



Staying Connected:

Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness News

January 2022

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BE THE SPARK

How to Play to Your Strengths

Reflected Best Self (RBS) Exercise

([Harvard Business Review](#))

Identify Respondents and Ask for Feedback

Request feedback about your strengths and specific examples when the strengths were witnessed from individuals in your life (friends, family, co-workers) past and present.

Recognize Patterns

Create a table of your feedback. Identify the common themes in the responses.

Compose Your Self-Portrait

Begin with the phrase "When I am at my best, I..." Establish a clear image of your best self.

Redesign Your Job

Adjust the pieces of your job description that allow you to play to your strengths.

A new year has begun and many of us have established our resolutions for the year ahead. Resolutions are usually decided upon through reflection of our lives at the end of a year. Typically these resolutions are made to address a perceived weakness.

Although some people will find success with this approach, studies have suggested that focusing on your strengths will lead to a better chance at producing positive long-term change.

A Gallup organization poll found that less than two in ten people feel like they are able to play to their strengths every day. Gallup also found that 73% of professionals under 30 believe that the secret to being successful in life is fixing your weaknesses.

Last month we spent time identifying our strengths. We focused on finding character strengths, personal strengths, interpersonal strengths, and organizational strengths. Hopefully you were able to identify a few strengths that bring you energy and meaning. If you were not able to identify a few core strengths, consider taking the [Values in Action Inventory](#) (Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

So now we need to build on these strengths to help improve our wellbeing, our engagement and our productivity. In *The Power of Character Strengths*, authors Niemiec and McGrath identify how to ignite each of your strengths (2019).

Niemiec and McGrath state that we should take some time to "reflect" on an identified strength. What does this strength mean to you? How would you describe this strength to someone else?

They also suggest that we see if we can "observe" this strength being exhibited

by others. By observing this strength in individuals that are close to us, we are able to reinforce the value.

We also may need to establish "strategies" to use this strength on a daily basis. By using this strength on a daily basis, we have the ability to hone our skills.

We should also learn to "use each strength" in a balanced manner. You may be tempted to over use a strength when trying to impress someone, or under utilize the strength because you are intimidated by others present.

Just like with most things in life, we should also take time to "review the outcomes" when using our strengths. There will be times when we may have used the wrong strength in a particular situation and it leads to an unintended outcome. This is a great opportunity to learn from the decision and to work on building our ability to identify the correct strength to use in various situations.

The last recommendation from Niemiec and McGrath is to "visualize" what it might be like to use the strengths successfully. We are not always afforded opportunities to use our strengths, or we are not sure if the situation is going to be right for a particular strength. By using visualization we are able to test the strength and formulate some internal feedback.

By focusing on our strengths rather than our weaknesses we are building a strategy that will not only see us grow and flourish but it will see us implementing programs and services that will help our adults also grow and flourish.

"To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom." - Socrates



Mark your calendar and make sure everyone knows that you are busy on June 15, 2022. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day will be here before you know. More information on events and awareness activities coming soon. If you are interested in helping to plan events statewide, please feel free to reach out to cliff.bryant@ky.gov.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis of Adult Protective Services, 2021

In November of 2021, Kentucky Adult Protective Services solicited feedback, through an anonymous online survey, about its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to success. The following information is an analysis of the information that was gathered. This information is being used to establish a 3—5 year operational plan. Keep an eye out for future surveys to give your feedback.

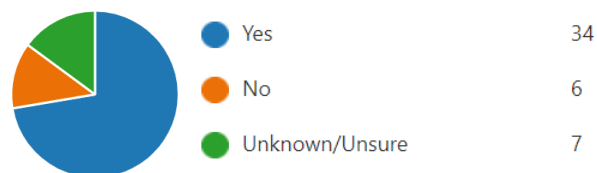
Have you worked with APS in Kentucky in any capacity (personal or professional) in the past?



Do you believe that APS has appropriate communication about their services with community partners and stakeholders?



In your community, does APS work with community partners? (i.e. law enforcement, local coordinating councils, home health agencies, OIG, county attorneys, etc)?



Strengths

- Collaborations
 - Teamwork
 - Adaptability
 - Technology
- Experienced staff
- Adult centered planning
 - Dedicated staff

Weaknesses

- Communication with professionals (acceptance/denial and outcomes)
 - Staff pay
- Community awareness of acceptance criteria
 - Lack of resources

Opportunities

- Consistent decision making (intake/investigations)
 - Ongoing services
- Shifting from investigative mentality to service provisioning
 - Assessment skills
 - Networking
- Communication with community partners/stakeholders
 - Education about APS and its services
- APS presence in communities (participation in Coordinating Councils on Elder Abuse)
- Collaborations with adult service providers for increased knowledge of available services

Threats

- Staffing shortages
 - High case loads
 - COVID-19
- Lack of funding for services
- Pressures from courts and hospitals
 - Public perceptions
- Increase in criminal activity
- Lack of mental health services

HELLO!



MEET THE TEAM

Elder Abuse Committee

KRS 209.005 establishes the formation of an Elder Abuse Committee. This committee is tasked with addressing “issues of prevention, intervention, investigation, and agency coordination of services on a state and local level through interaction with local groups or entities that either directly or indirectly provide services to the elder population.”

The following entities are specifically identified in KRS:

- Senior citizen centers
- Local governmental human service groups
- The Sanders-Brown Center on Aging at the University of Kentucky
- Long-Term Care Ombudsmen

The membership of the committee is written to include representatives from the following agencies, at a minimum:

- The Department for Community Based Services
- The Department for Public Health
- The Department for Behavioral Health, Development and Intellectual Disabilities
- The Department for Aging and Independent Living
- The Office of Inspector General’s Division of Health Care
- The Office of the Ombudsman
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Local and state law enforcement official
- Prosecutors

The committee is responsible for producing an annual report of their activities, products and recommendations for public policy to the Governor and the Legislative Research Commission. The annual elder abuse report is completed as a joint effort with the Adult Protection Branch. These reports may be accessed on the Elder Abuse Awareness page ([click here](#)).

The committee also works on enhancing existing public awareness campaigns, providing a forum for the exchange of information to educate the elder population and their families on the rights of elders, and recommending practices to assure timely reporting of referrals of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Strength Based Protective Services: How does this fit in with Adult Protective Services?

Although Adult Protective Services (APS) is tasked with completing an investigation of abuse, neglect or exploitation, we must remember that the underpinning of this investigation is the assessment. The worker uses each interaction with the adult, family and collaterals to develop an outline of the adult’s current situation, immediate needs and long-term needs.

An APS worker will have to utilize their skills to build rapport with the adult to gain as much insight into the current situation as possible. Understanding that the focus will be on safety factors, the worker will need to start assessing the adult’s strengths early in the conversation.

By identifying the adult’s strengths the worker will be able to leverage them to address the current situation while also establishing long-term strategies to prevent future abuse, neglect and exploitation.

In taking a strength based approach, APS will attempt to instill some hope in to the relationship by showing the adult that they already have some of the resources inside themselves to affect a change that may be necessary to reduce their risk of future abuse, neglect and exploitation.

When the adult is willing and capable, APS will help to identify goals and strategies to remove or minimize safety and risk concerns. The goals will be adult centered, emphasizing their personal strengths as well as potential strengths of accessing resources in the community.

A strengths based approach is designed to help adults see that they have the necessary strengths to affect the change they want to see in their personal life. When a worker takes this approach, the relationship between the worker and the adult takes on a more positive and hopeful status.

When APS is able to build a positive and hopeful relationship with an adult, outcomes associated with health and welfare tend to be better than when the relationship remains distant or strained.

“Success is achieved by developing our strengths, not by eliminating our weaknesses.”

- Marilyn vos Savant



RESEARCH TRANSLATION

What are the characteristics in older adults that increase the likelihood that their fractures are related to abuse?

[Click Here](#)

RESEARCH TRANSLATION

Identifying patterns of health care utilization among physical elder abuse victims using Medicare Data

[Click Here](#)

Immigrant Clients: Casework, Outreach, and Protection

[Click Here](#)

**AN IPHONE
AND A
FIREWORK
WERE ARRESTED
ON NEW
YEAR'S EVE.**



**One was charged and
the other was let off.**



1/27/22 2:00-3:00pm (ET)

Trauma Informed Counseling for Older Adults

[Register Here](#)

2/16/21 11:00am—12:30pm (PT)

A Circle Approach to Healing the Harm of Financial Exploitation

[Register Here](#)