



Let's Talk about Strengths Identifying and Utilizing Functional Strengths in Wraparound

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- To identify specific functional strengths for each team member throughout all phases of Wraparound.
- Practice utilizing functional strengths to engage family and team members and brainstorm creative strategies connected to functional strengths.



Objectives

What is a Strength?

It is what energizes you,
differentiates you, make
you feel useful and whole.
Strengths combined with
direction create a chain of
positive actions.

Exercise 1: What about you?



Some Common Criticisms of Strength-based Planning

Pollyannaish – “believing in good leads to good outcomes and that this is unrealistic” – people are apparently manipulative and often “unfixable” – and a strengths approach denies this

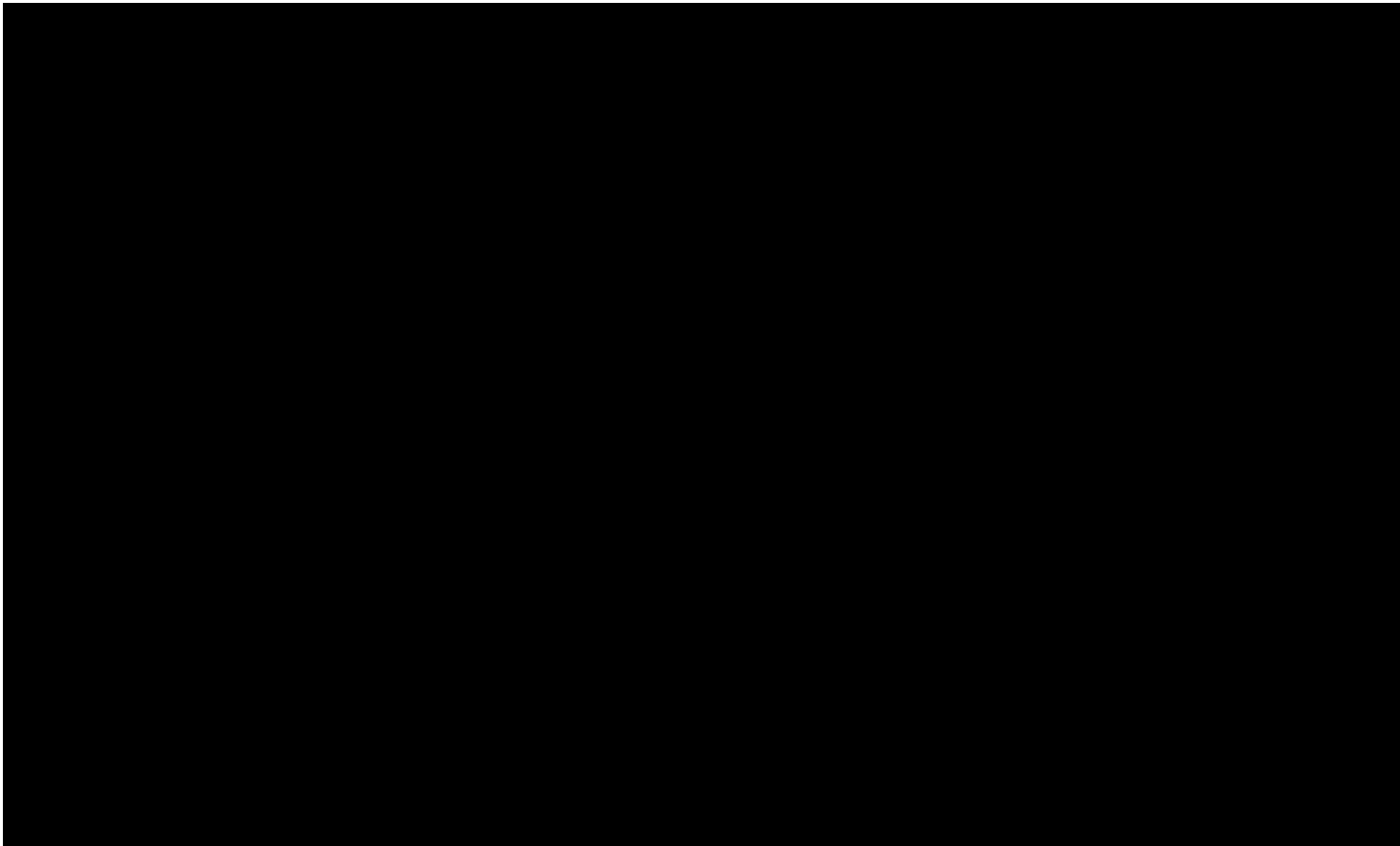
Denies reality – “yeah, that kid might be a good leader among their peers, but he gets his peers into trouble” – good wraparound work never denies a condition, illness, or situation that must be remedied for health, public safety, or optimal family and individual functioning

Reframes things that youth/families need to be accountable for – “attempts to clean or sanitize problems away and makes families and youth less responsible or accountable”

Why are strengths important in the Wraparound Process?

- All people have strengths
- Each person's strengths are unique
- Change is supported by building on strengths
- People know their own strengths and needs
- Exploring strengths identifies common values and goals
- All environments have strengths to build upon





Where do we start? How do we start?

Review the referral and any documentation

- Do you read the information with an eye for strengths?
- Can you find strengths from the referral?
- Do the strengths you find create a sense of hopefulness, excitement, and enthusiasm about meeting the family?
- Can you generate strengths that are accurate, genuine, and based in fact

Meet the family, get their story

- Don't mistake facts, problems, or worries for deficits
- Create a space for families to tell their own story
- Organize the details to review the facts
- Analyze the story to pick out strengths





Rules on Strengths: Be a detail detective!

- No one word strengths
- Individualized-how do you know it belongs to that unique person?
- Answer how it helps them to succeed

Be Overt!



- Functional strengths should be imbedded within the story.
- Clearly identify who has the strength and how it was used.
- Strengths should be evident from multiple perspectives.
- Everyone in the family and relevant relationship should have strengths identified.

Team member	Strengths
Matthew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He hasn't given up hope of being a permanent member of a family. • He steps up to help out with his little brother, is patient with him, and will protect him. • He is close to Mona and talks to her about everything. • He stands up for himself and tries to protect himself from getting hurt again. • He is able to build relationships with adults he trusts. • He is a leader on the football field. • He likes being part of a team and the sense of family a team gives him – 'someone always has your back'. • He responds to structure and routine and his coach provides this for him daily. • Does his best when he is able to stay physically active and busy.
Mona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She learns from past mistakes and experiences and builds off those lessons learned and experiences to help others. • She confides in Michelle (her co-worker) and they work out together every other day. • She has a passion for working with youth and supporting their needs in her professional life and as a volunteer. • She makes long-term commitments and isn't afraid to go "all in" • She values the importance of education and worked hard to accomplish her own educational goals. She also gives back so others can pursue the same in her tutoring work. • Mona is the rock of the family and gets things done.
John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He works hard to support his family and wants to pass on the value of hard work to his kids. • He learns from watching others. • He believes in picking yourself up and moving forward despite obstacles. • He believes doing things as a family keeps the family strong and together • He attends all Matthew's sporting events and looks for activities to keep Matthew busy.
Steven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He looks up to Matthew and enjoys spending time with him. • He has a calming effect on Matthew.

Team Members' Strengths

Adam (Therapist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He comes from a long line of football fanatics and uses his knowledge of football to connect with Matthew. • He is very handy with tools and does wood working in his spare time. • Has a strong foundation in trauma work and really believes in Mona's and John's love for Matthew as a foundation for success. • He is patient with Matthew and as a result Matthew opens up to him.
Sue (Probation Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has connections to the local university and can score tickets to college games. • She is very active in her community and volunteers at a local Boys/Girls Club and helps with a local neighborhood revitalization effort on the north side. • She is a straight forward about her expectations so Matthew knows what to expect. • She works to balance Mona and John by reinforcing them as parents and the structure they provide.
Michelle (Mona's Co-worker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has known Mona and John for over 15 years and feels comfortable being very honest and open with them- She is a "tell it like it is" kind of person. • She uses her sense of humor to calm people down in times of crisis and using humor helps her to stay calm in stressful situations. • Michelle is a good listener and Mona will open up to her about everything. • She really gets along well with Matthew and he is comfortable around her as well.
Coach Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He believes the team is like family and we stand up for one another. • He goes above and beyond for kids and will step up when asked to take on tasks. • He sees the leadership capabilities of Matthew and knows how to push him. • He has a way of making sure discipline and fun both come together when he is coaching youth in football.



Let's put our
skills to use!

Plan of Care Sample

Need Statement: Matthew needs to know people can be permanent parts of his life.

Strategy #1	
Matthew, Mona, John and Steven will create a “Team Carter” scrapbook over the next month where they can highlight their life together as a team including memories as a family, important accomplishments they have had together, traditions they have started, and important people in their lives.	Strength – Matthew wants to be a permanent part of a family; John believes family activities keep families strong. They bond when they do things all together.
Task	Strength
1. Mona will take Matthew and Steven to the store tomorrow to pick out a scrapbook and some craft materials.	Mona is the rock of the family and gets things done. Matthew is calm when Steven is around.
1. Adam will schedule a family session in the next month with Matthew, Mona, John and Steven to help them discuss and design a team logo for their first page that shares what their family means to them.	Adam is patient with Matthew and has a strong therapeutic background in working in the area of attachment and trauma. Matthew likes being part of a team.
1. John will gather pictures he has taken from all of Matthew’s sporting events and school accomplishments to share with Matthew. Matthew will sort the pictures when he has down time after practice in the next week to decide what should be included.	John attends all of Matthew’s games and values education. Matthew does his best when he stays busy.

Engaging the Team through Strength Discovery

- What is their perspective on the strengths of the family?
- What role do they enjoy playing in their relationship with this family?
- What has worked in the past?
- What makes them hopeful about the future?





imagine

...waking up one day and having everyone you encounter understand the ways in which you are unique and extraordinary. What if everyone viewed the things you did as needed contributions, and rather than looking for what is wrong with you, people painted out what is right with you? If that happened, you would be super-charged. You would feel free and released from the burden of having to defend yourself. You would be psyched to jump out of bed and get to work. You would feel well and strong. Wouldn't it be nice if just one day your life could be like that?



The entire team

- Derives a changed meaning around the **situation** they are experiencing and it then shifts their perspective
- Changing their approach based on information gathered through the team process to address needs and build on strengths



It is our job to create opportunities to listen for, explore and identify newfound strengths throughout the process

Functional Strengths Recap

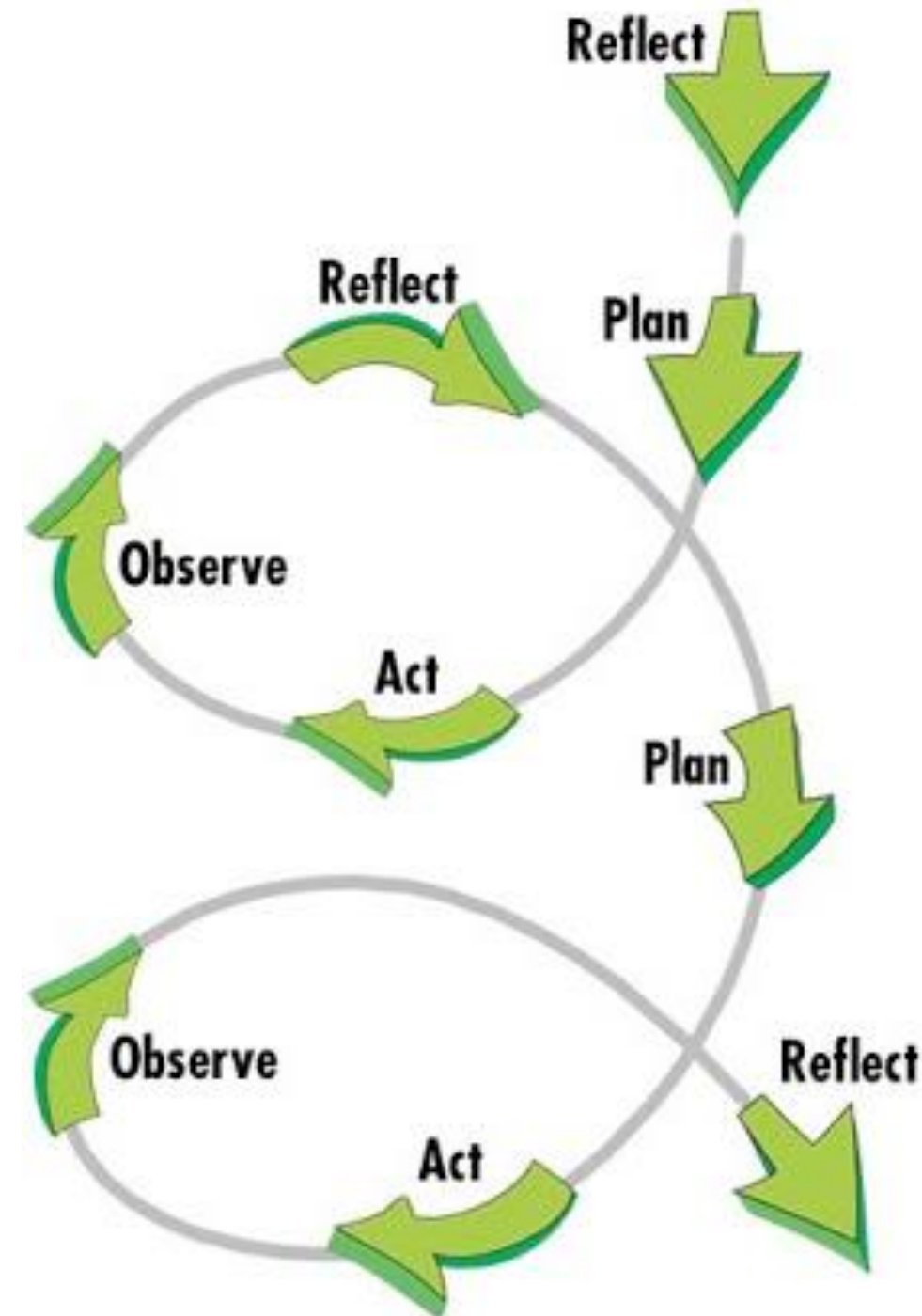
- ✓ Functional strengths are a cornerstone in planning throughout the process.
- ✓ Make your job easier—Start with a strength-based story.
- ✓ Model strength-based listening for your teams throughout the process.
- ✓ The strengths should be connected between all activities.



Reflection

Based on today's sessions:

- What activity or skill do you feel like you were demonstrating consistently?
- What area(s) do you need to focus on moving forward?
- Identify two things that you learned today that will help you move forward.







Resources

- The Institute for Innovation and Implementation
 - <http://ssw.umaryland.edu/theinstitute>
- National Wraparound Implementation Center (NWIC)
 - www.nwic.org
- National Wraparound Initiative
 - <http://www.nwi.pdx.edu>
- Wraparound resources
 - www.paperboat.com
 - <http://www.milwaukeecounty.org/WraparoundMilwaukee7851.htm>
- System of Care Resources
 - <http://systemsofcare.samhsa.gov/>
 - <http://youthmove.us/>
 - <http://www.tapartnership.org/>
 - <http://www.ffcmh.org/>



Contact Information

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