

Group 1: people who work with citizens

Helpful skills and knowledge for people in group 1 who want to work in a strengths-based way.

First published: 29 January 2025

Last updated: 4 February 2025

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Helpful skills and knowledge for people in group 1 who want to work in a strengths-based way.

If everyone who works in social care in Wales is familiar with strengths-based approaches, they can use them to promote positive outcomes for the people they support.

Who's in this group

This group includes anyone who works with citizens, including people who:

- run engagement activities, such as focus groups
- deal with compliments or complaints about services
- assess needs and plan interventions
- give care and support.

They could be:

- social care workers or practitioners
- support workers
- social workers
- people who work in health, early years and childcare, education and similar services.

Knowledge

People in this group should be able to:

- understand the key principles of strengths-based practice and why we use them
- understand the benefits of working in a strengths-based way
- recognise the difference between strengths-based and practice that only considers risks and problems
- understand why organisations move away from deficit-based to strengths-based practice
- be aware of relevant legislation, including the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and how it promotes peoples' voice, choice and control
- understand the policies and guidelines that support strengths-based practice in their organisation
- know when to use strengths-based practice in a specific area of work, such as child protection, safeguarding, social work or drug and alcohol interventions
- recognise what a good support network looks like for someone, starting from the individual's family and then local community and services
- recognise the things in their organisation that make it difficult to work in a strengths-based way, and how to work with others to overcome these.

Skills

It's helpful for everyone in this group to be able to:

- hold a 'what matters' conversation using skills such as 'OARS', which comes from motivational interviewing:
 - open questions
 - affirmations
 - reflections
 - summaries.

- build strong, trusting and respectful relationships with citizens and colleagues by:
 - engaging with the person on their level
 - focusing on what matters
 - being sensitive to their needs and lived experiences
 - respecting the person's unique experiences
 - thinking of the possibilities for that person (also called 'evoking')
 - planning *with* the person rather than *for* the person.
- have difficult conversations in a compassionate way
- write reports and plans in a way that:
 - focuses on the person's strengths
 - uses the person's own words
 - explains the decisions clearly
 - shows how they came to a decision
 - explains how the person feels about decisions.
- do assessments that record and build on individual, family, and community strengths
- hold 'what matters' conversations that avoid labels, jargon and passive language
- use strengths-based practice in a specific area of work, such as child protection, safeguarding, social work or drug and alcohol interventions
- listen to – and advocate for – other people who work in a strengths-based way.

How to support people in this group

You can support people in this group by:

- working towards a positive culture in your organisation
- working to the values of strengths-based practice

- offering opportunities for regular reflective practice.