

FAMILY STRENGTHS: CATEGORIES AND QUESTIONS

Consider these strengths categories and questions when talking with a family about strengths.
(Add good questions as you think of them.)

Category: Special Interests

- What do you especially like to do?
- Do (did) you have any hobbies?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
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Category: Support System: Family and Friends

- Who do you call family?
- Who are you especially close to in your family?
- What friends would you call upon for help?
- Have you worked with people or agencies before that were particularly helpful?
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Category: Religion and Values/Attitudes

- How does religion play a part in your life?
- What do you do that helps others?
- Who is your ideal person?
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Category: Occupation and Education

- What jobs have you had?
- What schooling have you had?
- What do you like best about your work?
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Category: Emotional, Mental, Cognitive, and Physical

- When can you think most clearly?
- How do you best work out your problems?
- When you are down, what helps you to feel better?
- When do you feel best physically?
- Physically, what can you do best?
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FAMILY STRENGTHS CHECKLISTS

Members of the _____ family.

Family Strengths

- ___ 1. Persevere to keep the family together under difficult circumstances
- ___ 2. Are willing to make sacrifices for the children
- ___ 3. Seek to understand the needs and feelings of other family members
- ___ 4. Are able to express love and tenderness within the family
- ___ 5. Function effectively in stressful situations
- ___ 6. Are willing to face the family's problems
- ___ 7. Allow for flexibility of family roles
- ___ 8. Provide for and encourage individual growth
- ___ 9. Have fun together
- ___ 10. Share in spiritual or religious activities
- ___ 11. Are receptive to outside intervention
- ___ 12. Have knowledge of helpful resources in the community
- ___ 13. Have concerned and involved extended family members and kinship bond
- ___ 14. Have relatives that are willing to care for the children
- ___ 15. Are willing to take in and care for relatives and nonrelatives
- ___ 16. Defend family members from unjust treatment
- ___ 17. Advocate for the family's rights
- ___ 18. Are willing to make adjustments that will benefit the family

FAMILY STRENGTHS CHECKLISTS

Name: _____

Individual Adult Strengths

- ___ 1. Parent's willingness to maintain or regain custody of children
- ___ 2. Facing problems and accepting help
- ___ 3. Courage to risk sharing problems with counselor
- ___ 4. Expressing feelings and views openly
- ___ 5. Ability to express loving and warm feelings
- ___ 6. Asserting one's own rights
- ___ 7. Taking responsibility for one's own actions
- ___ 8. Ability to recognize how their actions affect their children
- ___ 9. Seeking to further knowledge, education, and skills
- ___ 10. Demonstrating self-control
- ___ 11. Ability to listen
- ___ 12. Maintaining emotional balance during stressful situations
- ___ 13. Ability to form and maintain close relationships with others
- ___ 14. Willingness to consider alternative courses of action
- ___ 15. Willingness to participate in intervention
- ___ 16. Following through on commitments
- ___ 17. Effectively coped with similar situations in the past
- ___ 18. Patience
- ___ 19. Generosity with time and/or money
- ___ 20. Wanting to improve current and future situations
- ___ 21. Not wanting to be dependent on others
- ___ 22. Demonstrates comfort with own identity
- ___ 23. Ability to forgive
- ___ 24. Having a sense of humor

FAMILY STRENGTHS CHECKLISTS

Name: _____

Child Strengths

- ___ 1. Child's development and behavior are is age appropriate
- ___ 2. Child handles physical or mental handicaps well
- ___ 3. Child is healthy and in good physical condition
- ___ 4. Child attends school or day care
- ___ 5. Child is doing well in school or day care
- ___ 6. Child handles difficult situations – anger, frustration, and stress
- ___ 7. Child is free from bizarre or suicidal behaviors
- ___ 8. Child has friends
- ___ 9. Child has strategies/means to protect himself/herself
- ___ 10. Child does not blame himself/herself for maltreatment

Add other identified strengths:

- ___ 11.
- ___ 12.
- ___ 13.
- ___ 14.
- ___ 15.
- ___ 16.
- ___ 17.
- ___ 18.
- ___ 19.
- ___ 20.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY NEEDS

Here are some follow-up questions you can use after the family member answers the miracle question. These questions may make it easier to identify needs in the person's answer.

- If you were to do that, what will be the first change you will notice about yourself?
- Who would be the first person to notice the next day that something is different about you after the miracle?
- What would your mother (husband, friend, sister, etc.) notice different about you, if you didn't tell her that there's been a miracle? What else? Anything else?
- What would your mother (or others) do different then?
- What do you think will be different between you and your mother then?
- If you were to take these steps, what would you notice different around your house?
- If you were to do that, what would be the first thing your children will notice different around your house?
- What would they do different then? What else? Anything else?

Adapted from *Family Based Services*, Insoo Kim Berg, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1994

COMMON FAMILY NEEDS

<p>BASICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adequate and balanced diet ▪ Good drinking water ▪ Sufficient clothes ▪ Clean environment ▪ Adequate housing and furniture ▪ Heat, water, electricity ▪ Safe neighborhood 	<p>FINANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Money for necessities ▪ Money for special needs ▪ Money for the future ▪ Steady job ▪ Know how to budget 	<p>HEALTH/PROTECTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Routine health and dental care available ▪ Emergency health and dental care available ▪ Legal protection available ▪ Adequate public safety
<p>VOCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to work ▪ Satisfaction with work ▪ Job security 	<p>RECREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation activities available for kids, parents, family ▪ Opportunities to take advantage of recreation 	<p>CHILD CARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ help with routine child care ▪ emergency child care ▪ availability of day care or baby-sitting
<p>COMMUNICATION/ TRANSPORTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ means of contacting friends, relatives, etc. ▪ access to a telephone ▪ safe/adequate transportation available 	<p>ADULT EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ adult education available ▪ resources for self-education available 	<p>CHILD EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ access to education ▪ opportunities to play with other children ▪ access to integrated community experiences ▪ access to special intervention services
<p>EMOTIONAL SUPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ good family relationships ▪ good relationships outside the family ▪ opportunity to spend time with significant others ▪ time for one's self 	<p>CULTURAL/SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ involvement in community or cultural affairs ▪ involvement in social activities 	<p>OTHER</p>

FAMILY NEEDS: CATEGORIES AND QUESTIONS

Remember the strengths categories and questions? They can be readily and effectively adapted to identifying family needs. (Add good questions as you think of them.)

Category: Special Interests

- What would you like to do in your free time?
- Is there something you would like to learn?
- Are there any hobbies or activities that you would like to do more?
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Category: Support System: Family and Friends

- What changes would you like to make with your family?
- Would you like different kinds of friends?
- Is there anything your family or friends should do for you now?
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Category: Religion and Values/Attitudes

- Would you like to go to religious activities more or talk with a priest, minister, rabbi?
- What do you still want to accomplish in your life?
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Category: Occupation and Education

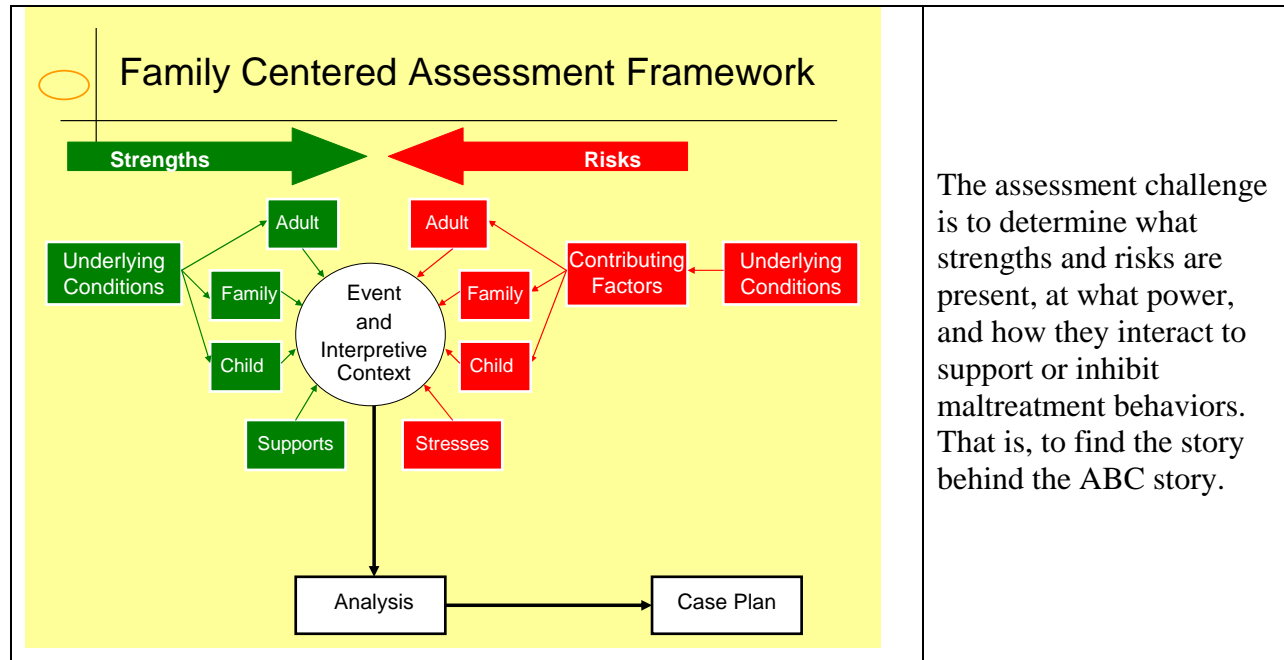
- What work would you like to do?
- Is there something connected with your work that you would like to do more?
- Is there more schooling or training that you would like to have?
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Category: Emotional, Mental, Cognitive, and Physical

- How can we help you to feel cheerful?
- How can we help you to think more clearly?
- What would you most like to do something about?
- How can we help you to be stronger and healthier?
- Do you have any nutritional needs?
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SESSION 3: ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Underlying Conditions – strength or risk behaviors driven by a family member’s intergenerational family history or underlying psychological needs and/or by the family’s responses to previous family crises.

Contributing Factors – factors that not in themselves abuse or neglect, but establish a family context that increases the likelihood of maltreatment. Examples: mental illness, poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, social isolation, medical conditions, physical or mental handicaps, some cultural practices/beliefs, etc.

Adult/Child Factors – the traits and characteristics of the individuals. Examples: willingness to change, intelligence, personal expectations, self-esteem, education level, occupation, etc.

Family Functioning – the appropriateness of the family roles and rules, especially as they are expressed in common family dynamics: conflict resolution and discipline, problem solving, affection, protection, nurturance, information sharing, and decision making. Family functioning also includes the assessment of family cohesion (the closeness/distance of the emotional bonds) and its adaptability (ability to change in response to situational or developmental stress).

Supports – the formal and informal allies from whom the family can get help or comfort.

Stresses – often the precipitating event for maltreatment; commonly financial problems, sudden homelessness, medical condition changes, breakup of a relationship, etc.

ACTIVITY 3-5: MAKING SENSE OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Directions:

Review your findings from the Mason Case. As a group, identify the key strengths, supports, stresses, contributing factors, and underlying conditions. (Participant Guide page 3-9 may help you.) Write your results below. “Key” means a finding that is significant enough to be addressed in the case plan, either as strength to be used or a risk to be reduced/eliminated.

Strengths

Supports

Stresses

Contributing Factors

Underlying Conditions

SESSION 3: ASSESSMENT

SELF-ASSESSMENT: CRITICAL THINKING APPLIED TO ASSESSMENT

CRITICAL DECISION:

Do I have sufficient information to plan an effective intervention based on understanding the family story, the people involved, and the family members' needs, aspirations, strengths, and protective capabilities?

CRITICAL THINKING SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Diligence of Inquiry

- Was I able to arrange for specialized assessments or to review existing records/reports to identify existing or potential risks and/or strengths?
- Was I able to assess all family members in sufficient detail?

Level of Responsiveness

- Was I able to engage the family in the assessment process?
- Was I able to demonstrate empathy, respect, and genuineness during the assessment?
- Would the family state that I seemed willing to work with them in a helping partnership?

Depth of Understanding

- Did I get a clear understanding of the family's perceptions (the family's story) of what happened and why the state/agency is getting involved with the family?
- Did I get a thorough understanding of family and individual strengths, risks, protective factors, and needs?
- Can I create the antecedents-behavior-consequences chain for the maltreatment event?
- Did I check for and, as necessary, follow-up to assess how the family's history and/or underlying needs, and/or contributing factors are "driving" the maltreatment?

Avoidance of Undue Influence

- Did I do a self-assessment of any personal filters that may adversely affect my working with the family?
- Was I able to "check my filters at the door" as I met with the family?
- Did I maintain a sufficient amount of professional distance?
- When encountering cultural differences, was I able to note my questionable understanding and seek help from someone more knowledgeable (including family members)?
- Did I engage with all family members and not let the opinions of any one person distort my perceptions?

Discernment

- Do I have sufficient information to make an evaluation of my assessment with the family?
- Can I identify actions/statements that convey that an open and safe exchange of information occurred with the family during the assessment?
- Do I have sufficient information to plan an effective intervention based on understanding the family story, the people involved, and the family members' needs, aspirations, strengths, and protective capabilities?
- Are the family and I developing a shared vision for how the intervention will proceed?
- Are the family and I more optimistic that positive change can occur for the family?

Heart/Gut Check

- Does my heart/gut feeling lead me to believe that I have a good understanding of the "story behind the story" – the maltreatment dynamics and the interplay of strengths and risks – for this family?

Confidence in Decisions Made

- Have I engaged the child (age-appropriate) and family in the assessment process and interpretation?
- Did I make the best decisions based on the available information?