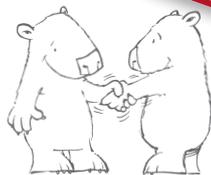


Strengths in Circles



Circles technology is a much-loved approach to group facilitation that is used in school classrooms, dispute resolution, mediation, juvenile justice, reconciliation processes and restorative justice practice.

Based on a framework of six key principles—Agency, Safety, Positivity, Inclusion, Respect and Equality—*Strengths in Circles* names 42 key elements that sit at the hub of Circles conversations. Each individual card can be a rich source of conversation and activity within a group.

Working one-on-one

Strengths in Circles can be used to help young people identify, name, develop and find ways to use their own strengths—and to recognise the strengths that others have. By developing their ‘strengths literacy’, young people are more able to make effective and intentional choices about who they want to become—and how to relate to others.

- Which card represents a Circles strength you do well? What happens when you use this strength?
- Choose a card that represents a strength you find challenging. Can you explain why?
- Which card represents a strength that people around you seem to find easy. How do they ‘do’ that strength? What additional strengths might be needed to do that strength well (you may like to pair *Strengths in Circles* with the *Strength Cards*).
- Thinking of a person in your school, family or community, can you choose a card that says something about what you particularly admire about how that person is with other people? How might you ‘borrow’ a little of their strength?
- Select cards to show which strengths you think are really important for any group or team. Are these strengths already in your repertoire, or are there some you might choose to practise or focus on?

Researching in pairs

Working in pairs, students can explore the significance of concepts introduced by the cards through an array of playful research activities. These activities can be built around a single suit or individual *Strengths in Circles* card. For example, you might invite students to:

- Find a series of quotes with a keyword/concept from the card in them.
- Find dictionary definitions of keywords/concepts of your card.
- Find synonyms and antonyms for keywords on your card.
- Find song titles or book titles with key words from your card.
- Tell/write an anecdote from your own experience, emphasising the relationship between what you learnt and the concept on your card.

Gratitude Activity

Most children—even very young children—have an innate sense of what is fair, and inviting children to put themselves in others’ shoes (as the cards do) is an essential part of developing empathy and caring for the feelings of others.

For this activity, choose the card ‘We show gratitude’ from the POSITIVITY suit. Ask everyone to talk in pairs about things that others do for them that they might be thankful for. For example:

- What do people at home (parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, others) do?
- What do people at school (teachers, cleaners, those in the office, others) do?
- What do people in the community (shopkeepers, bus-drivers, others) do?
- What do other students in this class do?
- What are the different ways of showing gratitude to someone?

Mix everyone up so that they are next to someone different. Going round the Circle, each person turns to the person on their right and finishes this sentence stem: ‘I would like to thank you for...’ Give students a moment or two to think of something to say. If they get lost for words ask others in the Circle to help out with ideas.

Strengths in Circles for adults

Strengths in Circles is powerful tool that adults of any age in any group or organisation can also use among themselves for establishing respectful, strengths-based conversations. Enhance collaboration, open up possibilities and create change!

- Can you think of a time when you were part of a group that did that concept (or theme) really well? What do you think made it possible for that group to do so well?
- Was there a particular person who demonstrated or exemplified that value?
- What is already happening in your organisation/community group/family that you could build on even more?
- Which of the cards do you think would make the most positive difference in your group or team?
- Imagine the best possible group or team—which card concepts do you think you would notice and appreciate seeing in operation most?
- How could you (or your group) do even one tiny step towards this today?



STRENGTHS IN CIRCLES

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