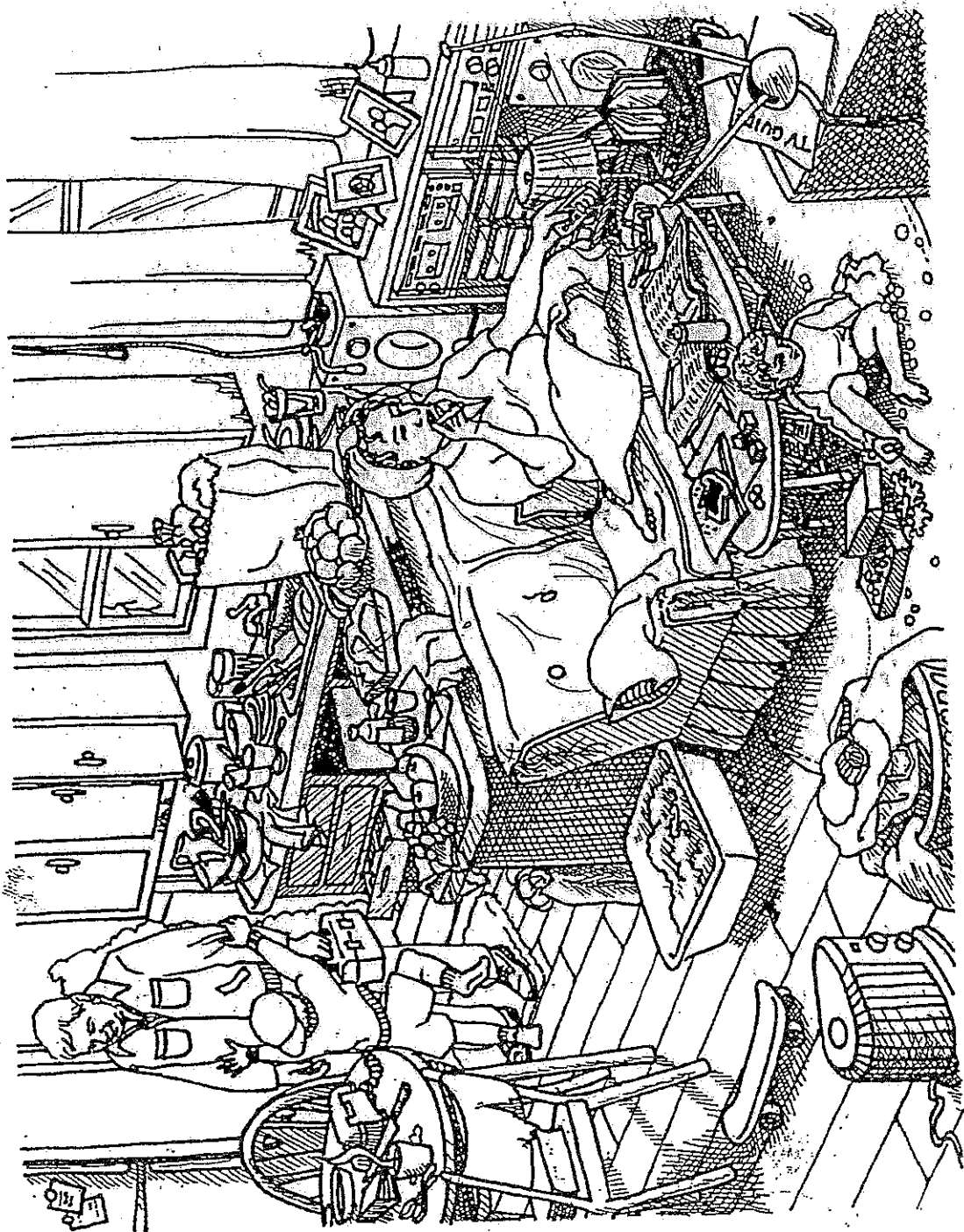




Family's strengths line drawing

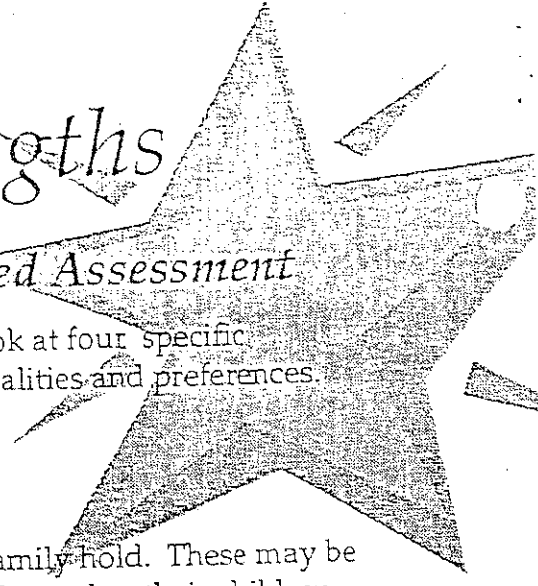


Camille Doucet 2008

Chart D: Examples of Reframing Deficits as Strengths

 <i>A documented deficit...</i>	 <i>May indicate this strength...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argumentative • Rebellious • Thrill-seeker • Runs away from home • Skips school to be with friends • Has tantrums and outbursts • Manipulative • Attention seeking • Close-mouthed • Class Clown • Disabled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates for himself/herself • Courageous • Willing to try new approaches • Takes action • Is sociable • Expressive • Good at controlling environment • Looks to attach to someone • Cautious, protective • Creative, good humor • Learns detours around roadblocks.

Assessing Strengths



What to look for in a Strengths-Based Assessment

When we assess a child's and family's strengths we look at four specific areas; their attitudes and values, skills and abilities, qualities and preferences.

Attitudes and Values

These are beliefs and expectations the child and family hold. These may be conscious or unconscious affirmations that a family teaches their children.

- Respect for privacy
- Strong sense of ritual and traditions
- Concern for family unity and loyalty
- Shared Responsibility

Skills and Abilities

Skills and abilities are either hard competencies or soft skills related to many area of life such as work, school or sports.

- Family Communication style
- Playing together
- Ability to plan ahead
- Good math skills
- Good carpentry skills

Qualities

Qualities are descriptive statements that can be made about the family's characteristics and interaction patterns.

- Positive outlook on the future
- Patient with each other
- Strong bond between family members
- Enjoys being the center of attention

Preferences

The child's and family's likes and dislikes.

- Maximizes the voice and choice of the family
- Can help support the match between family strengths and needs
- Indicates the family's choice of service delivery and what choice of services they can handle

Assessing Strengths

Sample Family Strengths Discovery Worksheet

Family Member	Value/ Attitude	Skills/ Abilities	Preferences	Qualities
Kenneth: Father	Loyal: Marriage is forever	Skilled at woodworking	Likes to feel in control	Has maintained sobriety for over twelve months on his own
	Independent: Doesn't like to accept handouts	Able to support family through fixing old appliances	Wants to return to his Dad's homestead	Believes he should be able to make it on his own
	Believes parents need to be there for their kids	Controls temper by taking time-outs	Prefers time alone or with other hunters	Is able to keep his son in line
		Used to train hunting hounds prior to moving to the city		Strong advocate: has disagreed forcefully in the past about treatment plans for Ken Jr.
Mary Lou: Mother	Believes her job is to make a home for her husband	Is able to access during an emergency	Misses time alone with Ken	Is well liked in her community: Three phone calls from friends during the first meeting
	Wants her kids to do better than she did	Maintains the little kids who are well clothed and well behaved	Likes time for herself with a therapist she can trust	Is emotionally attached to her son: cried when discussing situation
	Values extended family and listens to her own parents	Is a good cook: Children were looking forward to dinner	Enjoys joining in church activities with older women	Has optimistic outlook: Spiritual base allows her to talk about when things were better with her son
	Is strongly connected to her church: Spiritual Base	Makes own clothes and maintains Ken's work clothes		
	Values hard work: believes if people work hard they will do okay. Runs house on her own	Is able to stretch a dollar		

Assessing Strengths

Sample Questions:

Looking for strengths, values, attitudes, skills, abilities, preferences and culture.

For Children:

1. If you could say one good thing about yourself, what would it be?
2. I like your (hair, makeup, clothes etc..). Did you do it yourself?
3. What is your favorite color? Musician? Sport? Person? Friend? Subject?
4. If you could live anywhere, where would you live? Why?
5. Tell me about your friends?
6. What do you value most in a friendship? (loyalty, fun, what?)
7. What about your personality? Are you (quiet, friendly, private, loyal?)
8. Name two good things about your parent(s)/school/community?
9. Name two things you don't like about your parent(s)/school/community?
10. What about art? Do you have a favorite type of art or artist?
11. Do you have a favorite type of pet? What do you like about it?

For Parents:

1. What do you do for fun? When is the last time that you did that?
2. Who are your closest friends and why are they special to you?
3. What is your neighborhood like?
4. What were you like as a child?
5. Who has been the biggest influence on your life?
6. What was the best break or vacation you ever took? What made it best?
7. What do you do to "blow off steam"?
8. What do you picture your life like five years from now?
9. If you have one goal this next year, what would it be?
10. What are the best things about yourself? Your spouse/significant other?
11. How did you meet your spouse/significant other?
12. What makes you mad?
13. What are your favorite books? Movies? Name a celebrity you like?

Narrative vs. List
Pg. 1 of 5

Dad

Friendly and Outgoing
Likes to learn
Family Oriented
Values differences in others
Good sense of humor
Can speak French

Mom

Warm and Friendly
Devoted to family and husband
Accepting of others
Runs home smoothly
Good at finding resources in the community
Has good coping skills

Daughter

Enjoys history
Lies science
Likes insects
Takes care of her pets
Very Intelligent

Son

Happy and good natured
Easily forgives others
Enjoys science, chemistry and math

Uncle

Very caring about niece and nephew
Assist in home schooling kids
Has a great personality
Lights up a room with his smile

Grandmother

Provides home schooling to the kids with Uncle
Excels in chemistry
Generous with her knowledge, values her family heritage and culture

Natural Support

Helps the family in anyway he can

Good for a supportive pat on the back when needed

Knows sign language

Natural Support

Jack of all trades

Provides respite by entertaining the kids so parents can get a break

Always willing to come when asked to assist

Family Strengths

Strong sense of who they are and belonging

Value education

Enjoy the diversity in their home

Play musical instruments together

Have stable housing and their own transportation

Strengths \ Culture Discovery

Dad is a friendly outgoing person; he enjoys learning about other cultures. He is very committed to his wife Mom and values family. He recognizes the value in using Grandmother and Uncle to assist in raising his children in the way of his culture and takes time with his children to impart his values to them. He is a strong man who is willing to go against the grain of the larger culture. He is open to new natural support #1s and values diversity (Natural support #1). Dad has been very successful in managing money. He has a talent for the stock market. He has a good sense of humor and enjoys laughter. Dad has a skill for languages and can speak French fluently. He is open-minded and has an easy way with people.

Mom is warm and open with others. She is fiercely protective of her children, family, and devoted to her husband Dad. She also utilizes the benefit of having more than one generation living in the family home. She is accepting of others who may differ from her (cousin) and is open to learning from them. She is actively involved in the community. Mom is a skilled gardener enjoys horticulture and has an extensive collection of poisonous plants. Mom is skilled in communicating with others and has the ability to create a safe and stable environment for the children. Mom runs the house smoothly organizing chores and activities she insures everyone is well cared for. Mom enjoys smoking (literally) when she needs to relax and has developed this as a coping skill when stressful situations arise. Mom is very skilled in finding resources in the community.

Daughter is the oldest child living in the home. She receives home schooling from her Grandmother and Uncle. She is a bright child who is very friendly and shows a special interest in history especially Marie Antoinette. Her favorite toy is her Marie Antoinette doll. She also enjoys science and often develops various scientific experiments and encourages her brother "Son" to help her test out various theories and inventions; most recently an electric chair. Daughter also likes insect's, and has pet spiders that she takes good care of, showing an ability to be responsible for the care of others.

Son is the youngest child living in the home and is Daughter's brother. He is a happy young man who is quick to forgive others (including his sister) when he feels they have mistreated him. Son enjoys assisting his sister in scientific experiments and is very good at chemistry and mechanical engineering himself, once developing a guillotine that actually worked.

Uncle (Dad's brother) is a very caring uncle to his niece and nephew and assists Dad, Mom and Grandmother in raising them into the family culture. Uncle has an electric personality and can literally light up a room when he enters it. Along with Grandmother, Uncle provides the children with home schooling. He is especially talented in developing science projects that make it fun for the children to learn. Uncle can be relied upon and is calm in a crisis. The children look up to uncle and desire to please him.

Grandmother also lives in the family home. As noted, she assists Uncle in providing the children with home based education. She provides respite to Dad and Mom. Grandmother has extensive knowledge of Chemistry. She knows how to develop potions and can apply hexes and spells of all kinds. She is generous with her knowledge and willing to share with her grandchildren her values and culture.

Natural support #1, who has been a friend of Dad since childhood, also lives in the family home. He contributes his talents such as retrieving the mail, writing letters and giving individual family members support and a pat on the back when needed. He has developed a number of methods for sharing his insights with the family including Morse code and sign language.

Finally, Natural support #2 who is a longtime family friend also lives in the family home. He contributes in many ways, has many skills, and is noted to be a "jack of all trades". He is devoted to the children and often will provide respite to the parents by amusing them. He is excellent at playing the harpsichord and organ. Natural support #2 can be counted on to come whenever he is called and is always willing to do whatever is asked of him.

in order to help the family. Natural support #2 is skilled in all types of home maintenance. He can fix all kinds of machinery. Natural support #2 is loyal to a fault and can be relied up on in an emergency.

As a family, they are committed to maintaining their heritage and values. Mom and Dad value education as do Uncle and Grandmother. They work hard to insure that their children are educated in a way that makes sense to them and that prepares them for the life they are likely to lead when they grow up. The family values each other's talents and skills and enjoys diversity in their home life. They enjoy playing musical instruments together. The presence of extended family and friends is a value that Dad and Mom hold dear and they believe that each member of the household has talents and skills to share and to make things run smoothly. They have a stable living situation as well as transportation.

Exercise A: What Influences You?

Write down your answers to the following questions on a sheet of paper. Then ask someone close to you to answer the questions about you. Compare your answers to see if what you think is how you appear to others.

1. What is your culture? (**Culture** is the *behaviors and beliefs* characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.)
2. How does your culture affect what you do?
3. How does your culture affect what you think?
4. How would your culture facilitate rapport with a young person and his or her family?
5. What makes you uncomfortable?
6. How might other people tell when you hear or see something that makes you uncomfortable?
7. What difficulties might you encounter when working with youth of a different culture?

Appendix 6.1

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment:

Possible Questions for Young People

❖ People Who Are Close to the Young Person (e.g., family, extended family, relatives, and other informal key players)

- Who would you define as your family?
- Who in your family do you admire the most and why?
- When do you feel the closest to your family?
- What are your happiest memories with your family?
- What do you like most about your mom, dad, sister, brother, aunt, grandmother, etc.?
- What do you think they like most about you?
- Who would you define as your friends/social network?
- What are some of your happiest times with your friends?
- Who are you closest to?
- What do you admire the most about them?
- What are some ways that your friends have helped you?
- Who else is an important part of your life?
- Is there anyone else who ever helps you or your family?
- What services that you receive do you or your family feel help you?
- What services/resources have you received in the past that helped you or your family?
- What obstacles do you face to have the relationship you want with family/friends/formal supports?
- With whom would you like to have a better relationship?)

Appendix 6.1

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment: Possible Questions for Young People

❖ Young Person's and Family's Strengths and Interests

- What are some of the things you think you are best at?
- What does your family think you are best at?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What groups and activities are you involved in or would you like to be involved in?
- What are your dreams/goals?
- What are the interests/dreams/goals of your informal key players? (e.g., mom, dad, sister, brother, grandmother, uncle, aunt)
- What activities and interests do you share with your family? With friends?
- What keeps you from engaging in the activities/interests that you enjoy?

❖ Values, Culture, and Natural Resources of the Family

- What traditions do you have with your family? (If spiritual beliefs are shared, discuss areas of strength around these.)
- What would you say your family's values are?
- What areas do you wish you could strengthen as it relates to your values? Your culture?

Appendix 6.1

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment: Possible Questions for Young People

❖ Vision and Needs of the Young Person Across Life Domains

Employment/Career

- What types of jobs/volunteer opportunities have you had?
- What types of jobs/volunteer opportunities would you like to have?
- What might get in the way of you reaching your employment and career goals?

Educational Opportunities

- When do you do your best educationally?
- What educational goals do you have?
- What could get in the way of you reaching your educational goals?

Living Situation

- What types of living situations do you do your best in?
- What is your ideal living situation?
- What skills do you need to learn to obtain your ideal living situation?

Appendix 6.1

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment: Possible Questions for Young People

Personal Effectiveness/Well-being

- Who do you help?
- How do you help other people?
- How do you keep up your relationships with the people who are close to you?
- What do you still need to learn about keeping up relationships?
- How do you deal with stress?
- What do you do to relax?
- What dangers do you face?
- Where and when do you face dangers?
- How do you deal with these dangers?
- When do you speak up for yourself?
- When you want to find out something, where do you get information?
- What do you do to take care of your health?
- How do you get the medical and dental services that you need?
- If the young person is pregnant or a parent:
 - How do you take care of the health of your child (children)?
 - Who gets (will get) medical attention for your child (children)?
 - Who does (will) rear your child (children)?
 - Who does (will) discipline your child (children)?
 - Who does (will) pay for your child's (children's) needs?

Appendix 6.1

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment: Possible Questions for Young People

Community Life Functioning

- How do you get around your neighborhood?
- What community groups do you take part in?
- What dangerous situations do you see in your neighborhood?
- How do you avoid these dangerous situations?
- What do you need to avoid dangerous situations?
- Where do you go to have fun or get entertained?
- Who do you usually go with to have fun?
- What services would you like to see offered in your community?
- How do you manage your money?
- What do you need to learn about managing your money?
- Where do you find spiritual comfort?

Appendix 6.2

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment:

Possible Questions for Family and Other Informal Key Players

Note: Questions are presented with alternate wording so that they may be asked of a family or extended family member or of someone who is not a member of the young person's family. The words occurring first within each parenthesis are used with family or extended family. The words occurring last within each parenthesis are used with non-family key players.

❖ Young Person's and Family's Strengths and Interests

- What are your dreams and goals for the young person?
- What are some of the things you think the young person is best at?
- What are the young person's interests?
- When and in what situations is the young person most successful?
- Who is part of (your / the young person's) family?
- Who do you admire or respect among (your / the young person's) family?
Why?
- What do you think (your / the young person's) family is good at?
- Who are the young person's friends?
- What do you like or respect about the young person's friends? Why?
- Which of these friends are you closest to?
- Who else is the young person close to?
- Who helps the young person and his or her family?
- What services do (you / the young person and his or her family) receive
that helps the family or the young person?

Appendix 6.2

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment:

Possible Questions for Family and Other Informal Key Players

- What do you need to support the young person in his or her journey to adulthood?
- When do you feel the closest to the young person?
- When does the family seem to pull together?
- What do you think the young person likes best about his or her grandmother, mom, dad, brother, sister, etc.?
- What do you think they all like most about you?
- What are your interests?

❖ Values, Culture, and Natural Resources of the Family

- What family traditions do (you / the young person's family) have?
- How do these traditions affect how (you /the young person's family) live (your life / their lives)?
- What do (you / the young person's family) value?

❖ Vision and Needs of the Family Across Life Domains

Employment/Career

- What types of jobs/volunteer activities has the young person had?

Appendix 6.2

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment:

Possible Questions for Family and Other Informal Key Players

- What strengths did the young person demonstrate when doing these jobs/volunteer activities?
- What needs did the young person have when doing these jobs or activities?
- What types of jobs/volunteer opportunities do you think would be best for the young person?
- What could get in the way of the young person reaching his or her employment/career goals?

Educational Opportunities

- When does the young person do his or her best educationally?
- What educational goals would be best for the young person?
- What could get in the way of the young person reaching his or her educational goals?

Living Situation

- What types of living situations does the young person do best in?
- What is the young person's ideal living situation?
- What skills does the young person still need to learn to obtain and maintain the ideal living situation?

Appendix 6.2

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment:

Possible Questions for Family and Other Informal Key Players

Personal Effectiveness/Well-being

- Who does the young person help?
- How does the young person help other people?
- How does the young person keep up relationships with people who are close to him/her?
- What does the young person still need to learn about keeping up relationships?
- How does the young person deal with stress?
- What does the young person do to relax?
- What dangers does the young person face?
- How do you help the young person protect himself/herself from these dangers?
- What skills does the young person need to advocate for his or her needs and wants?
- Where and how does the young person find information?
- How does the young person take care of his or her health?
- How do (you and the young person / the young person and the family) get needed medical and dental services?
- What do (you and the young person / the young person and the family) need to take care of (your / their) health?
- If the young person is pregnant or a parent:

Appendix 6.2

Strength Discovery and Needs Assessment:

Possible Questions for Family and Other Informal Key Players

- How does the young person take care of the health of his or her child/children?
- Who gets/will get medical attention for the child/children?
- Who does/will rear the child/children?
- Who does/will pay for the child's/children's needs?
- What skills does the young person need to take care of his or her child/children?

Community Life Functioning

- What dangerous situations do you see in the young person's neighborhood?
- How does the young person avoid these dangerous situations?
- What does the young person need to avoid dangerous situations?
- What community groups or services does the young person belong to or use?
- What community services or organizations would you like to see the young person belong to or use?
- How does the young person manage his/her money?
- What does the young person need to learn about managing money?
- Where do (you / the young person and family) find spiritual comfort?