

STRENGTHS APPROACH TO PRACTICE

Everyone has strengths. Our qualities, capacities, relationships, values, stories, experiences, skills and material resources can all be strengths. But 'The Problem' can easily be experienced as all-consuming, keeping clients and services alike stuck and creating barriers to change. Strengths-based practice focusses squarely on identifying, mobilising and celebrating clients' strengths. Social workers, counsellors, managers, educators—and anyone who works with others—can become a catalyst for building cultures where strengths and connectedness flourish, so that clients build resilience, capacity for lasting change and genuine 'agency' in their own lives. This highly engaging and practical training facilitates participants' learning of strengths-based principles, skills and resources that can be applied immediately in their work.

AUDIENCE

This training is suitable for social workers, teachers, counsellors, psychologists, life coaches, trainers, managers, supervisors and team builders. It is appropriate for those with no knowledge of strengths-based practice models as well as those with prior learning and experience.

CONTENT ELEMENTS

- What is the strengths approach?
- How does it align with person-centred, solution-focused practice?
- Principles of practice including power-over and power-with
- Strengths approach skills including: noticing change, scaling, externalising and reframing
- The column approach
- Creating conditions for change.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants have the opportunity to:

- define and articulate strengths-based, solution-focused practice
- consider the dynamics of 'power over' and how to work from a 'power with' perspective
- identify conditions that maximise each person's participation in their own change process
- practise strengths-based, solution-focused skills including externalising, reframing, scaling, list building and straight talk
- learn about a strengths approach to recording and documentation
- discuss ideas for a strengths approach to challenging conversations
- consider the implications for practice when working from a strengths perspective
- take away ideas for using tools for strengths-based conversation-building.

PRACTICE KNOWLEDGE

This training is grounded in over 25 years of strengths-based practice across a range of services including family work, youth services, mental health support, financial counselling and victim support programs. It provides a set of values and skills that emphasise the importance of identifying, mobilising and celebrating client strengths, expertise, skills and resources. Resources used in this training are also informed by other knowledge platforms for practice including solution-focused practice, Brief Therapy, Appreciative Inquiry, Choice Theory, Creative therapies, Circles approaches to groupwork and Narrative approaches.

RESOURCES USED IN THIS TRAINING

- *Strengths Approach* book and Innovative Resources tools
- Participant Resource Notes and hand-outs to take away
- Images and quotes to inspire and engage
- Online visual components.

DURATION

This training is available in one- and two-day formats. The two-day training is preferred as it provides invaluable opportunities to practice applying the principles and skills with the benefit of coaching from the facilitator, and feedback from the group. Day One and Two can be scheduled on successive days, or with a period of days or weeks in between.

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