

UNDERSTANDING AND BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS

LESSON 2

Reflection

“No matter what kind of challenges or difficulties or painful situations you go through in your life, we all have something deep within us that we can reach down and find the inner strength to get through them.”

- Alana Stewart

BRITE IDEAS

Throughout this workbook, you will have many opportunities to recognize and use your strengths to get the most out of the BRITE program.

People dealing with difficult life problems often move forward by recognizing and building on their personal strengths. The goal of this lesson is to help you recognize and use your strengths to improve your confidence and build resilience.

WHAT ARE PERSONAL STRENGTHS?

- Personal strengths are our skills, knowledge, talents, gifts, interests, values, personal qualities, and physical characteristics that help us achieve goals and build resilience.
- Some people refer to these strengths as “Personal Medicine” (a term coined by Patricia Deegan, PhD). Personal Medicine involves using our strengths to cope effectively with stressful life experiences.

WHY ARE PERSONAL STRENGTHS IMPORTANT?

- Strengths support our emotional and physical well-being and can often give meaning and purpose to our lives.
- Recognizing our personal strengths can help us improve our confidence and our ability to make decisions and set goals.
- When personal struggles get in the way of achieving goals such as working, completing school, making friends, or living in a safe and comfortable place, it’s easy to forget about one’s strengths.
- In fact, because of past experiences, many individuals think mostly about their weaknesses and failures. They may blame themselves or others for their problems.
- At times, providers of mental health or substance use services may also lose sight of the importance of helping people recognize and use their strengths.

LET'S DISCUSS:

- ◆ Why would people who have experienced very difficult life events have a hard time recognizing their strengths?
- ◆ What life events may have affected your confidence in accomplishing your goals?

LET'S GET PERSONAL: My Personal Strengths Inventory

Below is a list of strengths that may or may not describe you. Please check the boxes that apply to you and those strengths that you may want to further develop.

Personal Strengths	This is a strength of mine	This is a strength I want to develop
Relationships		
I have friends I can count on		
I'm a good listener		
I'm comfortable sharing my ideas and feelings		
I care about helping other people		
I am a friendly person		
I keep myself safe by avoiding people who may harm my emotional and physical well-being		
I am involved in my community		
I have a positive connection to one or more family members		
I can carry on conversations with people		
Self-Care/ Healthy Lifestyle		
I stay away from using drugs and alcohol in a harmful way		
I know what goals I want to accomplish		
I see my medical doctor, dentist, eye doctor, etc., on a regular basis		
I eat healthy foods		
I like to take walks		
I am involved in self-help/advocacy activities		
I like to exercise and stay active		
I know how to meditate		
I participate in the cultural supports and resources in my community		
I practice yoga, martial arts, Tai Chi, or other physical body movement techniques		
I have healthy ways to calm down when I feel stressed		

out		
I read and ask questions to improve my mental health and substance use problems		
Talents, Skills and Enjoyable Activities		
I play a musical instrument		
I'm motivated to learn and work on my goals		
I speak more than one language		
I like to play table games		
I enjoy movies and television		
I like to go to museums, concerts, and plays		
I like to dance and/or sing		
I enjoy taking care of children and/or the elderly		
I enjoy art and creative activities		
I enjoy writing (poems, stories, diary, journal)		
I like to play sports		
I have hobbies		
I like to cook		
I enjoy reading		
I enjoy listening to music		
Spirituality		
I have a spiritual side to me.		
I find great comfort in prayer		
I am active in a religious or spiritual community.		
Strengths not listed that you observe in yourself and that other people see in you.		
Other:		
Other:		

LET'S DISCUSS:

- ◆ Who would like to share one or more of your strengths and/or a strength you would like to further develop?
- ◆ Who would like to share one of your strengths that is not listed?

LET'S TAKE ACTION!

Consider taking one or more Action Steps to support your personal progress in areas that are important to you. The following action steps give you the opportunity to learn more about the topic, apply what you have learned, or take steps towards goals that are important to you. You may choose to use the outline below to keep track of your Action Step. Choosing to take an Action Step is completely up to you.

A. I plan to take the following Action Steps - Check all that apply.

- Re-reading the lesson on my own or with others
- Gathering more information on the topic (internet, library, healthcare professional)
- Discussing this topic with my counselor/therapist/doctor
- Discussing this topic with another group member/peer/friend/family member
- Writing down my thoughts and feelings about this topic in a diary or journal

B. Apply what I learned from the 'Let's Get Personal' Worksheet:

- I want to improve: _____
 - My first step is to: _____
 - When _____ Where _____ With whom _____

C. This topic motivated me to work on one of my important life goals:

- My goal: _____
 - My first step is to: _____
 - When _____ Where _____ With whom _____

Affirmation

I have strengths to build my personal resilience, make healthy decisions and set important goals. I am a capable person who can take charge of my life and develop new strengths to support my emotional and physical well-being.