

## Areas to Explore through the Strengths Assessment

### Daily Living

#### Current Status

- Where do you live (address)? How long have you lived there?
- Do you live with anyone else?
- What is good about where you live? What do you like about where you live? (e.g., quiet neighborhood, close to grocery store, near bus route, etc.)
- How do you get around (car, bike, bus, or walk)?
- Do you have pets or animals?
- What personal assets related to daily living does the person have? (e.g., do you have a phone, cable, TV, dishwasher, washer/dryer, etc.?) Note: This can help identify wants —does the person wish he/she had a vacuum cleaner?
- Are there details, special attributes about the home that the person is proud of or enjoys? (e.g., collects things, paintings, is particularly tidy, embroiders, has aquarium, etc.)
- What does the person enjoy doing or is good at doing in terms of daily living tasks, if anything? (e.g., cooking, cleaning, doing errands, grocery shopping, etc.)

#### Desires/Aspirations

- Do you like where you live? Where else would you like to live?
- Do you like living alone? With other people?
- If you could change one thing about your living situation, what would it be?
- What would your ideal living situation be? (e.g., living on a farm, buying a home, etc.)
- Is there anything you would want to make your living situation easier? (e.g., a vacuum, day care for kids, a care, a way to get to the shopping center more, etc.)
- What is most important to you in your living situation? (e.g., feeling safe, near friends, near business, having a pet, etc.)

#### Resources

- Where have you lived in the past (list each)? With whom? For how long? What was the type (e.g., apartment, group home, house, nursing facility, etc.) and location?
- Are there things you really liked about any of the past living situations?
- What was your favorite living situation? Why?
- Are there things you had in a past living situation that you do not have now but you would like to have again?

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## Financial/Insurance

### Current Status

#### **Income (type and amount)**

- SSI/SSDI
- Income from work
- Family/friends loans/assistance

#### **Program Assistance**

- Food stamps
- Section 8/HUD
- PASS Plan
- Homestead
- TANF

#### **Insurance**

- Medicare/Medicaid
- Insurance Company
- Spend-down information (amount)

#### **Money Management**

- Do you have a bank account? What kind?
- Payee? Name & address
- How do you budget & manage your money
- How do you pay your bills?
- Do you have extra spending money each week? How much?

### Desires/Aspirations

- What would you like to be different with regard to finances? How?
- What is important to you regarding your finances? (e.g., I want extra money each week to go out to eat; I want to be able to rent movies; I wish I had a savings account, etc.)
- Are there benefits the person is entitled to, but is not getting?

### Resources

- What was the person's income in the past? From what sources? (e.g., has the person worked in the past? Did they get benefits they do not receive now?)
- Did the person use/have any resources in the past that they are not using now? (e.g., payee, taking a financial management class, was an accounting major in college, used to have a savings/checking account, etc.)

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# Vocational/Educational

## Current Status

- What is the person doing with regard to productive activity? Include type, where, and amount of time. (e.g., Junior College classes in art one class per semester).
- Activities that could be included in this category: competitive employment, volunteer work, school, odd jobs, helping others, work in the CSS program, job search, involvement in vocational services and/or vocational program, parenting, taking care of sick or elderly friend or relative, etc.
- Highest level of education (e.g., GED, high school, 22 hours of undergraduate work, B.A., etc.)
- What do you like about your current job, activities, etc.?
- What is important to the person about what they are doing? (e.g. "I like the extra money", "helping people", "being around people", "being in charge of something", etc.)
- Particularly if the person is not doing anything in this area, what are their interests, skills, abilities related to productive activity? (e.g. "I'm very mechanical.", "I enjoy playing with kids.", "Art is my passion." etc.)

## Desires/Aspirations

- Do you have any desire to work? Go to school? Volunteer? Earn extra money?
- If so, what would that be doing? What do you enjoy doing? What do you have experience doing? (e.g., "I'd like to get a nursing degree", "I like to work outside and with my hands", "I like helping people", etc.)
- If you could be or do anything you wanted (career-wise), what would that be? What is it about that that interests you?
- If the person is doing some type of activity currently, is the person satisfied with what they are doing? Is there anything about what they are doing they would like to change? Is there other activity they would like to do in addition?

## Resources

- What type of activity (work, school, volunteer work, training, etc.) have you done in the past? For how long? When? Where? What did you like or not like about it?
- What kind of vocational services have you received in the past?
- Have you been/are you on any work incentive programs?
- What work situations have you found most enjoyable and why?

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# Social Supports

## Current Status

- Who do you spend time with? Who are your friends? Who do you feel close to? Who makes you feel good when you're around them?
- What organizations, clubs, groups, or do you participate in? (e.g., church, AA/NA, CSS, softball league, neighborhood groups, etc.)
- Do you have anybody that comes to visit you or that you spend time with? What kinds of things do you do together?
- Do you have a pet? Would you like one?
- Do you visit with any members of your family? Are the visits pleasant or stressful? Do you rely on any members of your family for support?
- What is it you like and dislike about being with other people?
- Where, outside of your home, do you feel most at ease?

### ↳ Examples of Social Supports

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Workers                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Compeer                      | <input type="checkbox"/> People at work                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pets                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual (church, minister) | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Groups                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acquaintances          | <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Other            | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-help/<br>Consumer-run organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social service workers |   |   |

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## Aspirations/Desires

- Is there anything that you would like to be different in your social life?
- Are there any areas of your life you would like to have more support in? (e.g., spirituality, better relationship with family, more friends, someone to go camping with, etc.)
- Are there organizations, groups, clubs that you do not currently belong to, but would like to? (e.g., church, rotary club, book club, astrology club, etc.)

## Resources

- Have there been important people in your life (e.g., friends/family) that you have felt supported by in the past but currently do not spend time with? Who?
- Are there places you used to hang out/people you used to hang out with that you do not currently? Describe who and where.
- In the past, did you belong to any groups, clubs, and/or organizations? What were they? Did you enjoy them? What did you enjoy about them?

# Health

## Current Status

### Psychiatric

- Psychiatrist currently seeing
- Medications
- Do you experience symptoms of your illness? What are they like? What kinds of things do you do to cope with or manage your symptoms?
- What produces stress for you? What do you do to manage stress?

### Physical

- Medical Doctor currently seeing
- Dentist
- Description of physical health
- Diet and eating habits
- Do you exercise? What type?
- Pharmacy and Pharmacist
- Use of over the counter medications
- Birth control
- Smoking habits

## Desires/Aspirations

- Are there things you are working on or would like to work on with regard to your physical or mental health? (e.g., losing weight, managing symptoms, smoking less, drinking less, etc.)
- What is important to you in this area? Is there anything you would like to learn more about, improve, or change in this area?

## Resources

- Address resources used in the past for any of the areas mentioned in current status.
- Patterns of hospitalization: When was your last hospitalization? Was it state or private? How often do you typically go into the hospital? What happens before you go in (precipitating factors)? Are the hospitalizations usually voluntary or involuntary?
- Were any of the resources used in the past (doctors, hospitals, exercise activities, medications, diets, symptom management techniques, etc.) particularly helpful?

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# Leisure/Recreation

## Current Status

- What do you do for fun?
- What are your hobbies?
- What do you do to relax and enjoy yourself?

### ↳ Example Areas of Leisure/Recreational Activities

#### Sports activities:

Basketball, football,  
softball, tennis,  
swimming

#### Individual

##### entertainment:

Listening to the radio,  
TV, people watching,  
listen to music

#### Meditative Pursuits

Prayer, yoga, bible  
study

#### Outdoor - Nature

##### Activities:

Hiking, fishing,  
canceing, picnics,  
hunting, camping

#### Intellectual

##### Pursuits

Reading, lectures,  
non-credit classes,  
going to library

#### Trips, Excursions,

##### Vacations

Shopping

#### Social pursuits:

Parties, visiting,  
table games, talking  
on the phone,  
shopping

#### Cultural/Artistic

Instruments,  
painting, crafts,  
visiting museums, art  
class, concerts,  
movies

#### Cooking, Baking, or Knitting

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- Do you ever go out and do things on weekends? If so, what do you usually do?
  - Do you have a TV? Would you like one? What is your favorite TV show? Do you like movies? What kind? Who is your favorite actor?
  - Do you like to read? Who is your favorite author? Do you go to the library?
  - Do you like to cook? What is your favorite meal? Do you like to go out to eat?
  - If you could do anything you wanted for one day, what would you do?
  - When do you get bored? What do you do when you get board?

## Desires/Aspirations

- What fun things do you like to do, but are not doing currently?
- Have you ever wanted to try something that sounded like fun, but you never have done?
- Explore desires listed in current status.

## Resources

- Explore past involvements, interests, activities listed in current status. Where did the person do the activities? With whom?
- What activities did you most enjoy in the past? What was it about the activities you enjoyed?

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# Spirituality

## Definition

Spirituality refers to any set of beliefs and/or practices that give a person a sense of hope, comfort, meaning, purpose in their life, or a connection to the greater universe.

For some people this may have to do with God and some type of organized religion, for others it may be an individual relationship with a higher power, for others it may not be specifically defined. Religion is not necessarily synonymous with spirituality.

Do not limit the definition to only an institution, church, or denomination. Also, do not impose your own thoughts or beliefs on the person.

### ↳ Examples

- |              |                      |                          |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| ▪ Meditation | ▪ Community Service  | ▪ Fellowship with others |
| ▪ Art        | ▪ Organized Religion | ▪ Political Justice      |
| ▪ 12-step    | ▪ Rituals            | ▪ Altruism/giving        |
| ▪ Temple     | ▪ Nature             |                          |
| ▪ Music      |                      |                          |

## Possible Approaches to Talking About Spirituality

- Is there anything in your life that brings you a sense of comfort, meaning, or purpose in your life?
- What gives you the strength to carry on in times of difficulty?
- What do you believe in?
- What do you have faith in?

This topic can also come up within other life domains, such as social support. Often times, spirituality is linked with connection to others in a social context.

