

thriv·ol·o·gy

Thrivopolis

Facilitator Guide





Thrivopolis

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About Thrivology

Every young person has a right to bodily autonomy and sexual health and well-being. To realize these rights, young people need access to sexual and reproductive health programs and services.

We see you—the teachers and educators, the counselors and clinicians, the caring adults—working hard every day to make this happen. With easy access to the latest research, along with practical, helpful opportunities and resources, we know you are better supported and able to provide young people with the very best care and education they deserve.

That’s why Healthy Teen Network and Johns Hopkins Center for Adolescent Health have partnered to create Thrivology.

Thrivology creates resources using the latest research on how to provide the very best sexual and reproductive health education and care, so young people may thrive.

Thrivology is a U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Population Affairs-funded research-to-practice center. In collaboration with our Research Alliance of experts in the field and Thrivology Youth Leaders, we work to expand the delivery of trauma-informed, healing-centered practices in adolescent sexual and reproductive health programming and care.

Learn more on our website, healthyteennetwork.org/thrivology/

About Healthy Teen Network

We are Healthy Teen Network.

We believe every young person has the right to be who they are and love who they love.

That means living in a world that affirms and celebrates them for who they are. That means having the agency, opportunity, and access to make decisions about their bodies, relationships, and futures. (And feel good doing it!) That includes decisions about if, when, and how to parent—or not.

And we see you—teachers and educators, counselors and clinicians, caring adults—helping them do this. Every day, providing honest, affirming care and education, and empowering the next generation to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

At Healthy Teen Network, we know you do your best when you’re connected to great opportunities, resources, and others working in sexual and reproductive health. That’s the magic of the Network—and why we’re here every day to help professionals learn, improve, create, and advocate.

Welcome to *Thrivopolis*

Thrivopolis is a game and discussion designed to spark connections and inspire collaboration among a broad array of youth-supporting professionals. More than just a game, it's an experience that invites educators, clinicians, and other professionals to reflect on the labyrinth of programs and services confronting young people and the professionals who support them. Recognizing that these hard-to-navigate systems often fall short in addressing the holistic needs of young people, *Thrivopolis* challenges players to reimagine a world that truly supports young people on their journeys to heal—and thrive.

The dynamic, fast-changing environment of *Thrivopolis* mirrors the ever-evolving social, political, and economic environment of the real world. Throughout the game and discussion, players are encouraged to think big—really big—about what is possible when we expand our focus from being mindful of the trauma young people may experience to imagine visionary spaces where young people can heal from trauma and thrive in all areas of life. This approach requires that players think holistically about opportunities for change—considering both the range of resources professionals can provide to young people and the shifts needed to heal systems and structures that may be causing harm.

In sum, *Thrivopolis* aims to:

- Spark dialogue among youth-supporting professionals about innovative approaches to fostering healing and thriving in a challenging landscape of programs and services.
- Inspire players to explore practical solutions and real-world examples that extend beyond trauma-informed care to healing-centered opportunities.
- Encourage a systems-thinking perspective, empowering players to challenge structural disparities and identify resources that foster holistic healing.

Through play and discussion, professionals will:

- Gain deeper insights into the systemic challenges impacting young people.
- Develop a shared vision for creating environments that promote healing and thriving.
- Identify actionable strategies to apply within their organizations and communities.

The instructions that follow provide facilitators with guidance on how to play and discuss *Thrivopolis* with one or more groups of youth-supporting professionals.

Are you ready to enter the visionary world of *Thrivopolis*?



Thrivopolis

90-Minute Workshop

Workshop Planning

Step 1. Determine how many games you'll need.

Thrivopolis is designed to be played by group(s) of 3 to 6 players. One or more facilitators may run concurrent games with small groups of players. You'll need one game for each small group.

Step 2. Order games.

Order copies of *Thrivopolis* from thrivology.com. Allow time for delivery.

Tip: Each game includes one Player Guide with directions. Download and print extras from Thrivology.com.

Step 3. Assemble games.

To save workshop time, facilitators may punch out gameboard squares and organize card decks prior to the the first workshop.

Workshop Facilitation

Workshop Length – 90+ minutes

Longer workshops are encouraged to provide more time for game play and debrief discussions. Facilitators should adjust times for each section below if facilitating a longer session.

10 minutes	Welcome, introductions, icebreaker, and team assembly
5 minutes	Introduce game
35 minutes	Round 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Round 1 instructions and set up gameboards • 5 minutes• Play • minimum of 15 minutes• Discussion • minimum of 15 minutes
35 minutes	Round 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Round 2 instructions and prioritize resource cards • 5 minutes• Play • minimum of 15 minutes• Discussion • minimum of 15 minutes
5 minutes	Wrap up

Materials

- **Games (one per small group).** Each game includes 48 gameboard squares, one deck of event cards, one deck of resource cards, one deck of character cards, at least one character piece per player, and at least one Player Guide per small group.
- **Player writing supplies.** Pens and/or pencils and blank sheets of paper (size optional) for players to take notes during discussion, share contact information, etc.
- **Facilitator writing supplies.** Markers (Sharpies or dry-erase markers depending on room setup), easel and easel pad paper (if not using a whiteboard), tape (if placing easel pad paper on walls).

Setup

Each small group needs access to a flat surface big enough to hold an 8 by 6 grid of gameboard squares and card decks.

Tip: To save workshop time, facilitators may set up the gameboard squares and card decks for Round 1 for each small group before the workshop, following the Player Guide.

Procedure

1. Set the stage • before meeting start time

Create a welcoming environment where participants feel comfortable playing and sharing.

Tip: Looking for more information on how to create a welcoming environment? Check out [this resource](#).

2. Welcome, Introductions, & Icebreaker • approximately 10 minutes

Welcome & Introductions. Facilitator should introduce themselves, briefly explain their role (to facilitate game play and discussion), and then ask players to quickly introduce themselves. Method for introductions is influenced by number of people and time available.

Icebreaker. Ask participants to share their favorite game as a child and why. Players can share with their small group or with the overall group depending on the total number of players and amount of time available. Facilitator can also use icebreaker for introductions—players introduce themselves and share their favorite game at the same time.

Note: Facilitators can choose a different icebreaker, but using one is highly recommended. The icebreaker choice should consider the group size and available time.

Form small groups. Each small group should have three to six players. Facilitators are encouraged to consider multiple factors when determining how to form small groups (i.e., grouping players with similar vs. different roles; grouping players from the same organization vs. different ones, etc.).

3. Introduce game • *approximately 5 minutes*

Distribute and introduce games. Ask each group to open their box and unpack components. Introduce each component included the game box: two-sided gameboard squares, event cards, resource cards, character cards, character pieces and Player Guide.

Orient players to the blue side of the game box (or page 7 of some Player Guide versions) and ask for a volunteer to read aloud the game description beginning “In the wake of the Great Unraveling...”

Tip: Do your best to keep Round 2 instructions a secret so that players are surprised by the opportunity to collaborate. Suggest that players do not look at the Round 2 instructions until instructed.

4. Play Round 1 of *Thrivopolis* • *approximately 35 minutes*

Set up gameboards (5 minutes). Have players refer to “Round 1 Instructions: How to Set Up” in the Player Guide (pages 8 and 9 in some versions). Review the instructions together, encourage questions and clarify any uncertainties, then ask each small group to set up their gameboards.

Tip: Players can select a character piece and then refer to the character cards to see what character matches their piece or players can refer to the character cards first to select who they want to play for the game.

Ask players to not make any changes to the gameboard when they finish playing Round 1. Gameboard squares and character pieces should remain in the same location for Round 2.

Time to play! Have players refer to “Round 1 Instructions: How to Play” in the Player Guide (page 10 in some versions). Review the directions and tips together, encourage questions and clarify any uncertainties, then allow at least 15 minutes for competitive gameplay.

Tip: Encourage players to focus on broad, visionary thinking during gameplay and save longer conversations on real-world constraints for discussion.

Tip: As groups will finish at different times, consider ending gameplay when most (but not all) groups have finished.

De-brief. Use the Discussion Guide on page 13 to facilitate a large group conversation on Round 1. Allow at least 15 minutes for discussion.

5. Play Round 2 of *Thrivopolis* • approximately 35 minutes

Review Round 2 instructions and prioritize resource cards (5 minutes). Have players refer to “Round 2 Instructions: How to Set Up” and “Round 2 Instructions: How to Play” in the Player Guide (pages 12 and 13 in some versions). Review the directions together, encourage questions and clarify any uncertainties, then allow at least 15 minutes for competitive gameplay.

Tip: Players should discuss and determine the order of resource cards before moving to the next step.

Time to play! Allow at least 15 minutes for collaborative gameplay.

De-brief. Use the discussion guide on page 18 to facilitate a large group conversation on Round 2. Allow at least 15 minutes for discussion.

6. Wrap-Up

Express gratitude. Thank the players for their participation.

Introduce *Thrivology.com*. Encourage players to visit the Thrivology website for additional trauma-informed and healing-centered resources for young people and professionals.

Access to game. Encourage players to consider facilitating this same workshop with others in the future. Explain that all materials needed to reproduce this workshop are available on the Thrivology website.





Thrivopolis

Discussion Guide

Overview

Facilitators should consider the questions below to help players reflect on what they learned from the game. Facilitators are also encouraged to ask questions about components of the game that seem to confuse or frustrate players. Asking players to reflect on challenging components of the game and consider how each game component represents the real world is a helpful exercise for clarity.

Time. Recommend a minimum of 15 minutes for each discussion based on 90-minute workshop.

Format. Depending on the number of players, room setup, and time available, the facilitator could:

- Direct questions to the entire group and ask for volunteers to share their thoughts.
- Ask teams to work together to respond to each question then report their response to the entire group.
- Ask teams to work together to respond to each question and add their thoughts to posters placed around the room related to each question. As the facilitator, you can review responses and guide discussion.



Round 1 Discussion

1. What are your general impressions of *Thrivopolis*?

Tip: This question is to encourage players to begin reflecting on what they experienced or learned from the game (not feedback on the game design, instructions, etc.).

2. What might the pathways represent in the real world?

Example answers:

“The maze symbolizes the challenges and obstacles individuals face when navigating through ever-changing social systems or support networks.”

“The pathways could reflect the interconnectedness of different resources and services in our communities.”

Tip: Emphasize how difficult it can be to view the system, with all its twists, turns, and roadblocks from within it, without a birds-eye view.

3. How did the event cards reflect real-world challenges and opportunities in our social and political environments?

Example answers:

“The event cards showed how funding and policy shifts, and even unexpected events impact our ability to provide support.”

“They show how quickly situations can change and how we must adapt to new circumstances.”

Tip: Emphasize how quickly institutional knowledge of the system can become outdated; emphasize the inability for any one professional or organization to navigate it alone.

Tip: Provide context-specific information or resources about relevant laws and policies, where appropriate, to ground the discussion.

4. How do you think the resource cards address trauma?

Example answers:

“The resources are focused on providing young people with resources they need to thrive. These are resources that all human beings should have access to, but often do not.”

“Some focus on meeting sexual health needs after trauma, such as an STI test, while others show the bridges that help young people reach those services, like a trusted adult to confide in.”

Tip: While some cards highlight sexual and reproductive health services that may be needed after trauma, others focus on basic needs or the bridges to access these services. Emphasize that these are just examples of the many supports a young person might need on their healing journey—and that needs often extend far beyond sexual and reproductive health. Invite participants to consider additional resources and reflect on how these supports can promote healing.

5. How did the game mechanics of searching for resources parallel the process of seeking valuable resources to support those in need in the real world?

Example answers:

“Based on your position and the position of the home square, some resources are farther away and harder to access.”

“In the real world, resources compete for any one young person’s limited time and attention.”

Tip: Emphasize how important it is for youth-supporting professionals to work together to prioritize support.

6. What might the daytime and nighttime sides of the gameboard squares represent in real life?

Example answers:

"The nighttime side represents how difficult it can be to know what resources are available and how challenging it can be to find resources."

"The nighttime side was missing several resources. This is representative of policies and practices in the real world that restrict or remove access to certain resources."

"It can still be challenging to find or access resources on the daytime side."

Tip: Emphasize how some young people live in communities that feel like the nighttime side of the board where resources and supports are unknown and limited.

7. What strategies did you employ to compete against other youth-supporting professionals?

Example answers:

"I tried to anticipate others' moves and adapt, blocking others from returning home first."

"I was too focused on gathering my resources to worry about others."

Tip: Emphasize how institutions are organized so that youth-supporting professionals too often "work in silos" for expediency's sake.

8. Why do you think specific resources were not linked to specific *Thrivopolis* characters?

Example answer:

"To remind us that our job does not limit us to the kind of resources and support we offer to youth."

Tip: Emphasize how it is important for us to think outside of our traditional siloed roles that assume only certain professions (teacher, judge, etc.) are responsible for providing access to certain resources. *Thrivopolis* is designed to challenge players to consider what might be possible if they think beyond these traditional roles.

9. Were there any surprises or unexpected outcomes during the game that reminded you of real-life uncertainties and curveballs?

Example answer:

“Despite careful planning, there were moments where luck played a significant role in the outcome.”

Tip: Emphasize that surprises and unexpected outcomes happen, sometimes even despite our best planning and preparation efforts. This reality underscores the importance of working with other youth-supporting professionals. Together, you have the ability to create a stronger and bigger safety net—for each other, as well as the young people you support.

Round 2 Discussion

1. How did it feel to collaborate compared to working individually?

Example answers:

“Collaborating required more planning and coordination early on and throughout.”

“It felt rewarding to set up other players for success—even though they captured resources, it felt like a win for me.”

Tip: Emphasize that collaboration often requires more resources, including time.

2. How did your team approach prioritizing resources? Did any challenges arise?

Example answers:

“We prioritized resources based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, focusing on physiological needs first and safety needs second.”

“Our team prioritized resources based on ‘quick wins,’ choosing the easiest ones to obtain given the current gameboard.”

Tip: Emphasize that young people have competing needs—for both healing and thriving; only through collaboration can professionals prioritize to meet needs in an appropriate order.

3. How did your team work together to secure resources?

Example answers:

“We decided to divide resources between players so that we could quickly find our resources but helped each other to navigate the gameboard so that the resources could be secured as quickly as possible.”

“We decided that as a group, we would focus on one resource at a time to make sure our gameboard flips, swaps, and rotations did not negatively impact our ability to obtain the highest priority resources.”

4. Which gameplay round reflects reality more? In other words, are real-world systems designed more for competition or collaboration?

Example answers:

“In the real world, Officer Blue and Coach Violet would not normally work together.”

“While we collaborate at the edges, for funding’s sake, we are ultimately responsible for our own numbers.”

Tip: Emphasize how professionals can work within (and outside of) systems to collaborate.

5. How might professionals take things into their own hands and collaborate across diverse youth-supporting professions?

Example answers:

“When networking, we can tell people we’ll call them directly for referrals and hold them accountable for follow-up.”

“Creating shared goals and objectives that cut across different professions can help incentivize collaboration and collective action.”

Tip: Emphasize that everyone has a role to play in crafting a world where young people thrive.

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