

Building Agencies of Change

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What Kind of Agency Do
We Want?

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- What is our mission?
- What is our “philosophy?”
- How do we carry out our mission and philosophy in classrooms, in client interactions, with each other in supervision and meetings, and in the community?
- Do we have the kind of environment where staff feel safe to share their thoughts and ideas—positive or otherwise?
- What coordinated systems of feedback, if any, are in place to gather and respond to the feedback of clients, staff, and the community?

What is Strengths-Based?

A strengths-based perspective is a view that emphasizes the capacity of people to face adversity, achieve positive change, and flourish. People are seen as having abilities and resources within themselves and their social systems that when activated and combined with new experiences, understandings and skills, offer pathways to reduce pain and suffering, resolve concerns and conflicts, and cope more effectively with life stressors. The outcome is improved sense of well-being and quality of life and higher degrees of interpersonal and social functioning. Strengths-based practitioners promote change through respectful educational, therapeutic, and operational processes that encourage and empower others.

Personal Philosophy and Worldview

Understanding Worldviews

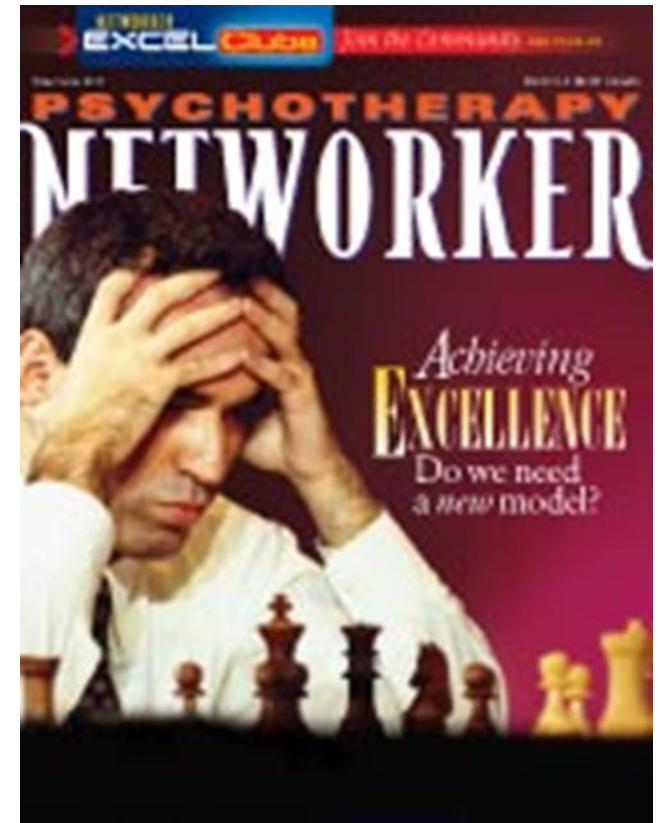
1. What are the core beliefs and ideas you have about people?
2. How have you come to believe what you believe and know what you know? What have been the most significant influences on your beliefs?
3. How do/might your beliefs and assumptions affect your work others? With colleagues? With the community??

Understanding Your Worldview (cont.)

4. Do you believe that change is possible even with the most “difficult” and “challenging” situation and people?
5. How do you believe that change occurs? What does change involve? What do you do to promote change?
6. Would you be in this field if you didn't believe that people could change?

An Agency's Response: Becoming Strengths-Based

- 1999 – Youth In Need (YIN) incorporated a Strengths-Based philosophy
- 2002 – Began “Strengths-Based 101” IJT
- 2003 – All clinical staff began tracking their outcomes
- 2004- Began incorporation of SB ideas into funding requests
- 2004 – SB Interviewing
- 2009 – SB Employee Evaluations
- 2010 – SB Roundtables
- 2011 – “Building a Culture of Excellence”
- 2012 – SB 101 3.0
- 2012 – imagYIN OMS



imagYIN_{OMS}

Interactive Measurement of Agency Growth by Youth In Need, Inc.
Outcomes Management System

“Search and see if there is not some
place where you may invest your
humanity.”

Albert Schweitzer

Benefits of Strengths-Based Agencies

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- More “response-able”
- Better work environment (climate)
- Better and more creative problem-solving strategies
- More resilient to the negativity of single persons or abrupt group changes
- Are better at self-monitoring
- More productive
- Less staff turnover

Ideas for Creating Change in Agencies

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- First and foremost, do not wait for opportunities to improve skills, strengthen work relationships
- At the start of each day, reorient to personal philosophy
- Commit to a “We” environment
- Be mindful of “real-time resilience”
- Maintain a Losada ratio of at least 3:1
- Be proactive and focus on well-being as opposed to being reactive (e.g., compassion fatigue)
- Identify the best of your programs on an ongoing basis and explore and build on those successes
- Use routine and ongoing feedback