*Was the youth involved with choosing who provides them with mental health support? If not, why?*

*Does the youth take medication? If so, are they effective?*

*Does the family/guardian have necessary guidance/information to help support the youth?*

*Is the family/guardian connected with other families in the community? How can the family maximize*

*available resources?*

*Are there peer support groups or resources the youth could access?*

**Behavioral Health**

*Does the youth ever try to hurt themselves or others?*

*Are there behaviors that are concerning the family or others?*

*Does the youth have a behavior support plan?*

*Is someone requesting a behavior support plan?*

*Is there something that needs to be understood about the youth's behavior to help them get what they need?*

*Are there other professionals that could help the youth?*

*Are there others who know the youth well who could help?*

*Are there particular things that trigger the youth?*

*What people, environments or things help the youth better manage their behavior?*

**Transportation**

*What type of transportation does the youth need? What supports are needed to be in a vehicle?*

*Are there safety concerns while the youth is riding in a vehicle?*

*Are there barriers to the youth going to school, working or taking part in other activities because of the lack*

*of transportation?*

*Is the youth able to access the community in a safe and reliable way?*

*How does the youth get to and from the places they want and need to go?*

*Can the youth drive or do they wish to pursue a driver license?*

*Does the youth feel they are able to access the community when they want and need to?*

*Does the youth want to learn more about how to access the community with more independence?*

*What skills does the youth currently have for using and accessing transportation independently?*

*How does the youth currently gain independence through access to transportation? (bus, bike, walk, roll,*

*etc.)*

*What are no-cost transportation opportunities available to the youth?*

**Assistive Devices or Technology**

*What could improve the youth’s ability to be independent? At home? At work? At school?*

*What type of assistive technology would be a benefit? For what?*

*What adaptive equipment needs to be purchased, maintained or updated?*

*Describe any adaptive equipment and related supports the youth uses.*

*Are there AT devices being used at school that would also be helpful at home?*

*Is there education that needs to happen or resources found to learn about options for assistive devices and*

*technology?*

**Environmental Modifications**

*What could improve the youth’s ability to be independent?*

*Are there areas and items in the youth’s home they can’t access independently for safety or mobility*

*reasons? (rooms, tables and other furniture, counters, sinks, appliances)*

*Are there environmental adaptations to consider? At work? At home? At school?*

*Are there places in the community the youth could access or access more independently if they had a more*

*accessible vehicle or modifications to a vehicle?*

*Is there education that needs to happen or resources found to learn about options for environmental*

*modifications?*

*Does the youth and their family/guardian have information to help them with considerations when choosing*

*a place to move to, as the youth plans for adult life?*

**Hopes and Dreams**

*What does the youth want to do or be?*

*Are there any goals the family has for the youth?*

*What are the things the youth hopes to have, do, find or gain in their life?*

*Are there dreams that are immediately possible with the right support in place?*

*What could happen to support the youth to realize their dreams?*

*What things can the youth do to realize their dreams?*

*Is there a special vacation the youth wants to go on?*

*Is there some special thing the youth would like to purchase?*

*If the youth could go anywhere, where would they go?*

*If the youth could do anything, what would they do?*

*Is there someone special the youth would love to have in their life?*

*What kind of job does the youth hope to have?*

*What does the youth want to be when they grow up?*

*If the youth could live anywhere, where would they live?*

*What are other people’s hopes and dreams for the youth?*

*What would others love to see the youth achieve in their life?*

*Does the youth think there are barriers that prevent their dreams from happening?*

*Does the youth know about the possibilities? Is the youth informed about possibilities? Is the youth*

*encouraged to dream?*

*Does the youth need/want help to lead a support team, share their goals, hopes and dreams at educational*

*and other support meetings?*

*Does the youth and their family/guardian want help to review and prioritize the youth’s goals, hopes and*

*dreams that are shared at various meetings?*

**Other Individualized Planning Documents**

*Has the team learned anything new around what’s most important to or for the child from other planning?*

*Does the child have an Individual Education Plan, Individual Plan of Employment, Child Centered Plans (Maps, Paths, etc.), One Page Profiles, etc.?*

*Has this child had a planning meeting in the past? If so, what type of planning meeting and when was the last update?*