

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.

1. Can you identify a maltreatment chain of events that reoccurs? What happens before the maltreatment, what are the maltreatment behaviors, and what are the consequences for the family members?

2. Have you asked the family about exceptions to the maltreatment incident behavior? What questions might you ask?

3. Have you noticed any particular family strengths/resiliencies – abilities to persevere or change despite a troubled past? How could you complement the family on those?

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

BASICS <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 	FINANCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Money for necessities ▪ Money for special needs ▪ Money for the future ▪ Steady job ▪ Know how to budget 	HEALTH/PROTECTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Routine health and dental care available ▪ Emergency health and dental care available ▪ Legal protection available ▪ Adequate public safety
VOCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to work ▪ Satisfaction with work ▪ Job security 	RECREATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation activities available for kids, parents, family ▪ Opportunities to take advantage of recreation 	CHILD CARE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ help with routine child care ▪ emergency child care ▪ availability of day care or baby-sitting
COMMUNICATION/TRANSPORTATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ means of contacting friends, relatives, etc. ▪ access to a telephone ▪ safe/adequate transportation available 	ADULT EDUCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ adult education available ▪ resources for self-education available 	CHILD EDUCATION <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
EMOTIONAL SUPORT <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 	CULTURAL/SOCIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ involvement in community or cultural affairs ▪ involvement in social activities 	OTHER

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

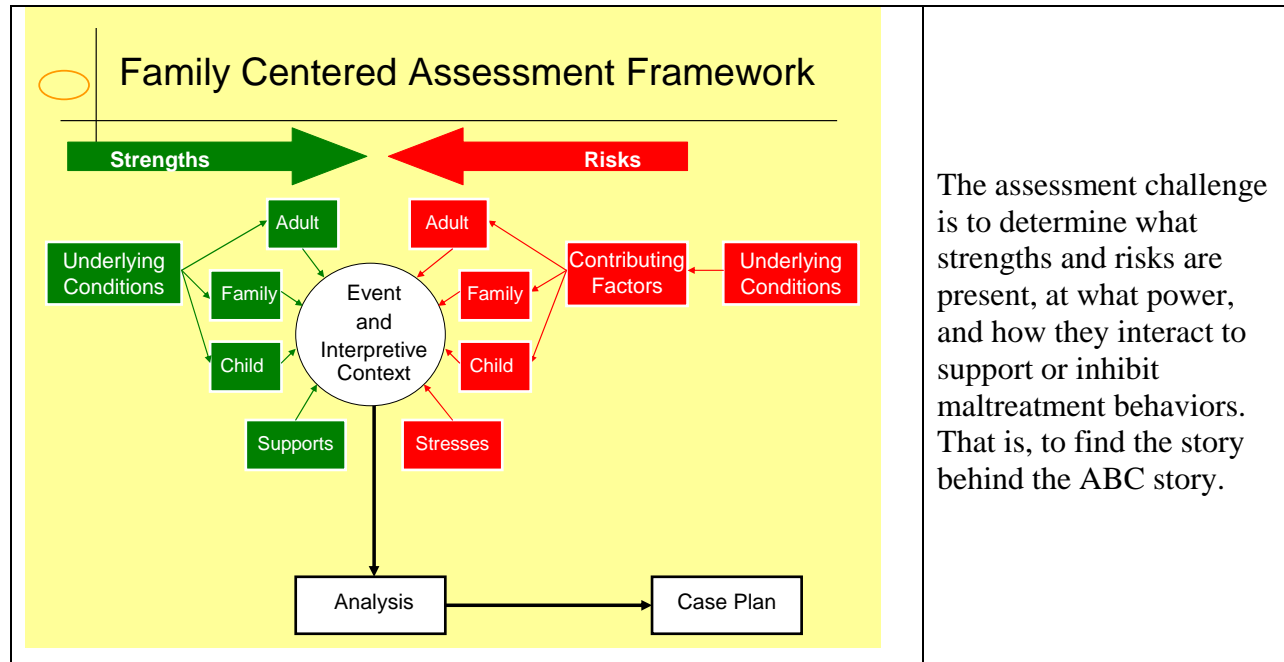
- What work would you like to do?
- Is there something connected with your work that you would like to do more?
- Is there more schooling or training that you would like to have?
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Category: Emotional, Mental, Cognitive, and Physical

- 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?