

Individual Protective Factors: Taking a Strengths-Based Approach

A strengths-based approach means focusing on what we **are already good at** (aka our strengths) and helping us **use those strengths** to make the best choice for ourselves, handle challenges, grow our confidence, and build strong relationships.

This worksheet will help us look at our strengths and begin to apply them to different scenarios that may come up in our lives.

Remember: When we know and practice our strengths, we can better rely on them in our day-to-day walk and when facing challenging times.

STEP 1: IDENTIFYING MY STRENGTHS

Read over the Character Strengths below. Circle the ones that you see in yourself (the ones that describe you), and the ones that others have noticed and pointed out to you.

Definitions of each are provided on the last page for your reference.

WISDOM/ KNOWLEDGE	TRANSCENDENCE				
Creativity	Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence	COURAGE	TEMPERANCE		
Curiosity	Spirituality	Bravery	Forgiveness	JUSTICE	HUMANITY
Open- Mindedness	Gratitude	Persistence	Humbleness	Fairness	Love
Love of Learning	Hope	Honesty	Carefulness	Leadership	Kindness
Perspective (Wisdom)	Humor	Enthusiasm	Self-Regulation	Teamwork	Social Intelligence

*Based on The 24 Character Strengths. VIA Institute On Character:
<https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths>*

STEP 2: REFLECTING ON MY STRENGTHS

Next, let's reflect on our strengths.

Select the top two strengths that you see in yourself and explore them further in the reflection questions.



The goal here is to really think about how these strengths come up in your day, in your actions and interactions, and in your thoughts.

STRENGTH #1: A TOP STRENGTH I SEE IN MYSELF IS...

How do you use this strength in your everyday life? How does it show itself in your actions, interactions, or thoughts?



If you're feeling stuck, it may help to think of a time when your strength helped you get through a difficult situation in the past.

STRENGTH #2: A TOP STRENGTH I SEE IN MYSELF IS...

How do you use this strength in your everyday life? How does it show itself in your actions, interactions, or thoughts?



Select two strengths others have said they see in you:

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STEP 3: STRENGTHS IN ACTION

In this step we will be reflecting and mapping how we might use our strengths (both strengths we see in ourselves and those others see in us) to accomplish a specific goal.

When we think about how our strengths help us reach goals, improve relationships, or make hard decisions, we can also learn how to use our strengths to handle challenges, overcome hurdles, and continue growing.

REFLECT: Think about a current goal you are working toward (improving a relationship, improving your health, passing a test, making a team)...

A GOAL I AM WORKING ON:

How do you think your strengths can help you move toward this goal?



If you're feeling stuck it may be helpful to think about the steps you'll need to take to accomplish this goal. Then, you can think about how your strengths would help you at each step.

REFLECT: Think about a current challenge, hurdle, or difficult situation ahead of you (broken relationship, health challenges, low grades, potential confrontation)...

CHALLENGE OR SITUATION:

How do you think your strengths can help you move through this challenge or situation?



Everyone has their own unique set of strengths. Whether these strengths come naturally, or they've been developed over time, using our strengths during challenges can often keep us grounded.



Select two strengths you would like to build!

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DEFINITIONS

Use the following definitions for the 24 Character Strengths as you move through this worksheet.

CREATIVITY

Thinking of original and productive ways to do things

Wisdom/Knowledge

CURIOSITY

Taking an interest in ongoing experiences for its own sake; exploring and discovering

Wisdom/Knowledge

OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; weighing all sides fairly

Wisdom/Knowledge

LOVE OF LEARNING

A passion for learning; a desire to learn and achieve new skills just for learning's sake

Wisdom/Knowledge

PERSPECTIVE

Being able to provide advice or lessons; seeing the “big picture,” not stuck in small details

Wisdom/Knowledge

APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE

Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence and/or skill in all domains

Transcendence

SPIRITUALITY

Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose, the meaning of life, or the universe, whether secular or non-secular

Transcendence

GRATITUDE

Being aware & thankful of/for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks

Transcendence

HOPE

Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; action-oriented, optimistic thinking

Transcendence

HUMOR

Recognizing what is amusing in situations, and offering a lighter side to others

Transcendence

BRAVERY

Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; acting on convictions even if unpopular

Courage

PERSISTANCE

Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles

Courage

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HONESTY

Presenting oneself in an authentic & sincere way; taking responsibility for your feelings & actions

Courage

ENTHUSIASM

Approaching a situation with excitement and wholeheartedly

Courage

FORGIVENESS

Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' flaws & imperfections; not being vengeful

Temperance

HUMBLENESS

Not bragging, or seeking attention; accurately evaluating accomplishments, and letting accomplishments speak

Temperance

CAREFULNESS

Being careful about one's choices; not taking unnecessary risk; consider consequences of one's actions

Temperance

SELF-REGULATION

Controlling one's feelings & actions; disciplined; ability to remain calm when facing challenges

Temperance

FAIRNESS

Treating others justly; not letting personal feelings and bias get in the way of decisions about others

Justice

LEADERSHIP

Ability to organize or encourage others to work toward a shared goal, or to solve a problem

Justice

TEAMWORK

Working well as a member of a group; being loyal to the group and its success

Justice

LOVE

Valuing close relationships with others, and consistently deepening and contributing to that closeness

Humanity

KINDNESS

Being generous with others, giving your time, resources, & support to others; nurturing & caring for others

Humanity

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Being aware of others' feelings and motives; ability to "read the room" and act accordingly

Humanity



To take the full VIA Institute on Character Character Strengths Survey from VIA Institute on Character, head over to viacharacter.org and take the FREE survey!

