

STRENGTHS-BASED APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY HANDOUT

Strengths based practice starts with what is working and where we are strong, successful and passionate.

Strengths based practice operates on the assumption that we all have strengths and resources for our own empowerment.

Strengths based practice does not ignore problems and challenges. Instead, different approaches are taken to addressing issues and challenges. By focusing on what is working well now, what has worked well in similar situations, the individual strengths and the strengths of others involved, informed successful strategies are developed.

IAHA promotes five strengths-based practices:

- Acknowledge the positive
- Identify strengths
- Acknowledge support and resources
- Identify and address challenges
- Focus on solutions

The following table provides focus questions to support each of the five strengths-based practices.

PRACTICE	QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS
Acknowledge the positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is working well? • What does a good day look like for us/our organisation? What makes it a good day? • What are we most proud of in our lives/our organisation? • What inspires us? • What do we like doing? What makes this enjoyable? • What do we find comes easily to us? • When things are going well in our lives/work, what is happening? • What is positive at present? • What are three (or five or ten) things that are going well right now? • What gives us energy? • What is the most rewarding part of our lives/our work? • What makes us feel excited or useful or satisfied? Talk about a time when we felt these feelings
Identify strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we value or like about ourselves/our organisation? • What skills and talents do I/we have? • What would other people, who know us, say we are good at doing? • How would our family and friends describe our talents and strengths? • We are resilient, what helps us bounce back?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What achievements have we made? How did we make them happen? • What did we do to help things go well? • What have we tried? And what has been helpful? • How have we faced / overcome the challenges we have had? • Without being modest, what do we value about ourselves? What are our greatest strengths? • How could/do our strengths help us to be a part of our community? • How would we describe the strengths and skills we have in your lives? • When now, or in the past, have we felt like we are making a difference, making a contribution? How did we make this happen? • What is one, (or five or ten or more) thing that we can do well? • When did we respond to a challenge in a way that made us feel really on top of things? • How have we been able to develop our skills?
Acknowledge support and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the things in our lives that help us keep strong? • Who is important in our lives? • How have people around us helped us overcome challenges? • How are other people contributing to things going well for us? • How would we describe the support and resources we have? • What could we ask others to do that would help things go well for us? • What resources such as community, people and equipment do we have now? What other resources might be helpful for us? • What kind of supports have we used that have been helpful to us? How did the supports improve things?
Identify and address challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could be going better? • What stops things working better? • What are three things that have helped us overcome obstacles? • When we think about (whatever it is that is stopping things going well) is there anything we can think of that could help in any way?
Focus on solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be happening if things were working better? • What small thing could we do that would make a difference? • What is something we/our organisation has identified for improvement? • How would we currently rate it on a scale of 1 – 10? • What might make that score a little better? • What deadly solutions have we tried. How did they work out?