

Strengths-Based Approach Interview Guide



Ask the individual to describe a time they were successful in the past.

- Describe your longest length of sobriety.
- Describe a time that you saw an opportunity for crime but did not act on it.
- Describe a time you were able to walk away from a situation that could have gotten volatile.
- Describe a time you were successful at a job and/or in school.
- Describe a time as a parent that you are especially proud of.

Interventions should not just be about fixing what is broken, but also developing an individual's existing strengths.



Express confidence that the individual can overcome current difficulties and link confidence to individual's prior successes or current strengths.



The structure of these statements should be



"I believe you can do X, because you did Y in the past."



"I believe you can do X, because you have Y going for you now."

"I believe you can stay sober because you stayed sober for 3 months when you had your family support."



"I believe you can stay sober because you obviously have a strong desire and you have the tools to help with your triggers."



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Look for current strengths/protective factors in any of the following factors



Current Situation

- Stable housing
- Medical/mental health wellness
- Less criminogenic environment



Cognitions

- Rationalizations and justifications that indicate the client feels bad for behavior.
- Thoughts about desire to change, ability to change, reasons to change, or need to change
- Perceptions of changing identity or becoming a new person
- Beliefs that crime is bad / discussion of the costs of crime
- Self-efficacy in ability to stay sober, achieve goals in prosocial way, control anger, etc.



Family Dynamics

- Supportive, prosocial parents
- Supportive, prosocial spouse or partner
- Desire to be a good son/daughter
- Desire to be a good parent to children
- Desire to be a good spouse/partner
- Agreeable – altruistic, compliant, straightforward, not hostile, empathic to others



Personality

- Conscientious - able to control impulses, carry out plans and tasks and follow one's internal moral code, ambitious, able to persevere
- Agreeable – altruistic, compliant, straightforward, not hostile, empathic to others



Social Network

- Friends who work/go to school and have not been in trouble with the law,
- Minimal (reduction in) contact with criminal peers or negative view of criminal peers
- Prosocial co-workers, classmates, or neighbors that the client respects/likes
- Experiences of seeing people rewarded for prosocial, positive behavior
- Experiences of seeing people pay a price for antisocial, negative behavior.
- No gang ties



Employment or Education

- Full time employment
- High school education or greater
- Maintaining employment for several months
- Interest in a particular trade, skill, or type of job



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- Describe a time that you saw an opportunity for crime but did not act on it.
- Describe a time you were able to walk away from a situation that could have gotten volatile.
- Describe a time you were successful at a job and/or in school.
- Describe a time as a parent that you are especially proud of.

Express confidence that the individual can overcome current difficulties and link confidence to individual's prior successes or current strengths. The structure of these statements should be "I believe you can do X, because you did Y in the past." Or "I believe you can do X, because you have Y going for you now."

- "I believe you can stay sober because you stayed sober for 3 months when you had your family support."
- "I believe you can stay sober because you obviously have a strong desire and you have the tools to help with your triggers."

Look for current strengths/protective factors in any of the following factors

- Cognitions
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- Personality
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- Social networks
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 - No gang ties
- Employment or education situation
 - Full time employment



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- Family dynamics
 - Supportive, prosocial parents
 - Supportive, prosocial spouse or partner
 - Desire to be a good son/daughter
 - Desire to be a good parent to children
 - Desire to be a good spouse/partner
- Current circumstances
 - Stable housing
 - Medical/mental health wellness
 - Less criminogenic environment

