Put It Into Practice #3
Questions For Older Children And Youth About Their Strengths And Needs

When should I use this resource? DURING and AFTER a natural disaster occurs

Directions: Use the sample questions below to ensure that school-age children, adolescents, and transition-age youth have a voice in identifying their own strengths and needs in four key areas during and after a natural disaster: information and resources, social connections, physical safety and wellness, and emotional safety and wellness. This is not an exhaustive list, and you may want to add your own questions.

Information & Resources
Example questions for older children and youth
• Is there anything you want to know about [natural disaster/pandemic]?
• Is there anything you want to know about how the services you receive from [child welfare agency] may be different during [natural disaster/pandemic]?
• What types of support would help you during [disaster/pandemic]? (Prompts: food, clothing, housing, financial assistance, education, employment, mental health or substance abuse treatment)
• What other information or supports might you need during [disaster/pandemic]?

Social Connections
Example questions for older children and youth
• How are things going at home? (Prompts: biological, foster, and/or kinship home)
• How are your family members doing? (Prompts: biological, foster, and/or kin)
• Are you getting the support you need from your family and friends? If not, what do you need?
• Are there family members or friends that you need help getting in touch with?

Physical Safety & Wellness
Example questions for older children and youth
• How are you feeling physically? Are you having health concerns? If so, what?
• How well are you taking care of yourself? (Prompts: exercise, sleep, nutrition, self-care, hobbies, medical care, mental health care)
• Are your basic needs being met? (Prompts: sleep, having enough food, safe housing, enough money, access to education/employment, medical care, and mental health care)
• Is there anything that is making you feel physically unsafe right now? If yes, what’s making you feel unsafe? What would you need in order to feel safe?

Emotional Safety & Wellness
Example questions for older children and youth
• How are you feeling about the [natural disaster/pandemic]?
• It’s common to feel stressed, worried, irritable, or depressed when there’s a natural disaster or pandemic. Are you having any of those feelings? If so, tell me about what you’re feeling.
• Some people use more alcohol/drugs during a natural disaster or pandemic. Is this a concern for you?
• Are you getting the emotional support you need?
• What type of emotional support would be helpful to you?
• What’s going well for you? Are there ways [child welfare agency] can help you continue to do well?