



Be Inspired Group - Using Strengths Cards

Tapping into and building on your strengths and values can help to increase your health and wellbeing, improve your relationships, increase your performance and help you to achieve your life goals.

Traditionally we all tend to focus on problems and weaknesses, but there is much more to life than problems. Using a strengths based approach is about starting with what is right with us and acknowledging our inherent strengths and abilities to make the most out of life.

Focussing on strengths does not mean ignoring our weakness, but it does provide a more positive language for exploring difficulties that allows us to see opportunities, hope and solutions. What one focuses on tends to become their reality, so let's focus on what is good.

Strengths and values are also the intrinsic motivators and drivers for change and are a key resource that can help us to achieve change. Tapping into our strengths will also help to build our confidence and belief in ourselves.

The Strengths Cards are a useful tool for clinicians, coaches, managers, teachers or anyone who is interested in exploring and gaining a better understanding of their strengths.

The Strengths Cards are based on the VIA (Values in Action) Signature Strengths which were developed by Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson who are well known within the field of positive psychology. The VIA Signature strengths classification resulted from a three-year dedicated effort involving 55 noted social scientists, who identified 24 character strengths that have been found to be universal characteristics that define what's best about people. These 24 VIA Strengths can be summarised within the following 6 broad areas:

1. **Wisdom and Knowledge:** creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective
2. **Courage:** bravery, persistence, integrity, zest
3. **Love and Humanity:** love, kindness, social intelligence
4. **Justice:** citizenship, fairness, leadership
5. **Temperance:** forgiveness and mercy, humility, prudence, self-control
6. **Spirituality and Transcendence:** appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, spirituality

Signature Strengths are strengths that best describe the positive aspects of who you are.

They are strong capacities in you that are likely to be engaging, energising and comfortable for you to use. Your family and friends would likely agree that these are important strengths that you have. Finding ways to use and express these strengths is likely to bring many benefits and help you create a fulfilling life



Tips for Using Strengths Cards

- Lay all the cards out in front of you and choose your top 5 strengths
- Consider why you chose these top 5
- Explore each of these strengths
 - Are you using them now?
 - How have you used them in the last week or month?
 - How have you used them in the past?
 - Do you use them during difficult or challenging times?
 - How might you use them to become your best self?
 - How might you make more effective use of these strengths?
- Consider a challenge you are currently facing or a change you are considering making, how could you make use of these strengths to help you with it?
- Which of the strengths do you think you underutilise, how might you go about using them?
- Consider getting someone you respect to select cards that they see as your strengths and explain why they chose them for you?
- Explore all the other cards, are there strengths that you would like to make better use of and develop further?
- Think about how you might go about consciously using your strengths on a daily basis or during next week.
- Consider using your strengths in novel ways, for example if creativity is your signature strength how might incorporate creativity within a routine daily task.
- To enhance relationships with a loved one, a friend or a colleague you could get them to choose (or you choose) their top 5 strengths and offer them examples of how you see them using those strengths and offer them positive praise.
- You could also use the cards with people you're having difficulties with as a way to better understand each other and as an opportunity to positively acknowledge each other's strengths.
- Find new and unique ways to apply your Signature Strengths to your goals.