



**OREGON CHILD DEVELOPMENT COALITION**

## **Strengths-Based Approach to Performance Management**



**Presented at NMSHSA Conference 2019**

Stacia Clark, Professional Development Coordinator  
Stacia.Clark@ocdc.net

*v. Feb 2019 (90 min)*



---

---

*What strengths do you see in yourself?*

*What strengths do others see in you?*

*How do you know what your strengths are?*



Image Source: <http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/images/dissecting.JPG>

---

---

**After This Workshop** (When I return to my day-to-day job, I will...)

1. Treat staff with the support and respect that we give to families.
2. Engage staff as our partners with a critical role in achieving agency outcomes.
3. Recognize the areas of expertise that staff bring to their work.
4. Acknowledge staff contributions as valuable and important.

**In This Workshop** (During today's training, I will...)

1. List four components of a Strengths-Based Approach to Supervision.
2. Describe my own strengths, and the strengths of the people I supervise.
3. Identify four key Strengths-Based Attitudes for Effective Supervision.
4. Describe what implementing each of these Strengths-Based Attitudes looks like.
5. Recognize what I need from a supervisor and how I can ask my supervisor to better support me.

Learning materials available at <http://www.ocdc.net/strengthspm/>

## Where We Might Find Strengths...

<b>Interests and Aspirations</b> <i>Who do you want to be in the world?</i>	<b>Qualities and Personal Characteristics</b> <i>What are the core ways of being that you bring to your work?</i>	<b>Skills and Talents</b> <i>What things are you good at? Where do you bring an especially strong contribution to the success of the children and families, to the team, to the agency?</i>	<b>Environmental Strengths</b> <i>What supports do you have in place that help re-energize you or provide you with self-care?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Wants to be a...</li> <li>♦ Loves to...</li> <li>♦ Wants to spend more time...</li> <li>♦ Hopes to have...</li> <li>♦ Priorities</li> <li>♦ Wants to learn...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Honest</li> <li>♦ Caring</li> <li>♦ Hopeful</li> <li>♦ Hard-working</li> <li>♦ Funny</li> <li>♦ Kind</li> <li>♦ Patient</li> <li>♦ Dependable</li> <li>♦ Sensitive</li> <li>♦ Friendly</li> <li>♦ Encouraging</li> <li>♦ Willing to help</li> <li>♦ Calm</li> <li>♦ Stands up for the underdog</li> <li>♦ Creative</li> <li>♦ Thoughtful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Creates fun visual displays</li> <li>♦ Writes quality documentation</li> <li>♦ Knows a lot about...</li> <li>♦ Remembers stories that children / families / staff tell them</li> <li>♦ Engages with children to come up with fun new games</li> <li>♦ Computer skills</li> <li>♦ Training delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Home</li> <li>♦ Family</li> <li>♦ Pets</li> <li>♦ Friends</li> <li>♦ Exercise / recreation</li> <li>♦ Health</li> <li>♦ Congregation / faith community / spirituality</li> <li>♦ Other resources</li> </ul>

Adapted from: Goscha, Rick and Dianne Asher. No Date. Client-Centered Supervisor Training for Providers of Adult Mental Health Services in California. University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.

## Reflection: What Strengths Do You and Your Team Have?

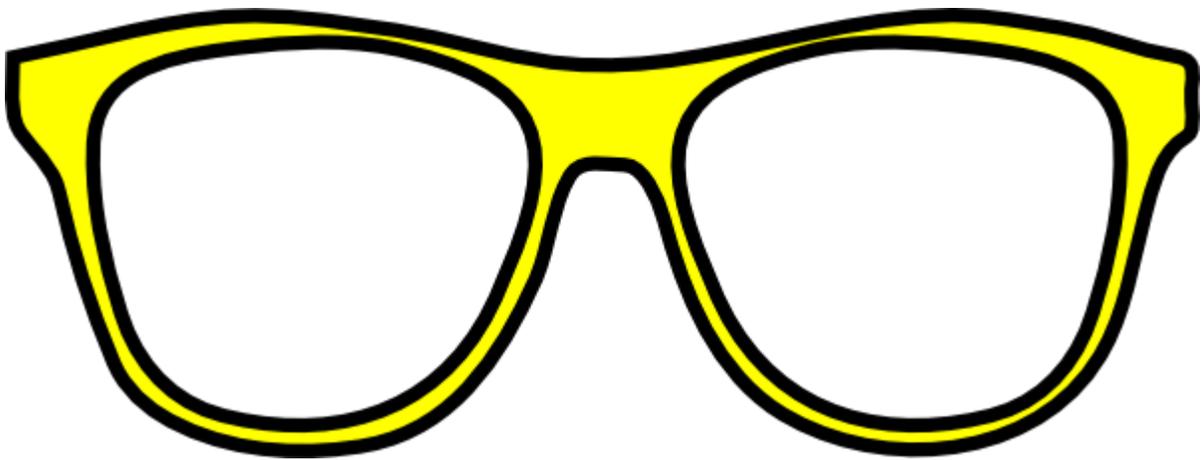
Interest and Aspirations	Qualities and Personal Characteristics	Skills and Talents	Environmental Strengths
<i>What strengths do you have in each of these areas?</i>			
<i>What strengths do the staff you supervise have in each of these areas?</i>			

“All people possess a wide range of talents, abilities, capacities, skills, resources, and aspirations. No matter how little or how much may be expressed at one time, a belief in human potential is tied to the notion that people have untapped, undetermined reservoirs of mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual abilities that can be expressed.”  
 – Charles Rapp

## What is Strengths-Based Approach to Supervision?

Apply a Discovery Lens

Maintain Positive Expectations



Encourage Collaboration

Operate from a Spirit of Service

"If we ask people to look for deficits, they will usually find them, and their view of the situation will be colored by this. If we ask people to look for successes, they will usually find them, and their view of the situation will be colored by this."  
– Ron Kral

## **Apply a Discovery Lens:**

### **Notice and Communicate About Effective Practice**

"A strengths-based perspective begins by looking for effective practice. Adult learners want to be validated for what they already know, recognized for their strengths and experience."

Judy Jablon, Amy Laura Dombro, and Shaun Johnsen

**"I notice..." Statements** – connect with the staff member and validate their work

"I notice that you \_\_\_\_\_."

This is important because \_\_\_\_\_."

#### **Tips:**

- See through distractions to what is important.
- Take notes.
- Be specific.
  - Describe the impact – e.g., to the child's learning and development, to the safety of the children and the staff, to the work of the team... Link what you notice to why it is important.
  - Narrow your focus so it's manageable to the staff member.
- Promote intentional decision-making.
- Encourage other team members to notice and communicate about effective practice.
- Resist opinions and judgement.

Write an example "I notice" statement for someone on your team:

Adapted from: Judy Jablon, Amy Laura Dombro, and Shaun Johnsen. 2016. *Coaching with Powerful Interactions: A Guide for Partnering with Early Childhood Teachers*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

## From the Office of Head Start...

### Reflective Strategies

#### Reflective Practice

A key to building positive, goal-oriented relationships is taking the time to reflect on our work with families. When we look at what's working and what's not, we can make changes that strengthen our relationships with families. Self-reflection is also an important part of our own professional growth.

#### Strategies for Effective Self-Reflection

- Observe and remember what happens with children, families, and staff.
- Think about how your own experiences affect you and your work.
- Think about the perspective of others.
- Identify stressors.



#### Reflective Supervision

It is also essential for staff to have healthy, trusting, and respectful relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Reflective supervision helps to nurture and guide staff so that they have the tools to engage children and families successfully.

#### Strategies for Effective Supervision

- Reflect on the staff's perspective.
- Support the staff's competence.
- Focus on the family-staff relationship.
- Value the staff's passion.
- Make time for your own reflection.

#### Strengths-based Attitudes for Effective Supervision

- Staff deserve the support and respect we are asking them to give families.
- Staff are our partners with a critical role in achieving outcomes.
- Staff have expertise about their own fields of practice.
- Staff contributions are valuable and important.

Excerpt from: The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. No Date. *Building Partnerships: Guide to Developing Relationships with Families*. Office of Head Start National Centers.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/developing-relationships-families/building-partnerships-guide-developing>

**Strengths-Based Attitude**

(from National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement)

Staff deserve the support and respect we are asking them to give families.

*How will you know that your supervisor supports and respects you?*

*How will the staff you supervise know that you support and respect them?  
What will they see you doing?*



## Strengths-Based Attitude

(from National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement)

Staff have expertise about their own fields of practice.

*List some areas where you have expertise.*

*How will you know that your supervisor acknowledges your expertise?*

*List some areas where the staff you supervise have expertise.*

*When you see your staff doing something well – demonstrating their expertise or strengths – how can you reinforce this behavior?*



## Strengths-Based Attitude

(from National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement)

Staff contributions are valuable and important.

*List some contributions you offer to your team.*

*How will you know that your contributions are valuable and important?*

*List some contributions that the staff you supervise offer to your team.*

*How will the staff you supervise know that you believe their contributions are valuable and important?*



## Strengths-Based Attitude

(from National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement)

Staff are our partners with a critical role in achieving outcomes.

*How do you define partner? How do you view partnership?*

*How do you explain different decision-making roles within your team?*

*What outcomes you and your team are trying to achieve together?*

*How will you know that your supervisor sees you in a partner?*

*How will you know that your supervisor believes you play a critical role in achieving the outcomes of their team?*



*How will the staff you supervise know that you see them as partners? What will they see you doing?*

*How will the staff you supervise know that you believe they play a critical role in achieving the outcomes of your team? What will they see you doing?*

## Relationship-based Practices for Effective Supervision

**1. Reflect on your program staff's perspective.**

Have an ongoing dialogue with your staff that allows them to have input about the structure, content, process, timing, and tone of supervision. This offers an opportunity for staff to reflect on what type of supervisory relationship they would like to have and how to negotiate goals and needs together. Ask staff to consider with you how you can work together to respond to complex situations. This can provide staff with an opportunity to consider different viewpoints within a system and reinforce teamwork.

**2. Support your program staff's competence.**

Accentuate the positives among staff members and in the work that they do. Staff need to be reassured about their knowledge and expertise. Strengths-based supervision helps staff feel that they are valuable members of a team. Staff may feel encouraged to reflect on their own professional competencies and goals, recognize their contributions, and feel safe to explore their challenges.

**3. Focus on the family-staff relationship.**

Work with staff to learn new skills for building partnerships with families. Use strategies that help you look at what's working and what's not and how they can use what they discovered to determine next steps with the family.

**4. Value your programs staff's passion.**

Listen to what the staff is experiencing without judging. This may include how different situations affect their mood, concentration, motivation, ability to connect with others, and what they need from you. By creating a safe and professional space where staff can talk about their real emotions, you help each other to better understand the roots of problems and strategize about how to address them.

**5. Make time for your own reflection.**

Make time to reflect on your own experiences, goals, and challenges. As a supervisor, you often put your staff's needs before your own. Reflection allows us to consider our reactions, responses, and options. Reflection on a past situation can help us prepare for similar events in the future. This is emotional work, and self-care is essential for you and your staff. You will need to take time for yourself to rejuvenate, reflect, and focus on your own professional development. Explore what helps you feel refreshed and inspired to learn and grow. What role can your supervisor play in your growth? How can your supervisor give you the best chance at success?

Excerpt from: The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. No Date. *Building Partnerships: Guide to Developing Relationships with Families*. Office of Head Start National Centers.

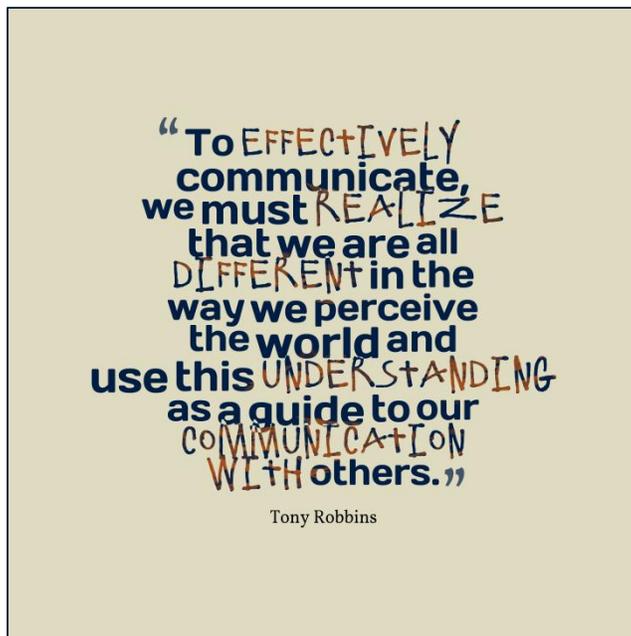
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/family/docs/building-partnerships-developing-relationships-families.pdf%20>

## Managing Upward

Earlier today, you wrote or talked about what you would see from your supervisor if they were demonstrating these Strengths-Based Attitudes.

How can you ask for what you need? What, specifically, might you say to your supervisor?

What can you do to recognize when you need to ask for these things?



## StrengthsFinder Strengths List

<http://www.strengthstest.com/strengthsfinderthemes/strengths-themes.html>

StrengthsFinder is based on the research of Donald O. Clifton and The Gallup Organization. They looked at how people think, feel, and behave – and how you will gain much more if you focus on building the areas of your greatest strengths.

<b>Achiever®</b>	People strong in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.
<b>Activator®</b>	People strong in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.
<b>Adaptability®</b>	People strong in the Adaptability theme prefer to "go with the flow." They tend to be "now" people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.
<b>Analytical®</b>	People strong in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.
<b>Arranger™</b>	People strong in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.
<b>Belief®</b>	People strong in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.
<b>Command®</b>	People strong in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.
<b>Communication®</b>	People strong in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.
<b>Competition®</b>	People strong in the Competition theme measure their progress against the performance of others. They strive to win first place and revel in contests.
<b>Connectedness®</b>	People strong in the Connectedness theme have faith in the links between all things. They believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has a reason.

<b>Consistency® / Fairness™</b>	People strong in the Consistency theme (also called Fairness in the first StrengthsFinder assessment) are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same. They try to treat everyone in the world fairly by setting up clear rules and adhering to them.
<b>Context®</b>	People strong in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.
<b>Deliberative®</b>	People strong in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.
<b>Developer®</b>	People strong in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.
<b>Discipline™</b>	People strong in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.
<b>Empathy™</b>	People strong in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others' lives or others' situations.
<b>Focus™</b>	People strong in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, then act.
<b>Futuristic®</b>	People strong in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.
<b>Harmony®</b>	People strong in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.
<b>Ideation®</b>	People strong in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.
<b>Inclusiveness® / Includer®</b>	People strong in the Inclusiveness theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.
<b>Individualization®</b>	People strong in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.
<b>Input®</b>	People strong in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.

<b>Intellection®</b>	People strong in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.
<b>Learner®</b>	People strong in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.
<b>Maximizer®</b>	People strong in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.
<b>Positivity®</b>	People strong in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.
<b>Relator®</b>	People who are strong in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.
<b>Responsibility®</b>	People strong in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.
<b>Restorative®</b>	People strong in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.
<b>Self-Assurance®</b>	People strong in the Self-assurance theme feel confident in their ability to manage their own lives. They possess an inner compass that gives them confidence that their decisions are right.
<b>Significance®</b>	People strong in the Significance theme want to be very important in the eyes of others. They are independent and want to be recognized.
<b>Strategic™</b>	People strong in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.
<b>Woo®</b>	People strong in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.