

IDEAS BANK

Strength Cards for Kids

Strength Cards for Kids has a simple message: all children deserve to have their strengths celebrated. Find out how to use this classic resource with students, children in care or your own kids in this month's Ideas Bank.

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Bombs and Saurapods

How do you brighten the day of children in a warzone? With a pack of cheeky dinosaurs, of course!



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Dial an Angel

Symbols on the ground and angels all around? Yes, indeed, at a training event in Singapore!



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International Women's Day

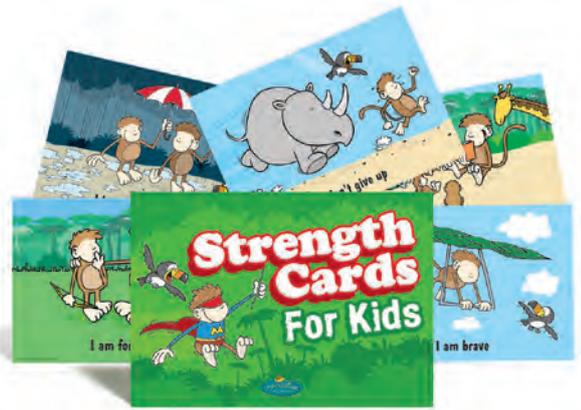
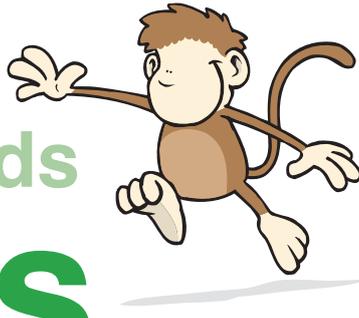
We're inspiring change in women's lives with card sets and a special workshop.



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Ideas Bank

Strength Cards for Kids



We all live in a world of strengths. We learn, combine and shape our strengths as key components of our identity. And we all have our own unique repertoire of strengths.

Strength Cards for Kids has a simple message: all children deserve to have their strengths recognised and celebrated. The best people to give children this gift are the adults who know them well.

Imagining How Others See Us

A most enlightening conversation can follow if you ask kids to choose cards they think others would select for them. This may be quite a challenge for some children: it asks for a level of empathy and insight that younger kids might find particularly difficult to apprehend.

But imagining the perspective of others can serve several purposes. Firstly, it may help a child to be less self-conscious when talking about themselves. And memories, related to the person they are focused upon, may be evoked. This activity helps us recognise that people often see us differently to how we see ourselves.

Shadow Questions

Sometimes strengths-based and solution-focused approaches are criticised for being too saccharine or 'Pollyanna-ish' by only looking at the positives. Shadow questions focus on that place where strengths become deficits. They can be useful for reflecting on change, discussing difficult or unwanted behaviour, and interpersonal skill development.

- Do any of your strengths get you into trouble?
- Do you use some strengths more than others?
- Has anyone ever criticised your strengths? Do you think their comments were useful?
- Which strengths do you need to work on?
- Have you lost some strengths you used to have? Why did they go? Could you get them back?

Gifting with Strengths

In a world dominated by consumerism, it can be refreshing to stop and think about what it is that children really need. It's probably fair to say that the child deprived of the latest electronic gadgetry will suffer little compared to the child deprived of affirmation and praise.

Yet naming or gifting strengths to children is not universal. Some families simply do not reflect on the power of celebrating strengths—even if they do recognise them. There have been important stories told of the profoundly positive impact of families making the time and commitment to admire each other's strengths.

Counsellors and family support workers may like to use these cards to encourage parents and carers to reflect on the importance of gifting strengths to children. Questions to explore might be:

- What are the child's strengths?
- What difference might it make if I name them?
- Is it the right time for them to hear their strengths?
- Am I in the habit of celebrating the strengths of the children around me?
- How do the child's strengths make a positive difference to us all?

I Can See Strengths, Toucan See Strengths!

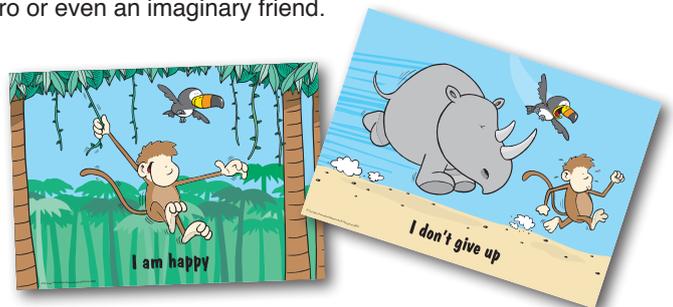
Each card in this set features a rather delightful toucan, who observes the action from the sidelines. The toucan's expressions and behaviour are responsive to what is happening in each picture.

Many of Innovative Resources' card sets feature an observer character, and they have an important job. The toucan is a witness who stands outside the action and represents an extra voice or alternative viewpoint than can be brought into conversation.

Wherever the toucan appears you can ask:

- What is the toucan thinking?
- What is the toucan noticing?
- What would the toucan say is happening in the situation?
- What would the toucan want you to notice?
- What would the toucan recommend you do?

Having a witness or observer to our decision-making and strengths can, at times, be really helpful. The toucan's perspective might be that of a family member, a special person like a favourite teacher, a hero or even an imaginary friend.



STRENGTH CARDS FOR KIDS

40 hard-wearing, laminated, full colour cards, 210 x 150mm

Polypropylene box, 24-page booklet

ISBN: 9 781 875650 767

Concept development and text: Russell Deal

Illustrations and design: Mat Jones

Product Code: 0400

\$49.50 inc. GST



In the Spotlight



Bombs and Sauropods: Fear, play and hope in Sudan's warzone

'Very sad bombs are still being dropped. Last Tuesday planes flew over and everyone in the compound moved quickly into fox holes that are throughout the grounds. Teachers monitoring carefully. A plane overhead was hidden by the clouds. The sound of the plane changed, signaling that a bomb was being released. One of the teachers recognised the sound and called, "A bomb is being dropped". Everyone crouched low. Within a minute or two black smoke and dirt rose high into the sky. When it was safe to get out of the fox holes I went around to check on everyone. I saw the little ones still crouched in their holes, their eyes looking up. What must be racing through their minds?'

In March 2013, Innovative Resources received a message from Nicole Rotaru, an aid worker and educator about to begin a two year contract in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. She was leaving to join a group working in the region. The mountains, which cover some 48,000 square kilometres, lie at the geographical heart of Sudan, and have been the site of a two-decade long conflict over religion, resources and ethnicity.

In June 2011, war recommenced when northern forces from Khartoum bombed crops and forced over 70,000 people to flee to the Yida Refugee Camp. Unlike communities in the Arab-dominated, Muslim north of Sudan, the Nuba peoples, made up of some 50 black African ethnic groups, have more in common with populations in South Sudan. But they are also geographically cut off from the south, living in a region that has little infrastructure—a region of green farms, thatched huts and subsistence living.

Before she left, Innovative Resources donated several card sets for Nicole to take with her. There was no guarantee the cards would reach their destination—in the warzone roads are few, cars and trucks unreliable, and transport of food and other essential items takes priority. But in May, Nicole and the cards made it safely to their destination, and she generously sent

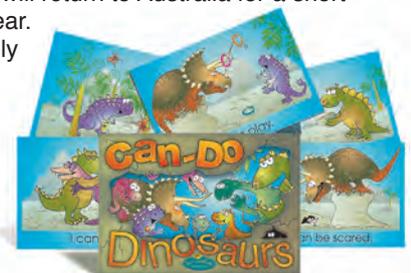
news and photos showing the cards in the hands of children and patients at a local field hospital.

The hospital has 230 beds, but the number of patients far exceeds this capacity. Often, more than one person shares a bed, and tents are set up around the hospital to accommodate more people. The patients come from far and wide in this region. Malaria, TB, malnutrition, infections and war wounds are commonplace. One trained doctor and two nurses, along with trained Nuba staff, care for the patients.

'These photos capture the children at the hospital enjoying the Can-Do Dinosaur cards. This was the first time the children had used the cards. They delighted in the bright colours, the funny, crazy pictures and seeing something new. Many of the children do not speak English, but had fun repeating the captions after me. 'I can...' was said with strength and adults joined in the activity and had fun.'

'The laughter generated was a marvellous tonic! "I can..., I can..., " indeed! The Nuba people have great courage, determination and resilience. They have lived through oppression, hunger and war for most of their lives. The children have little experience of peacetime.'

When we made contact with Nicole in October 2013 it was a welcome, peaceful day in mountains. Life, for the time being, was quiet. 'The donkeys are braying, students are in class, women are fetching water and carrying bundles of fire wood, the mountains are lush with sorghum to be harvested at the end of the month,' she wrote. Nicole will return to Australia for a short break at the end of her first year. Innovative Resources sincerely thanks her for sharing her eloquent, evocative accounts of life in the Nuba Mountains and wishes her well for the return mission.



In the Spotlight

Dial an Angel:

Crisis hotline training for AWARE workers

Kumar is our man in Singapore! A social worker now working as a manager of government-funded social services, Kumar regularly uses Innovative Resources' tools in his work. He's also an enthusiastic experimenter for us, always willing to try out our latest card sets and test out their cross-cultural credential.

On a Tuesday evening last November, Kumar and a colleague were at it again, running training for AWARE Singapore. *Symbols* got a workout. So too did our now-retired *Angels with Attitude* (not to be confused with our entirely new *Angels* cards.)

A big thanks to Kumar for sending these great photos—and here's his rundown on the event...

Hey, I wanted to let you know about a training session we ran this week. It was for a leading local women's rights and empowerment agency in Singapore. In their twenty odd years of existence, I am their first male trainer—OK, that got me freaked out a bit!!!

Anyway, the training was part of a series of workshops organised to equip them with the theory and skills to staff their crisis hotline for women. My session was on understanding family and marital issues.



Step 1

I did my stuff and as a closing exercise I used two card sets, *Symbols* and *Angels with Attitudes*. First I divided the participants into two groups. The first group picked *Symbols* cards to represent the pain, anxieties, worries, concerns and ambivalence the women who call in may have. They then placed all these symbols in the centre the room and explained their choices. You can see the 'inner circle' they created.

Then the second group chose symbols that depicted how callers might feel at the end of their journey of healing or decision making. That's the outer circle. The volunteers won't complete the entire journey with callers, but they will be a crucial first link.



Step 2

Then I lined all the *Angels with Attitude* cards around the two circles of *Symbols* cards, and asked the staff to pick an Angel with an attitude, skill or hope that they would like to have to help them in their work with the hotline callers.



Step 3

Next I invited them to place their *Angels with Attitude* card in the space between the symbols of pain circle and the journey's end. They expressed their hopes as they placed each card on the ground.

We had good feedback from this exercise. Wanted to let you know I'm still working hard to use the cards in different ways. I only wish I could cover more cases and group work!

To find out more about the work of AWARE Singapore, visit www.aware.org.sg

SOON

Coming Soon From **Innovative Resources** **A Vision for Supervision**

Strengths-based questions for Reflective Conversations



Do you supervise others? Do you receive supervision?

Coming soon: an inspiring, practical tool for strengths-based supervision!

Supervision plays a pivotal role in the professional development of social workers, psychologists, counsellors, managers, health practitioners, life coaches and other human service professionals. At its best, supervision can be a powerful crucible of discovery and learning for both supervisor and practitioner—with the benefits also flowing on to clients.

A Vision for Supervision consists of:

- 40 cards arranged in 5 colour-coded suits, each card with ...
- a key topic such as 'Hopes and plans', 'Present situation', 'What worked?' and 'Noticing success'
- 4 questions that go to the core of supervision conversations.
- A total of 160 strengths-based questions for building your supervision conversations from start to finish, plus ...
- a booklet filled with suggestions for using the cards.

'What is the most useful question I could ask right now?' This common solution-focused line of thinking is made practical with this project by Roger Lowe and Russell Deal. And while the target application is supervisory relationship and process, this project is certainly adaptable to other contexts...I see myself introducing A Vision for Supervision to practicum, internship, individual and group supervision, and supervision training contexts. Invent – adapt – learn – enjoy!

From the foreword by Frank N Thomas, author of *Solution-Focused Supervision* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2013); Professor of Counselling and Counsellor Education at Texas Christian University (USA).

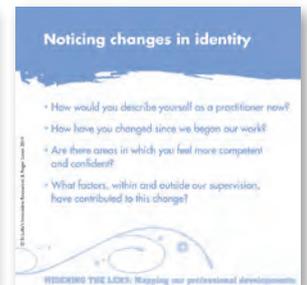
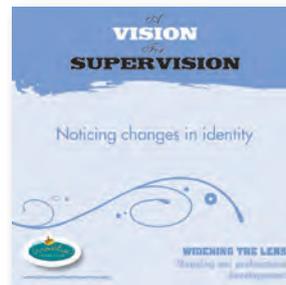
A Vision for Supervision

ISBN: 978 1 920945 70 1

40 laminated cards, 120 x 120mm, polypropylene box, booklet of suggested activities.

Authors: Roger Lowe & Russell Deal

CAT No: 4927 AU\$64.50 (includes GST)



Available May 2014. Orders taken now



World Social Work Day

18 March 2014

World Social Work Day is the annual opportunity to advocate for a social work perspective to be incorporated into our political systems. It's also a special day for celebrating social workers' contribution to the wellbeing of individuals and societies the world over.

Tools for Empowering Conversations



Celebrate women's achievements throughout history and across nations—it's International Women's Day on 8 March!

This year's theme is Inspiring Change because the best change occurs when it's backed by real motivation. What inspires you to work towards women's equality? What inspires your organisation to build a culture that supports women's advancement? Who are the significant women in your life and what matters to them?

With the approach of International Women's Day, it's an ideal time for organisations and teams to take a moment to reflect on women's experiences. What strengths do women contribute to your team or workplace? Does gender bias affect decision-making? How to you ensure that women's voices are heard and respected?

→ Use your *Change by Design* cards for a timely and wide-ranging discussion about women's contribution to change and leadership in your organisation. Select the Engagement, Connectedness and Continuity suits and use the questions on the cards as prompts to reflect on how your organisation supports women's advancement. For example, does your organisation...

- share information and knowledge with women?
- respect the work of women?
- know how the roles of women may alter?
- notice and acknowledge women's progress?
- set a good example?

Some of Innovative Resources' card sets have been developed especially for girls and women, including *Girlltopia*, *Note to Self*, and *A Patchwork Life*. So why not mark International Women's Day by inviting girls and women to participate in reflective and creative conversations?

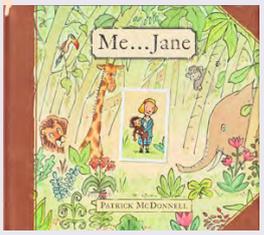


→ Women's lives can be thought of as a patchwork of different memories, experiences, dreams, and relationships—all sewn together to form our unique selves. Use *A Patchwork Life* to pick out a series of cards that represent key times or themes in your life. Lay them out like a patchwork quilt:

- Which cards stand out in particular?
- What did you learn from the times in your life that each card represents?
- Which of the cards do you think are particularly important/challenging/delightful aspects of women's lives?
- If you re-arrange the order of the cards, does the story change?
- What is the thread or 'backing fabric' that links all the patchwork squares together?
- Is there a card missing? Does a card need to change?
- Choose one or more cards that represent important strengths and capacities you have developed, or wish to develop further. Write/draw about these in your journal.

Book Review

Available from our Bookshop



Inspire a child for International Women's Day!

Me...Jane
By Patrick McDonnell

Little, Brown and Company, 2011.
Hardcover, 40 pages.

Product Code: 6679 \$28.99 inc. GST

Meet the little girl behind an amazing woman! Dr Jane Goodall is a renowned expert on chimpanzees and is recognised internationally for her work as an environmentalist and humanitarian. In 2002 she was made a United Nations Messenger of Peace.

Jane grew up at a time when girls were not encouraged to pursue adventurous careers. But Jane was encouraged, and this delightful picture book celebrates her inquisitiveness, careful observation and love of the outdoors—all the special qualities a wise and intrepid adventurer needs!

Beautifully illustrated by Patrick McDonnell, this is a picture book about following dreams, fostering learning, and letting girls pursue their unique interests and strengths. Here's a perfect gift to let a little girl know that the world is her oyster. A treat to share on International Women's Day.

Workshops and Conferences



A free half-day workshop for anyone who works with tween and teen girls, and women of all ages.

Adventures in Girlltopia

Wednesday 9 April
9.30am–1.00pm

Youth Central Training Room, 10 Mundy Street,
Cnr Mundy and Hargreaves Street, Bendigo

With Jane Bennett, author of the *Girlltopia* cards

In this workshop we will explore ways of using the *Girlltopia* cards to trigger stories, questions, reflections, curiosity and learning, which can help to bring awareness and choice to many of the issues facing girls today. We will also look at ways of using the cards to highlight important experiences of a woman's life journey—no matter what her age.

This workshop will be of particular interest to youth workers, teachers, counsellors, welfare workers, health professionals and parents. The cards can be used in groups and with individuals, in classrooms, counselling sessions, with families and at home.

You'll leave this workshop with lots of ideas for using this resource with girls and women.

For more about the presenter go to: www.janebennett.com.au

There is no fee but registration is required. Please email: info@innovativeresources.org