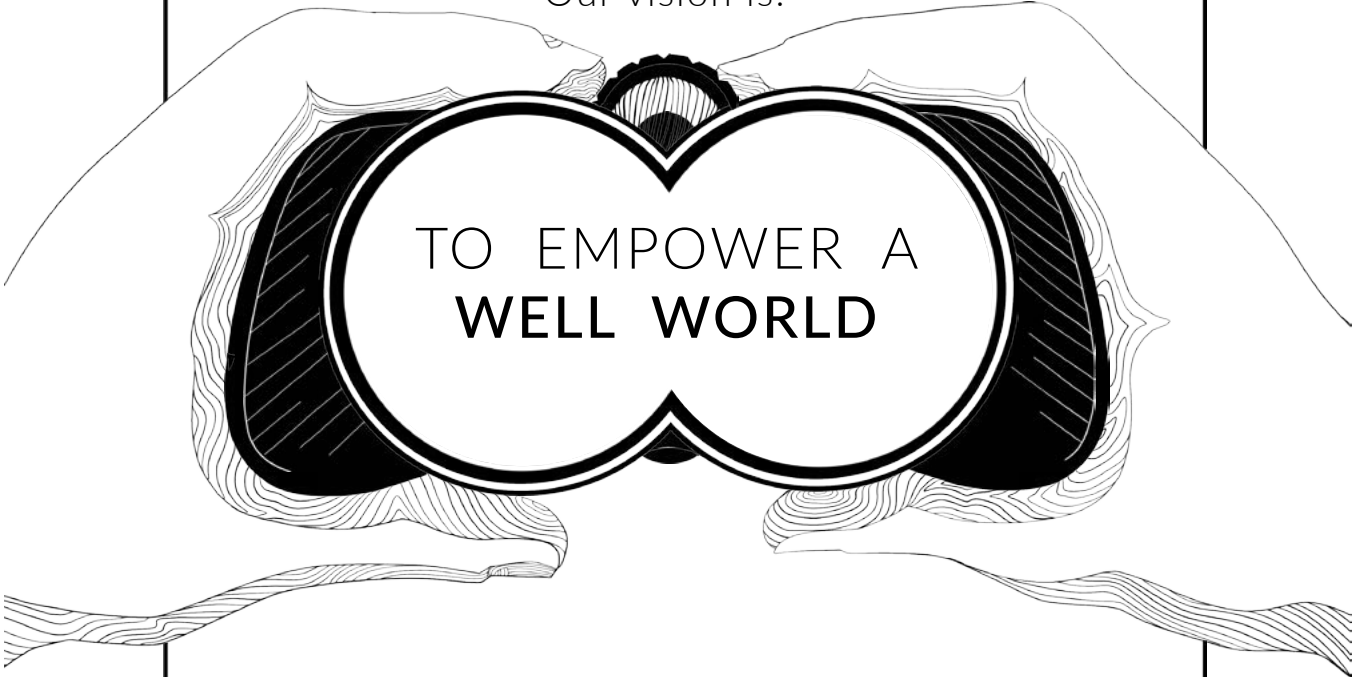


ADULT ADVISOR

FIELD GUIDE

Our vision is:



TO EMPOWER A
WELL WORLD

Sources of Strength

All Rights Reserved. © 2019 Sources of Strength, Inc
Second Edition, 2021

sourcesofstrength.org

Editor in Chief

Mish “Need Some Coffee” Moore

Chief Illustrator

Tanya “The Ringer” Adams

Layout Design

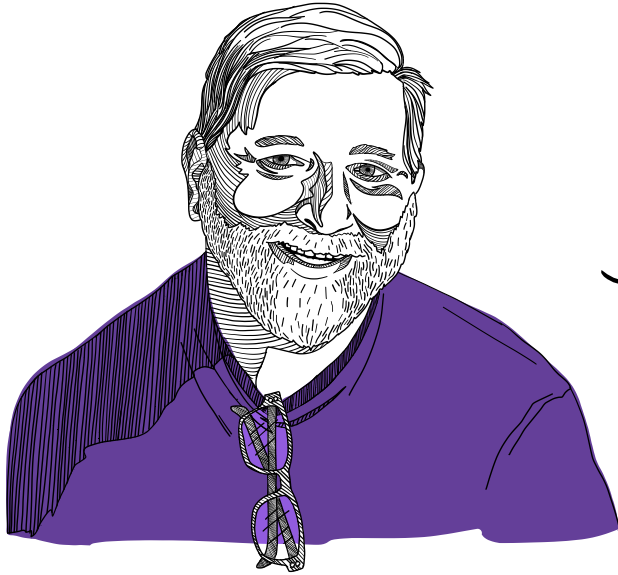
Cody “Happy to Help” Sletten

In Gratitude:

We would like to thank the Sources of Strength team for many hours of brainstorming, writing, editing, humor, encouragement, and feedback throughout this process, including Janell Anema, Rana Razzaque, Jaymie Sheehan, Matthew Hofmeister, Carey Franklin, Kelsey Hopstad, and Kristen Musselman. Thank you especially to Dan Adams and Scott LoMurray for your help and support. Thank you to the many research partners, individuals, and organizations for your tireless creativity, work, and feedback. Your friendship and passion have helped make our powerful vision of Hope, Help, and Strength a reality. Thank you to Mark LoMurray for giving your life to help young people and communities thrive, even in the face of immense difficulties. Thank you to our Adult Advisors, your hard work and powerful stories enable us to keep working to empower the voices of young people to spread Hope, Help, and Strength. Finally, thank you to our Peer Leaders: you are the heart, soul, and voice of Sources of Strength.

Distribution:

This Field Guide is available in its entirety with Adult Advisor access of our website. If you would like to purchase additional hard copies of this Field Guide, please visit our store at sourcesofstrength.org



letter from the founder

MARK LOMURRAY

Welcome!

My past 45 years of working with teens, young adults, and families and the experiences of that work, both joyful and tragic, shaped the building of Sources of Strength. I started Sources of Strength initially because I stood at far too many gravesites of young people. Those tragedies burned into me a conviction that we could do something different, more effective, more life giving. Sources of Strength was also born out of the resiliency I have watched come to life in thousands of individuals facing challenges and the amazement I felt at the diverse ways individuals, families, and communities come to healing and health.

The Sources of Strength wheel is designed to be simple and understandable. It is an accessible tool to help us share stories of Hope, Help, and Strength and guide us through the ups and downs of life. As you work with young leaders, maintain the simplicity of Sources of Strength and celebrate the amazing diversity of individual paths toward Strength and resiliency. That is what makes Sources life giving - for Peer Leaders, Adult Advisors, trainers, administrators, parents, and you!

I have given my life to this work. For me, this has never been a job, but rather a labor of love to help individuals thrive in the face of adversity. What we offer at Sources of Strength is radical: the chance to practice a community of health and hope. We use Active Learning to help cast a vision of what a well world can look like. We will stumble along the way, but within this community we learn to laugh, listen, and live with deep gratitude as we walk alongside others working towards Strength.

Now go forward and use this Adult Advisor Field Guide! Write in it and on it. Make stars by the things you find great. Place your adaptations in the margins. Share with us again and again. I have found this to be deeply meaningful work, and I have faith that you will too. I am grateful to call you a partner in hope.

Thank you. Thank you for giving your life to young people and for being willing to be part of Sources of Strength. Keep lighting up your corner of the world.

Mark Lomurray

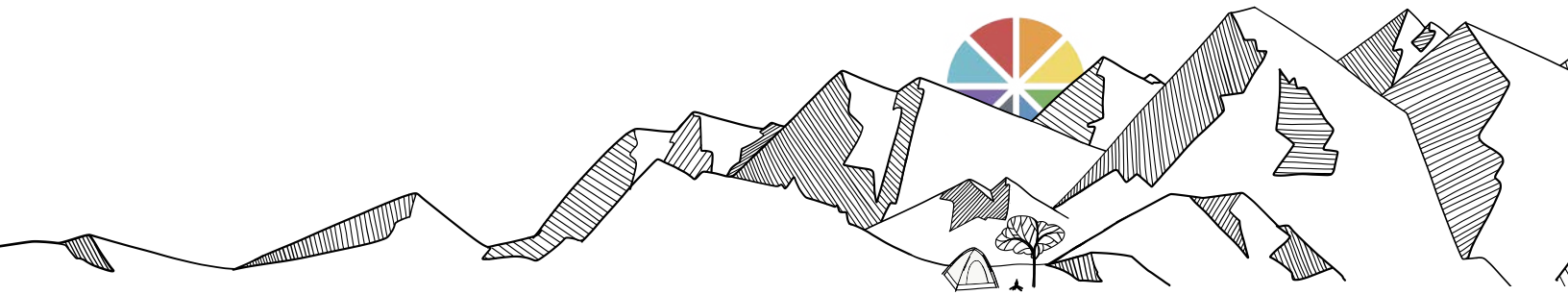
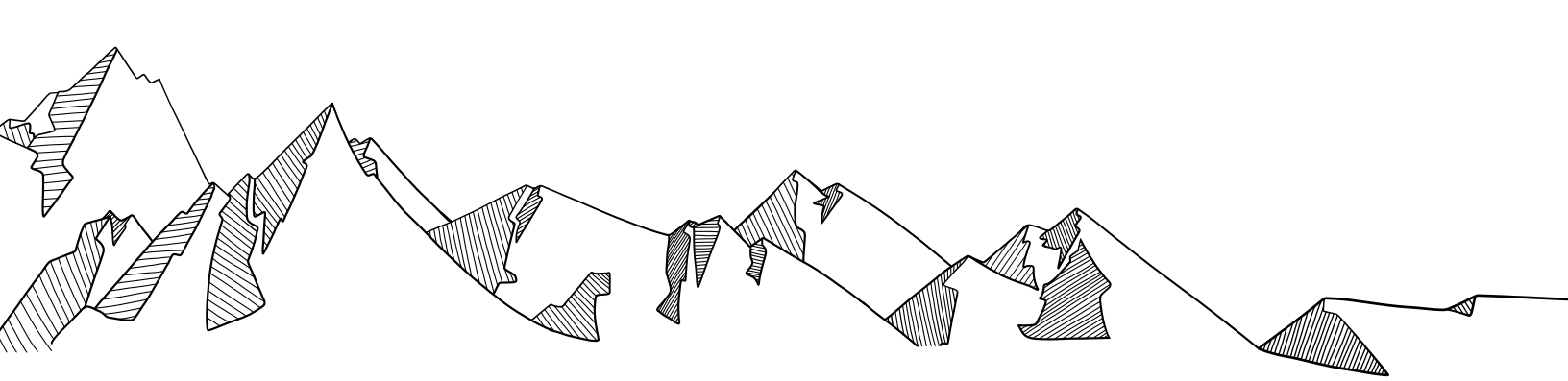


Table of contents

Field Guide: Getting Started	<u>6</u>
How to Use the Field Guide	<u>8</u>
Field Guide Legend	<u>9</u>
Glossary	<u>10</u>
Pack Your Bag: Gear for the Road	<u>12</u>
Chapter 1: The Scenic View: Overview and Philosophy	<u>14</u>
Upstream Prevention	<u>16</u>
A Brief History and Overview	<u>18</u>
Theory of Change	<u>20</u>
Sources of Strength Model	<u>21</u>
Sources of Strength Wheel	<u>22</u>
Definition of Strengths	<u>23</u>
Shared Risk & Protective Factors Approach	<u>24</u>
Active Learning	<u>25</u>
Chapter 2: Building Below the Waterline: Practicing a Community of Strength	<u>26</u>
Building Below the Waterline	<u>28</u>
Fun, Sharing, and Planning: Peer Leader Meetings	<u>30</u>
Base Camp: First Peer Leader Meeting	<u>32</u>
When, Where, and How to Meet	<u>33</u>
Facilitation Guidelines	<u>34</u>
Peer Leader Ownership	<u>36</u>
Rationale for 1 Part Fun	<u>38</u>
Rationale for 1 Part Sharing	<u>40</u>
Helpful Prompts for Group Discussions	<u>41</u>
Rationale for 1 Part Planning	<u>44</u>
Inclusive Practices	<u>45</u>





Chapter 3: On the Trail: Sharing a Community of Strength 48

- Sources Messaging and Philosophy [50](#)
- Hope, Help, and Strength-Based Messaging [50](#)
- Targeted Messaging [52](#)
- Layered Messaging [52](#)
- Campaign Planning [53](#)
- Templated Campaigns [54](#)
- Getting the Word Out [56](#)
- What Helps Me [60](#)
- I Am Stronger [64](#)
- Thankfulness [67](#)
- Connect [70](#)
- We Belong [73](#)
- Trusted Adults [76](#)
- Sources of Strength Week [79](#)
- Ideas for Strength-Specific Campaigns [81](#)
- Postvention Guidelines: Do's and Don'ts [86](#)

Chapter 4: Staying the Course: Evaluating your Efforts and Impact 88

- Multi-Year Implementation Strategy [90](#)
- District and Community Level Strategy [95](#)
- First Aid Kit: Troubleshooting Key Challenges [98](#)
- Fidelity Markers [101](#)
- Evaluating your Sources of Strength Team [105](#)
- Tracking Activities [107](#)

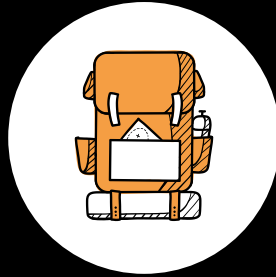
Chapter 5: The Wilderness: Additional Tools and Resources 110

- Games [112](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions [120](#)
- Suicide Intervention Protocol [125](#)
- Sources of Strength End of Year Peer Leader Survey [128](#)
- Additional Features: Visuals and Tear-outs [130](#)

field guide
GETTING
STARTED



Every journey requires preparation.
Whether you're just starting out or traveling a well worn path, here
are resources you'll use on the trail.



INTRODUCTION

How to Use the Field Guide [08](#) | *Field Guide Legend* [09](#)

Glossary [10](#) | *Pack Your Bag: Gear for the Road* [12](#)

HOW TO USE THE FIELD GUIDE

Welcome to Sources of Strength! By becoming an Adult Advisor, we are inviting you to embark on a journey. This Field Guide was thoughtfully crafted to be your companion as you work to empower, support, and sustain a peer-led social change initiative in your school or community. Whether you are just getting started or looking for some new resources after several years on a well-established team, we hope this Field Guide is a resource for you.

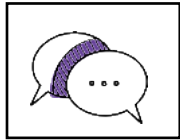
Sources of Strength is always working to help support a wide variety of cultures and contexts of Peer Leader teams. We have spent time listening to what Adult Advisors say they need and have tried to speak to many of those requests in this updated Field Guide. We consider this guide to be only one of several tools offered to support teams. Other tools include our website (sourcesofstrength.org), online and phone support with our staff, as well as Train the Trainer events held in several locations across North America each year. We believe that with all of these tools, any caring, connected, and positive Adult Advisor will be able to start and sustain a thriving Peer Leader team.

Any Adult Advisor team will benefit from looking through this guide after a training for important reminders of how to lead a diverse Peer Leader team to fidelity, as well as how to retain Peer Leaders. We have included sections on games and sharing prompts and give directions for running a variety of different campaigns. We have also included a section for [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to help troubleshoot problems that may arise along the way. If you do not find what you are looking for in these pages, please do not hesitate to visit sourcesofstrength.org to schedule a support phone call with one of our amazing National Trainers or Support Staff. We are truly committed to helping your team grow, sustain, and thrive for many years to come, so don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything.

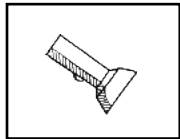


FIELD GUIDE LEGEND

Throughout this Field Guide, we have included various icons to cue important tips, offer reminders, and share research relevant to your work as an Adult Advisor and Peer Leader Team. As you read, these icons will signify important markers along the journey. Explore the Field Guide legend below to familiarize yourself with these icons and their meaning.



A Talk Bubble signifies a tip about sharing or communicating with your team.



A Flashlight will draw your attention towards something we think is really important to remember.



Are you on track? The Compass invites you to take a moment to check how your team is running according to the program's evidence-based standards.



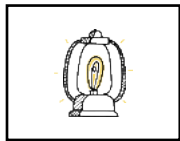
Sources of Strength believes in the power of sharing our stories. A Campfire will highlight powerful quotes or stories we've heard from wise people along the way.



Just as the rings of a tree tell the story of its longevity, the Wood Cut icon will give tips for how to keep your team running strong for years to come.



This little Tent says, "Camp here: focus on this."



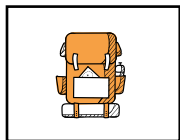
The Lantern illuminates a bright idea you might find helpful.



A Tree symbolizes a stage of growth in your team's development.



The Mountain highlights a tip about how to overcome common challenges that often stand in the way of moving your teams progress forward.



The Backpack will highlight an important tool that you can use along your journey towards Hope, Help, and Strength.

GLOSSARY

Adult Advisor: Adult member of a school or community who fosters an environment of Strength amongst staff, Peer Leaders, and students, and works to facilitate safe, strategic, Strength-based messaging.

Strength-Based Approach: A philosophy that uses Strength and potential as a foundation for creating positive change. Asset-based approaches uncover, uplift, and grow Strengths, assets, and resources.

Deficits-Based Approach: A philosophy which focuses on mitigating risk, what is lacking, wrong, or broken in a student, system, or culture.

EDM: “Electronic Dance Music”. For more information also see, “NOPE”.

Evidence-based: Refers to a designation that a program or curriculum has undergone research and evaluation and has demonstrated reliable and effective outcomes.

High Potential Youth: Growth Mindset alternative to at-risk youth. Indicates that a young person is not simply a problem to be solved or the sum total of their environment, but that they have agency, Strength, and potential for growth and positive impact.

Mindful & Mindfulness: Being intentionally aware of and noticing the ways in which we experience our emotions, thoughts, actions, and situations. This fosters greater social, emotional, physical, and cognitive insights that benefit ourselves and others.

NOPE: No, Absolutely not, Nada, Never, No way, Negative.

On Fleek: A slang term once used by adolescents to describe something that they consider “perfect”. As used in a sentence: Do not use “on fleek” in a sentence.

Peer Leader: A student on a Sources of Strength team who uses their story of Strength and their influence to positively impact and change school norms and culture through Strength-based messages.

Protective Factors: Conditions and characteristics that reduce risk in individuals, families, and communities, and increase overall health and wellbeing.

Positive Psychology: The scientific study of the experiences, traits, and institutions that allow an individual and community to thrive.

Positive Social Norming (Social Norming): Social norms are the unwritten rules of behavior that are considered acceptable in a group or society. Norms function to provide order and predictability in society. Positive Social Norming refers to the prevention strategy of highlighting healthy norms and behaviors, rather than the unhealthy norms or behaviors we are trying to prevent. It is based upon the notion that peer social influence is the greatest predictor of behavior change.

Post Programmatic Stress Disorder: The hesitation to initiate a new program based on the perceived ineffectiveness of previously implemented programs. (“Programs don’t work, so why would this one?”)

Post Traumatic Growth: Change experienced after a group or individual has survived a traumatic life event, which may be marked by growth in one’s appreciation of life, relationships with others, new possibilities in life, personal Strength, and spiritual change.

Resilience / Resiliency: The capacity of an individual or group to recover from and grow stronger in the face of adversities, challenges, or failures.

Risk Factors: Any characteristics or exposures that increase a person's risk of detrimental outcomes.

Shared Risk and Protective Factors: A Public Health model predicated on the notion that certain risk factors increase risk for a variety of negative health outcomes, while certain protective factors decrease risk for these outcomes. Focusing on shared risk and protective factors allows for less siloed prevention strategies that have a more comprehensive impact using a wider variety of funding streams.

Social Networking Theory: A theory of how humans are interconnected which explains how attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs can spread through networks of connections to influence people throughout a population and enact change.

Sustainability: Integration of the Sources of Strength program into practices, systems, and culture that results in continuous, positive, population level change over multiple years.

Trauma: An experience that is physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on an individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being. Trauma may be chronic and recurring or a single event. Trauma can occur on an individual level, but it can also be generational, communal, and/or historical/systemic.

Trusted Adult: Any adult who exhibits attitudes and behaviors towards youth that contribute to the youth's sense of well being, connection, and support.

Upstream: A prevention strategy that moves beyond a reactive crisis intervention model and takes a public health approach to promote wellness, coping, connection, help-seeking, and protective factors that result in reduced negative downstream outcomes.

Wellness: Being in good health mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Wellness is an active process, rather than a state of being.

Yabba Dabba Doo: Originally a catchphrase from the cartoon 'The Flintstones', it has since been co-opted by youth culture as an expression of enthusiasm and support. Go ahead, use it with some teenagers...we definitely didn't make it up.

PACK YOUR BAG: GEAR FOR THE ROAD

You are starting out on a journey! It can seem daunting, but you are not alone and there is plenty of gear for the road. Here are the tools, resources, and support you'll need to build a great Sources of Strength program.



Field Guide: This guide can help you start and sustain a team. It includes tips, directions, and information from all areas of the program.

Website: At sourcesofstrength.org you'll find the most up-to-date videos, photos, tips for your team, research articles, and our contact information. Make sure you are registered on this site as an Adult Advisor for access to more tools and support, including campaign examples and guidance. We will make reference to the website throughout the Field Guide for further information.

Sources of Strength Support: Have a question? Need a fresh perspective for approaching a challenge? Want to chat about last night's episode? Email us at info@sourcesofstrength.org, or call our staff for support. Our support staff will also reach out to you at various points throughout the year.

Online Store: Need prizes for Sources games or campaigns? Would this Field Guide work as the perfect stocking stuffer for family and friends? Visit [our store](#) for campaign materials, hats, pop-sockets, stickers, t-shirts, and more!

Email and Text Drip Campaign: Sources of Strength will periodically send emails or texts with photos, tips, videos, and more to help your team keep ideas fresh and engaging. Be sure to take advantage of this resource.

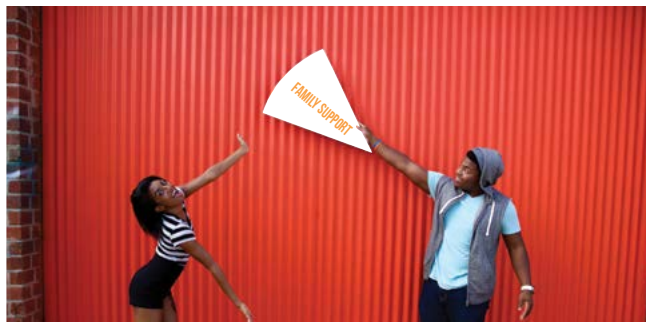
Social Media: Follow us on Social Media to see what our, and other teams have been up to, and to see recent videos, photo's, tips and inspiration.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sourcesofstrength/

Twitter: www.twitter.com/sourcesstrength

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sourcesofstrength/

Coffee: We don't sell coffee or anything, we're just pretty sure you'll need it.



the
SCENIC
View



Before we hit the trail, let's get the lay of the land and look at the foundational pieces of the Sources of Strength landscape.



CHAPTER ONE:

OVERVIEW & PHILOSOPHY

Upstream Prevention [16](#) | *A Brief History and Overview* [18](#)

Theory of Change [20](#) | *Sources of Strength Model* [21](#) | *Sources of*

Strength Wheel [22](#) | *Shared Risks and Protective*

Factors Approach [24](#) | *Active Learning* [25](#)

UPSTREAM PREVENTION: A STORY

There is a parable we like to tell in the Suicide Prevention field. Imagine a valley with a river running through it. Near a waterfall sits a village. Every morning, a woman in the village walks along the river's edge. One morning as she's walking, she hears a shout from a person caught up in the river's current, and about to go over the falls. Without a thought, the woman jumps into the water, swims out to the person, and pulls them safely to shore. The village celebrates that a life was saved.

Over the next several weeks, the town starts to notice more and more people caught up in the river's current, about to go over the falls. The villagers jump into action and start to build watchtowers and equip lifeguards to monitor the waterfall's edge. Through these efforts they save a number of lives, but not all. One morning, while contemplating this problem, the woman turns and begins to walk upstream, away from the waterfall.

The villagers were alarmed. "Where are you going?" they asked. "We need all hands on deck. You can't leave us!" The woman, nodding her head with understanding says, "Of course I am not leaving. I am simply walking up the river to see if we can stop some people from falling in the water in the first place. Could we put up some fences along slippery edges of the river? Could we place signs to let people know they're getting close to the edge of the water? Maybe we can even help them learn how to swim so that they can help themselves out of the water while it is still relatively calm, before they are swept further downstream?"



Upstream Prevention

Our primary mission at Sources of Strength is radically Upstream Prevention. We believe it is so important to have gatekeepers who understand the risk factors and warning signs of a person at risk and how to get them to help. However, we believe that this is not a comprehensive model for prevention. We also want to help individuals and communities interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives so that they may build grit and resilience for the ups and downs of life. We want to move as far upstream as possible to increase protective factors across a school or community, by building youth-adult connectedness, changing perceptions of adult support, increasing early help-seeking behaviors and coping skills like mood management and emotional regulation. We want to give students and staff a shared language for talking about the Strengths they use in their life to overcome and cope with life's challenges.

While our primary focus is on Upstream Prevention, Sources of Strength teams have been shown to have significant impact in other areas as well. A Peer Leader who has been trained in Sources of Strength is four times more likely to refer a friend they are worried about to a Trusted Adult. A Sources of Strength team works to create a culture of help seeking and connection, where it is okay to not feel okay and where reaching out for help is a sign of Strength, not weakness.

We also realize that tragedy and hardship still occur in life, despite our best efforts: loved ones can get sick, a school could lose a beloved teacher, etc. However, a Sources of Strength team can have great impact on a community after such loss. Peer Leaders can act as the eyes and ears of the school, helping adults be more aware of the areas of the school that may be struggling and in need of support. Sources is also about helping people heal and recover after tragedy. In this way, Sources can have a more universal and comprehensive impact in prevention, intervention, and postvention.

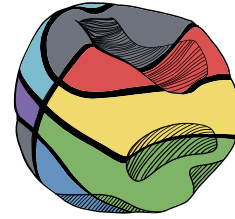


A BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW



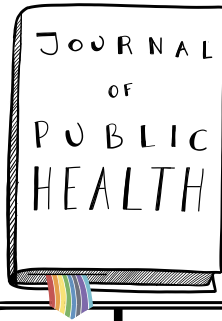
TIME BEGAN...
KIND OF A BIG DEAL.

1997



MARK LOMURRAY TEARS ACL, ENDING HIS DREAMS OF AN NBA CAREER (THAT AND HIS 5'8" STATURE). SOURCES OF STRENGTH BECOMES HIS BACKUP OPTION.

2010



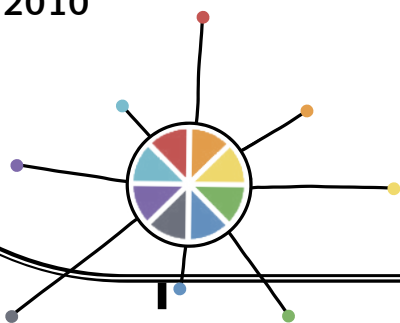
WYMAN STUDY PUBLISHED IN THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH SHOWS PEER LEADERS CAN BE UTILIZED TO CHANGE POPULATION LEVEL HEALTH NORMS.

2009



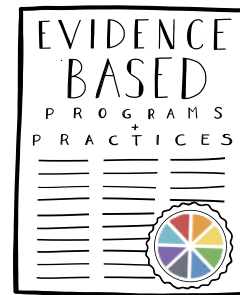
SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES REGISTRY BY THE SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER (SPRC) AND THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION (AFSP).

2010



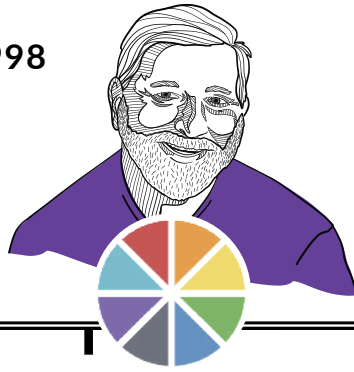
NATIONAL PEER LEADERSHIP STUDY FUNDED BY NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH BEGINS, STUDY EVALUATING SOURCES OF STRENGTH IN 40 HIGH SCHOOLS, LARGEST STUDY TO DATE ON PEER LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH.

2011



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS LISTED ON SAMHSA'S NATIONAL REGISTRY OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES (NREPP).

1998



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS DEVELOPED IN NORTH DAKOTA.

2005



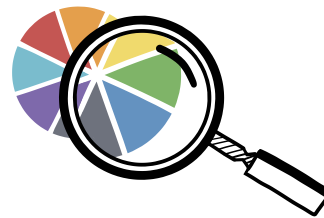
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARDED THE NORTH DAKOTA ADOLESCENT SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE (OF WHICH SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS A PRIMARY PART) THE NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE AWARD.

2009



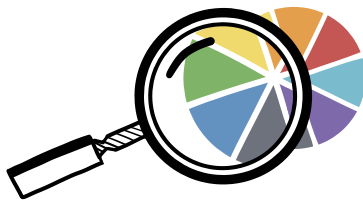
IN A FANTASTIC AND BRAZEN DISPLAY OF NEPOTISM, SCOTT LOMURRAY IS HIRED AS SOURCES OF STRENGTH'S SECOND EMPLOYEE. IMMEDIATELY ATTEMPTS FAILED COUP.

2006



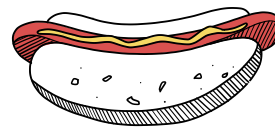
SOURCES OF STRENGTH PARTNERED WITH DR. PETER WYMAN AND DR. C. HENDRICKS BROWN FOR A RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL STUDYING PEER LEADER IMPACT ON INCREASING PROTECTIVE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCING SUICIDE RISK.

2017



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WORKED WITH THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE CDC TO STUDY OVERLAPPING PROTECTIVE FACTOR'S EFFECT ON REDUCING TEEN DATING VIOLENCE, BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND SUBSTANCE USE.

2018



JOEY CHESTNUT SETS THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS FOR EATING 74 HOT DOGS IN 10 MINUTES... THIS DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SOURCES BUT WE ALL THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY NEAT.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The prevention field is littered with countless well intentioned programs and campaigns that may at times move the needle in creating greater awareness around an issue or help shift attitudes around a particular topic, but very often do little to create real and lasting change in behavior or culture. Ultimately, our goal is not just to make people more aware of the work we are doing, but to really change the way people engage with issues of Mental Health, wellness, and connection in their own lives, and to enact that change on a cultural and community level.

There are a few elements that we believe can play a significant role in helping us accomplish this goal. We think of this as our Theory of Change.

Peer Led and Social Network Theory: Far too often we have teen suicide prevention efforts that don't involve teenagers; we believe that to shift youth culture, we must have young people not only involved but at the forefront of what we do. Adults do not shift teen culture, teenagers do. Their voice is critical to this work. Social Network Theory informs us that peer opinion leaders can shift population level health norms. We need to see and empower our Peer Leaders as Agents of Change, not as junior psychologists, so they can be the patient zero in creating an epidemic of health and contagion of Strength in their school or community.

Upstream: If we are to move beyond a reactive and crisis-driven intervention model and truly engage in prevention work that is impactful on a community and population level, then we must move upstream in our efforts. We must focus on determinants of health, and how to foster and support healthy individuals and communities. See page [16](#) for more information on Upstream Prevention.

Positive Psychology: Brain science has shown that our brains are hardwired for negativity. The good news is we can actually begin to rewire our brains to look for, notice, and savor the good things and allow those things to change us and make us stronger, healthier, more resilient, kinder, and more joyful. We are trying to participate in a public health movement with a goal of broad-based culture change. That is not easy or immediate. By incorporating Positive Psychology into what we do, we can create the necessary foundation for growth.

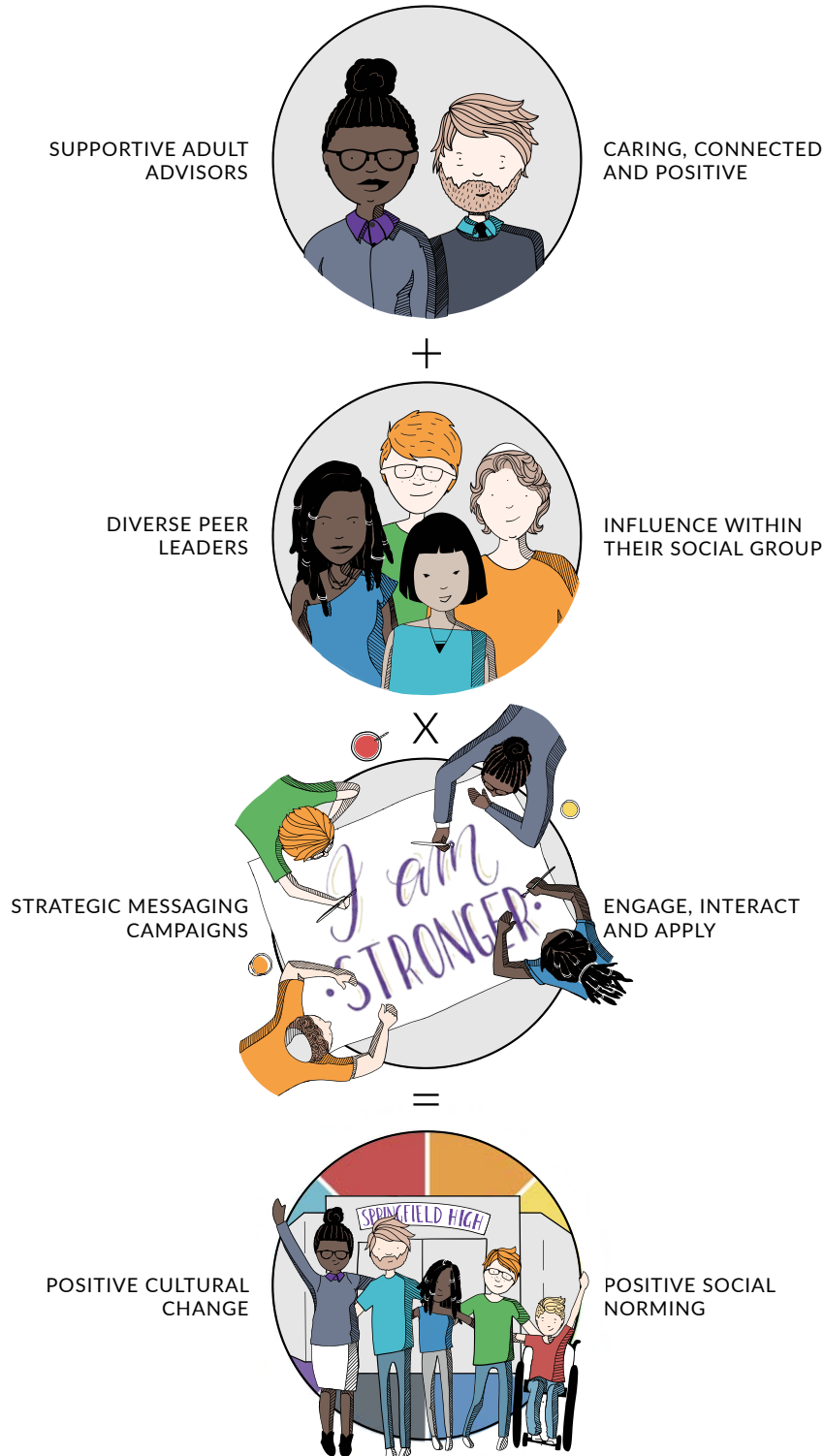
Active Learning: We believe that learning must be active and participatory in order to really learn and integrate a concept authentically into our lives. This work should be fun, collaborative, engaging, and applicable to the context and real world experiences of young people. Turn to page [25](#) for more information on Active Learning.

Final Thoughts: In order to enact the large scale cultural and behavioral change we hope to see in the world, we must empower and lift up peer voices to leverage their inherent power and influence to engage their Strengths and resiliency and draw others into that same work. We must move beyond reactive crisis-driven models and get upstream. Through utilizing the emerging sciences of Positive Psychology and Social Network Theory, we can actively provide a platform and process that empowers young people to be Agents of Change in their world and thus create a real and lasting impact.

The rest of this chapter will explore some of these concepts in greater detail and explore how you can utilize our Theory of Change in practical ways with your Sources of Strength team.

SOURCES OF STRENGTH MODEL

Relationship is at the center of the Sources of Strength model. We work to partner caring, connected, and positive Adult Advisors with a diverse group of Peer Leaders from across the social network of a school or community. We truly believe that one without the other lacks prevention power. Meeting together regularly, this team of youth and adults work to build a community of Strength, not only by practicing Strength in their own lives, but by sharing that Strength with others through Strength-based/public health style messaging campaigns. Spreading stories of Strength across a school or community, Peer Leaders invite students, staff and their community to interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives. Partnered together, we seek to create a contagion of Strength, an epidemic of hope, and a culture of connection, help-seeking, resilience, and wellbeing.



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WHEEL

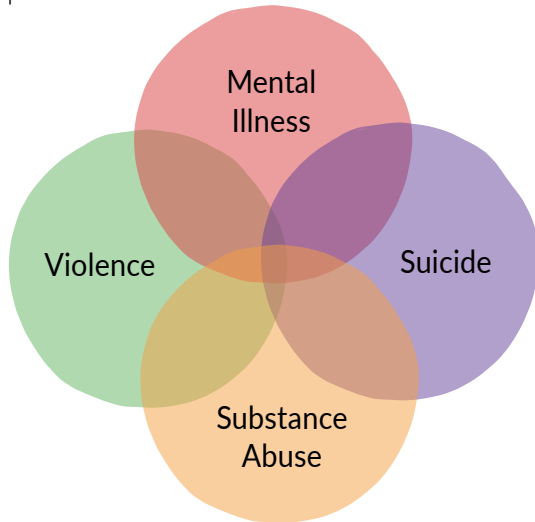


DEFINITION OF STRENGTHS

FAMILY SUPPORT	Whether related to us by blood, or by choice, these are the people who support, nurture, and care for us.
POSITIVE FRIENDS	Positive Friends lift us up, make us laugh, are honest with us, and are there for us when we need them.
MENTORS	A Mentor is an experienced person who shares their insight to help guide us, and help us draw on our own Strengths to be the best version of ourselves.
HEALTHY ACTIVITIES	When we feel stressed, Healthy Activities - whether they are social, physical, or emotional - help us unwind, lift our mood, and gain clarity.
GENEROSITY	Generosity can look a lot of different ways, from donating money or time, to being intentionally kind to other people. These acts of kindness towards others, big or small, can make an impact on how we feel about ourselves.
SPIRITUALITY	Spirituality is practiced in many ways, but at it's core we consider what gives us a sense of purpose and connection in our spirit. Thankfulness is a profound way to practice Spirituality together no matter what our cultural heritage and/or spiritual tradition.
PHYSICAL HEALTH	When we are injured, we don't have to stay in pain. We can get better, with access to the medical care we need and deserve. Physical and social/emotional pain are often intergrated and it's important to take care of our bodies, hearts, and minds.
MENTAL HEALTH	Mental Health is all about getting the support we need and deserve to help us when we are struggling. Our Mental Health is a very important part of living a healthy life, and oftentimes, getting together with a trusted person, counselor, or doctor can help empower us to overcome internal struggles we might be facing.

SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS APPROACH

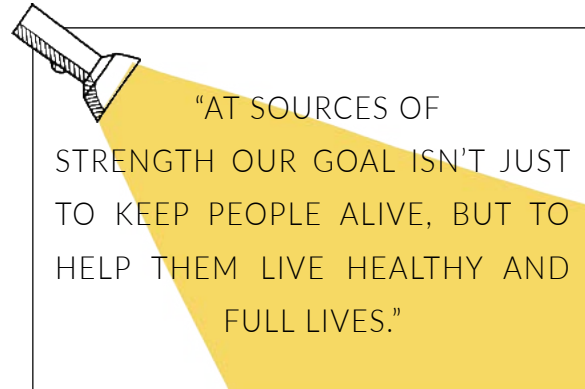
Within the prevention field, we often talk about overlapping risk factors - events or behaviors that may co-occur, compounding an individual's risk. We find that risk factors are often interconnected and impact each other. One negative impacting event could also potentially put a person at higher risk of a number of harmful outcomes. For example, an individual who experiences violence may find that their Mental Health or risk of substance abuse is also impacted. All too often, prevention efforts become siloed - tobacco prevention, bullying prevention, suicide prevention, marijuana prevention, teen dating violence prevention, etc. - each important effort competes for resources and attention.



Just as risk factors cannot be separated, protective factors, too, are interwoven. Growing in Strength will result in a ripple effect of protection in a person's life. A young person who has a caring, connected, and positive adult invested in their lives is not only less likely to die by suicide, but they are also less likely to engage in other risky behaviors such as substance abuse or teen dating violence. By boosting protective factors, we can build Strength against a variety of risk factors. Sources of Strength draws upon this shared risk and protective factor approach. When we see a person holistically, we can offer Strength and protection in multiple areas.

Sources of Strength has worked with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to measure overlapping protective factors' effect on reducing teen dating violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. While the final results of the study are

pending, we are confident that boosting protective factors will help mitigate risk factors in the lives of middle and high school students, creating safer and more welcoming schools and communities.



A rising tide lifts all boats; if we are effective in moving upstream and increasing connection, resilience, protective factors, help seeking, and healthy coping, we will have an impact on suicide, but we can also have an impact on substance misuse, violence, truancy, GPA, etc. Ultimately, Sources of Strength is a wellness model. At Sources of Strength our goal isn't just to keep people alive, but to help them to live healthy and full lives. Our mission is to foster and create healthy, whole individuals and communities to empower a well world.



ACTIVE LEARNING

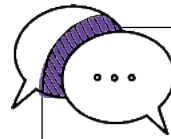
One of the core differentiators that sets Sources of Strength apart is our commitment to utilizing Active Learning techniques and strategies in everything we do. We believe that the process is as important as the program. How we engage and are engaged matters. It is important that we understand that games aren't just games, that movement and laughter light up critical learning centers in our brain and help us engage with and internalize information in more impactful and lasting ways.

Active Learning is particularly critical when it comes to learning about and engaging in our Mental Health and wellness. The internalization and application of this content is crucial to fostering behavior change and growing our brain's capacity to navigate the challenges that life may throw our way. Active Learning methods also go a long way in establishing more equitable learning environments as they engage and empower all participants in their learning and sharing. Students may be experiencing their own challenges with Mental Health, relationships, or sense of belonging, purpose, and worth. Active Learning provides an opportunity to express their ideas and engage with their Strengths in a more receptive and helpful environment.



So with Sources of Strength, always be thinking of ways to make the learning process active. Avoid lectures and powerpoints as much as possible. Play games. Make art. Laugh. Laugh a lot. Engage in conversations and dialogue with Peer Leaders about the topics we are working to address. Ask questions. Listen to the answers. Share authentically. Address and talk about conflict. Tell stories. Create space for life, learning, and growth to happen.

Work on using your coaching and facilitation skills to draw out and empower quieter Peer Leaders and provide guidance and support to those Peer Leaders who like to share a lot. Try to provide simple, quick, and clear directions for activities and keep summaries brief. Explain things when necessary, but when possible, have the Peer Leaders do the explaining, teaching, and modeling with one another.



“PLAY GAMES. MAKE ART. LAUGH. LAUGH A LOT. ASK QUESTIONS. LISTEN TO THE ANSWERS. SHARE AUTHENTICALLY. TELL STORIES. CREATE SPACE FOR LIFE, LEARNING AND GROWTH TO HAPPEN.”

If you are curious to learn more about Active Learning, a couple of books that might be helpful are: *Learning That Lasts: Challenging, Engaging, and Empowering Students with Deeper Instruction* by Ron Berger, and *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom* by Charles Bonwell. A fantastic website that has a lot of resources on Active Learning is: <https://cei.umn.edu/active-learning>

Building
BELLOW the
Waterline



Forging a deep and sustainable foundation for your team.



CHAPTER TWO:

PRACTICING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

Building Below the Waterline [28](#) | *Fun, Sharing, and Planning: Peer*

Leader Meetings [30](#) | *Base Camp: First Peer Leader Meeting* [32](#)

When, Where, and How to Meet [33](#) | *Facilitation Guidelines* [34](#)

Peer Leader Ownership [36](#) | *Rationale for 1 Part Fun* [38](#)

Rationale for 1 Part Sharing [40](#) | *Helpful Prompts for Group*

Discussions [41](#) | *Rationale for 1 Part Planning* [44](#)

Inclusive Practices [45](#)



Building the below waterline

SCOTT LOMURRAY

At the time of its construction, The Brooklyn Bridge was to be one of the largest and most iconic suspension bridges in the world. Enormous sums of money and effort went into the design and construction of the bridge. Years into the construction, residents of Manhattan and Brooklyn began to complain that though they always saw construction crews and apparent work being done, there was yet to be any tangible sign of progress on the bridge. As these grumblings grew louder, more frequent, and more unified, the architect of the bridge began to explain that the reason they saw no bridge was that they had spent years building below the waterline. He and his team had pioneered innovative and revolutionary techniques to provide anchor points in the riverbed and it was only as a result of this work that the bridge would stand the test of time.

I reflect on that story and I think about how often in this work we can look around and ask ourselves "Where's my bridge?" We wonder if we are having any impact, if we are making a difference, if we are building anything of substance and value.



Working with young people is building below the waterline. Working in education, Mental Health, and public health is building below the waterline. It can be difficult, even frustrating, and might leave us wondering where our bridge is...but this work is foundational. And it is only as a result of that foundational work that we can help build communities, and schools, and cultures, and young people that stand the test of time.

The time spent meeting with your Peer Leaders is not just another task; it is foundational work, a time when students and staff are able to practice building a community of Strength, playing and laughing together, reflecting and sharing together, and planning on how to invite and engage others into that community of Strength. It is in these spaces where we build anchor points that will stand the test of time.

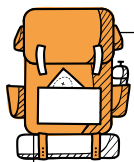
When we recruit for Sources of Strength we ask that Adult Advisors be Caring, Connected, and Positive. We often joke that we have had caring, connected, cynical, and pessimistic Adult Advisors before and it doesn't work as well. The truth is we are trying to get a public health culture change initiative off the ground, and that work is not easy. There will be fits and starts, and failures. It is vital that we are able to press through those growing pains if we are to ever see the bridge. So please don't give up. The world needs more people willing to go deep and spend their time, energy, passion, talent, and hope on the foundational work of building Strength below the waterline.

We must also build below the waterline in our own lives. Taking care of ourselves, cultivating our own Strengths and resilience, doing our inner work is also crucial if we are going to stand the test of time in this work. So please, build below the waterline in your own life as well. Take care of yourself, practice gratitude, be vulnerable and authentic, ask for and extend forgiveness, cultivate and tap into your Strengths so you can be here. We need you here. Our world needs you here doing the foundational work of bringing just a bit more Hope, Help, and Strength to your world.



FUN, SHARING, AND PLANNING: SOURCES OF STRENGTH PEER LEADER MEETINGS

The Sources of Strength Adult Advisor and Peer Leader trainings are designed to be fun (really fun), engaging, and a catalyst for your local social change initiative. Although the real “work” of this change happens as teams meet together regularly, growing in and practicing their Strengths, and then seeking to share, cultivate, and spread Hope, Help, and Strength-based messages and stories across a school or community at a population level. This is no small endeavor you are embarking on and we hope to offer the necessary resources, support, and strategy you’ll need to do this well amongst your adult and Peer Leader teams.



FOR MORE
INFORMATION ABOUT
MEETING REGULARLY,
SEE PAGE [33](#).

Where to Start

We recommend that you have your first Peer Leader meeting within ten days of the original Peer Leader training (see Base Camp on page [32](#) for more information and ideas). This will help you to capitalize on the energy, momentum, and connection cultivated in the training. From there, your team should meet on a regular basis; twice a month for about an hour each time or four times a month for a half hour each. How this looks may vary by school and context. The important point is that you meet regularly and with enough time to have some fun, do some sharing, and execute on campaign planning and construction. While it’s not always possible to have every Adult Advisor and Peer Leader present at every meeting, we hope that you’ll continue to engage your team at multiple levels and keep them coming back and excited to make a difference. When adults or peers don’t attend, we recommend following up with them to fill them in on what happened, share how they can be involved with the plan, and invite them to the next meeting to continue sharing their voice and

ideas. Peer Leader meetings are a great time and space to build connection, share stories, envision the impact we want to have on our school or community, and then turn that vision into a concrete reality that helps students and staff weather the ups and down of life by drawing on the Strengths and supports that all around us (for more information about meeting regularly, see page [33](#)).

To facilitate efficient and effective Peer Leader meetings, we recommend that you stick closely to our simple planning meeting formula of “1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, 1 Part Planning”.

Practically this looks like:

- Running a game from our games section on page [112](#);
- Facilitating a turn-and-share, small group, or campaign card sharing time using one of the sharing prompts on pages [41-43](#) or from the campaign materials provided in the training, or downloaded from our website;
- Leading the group in a structured brainstorming and planning time, where they contextualize, bring to life, and put into action one of our many Sources of Strength templated campaigns on pages [54-85](#), or their own ideas and campaigns.



“REMEMBER
THE MEETING FORMULA: 1 PART
FUN, 1 PART SHARING, 1 PART
PLANNING.”

1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, 1 Part Planning. These essential elements are the road map for a vibrant and thriving Sources of Strength team and will greatly help with Peer Leader retention. While the various elements can be divided up over multiple meetings (due to time constraints), we believe each piece is vitally important to the success, sustainability, and long term impact of the program on Adult Advisors

and Peer Leaders, as they each speak to key motivations and drivers for change - having fun and laughing, connecting with others through shared stories, and actively carrying out practices that help people interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives. If one or more of these elements is lost, teams will often see a drop in Adult Advisor and/or Peer Leader engagement and involvement. If we stop having fun this work can become too serious and heavy, and we might lose some student participation. If we stop sharing then our team and our campaigns

will feel thin and inauthentic, and we won't fully realize a community of Strength. If we stop planning then we will fail to achieve our mission of impacting our school and creating a healthy climate and culture amongst other students and staff.

For more information about games, see page [112](#). For helpful sharing prompts, turn to page [41](#). If you would like ideas for how to build and carry out a campaign, check out page [53](#).



BASE CAMP: FIRST PEER LEADER MEETING

So, you've assembled a team. You've had your Peer Leader Training...now what? It's time for your first Peer Leader Team meeting!

We ask that Peer Leader teams meet within the first ten days after training. When it takes longer than 10 days, Peer Leaders lose their excitement from the training, and start to believe that it is just another program that didn't get off the ground.

Gather as many Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders from the team as you can. Thank everyone again for participating in the training, reaffirming that their voices have great power, and that by working together, many people will be connected to help and Strength. Remember the meeting formula: 1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, 1 Part Planning. Play a short game (for games and directions, see page [112](#)). Take a moment to have team members share about their favorite part of the training, something they are excited about going forward, or a Strength they are focusing on that week (for more sharing prompts, turn to page [41](#)).



“GATHER YOUR TEAM'S CONTACT INFORMATION AND DECIDE ON THE BEST TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.”

In the first meeting, it's important to help students understand what they might expect going forward. If you can, give them an idea of when and where you will be meeting. If you have not done so already, gather your team's contact information and decide on the best tool for communication and announcements: is it the Remind app? A Google Classroom? A private Twitter account? Once you have decided on this as a team, move to planning your first campaign.

We have found it helpful for teams in their first

meetings to jump back into their brainstorming groups and talk about their favorite campaign idea that they came up with in the Peer Leader training. Depending on how much time you have, have the group discuss and vote on their first campaign. Typically, the group's first effort is the Getting the Word Out campaign, which uses various mediums to introduce Sources of Strength and the Wheel to the rest of the school.

Think of as many ways to “get the word out” as you can: social media, classroom presentations, art and wall displays, group activities, audio/video announcements - the sky is the limit! Help the Peer Leaders decide what will work best in their social circles and start moving forward with tangible steps. Remember, your job is to help the team make achievable goals, encourage their stories, and work towards Hope, Help, and Strength, and follow through on commitments.



WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW TO MEET

Meeting consistently is vital to the growth and Strength of your Peer Leader team. Within these meetings, Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors come together to form something radically different: a community of Strength. It is important that we are sharing our stories of Strength with each other so that they are internalized, changing the way that we view and engage in the world around us. It is important that we laugh and play together, strengthening our youth-adult connections and living from a place of joy, compassion, and authenticity. To be most effective, we have to plan contagious ways to share Strength with others, inviting them to join in our efforts. Meeting together regularly is when we remember and practice our mission together in community. We get many questions about where, when, and how to meet. While no one formula will work for every team, here are some guidelines.



“IT IS IMPORTANT FOR SCHOOLS TO BE WILLING TO GIVE UP PART OF THEIR TIME AND NOT ALWAYS BE PUTTING THE BURDEN OF TIME ON PEER LEADERS.”

When deciding where to meet, consider if a classroom could be easily freed for meetings. A circle is important to the work we do at Sources, allowing for games, sharing stories, and brainstorming ideas. Any meeting place should have enough room for a circle of chairs (chairs with desks attached can be problematic and should be avoided if possible). Libraries also work well, as do stages, cafeterias, or gyms. It is important, however, that group members be able to hear each other easily and that the space is free of traffic.

Your team should meet within 10 days of their training. When it takes longer than this, Peer Leaders can start to believe that this is just another program that never really took off. Follow-through is an important part of your role as an Adult Advisor team. After this initial meeting, teams should meet together

twice a month for about an hour each time to have fun, share their Strength stories, and plan campaigns. If a group cannot meet for a whole hour, they can meet each week for half an hour.



“BEING A PART OF A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH CHANGES YOU.”
- ADULT ADVISOR ON MEETING REGULARLY

Some groups meet during the same period each time, taking advantage of a longer lunch or Advisory period. We find a team will have trouble growing or retaining Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors if they cannot find a time to regularly meet. For more ideas about meeting times, see Troubleshooting Key Challenges on page [98](#).

Peer Leader teams have the capacity to change population level norms for the better. They cannot do this unless they meet consistently to play, share, and plan. If you are still facing challenges around meeting consistently, don't hesitate to reach out to a Sources of Strength staff member to brainstorm some solutions.

FACILITATION GUIDELINES

The power of this program is not what happens in the training, but in the work that you and your Peer Leader team do to internalize Strength stories and spread Hope, Help, and Strength throughout your school or community. When you invest in a community of Strength, powerful relationships will develop along the way! Here are some tips and techniques for facilitating your Peer Leader meetings and cultivating a space to practice a community of Strength. For more guidance on our formula for successful Peer Leader meetings, see page [30](#).

Location, Listening, and Leadership

When it comes to selecting the perfect campsite, it's all about location, location, location. In the same way, the space you choose to hold your Peer Leader meetings in, and the way you organize that space matters! If you remember back to your training, we spent most of our time together in a circle or in small groups. You will want to continue to work alongside your Peer Leader team in this way. Sitting in a circle recognizes the power of each person and pushes back against hierarchy and power struggles, and small groups give everyone a chance to hear and be heard, to see and be seen. Avoid teaching from the front of a room or working at individual desks. Collaboration builds trust and relationship, and a key outcome of Sources of Strength is the increase in connection between Peer Leaders and adults, not just in moments of crisis, but also in everyday life.

For the majority of a meeting, your main job as an Adult Advisor is to listen and guide Peer Leaders. We all know the difference between a person who is listening and a person who is simply waiting for their turn to talk. Be the kind of Adult Advisor who develops and models the skills of active listening. We recommend you think about active listening in three ways: listening with your body, listening to learn, and

reflecting and re-framing.

Listening with your body means listening with your ears, your eyes, and your body language! Position yourself in such a way that your team knows that you value what they are saying because you are facing or positioned alongside your Peer Leaders. Match the body posture of whomever is speaking, and stay at or below students' eye levels.

Listening to learn means that you are willing to hear the perspectives, opinions, and ideas of your Peer Leader team without fixing or correcting. What could happen if you validate their opinions first before ever trying to change them? And finally, we have learned how powerful it is to listen by either reflecting (often called mirroring) back exactly what a Peer Leader has shared, or by re-framing what they shared in your own words. These simple techniques build trust and rapport.

It can be challenging to balance listening with guiding a team. Listening well doesn't mean not shaping the direction of your team. Work to ask good questions that help Peer Leaders further sharpen their great ideas. Make sure to add insights around the Sources messaging philosophy of Hope, Help, and Strength (for more on this, see page [50](#)). Suggest ideas for how your team could partner with community groups or clubs that they might not have thought of before. Always be asking, "What message are we sending with this prompt, campaign, or activity?" Once you have set up a space for this Strength-based Active Learning, get out of the way! You will be amazed at the great ideas a well guided Peer Leader team can come up with.

In addition to listening, you will also need to find ways to be heard! As a team it is important to choose a



way to get each others' attention. You can raise your hand until everyone is quiet, or maybe use one of our favorites, "Waterfall! Waterfall!" "Shhhhhhhhhhhhh." Others say, "If you can hear me, clap/snap/stomp once", if you can hear me, clap/snap/stomp twice, etc. Many Peer Leader teams come up with their own ritual for getting attention- ask the Peer Leaders to come up with a solution! Remember to keep it playful. It's possible their side conversations are on message, and we want to regularly honor and recognize how powerful Peer Leader voices are (even if sometimes we need them to be quiet!).



"WHEN YOU START A MEETING, IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO BEGIN WITH A QUICK REVIEW OF WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LAST MEETING, AND UPDATE THE TEAM ON YOUR NEXT STEPS."

As you build relationships with your Peer Leader team, you can empower them with more responsibilities and help to develop their leadership skills. Always be on the lookout for ways a Peer Leader may have a chance to grow in leadership skills. Everything we do at Sources of Strength is a practiced skill set, from learning about the Wheel and incorporating the Strengths into our day-to-day lives, to brainstorming and problem-solving with a diverse group of peers, to conflict management, project management, and celebration of all of our accomplishments, large and small. Part of growing a sustainable Peer Leader team is looking for opportunities to move from adult-initiated ideas and activities, in which decision making is shared with youth, towards a space where ideas and activities are initiated by peers and decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

Find ways to share responsibility with your Peer Leaders. Perhaps some of them can take attendance, but instead of simply noticing who is missing, they

can write cards letting those absent know they were missed. Many of your Peer Leaders are playing games and doing activities in the other clubs and communities they participate in; encourage them to incorporate their expertise and those experiences into your meetings. Remember that your job is not to call others out, but rather to invite them in to this radical community of Strength.

Remember, the model of this program is Adult Advisors + Peer Leaders x Strategic Messaging Campaigns = Climate and Culture Change. You, as an Adult Advisor, are an integral part of your Sources of Strength team. Your Peer Leader team will never take on so much responsibility that you no longer have a role. Since we take a Strength-based approach, the Wheel isn't just for Peer Leaders; it's for all of us. Your Peer Leaders need opportunities to share personally about how their Strengths have helped them through life's ups and downs, and so do you. For more information about how to encourage Peer Leadership on your team, turn to page [36](#).

Regularly circling back to the Peer Leader Mission Statement (Included in the Visuals and Tear-outs section starting from page [130](#)) will help you and your team refocus on our shared purpose, and stay on the right trail. And as you trek together, don't hesitate to reach out to one of our National Trainers, who are eager to walk alongside your team, offering guidance and troubleshooting challenges.



"BE THE KIND OF ADULT ADVISOR WHO DEVELOPS AND MODELS THE SKILLS OF ACTIVE LISTENING."

PEER LEADER OWNERSHIP

One of the defining characteristics within the Sources model is that of peer leadership. For too long, adults have attempted to do the work of prevention for young people. While many adults care and may want to affect change, adults alone lack the insight and influence that young people have. At Sources, adults and young people work together. There is incredible power in the voices of young people, and a great Adult Advisor team will focus on creating a space where these voices can be empowered for positive change. Every part of living in a community of Strength is a learned skill. Students don't always naturally know how to use their voices for Hope, Help, and Strength. They need excited and engaged

Mentors who can model and help them as they grow into leaders who can leverage their power and influence for positive change.

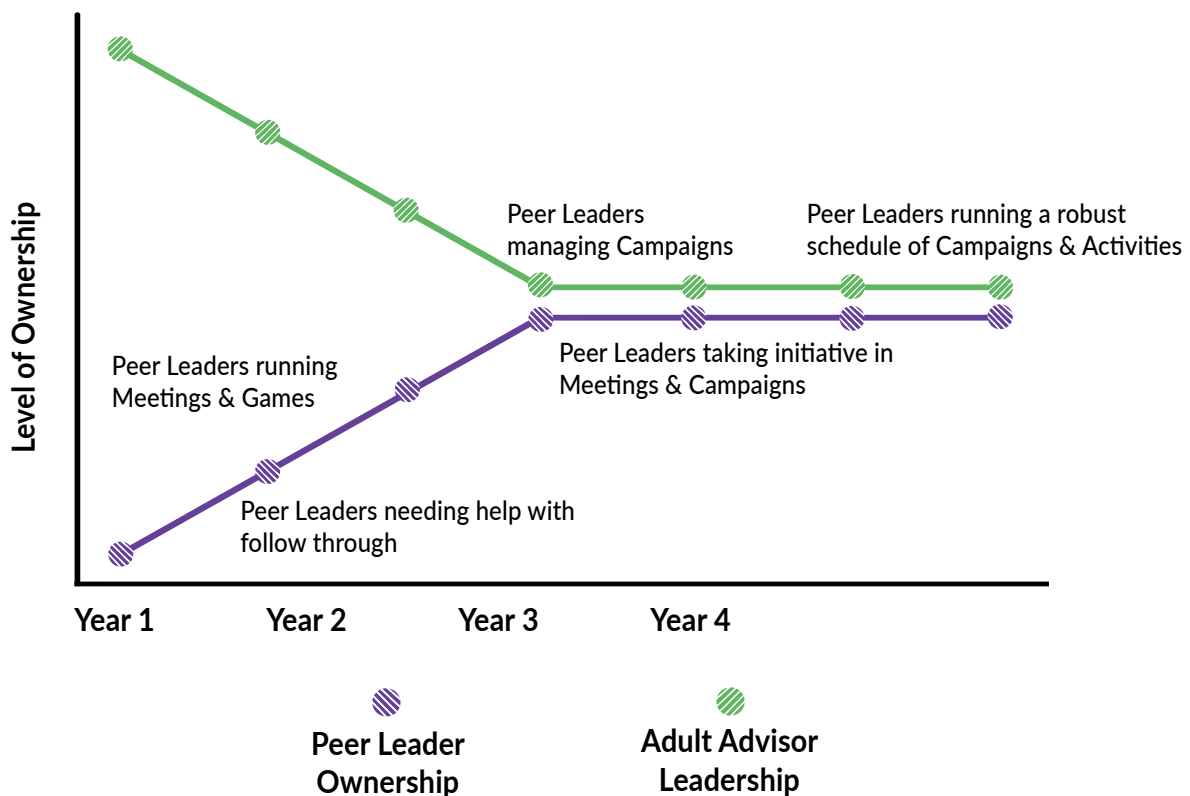


“EVERY PART OF LIVING IN A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH IS A LEARNED SKILL.”
- ADULT ADVISOR ON GROWING IN COMMUNITY

We are sometimes asked about how much Adult Advisors should be doing for Peer Leaders. These graphs were created to show the progression towards Peer Leader's ownership of a Sources of Strength program over time. It looks different

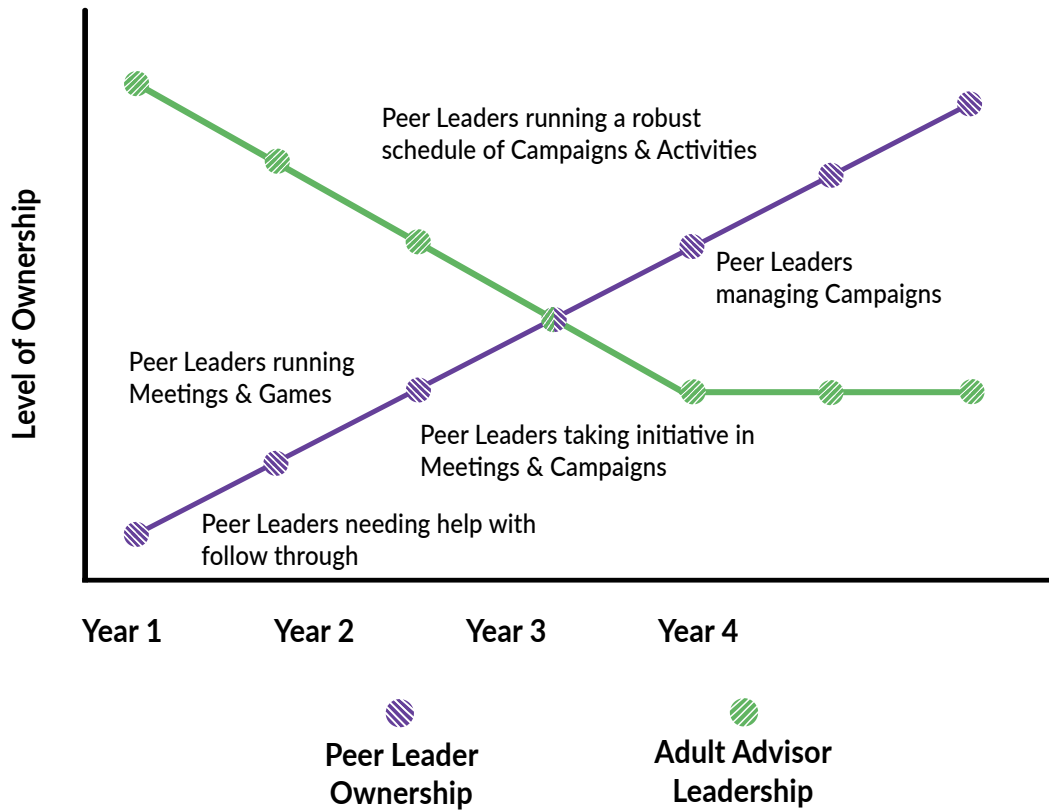
for middle and high school teams. While a high school Peer Leader team may eventually run games, meetings, and campaigns, a middle school team may need a little more help from adults. This balance will vary from team to team, but we hope these graphs will provide some general guidance.

PEER LEADER OWNERSHIP (Middle School Model)



PEER LEADER OWNERSHIP

(High School Model)



RATIONALE FOR 1 PART FUN

We are often asked, “Why do we play so many games?” This is a fantastic question, usually asked by people who did not win... All joking aside, games can be a helpful tool for connection, learning, and enjoyment within a group learning context. As we venture into our prevention work, we want to remember why the play and laughter that games offer us are important components of our journey together.



“MY FAVORITE PART OF THIS TRAINING WAS SEEING A DIFFERENT SIDE OF MY TEACHERS AND PRINCIPAL WHEN THEY PLAYED GAMES WITH US.”
- MIDDLE SCHOOL PEER LEADER FROM KENTUCKY

There is vast research about why play is important to human development and learning. Yet we often forget how vital play can be for one’s health and relationships.

We strongly recommend the use of games and a sense of playfulness in Peer Leader team meetings and campaign efforts for several reasons. We believe that as humans, we simply take ourselves too seriously: we need more fun in our lives! Many of us interact with some difficult stories in our work and personal lives, but that does not mean that all of our prevention efforts have to be serious. Games can alleviate the heavy emotions around discussions of suicide prevention and life challenges.

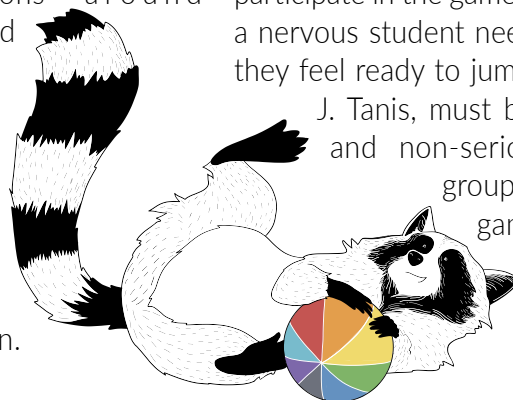
Furthermore, as Peer Leaders are nominated from a wide variety of social groups, games help learners mix, bond, and become more comfortable, laying the groundwork for discussion and collaboration.

Sources believes that laughter is important within a team setting; laughter has been shown to not only release endorphins, but to also turn on learning centers within the brain. Games do not just help us bond. They also help us to better remember what we are learning.

Fun is attractive to others. If we are practicing having fun with each other in our meetings, campaigns, and everyday interactions, others will be curious and more likely to want to be a part of what we are doing. If Peer Leaders are not having fun, they are also less likely to stay involved. Not only is fun a vital part of Active Learning and community building, it is also a powerful tool for retention. With this contagious fun, our movement of hope and help will continue to spread to those around us, making our schools and communities stronger.

Importantly, Sources of Strength believes that increased peer-adult connection is vital to the mission of teen suicide prevention and general well-being. Games within a meeting or campaign may be one of the first instances that a caring adult has been willing to spend time with a Peer Leader in a silly, fun, or “unproductive” way. Young people constantly move through the world in a top-down power hierarchy. They often have teachers, coaches, parents, or bosses speaking at them rather than with them. Countless times we have heard a Peer Leader say that one of their favorite parts of Sources of Strength is that they get to spend time in fun, face-to-face interactions with caring adults who believe in them and really want to hear what they think. Games and laughter help build strong and trusting adult to peer relationships.

Although everyone is highly encouraged to participate in the games, no one is forced. Sometimes a nervous student needs to observe a game before they feel ready to jump in. Play, according to David J. Tanis, must be, “fun, enjoyable, voluntary, and non-serious” to be beneficial in a group learning context. All of the games that Sources uses during training try to meet these characteristics. If your team has a favorite game they



love to play, let a Peer Leader facilitate that part of the meeting, building the student-led aspect of a Sources of Strength team. Not only are Peer Leaders more likely to learn, interact, bond, and experience less anxiety, they are also more likely to connect with safe adults in a fun and non-threatening atmosphere. Games should be used not only in Peer Leader meetings, but in school-wide campaigns as well. The vast majority of what we do should be infused with a sense of playfulness and fun, adding a human element to our work. If needed,

many of the games we play can be adapted to meet your Peer Leader team's specific needs. Games appropriately played can give the sense of belonging and buy-in needed for the Sources of Strength mission to be achieved, and they should continue to be used readily by Peer Leader teams. As you plan your meetings and campaigns, make sure to never leave fun out of the equation. A team that plays together, grows together! For a list of Sources of Strength games and directions, turn to page [112](#)).



FOR MORE ABOUT
THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE
LEARNING, TURN TO PAGE [25](#).



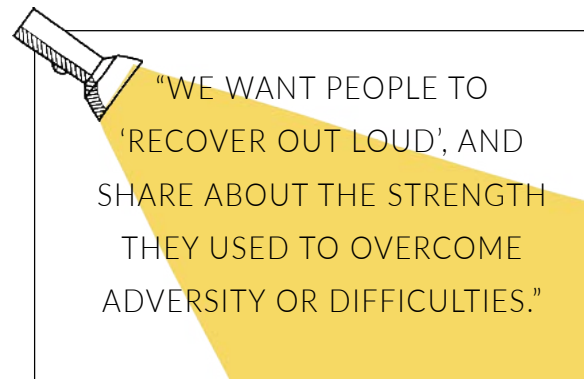
RATIONALE FOR 1 PART SHARING

We strongly believe in the power of our stories and in Strength-based storytelling. Our vision is to empower a well world by saturating schools and communities with stories of Hope, Help, and Strength. This way, stories of recovery and resilience become the norm, and people who are struggling or experiencing adversity can have hope that others have found a way through or around adversity, and they could use some of the same skills or Strengths as well. In the news and media, we are often surrounded by stories of everything that can go wrong. Unfortunately, when this is the information we are surrounded with, we can start to believe that this is an accurate proportion of good to bad in the world. Individuals who are not exposed to another, more positive option can often resort to sharing sad, shocking, or traumatic stories which can have discouraging or even dangerous outcomes.

At Sources, we work with Peer Leader teams to talk about what can go right. Research shows that by noticing our positive stories of Strength and recovery, our brains can physically change to be more positive. When we see stress as a challenge to be overcome rather than an insurmountable obstacle, we can become better at problem-solving, academically, professionally, or relationally. Whether Adult Advisors or Peer Leaders, we share our stories of recovery and Strength with each other to remind ourselves of what helps. In doing this, we add to our resiliency “toolbox” to create more ways that we, too, can overcome the difficult times that life throws our way. It is vital that Peer Leader teams are engaging and applying Strength to their own lives; it is through the internalizing of Strength that we can live authentic lives and effectively invite others to do the same.

It is not enough, however, to simply share a story of Strength once. We want to get to the level of internalized Strength stories, where Strength becomes a part of our self-narrative, a part of who we are and how we tell our story. Even students that may have been labeled “at-risk youth” can begin to tell their story through a lens of Hope, Help, and Strength. By doing this, they can come to understand that they are not the sum total of their

environment, but rather, high potential youth and resilient individuals with the Strength to overcome or mitigate that risk. When Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors experience and practice a community of Strength, they are much more likely and able to build a community of Strength around them with their friends, families, and in their schools and communities.



Learning to share our stories of Strength is both a personal coping skill as well as a public health messaging strategy. We often hear stories about how others struggle but we rarely hear stories of how they recover, cope, or heal. These stories are the true norm. We want people to “recover out loud” and share about the Strengths they used to overcome adversity or difficulties. Within the news media, for example, a difficult story may exhibit a 90:10 ratio of negative to positive information: 90% of the story tells about a difficult story while 10% may talk about how a situation was improved or what the reader could do to enact positive change. Sources of Strength challenges individuals and groups to flip that ratio, making 10% of the story about the challenge, adversity, or struggle a person faced and 90% about what helped and how they were able to recover, manage, and get better. While this approach takes intention and practice, it is a powerful skill that will cause ripple effects of Hope, Help, and Strength throughout a school and community.

HELPFUL PROMPTS FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Peer Leader meetings are an important time for Peer Leaders to process and share their stories of Strength and to hear others' stories of Strength. Connecting through stories is a vital component of Sources of Strength, and sharing can be done in several different styles, including through games, turn-and-talk with a neighbor, breaking into small groups and sharing, writing your story of Strength on a campaign card, in large group discussion, etc. Here are some campaign and Strength-specific prompts that can help facilitate discussions in Peer Leader meetings or amongst other students and staff.

You Belong

- When is a time you felt that you belonged?
- Who is someone that makes you feel like you belong?
- How do you help others feel that they belong?
- Who has invited you into belonging?
- What makes you unique?

What Helps Me

- Which of the Big Three Emotions (Anger, Anxiety, or Sadness) is most common when you're stressed or experiencing a challenge? What helps you manage that emotion?
- Who are people in your life that help you? What do they do to help you?
- What activities help you to feel joy?
- What activities are calming for you?
- If someone were to write a self care plan for you, what activities, places, or people might it include?

I Am Stronger

- One thing that I have done to grow in (Strength) is _____.
- One thing that I can do tonight to grow in (Strength) is _____.
- A person that I can support in growth is _____.
- What Strength have you used in the past week? How did it help?
- Is there someone who has helped you grow in Strength? Who is it and how has this helped you?

Trusted Adults/Mentors

- Who is a Trusted Adult that makes you feel safe to be yourself?
- Name an adult you feel is "in your corner". How do they show you that they are for you?
- Which adult do you most commonly ask for help, whether with school, a social issue, etc?
- Tell about how your Trusted Adult worked to gain your trust.
- One adult you would like to connect more to is _____ because _____.

Connect

- When did you connect someone else to help?
- When did you connect someone to a healthy activity?
- How has someone else connected you to better Mental Health?
- How have you connected others to your community?
- Where would you go to connect a struggling friend to help?

Spirituality (This could include traditions, practices, culture or religion)

- In what ways do you experience Spirituality in your own life?
- What are spiritual or gratitude practices that help you?
- How has a gratitude practice impacted you?

- Where are spiritual places for you?
- Tell about a spiritual moment in your own life.
- Name three things you are grateful for today.

Healthy Activities

- Share a story of how you used Healthy Activities to cope.
- What are your favorite calming Healthy Activities?
- Name three Healthy Activities you enjoy - only one can be a sport.
- What are your favorite energizing Healthy Activities?
- What is a Healthy Activity you might like to try?

Generosity

- Who do you think is the most generous person that you know and why?
- Name a person who has been generous towards you. How have they shown Generosity?
- How do you contribute to the community?
- Name a time in which you demonstrated Generosity.
- What is one way you can show Generosity today?

Family Support

- What unique traditions do you have in your family?
- What makes a person “family”?
- Who in your own Family Supports you? How do they show support?
- Who do you consider to be your “family of choice”? How do they support you?
- How do you show Family Support to others?

Getting the Word Out

- What part of Sources of Strength really “clicks” for you? How can we help Sources of Strength to “click” for others?
- What messaging and mediums break through to you and your friends?
- How do we tell others about Sources of Strength in a way that draws them in?
- Name three friends that you will go and talk to about Sources of Strength.
- What would be your “elevator pitch” to someone else to quickly explain what Sources of Strength is about?

Positive Friends

- What makes a person a Positive Friend?
- Who is your most Positive Friend and why?
- Tell a story of a time a friend was honest with you and it helped.
- Tell a story of a time a Positive Friend supported you in a difficult time.
- Who are your Positive Friends and why?
- How have you shown up as a Positive Friend?

Physical Health

- How well are you taking care of your physical well-being?
- How much water are you drinking?
- How often are you getting exercise?
- How often are you eating nutritious foods?
- How much sleep are you getting per night?
- How might you take better care of your physical well-being?
- How might you sleep more?
- How might you drink more water?

- How might you get better exercise?
- How might you eat more nutritiously?
- If you made a map outlining places one could find medical resources in your school and community, what might you include? (example: Nurses office, free community health clinic, food pantry, community garden, partnerships with local gyms, Walk-with-a-Doc events, free eye and dental exam events in the community, etc.)

Brainstorming or Voicing Concerns

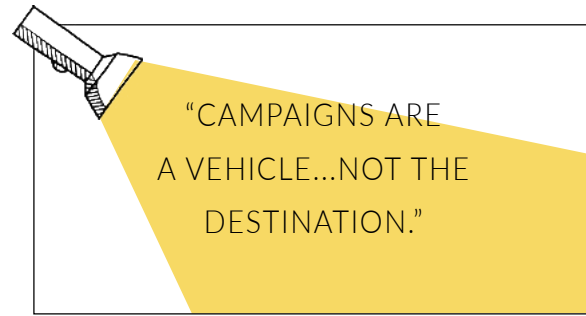
- What Strength is the most difficult for your friends to connect with? Why do you think that may be?
- What are you most concerned about in your school or community's culture?
- What part of the school year could use more support, connection, or restful moments?
- Are students in the school watching 13 Reasons Why (or whatever song/show/movie/trend is equivalent at the time)? What are they saying? Given this, what conversations might be most helpful?
- Where are unresolved pockets of grief within the school or community that adults might not be aware of?
- If you conducted a survey about the top five stressors a student at your school faces, what would these be? And what might help students cope healthily with these stressors?
- We can always grow stronger. Where would you like to start growing on this Wheel?
- What advice would you give parents about supporting their students?
 - About having Strength based conversations with their students.
 - About sharing and practicing their own Strengths.



RATIONALE FOR 1 PART PLANNING

Sources of Strength is not simply a school club, program, or student group but rather a vital part of a school and community-wide public health initiative. We envision each Peer Leader as the “Patient Zero” of an epidemic of health, and a contagion of hope and Strength, that they would go out and infect their social network and closest peers with positive social norms and behaviors, creating a wave of positive social change. They do this both through experiencing and practicing a community of Strength in their Peer Leader meetings and then by transforming this positive energy and these stories of Strength into strategic messaging campaigns that invite other students and staff to engage, interact, and apply Strength to their own lives. While regular meetings are a wonderful place to connect and share with other Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors, the power of Sources of Strength happens when this positive energy is taken out to the school and community in practical ways.

of Strength events. The true magic of growing resilience happens in coffee shops, lunchrooms, and in the small, everyday work of relationships, connections, and conversations; there is power in the small in-between moments that invite people into discovering and cultivating Strength in their own lives, where relationships are strengthened and health is lived out.



“IT’S NOT ABOUT THE CAMPAIGNS: SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THAT HAPPEN YOU’LL NEVER SEE. IT HAPPENS ON THE PLAYGROUND AND IN THE LUNCHROOM.”

- ADULT ADVISOR FROM ALASKA

Effective campaign planning helps people interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives. While a catchy poster or short celebrity video may be positive, we know that regular practices, actions, habits, and ideas, are what help individuals and communities grow in their health and wellness.

While campaigns are important, remember that they are only a tool and not an end in themselves. Even the most fun and exciting campaign is simply a starting point for larger discussions, interactions, and choices that happen outside of official Sources

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

We believe that school culture will shift toward Hope, Help, and Strength when we recognize and empower a diverse group of Peer Leaders with varied social, demographic, and life experiences. Drawing on knowledge from Social Network Theory, we want to embody inclusivity and thereby empower every corner and culture of our school and community. So what are we talking about when we talk about inclusivity? We're talking about:

Demographic Identities:

This may include our racial and ethnic identities, socio-economic experiences, gender identities, sexual orientation, and grade level.

Social Identities:

This is our representation within our peer groups, activities, and greater social environment. Think about the characters in "The Breakfast Club."

Life Experiences:

This includes our wide range of experiences in life that help shape our identities. Examples may include family history, religious or spiritual traditions, cultural heritage, physical capabilities, history of trauma, mental illness, and physical and clinical diagnoses.

It's important to consider these varied definitions of inclusivity when initially nominating Peer Leaders and in recruiting more Peer Leaders to your established team. Later we will highlight some accommodations and inclusive practices with regard to diversity of all students, including those with varied needs and/or abilities.

As you recruit, support, and sustain a Sources of Strength Peer Leader team, you want to create collaborative group norms within your team. Instead of relying on traditional norms and majority culture, each person can, and should contribute to the unique culture of your Sources of Strength team.

Tips Before Training

Host an All-Staff presentation to recruit Adult Advisors from all demographic backgrounds, social groups, and departments. If any of your Peer Leaders have been personally impacted by suicide, seek them out individually before the training and establish a Trusted Adult connection. Be aware that hard emotions may come up during a training, but you ultimately want to communicate that the training will be a celebration of our Strengths, and is usually a lot of fun. Before training, we also recommend that you establish strategic partnerships with like-minded community groups who work with your student population (i.e. intervention specialists, drug and alcohol prevention staff, faith leaders, Gay Straight Alliance, and Black Student Alliances, etc.). Lastly, when you are scheduling training, consider accommodations for students with special needs; this includes training space, scheduled breaks, sensory elements, ability, and peer-to-peer and peer-to-trainer communication.



"TAKE A TRAINING LITMUS TEST: WHO SHOWED UP? WHO SKIPPED? WHO LEFT DURING BREAKS? DO YOU SEE TRENDS IN PARTICIPATION?"

Tips During Trainings, Meetings, and Campaigns

Take a training litmus test. Who showed up? Who skipped? Who left during breaks? Did you see trends in participation? Ask your Peer Leaders if they think the group is representative of the cultural and social demographics in your school. If the answer is no, reflect during the Adult Advisor debrief on which groups

were underrepresented at the training and brainstorm who to invite next to your Peer Leader meeting. Set a goal to make every student feel seen and included by at least one Adult Advisor during training. Pursue edgy students and push yourself out of your comfort zone! Finally, be considerate and equitable with students of different needs and abilities. When in doubt about how to make an accommodation, ask the student!

Tips After Trainings, Meetings, and Campaigns

Continue to create opportunities for students of different social and cultural backgrounds to connect, create, and lead one another. Instead of trying to overlook differences, choose to celebrate them! When grouping students for activities, create groups based upon shared interest, rather than solely on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and social grouping. As your students engage with the wider community, create opportunities for them to share and collaborate with diverse groups and organizations. Dive into the language needs of your Peer Leader team, including both the student and family needs for English language accessibility as well as inclusive language for all people. Use person-centered or person-first language (student with disabilities vs. disabled student). Make your language Strengths-based (What problems do you want to solve in the world? vs. What do you want to be when you grow up?). Honor gender identity and sexual orientation, and use the name and preferred pronouns the student gives you. For more ideas and resources, connect with a National Trainer to discuss strategies of inclusivity for your specific context, and visit our Resources page at www.sourcesofstrength.org/resources.



Examples of Inclusive Language

People-Centered Language

"What problems do you want to solve?"
"Student leaders"
"You all / Y'all"
"Everyone"
"That's interesting/cool/ wild"
"Student with disabilities"
"Person experiencing homelessness"

Exclusive Language

"What do you want to be?"
"Kids, Kiddos, Sweetie(s)"
"You Guys"
"Boys & Girls"
"That's crazy"
"Disabled student"
"Homeless person"

Sources of Strength seeks to foster a safe environment for all Peer Leaders, regardless of their differences. We celebrate the unique voices, experiences, and identities of each of our students, and we believe that a culture of inclusivity within our team can positively shift the culture within the entire school.





Learning how to share our stories of Strength with those we meet
along the way.



CHAPTER THREE:

SHARING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

Sources Messaging and Philosophy [50](#) | *Hope, Help, and Strength-based*
Messaging [50](#) | *Targeted Messaging* [52](#) | *Layered*
Messaging [52](#) | *Campaign Planning* [53](#) | *Templated*
Campaigns [54](#) | *Getting the Word Out* [56](#) | *What Helps Me* [60](#) |
Am Stronger [64](#) | *Thankfulness* [67](#) | *Connect* [70](#)
We Belong [73](#) | *Trusted Adults* [76](#) | *Sources of Strength*
Week [79](#) | *Ideas for Strength Specific Campaigns* [81](#)
Postvention Guidelines: Do's and Don'ts [86](#)

SOURCES OF STRENGTH MESSAGING AND PHILOSOPHY

With every Peer Leader team idea, the team should answer the question, “What message are we trying to send?” Everything at Sources should be sent through a lens of Hope, Help, and Strength. As an Adult Advisor, your job is to create a space where students can use their voices, insight, and influence to create interesting and engaging ways for people to apply Strength to their lives.



“WITH EVERY PEER LEADER TEAM IDEA, THE TEAM SHOULD ANSWER THE QUESTION, ‘WHAT MESSAGE ARE WE TRYING TO SEND?’”

If their ideas are not Strength-focused, work to gently push them towards Strength. If your team never makes that pivot, you may need to stop that campaign from going out to

the larger population, as it could actually be harmful.

Peer Leaders have incredible power to effect change and strengthen a community. All of your efforts should be focused on helping people grow stronger by engaging with the Strengths given on the Wheel (see page [22](#)).

This chapter focuses on many different mediums you might use to help others

explore Strength and helpful coping strategies.

HOPE, HELP, AND STRENGTH-BASED MESSAGING

Sources of Strength’s vision is to empower a well world. We strive towards this vision one school or community at a time, by empowering Adult Advisor and Peer Leader teams to spread messages of hope, examples of help, and stories of Strength. For us, Hope, Help, and Strength is not just a catchy phrase or slogan, but a sign post by which we navigate, pointing the way forward and lighting the path ahead. It is the foundational philosophy of our prevention strategy and we hope it will help guide you as you work to impact your school or community for the better.

At the risk of mixing metaphors, we hope that it will also function as a filter, helping you and your Peer Leaders create hopeful, safe, and effective prevention messaging. As you brainstorm and plan your messaging campaigns, run everything through this filter: does it focus on Hope, Help, and Strength? Does it feel hopeful? Does it lift people’s spirits? Does it highlight how people get help, where people get help, or what resources are available for asking for help? Does it normalize help-seeking rather than individualized, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps thinking? Does it start and end from a place of Strength? Does it focus on the Strengths people already have in their lives and communities? Does

it highlight how people get better, how they recover and practice resilience in the face of adversity, or how they grow and practice their Strengths to increase their sense of wellness?

Hope, Help, and Strength based messaging is also in direct contrast to well-meaning public health or prevention strategies that commonly use sad, shocking, or traumatic messaging to encourage people to change their behavior or make healthier choices. What we have learned is that for the most at-risk and vulnerable amongst us, these messages can often have a negative impact. They can be triggering, reinforce a false norm, or contribute to a sense of inevitability and hopelessness for those who are struggling. Sources of Strength has lifted one of the tenets of the Hippocratic oath of “do no harm”; we have found that focusing on Hope, Help, and Strength is one of the most effective and powerful ways to avoid causing harm and actually help where it is needed most.

The core of what we are trying to do is to make hope contagious, to make help-seeking accessible and the true sign of bravery and courage, to make Strength an everyday practice in our lives, and to build connections and belonging among students

and adults, so that relationship is the true foundation of community.



“IF WE ENGAGE
IN AND PRACTICE THE
LEADING CAUSES OF LIFE,
WE WILL REDUCE THE
LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH.”

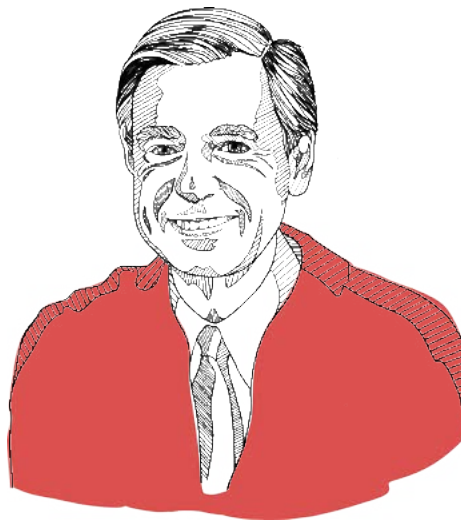
We fundamentally believe that Hope, Help, Strength-based stories are a more motivating, inspiring, and persuasive force in the world than stories of fear. We cannot shock people into lasting, better behavior. We change our behavior and practices more often based on what calls us to something better than what drives us out of fear of failure.

It's not always easy to make this change, because it is truly a paradigm or worldview shift in our fundamental culture as human beings. We tend to gravitate towards and stay focused on the negative

stories and events in ours and other's lives. While our stories of Strength and recovery often stay hidden in the shadows of our personal lives, Sources of Strength seeks to promote stories of recovering out loud, to share how we can grow and get better, how we can practice and use our Strengths to overcome life's challenges. We truly believe that the stories we tell can become self-fulfilling prophecies. If we tell stories of how we've grown stronger through adversity, then we will see Strength in the face of adversity. If we tell stories of hope in the face of despair, then we will find hope in the midst of despair. If we practice Hope, Help, and Strength, we can reduce the circumstances that lead to such prevalent sadness, shocking statistics, and traumatic events in the world.

Rather than focusing on the leading causes of death we want to focus on the leading causes of life; where is life breaking forth and what does it look like? How can we practice life, promote life, and celebrate life?

In what follows we will outline how to practically focus your messaging activities on Hope, Help, and Strength-based messaging.




“WHEN WE TALK ABOUT OUR FEELINGS, THEY BECOME LESS OVERWHELMING, LESS UPSETTING, AND LESS SCARY. THE PEOPLE WE TRUST WITH THAT TALK CAN HELP US KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE. LOVE IS AT THE ROOT OF ALL LEARNING, ALL RELATIONSHIPS...LOVE OR THE LACK OF IT. EVERYONE LONGS TO BE LOVED AND THE GREATEST THING WE CAN DO IS TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THEY ARE LOVED AND ARE CAPABLE OF LOVING.”

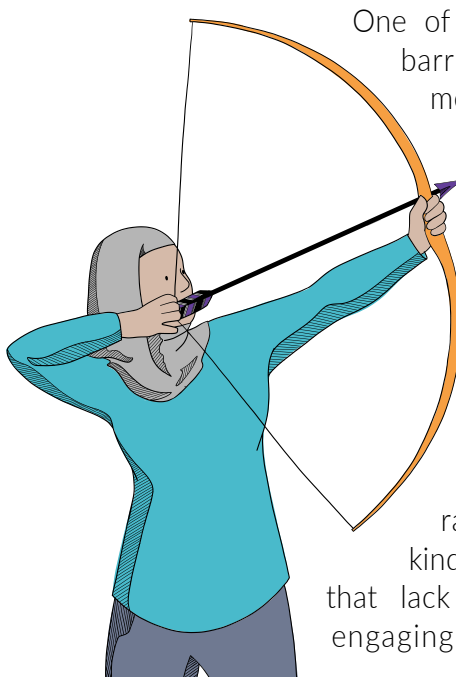
Mister Rogers

TARGETED MESSAGING

Effective messaging is a vital part of bringing Hope, Help, and Strength to a school and community. As teams build campaigns, it can be challenging to come up with ideas that can impact positive and strategic change in a community. Our research has shown campaigns that are interactive, and allow people to reflect on and share what the Strengths look like in their own lives, are far more effective than campaigns wherein people simply view or receive information. A campaign that is interactive and engages people to apply the Strengths to their own lives will not only bring awareness, understanding, and knowledge, but has the power to create lasting behavior and culture change.



“A CAMPAIGN THAT IS INTERACTIVE AND ENGAGES PEOPLE TO APPLY THE STRENGTHS TO THEIR OWN LIVES WILL BRING AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, AND KNOWLEDGE. IT HAS THE POWER TO CREATE LASTING BEHAVIORS AND CULTURAL CHANGE.”



One of the most common barriers to effective messaging campaigns is a failure to enact targeted messaging. Too often, teams get stuck in messaging campaigns that focus on general positivity, i.e., positive post-it notes, compliments, random acts of kindness, or activities that lack an authentic and engaging Strength-based

message. While Sources of Strength messaging should always have a positive focus or component, it can lack impact if it gets stuck in that realm and fails to engage people on a personal level. Your role as an Adult Advisor is to help your Peer Leader team to move generally positive ideas to the next level, by incorporating Strength-based language and activities into their activities.

However, your role is not simply to help students and staff be more aware of the Strengths. While there is great power in the Strength Wheel as a tool for discussion, sharing, and reflection, it will have little impact if it never hits home and becomes practical and real in our own lives. Every Source of Strength message should be positive and should raise awareness of the Strengths. However, more is needed if a team is going to help affect positive culture change: every campaign must also be interactive and engaging, helping people apply Strengths to their own lives.

A campaign will not be deeply effective unless it helps individuals and communities interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives. While a group may enjoy a campaign that is mainly positive, the effects of such messaging is relatively short-lived. Deep and lasting culture change will only occur when people are truly putting Strength into action and sharing their stories of resilience.

LAYERED MESSAGING

Have you ever noticed that we learn best when we interact with information in a few different ways? This is one of the tenants of Active Learning Theory. Typically, we don't remember things if we only hear them one time. By approaching a Strength through multiple mediums, an individual can interact with the same message in several ways. Additionally, layered messaging can help a person apply a Strength to several areas of their life.

For example, while an art and wall display about Trusted Adults can catch someone's attention for a few minutes, an eye-catching display loses its power if the interaction stops there. Rather, if over the course of a month, a student adds to the art display by writing the name of their own Trusted Adult, shares about that adult during a classroom

presentation, sees a video of their peers giving shout-outs to their Mentors, and writes a thank-you note to their Trusted Adult at a lunchroom display table, the impact of that conversation will be much deeper and more memorable.

As you plan campaigns, think creatively of different mediums that your community naturally gravitates towards. Do your students love art? Could a classroom presentation help with exploring a Strength more personally? What is a widely used social media platform your students are already using? Do you have events or traditions that many people rally around? How could your Peer Leaders combine their efforts with another club or organization to make the most of their efforts and help people engage with Strength in a variety of different ways?

As your team is brainstorming ideas for campaigns, we highly recommend that you layer your efforts, approaching the same ideas through several different mediums. As people, we need to see information presented in multiple ways before we can fully grasp it. A great teacher knows that we cannot master information we have only heard once; they will find different ways to help a student reflect on and practice important material. If our goal is to help individuals interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives, they must see and hear it more than once. Additionally, what is compelling to one person may not catch someone else's attention. By layering campaign messages with different mediums, a Peer Leader team has the best chance at helping their community internalize stories of Strength.

CAMPAIGN PLANNING



A little bit of planning goes a long way. It's a great idea to gather a team of insightful Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors on a quarterly basis to evaluate and plan for the next season of campaigns, translating the popular brainstorming ideas of the larger groups into concrete and realistic plans. Gather around a calendar and ask yourselves, "What message are we trying to send?" Allow all of your decisions to filter through the lens of that question to ensure that your campaign is clear and on target.

Some teams choose to cover a Strength over a month, but a Strength campaign can last as long as six to eight weeks. Ask your Peer Leaders which Strength their peers need to engage with the most and go from there. Here are some helpful questions to ask as you calendarize a campaign:



TO ENSURE YOUR
CAMPAIGNS ARE
INTERACTIVE AND FOCUSED
ON HOPE, HELP, AND
STRENGTH, SEE PAGE [50](#).

- Are there events happening in the school that Sources of Strength should be a part of?
- What other clubs or organizations could we partner with to carry our message forward?
- Are we including a wide range of mediums that will reach to the edges of our community?
- Are there local community entities that would be willing to sponsor our efforts?
- Who are we leaving out? How could we better include them?

TEMPLATED CAMPAIGNS

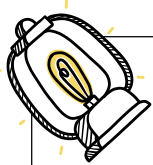
We have created a whole set of templated campaigns for your team to use to help people interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives. These were each created to focus on different goals that allow people to grow in Strength. While we hope these are helpful for you, we also believe that they are only a tool. The real power is in the creativity and insight of your Peer Leader team. As an Adult Advisor, your job is to foster a space of safety and creativity where helpful and effective Peer Leader ideas can come to life. While these campaign templates can be helpful, don't let them restrict you either. Consider looking at social media, Pinterest, or on our website to see some photos that might work for your setting; make it work for your context, whether that includes a local town tradition, your school's mascot, or giving a nod to the nature around you! When your team comes up with great campaigns, put them on display and share them with us on social media, by tagging #sourcesofstrength! We love seeing what teams come up with.

What Helps Me: When stressed, it's likely that we will feel one or more of the Big Three Emotions: anger, anxiety, or sadness. The What Helps Me campaign helps students and adults identify healthy and helpful coping strategies in their lives that can help them navigate the ups and downs of life. This campaign asks participants to share which emotion they experience most and then share a short explanation of what helps.

Example: *"When I get stressed, I feel anxious and sad. It helps me to write in my journal, go for a run, do some art, and talk to a friend."*

I am Stronger: The I Am Stronger campaign helps us reflect on how we have grown and makes us realize that our Strengths are not static, they are fluid and can be strengthened. Here, individuals can share about an area they feel they have recently grown in and explain how that has helped them.

Example: *"This time last year, I didn't feel like I had a solid group of friends. The people I hung around with were pretty negative and I didn't like who I was around them. But this year, I joined the soccer team. The girls are super fun and we all push each other to do our best in all areas of life."*



"MAKE A CAMPAIGN
WORK FOR YOUR CONTEXT,
WHETHER THAT INCLUDES A
LOCAL TOWN TRADITION, YOUR
SCHOOL'S MASCOT, OR GIVES
A NOD TO THE NATURE
AROUND YOU!"

Thankfulness Journals: Thankfulness campaigns provide opportunities for people to practice gratitude in their own lives and reap positive psychological rewards. A recent study showed that writing down three new things we are grateful for each day for 21 days can physically change our brain chemistry, making us more grateful, resilient, and positive people. This campaign has 21 days with three lines each for individuals to write down the people, places, and things they are grateful for.

Example: *"Day 14 - Coach Owens, springtime, and Costco hotdogs"*

Thankfulness Challenge: Students and staff can write three things they are grateful for in that moment. The back

of the campaign card lists dozens of answers we hear everyday from people we work with.

Example: *"My mom's lasagna, my dog, and my friend Tony's sense of humor."*

Connect: The Connect Campaign provides an opportunity to normalize asking for, providing, and receiving help. These stories are instrumental in breaking down codes of secrecy and silence. This campaign focuses specifically on Mental Health, allowing participants to share short stories of how they have been connected or how they have connected someone else to Mental Health.

Example: "I was really feeling out of control after my dad died, but I didn't feel like I could really talk to anyone. My friend Brent noticed I was struggling. He introduced me to our school counselor, Mrs. Hinson. I've met with her this semester a few times. While I'm still sad, she's given me tools to deal with my grief in a healthier way."



"WHEN YOUR TEAM COMES UP WITH GREAT CAMPAIGNS, PUT THEM ON DISPLAY AND SHARE THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA! WE LOVE SEEING WHAT TEAMS CAN COME UP WITH."

We Belong: We all need to feel like we belong somewhere. The truth is, we all offer something unique to the world, through our voice, talents, interests, culture, and perspective. The We Belong campaign provides an opportunity to identify the things that make us unique and celebrate them, helping create a culture of connection and community. This campaign asks students and staff to share what they bring to their school and community, celebrating the Strength that comes with diversity.

Example: "I am a strong woman; I bring my tennis skills; I bring my love of math; I bring my Jewish faith; I am transgender; I bring my musical talent, etc."

Trusted Adult Cards: One of the best ways to protect a young person from suicide is to have caring, connected, and positive adults engaged in their lives. Also known as Thank You cards, these look like postcards. Individuals are encouraged to write a short note to a Trusted Adult, thanking them for their influence in their lives. They are then asked to hand-deliver this note to that adult. This helps them formalize a protective relationship in their minds, allowing a young person to practice a "help-seeking pathway". This increases the likelihood that they will reach back out to that adult when they need help.

Example: "Dear Mrs. Cahill, thanks for letting me eat lunch in your room on Thursdays. It's always a highlight of my week. I appreciate you listening and helping me with my Chemistry homework. Sincerely, Rollin"



CAMPAIGN:

Getting the Word Out

Summary: Now that you have completed Sources of Strength Peer Leader Training, it's time to start sharing Sources of Strength with the rest of your school and community. In your first planning meetings your team should brainstorm ways to introduce Sources of Strength to your school and community.

Goals:

- Introduce your Peer Leader team to the rest of the school and community.
- Allow the school to become familiar with the Sources of Strength wheel.
- Help individuals apply the Wheel to their own lives.
- Prepare the community to be watching for future events in which they are invited to participate.

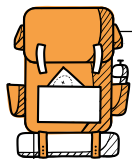
Research:

Research shows that positive personal stories, shared by people you are familiar with, can have a huge impact in the creation of positive social norms within a community.

Peer Leader Meeting

Fun: There are many games that you can play to break the ice and remind Peer Leaders of things they learned during their initial training. Generate excitement for individuals so they want to take what they learned at training out to their friends and classmates. For example, play the Chair Game and have Peer Leaders introduce themselves and share about which Strength is helping them that week.

Share: If this is the first meeting since your training, allow Peer Leaders to share some takeaways or thoughts they have had since then. Break into smaller groups and have Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors share which of the Strengths on the Wheel they are tapping into in this season.



FOR HELPFUL
DISCUSSION PROMPTS,
SEE PAGE [41](#).

Plan: Pull out your brainstorming sheets you worked on in the training. Your goal for the Getting the Word Out campaign is to start getting the message out about ways that we can grow in resilience: rather than focusing on one Strength, your team is introducing the entire Wheel. You may decide to have Peer Leaders return to their original poster group, or you may have already decided to focus on a few solid ideas. Start breaking down these ideas with

your Peer Leaders into attainable steps. Help them to be successful by guiding them towards realistic goals.

Help your Peer Leaders to remember that their goal is to use Hope, Help, and Strength to focus on making a difference. They need to come up with ideas that help others interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives.

School Wide Campaign:

Now that you have explored the Wheel, consider how you will take it out to the rest of your school and community!

Mediums:

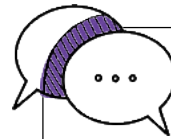
Here are some ideas that you could use to introduce the Wheel to your whole school. Don't be overwhelmed with these lists - you can pick one or two or even make up your own! Remember that these are only meant as suggestions: contextualize anything to make it work for your school and community!

Presentations

- Have Peer Leaders go to classrooms and present on all, or part of the Wheel. Ask students to identify two Strengths they are strong in, and one that they would like to grow in over the year.
- Bring poster boards into classrooms and lead students in the poster activity where everyone draws out the people, places, and things that make them stronger. Then, present briefly on the Wheel.

Classroom Integration

- English classes can read *Catcher In the Rye* and discuss the character of Holden. What Strengths did he have? How might life have looked different had he tapped into Strength?
- Ask history students to write a report on a period when a group or individual exhibited one or more of these Strengths for the greater good. For example, how did Americans at home during WWII exhibit Generosity? Family Support? Physical Health? Spirituality?
- Have Science students read different studies behind the benefits of being positive or thankful.
- Have a film class write case studies on especially resilient characters and what Strengths that individual tapped into.



“ASK YOURSELVES,
'WHO COULD
BENEFIT FROM ENGAGING
WITH STRENGTHS?' THE
ANSWER IS, 'EVERYONE!' SO
GET CREATIVE AND THINK
OF HOW TO ENGAGE WITH
ALL GROUPS ACROSS YOUR
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY.”

Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Host a sidewalk chalk show where artists make live art outside the school with the theme “My Source of Strength.” As students, staff, and community members walk through, give them multiple opportunities to hear about the Wheel. Provide chalk to allow others to share their own Strengths.
- Have some Peer Leaders briefly explain the pieces of the Wheel. Fill water balloons with paint that matches the colors of the Wheel. Allow participants to pick a water balloon and share which area on the Wheel they have grown in during the last year. Have them throw the balloon at a giant blank canvas. Place this splatter painting on a wall with a short explanation of how we can tap into Strength to move through difficult times.
- Create a mural of the Wheel on a public wall or in a quad. Use this mural often to allow people to check in about their Strengths and create a school culture where sharing about Strengths is common.

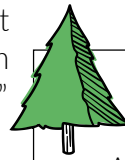
All School Activities

- Post-It Note Challenge: Hang posters up around the school with the names of different Strengths on the top. Hand out markers and Post-It Notes, and ask your Peer Leader team to come up with 5-10 ways to practice the Strength listed on that poster. For example, a Generosity poster might say, “Bake cookies for a Trusted Adult,” “Pay for someone behind you in line at Starbucks,” “When someone drops something, pick it up,” “Volunteer at a local shelter,” “Put your phone down and have a real conversation with a friend or family member,” or “Do the dishes without being asked.” Then post a sign that encourages passers-by to take one of these notes and complete the challenge. You could then encourage them to post/share about it on social media using a hashtag.
- Create large paper chains where participants write down their Strengths on strips of paper. Connect all

of the strips and display the chain in a public place to remind the community of how strong they are.

Video and Photography

- Create a Peer Leader Mission Statement video where Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors read the Mission Statement together. Show this video in classrooms, during half times, in assemblies, on social media, the school website, the local television station, before movies in local theaters, etc.
- Have students take photos of themselves holding a prop representing something that is a source of Strength for them. It could be a camera, paint brushes, hugging a friend, standing with a teacher, palming a basketball, measuring cooking ingredients, etc. Print these photos and display them in a public place with a poster saying, "What are your Sources of Strength?"



"DON'T TAKE OVER
ANOTHER GOOD CLUB: JOIN
TOGETHER TO MAKE EVEN
MORE OF AN IMPACT!"

Social Media

- Host a photo booth with fun props and paper. Have participants write about a Strength in their life. (Example: "My dog Hank, who takes my mind off of stressful testing") Make it contagious by posting these photos on social media and tagging others to do the same.
- Film and post short form interviews where people are asked which Strength they have grown in during the last year.
- Include hashtags such as #MySourceOfStrength, #WhatsYourStrength, #ShowMeYourStrength, or make it personal to your school by using your name or mascot, such as #TitansUnited, #MustangsStrong, etc.

Audio: Music and Announcements

- Have Peer Leaders share two minute stories of Strength. Try to focus 10% of the story on what was difficult, and 90% on what helped them. Share one a day during morning announcements for a week.
- Take a poll of students favorite encouraging or pump-up song. Allow a Peer Leader to introduce why the chosen song is important to them and let it play during the passing period.

Modifications (if needed)

Make sure you are getting the word out to all corners of your school's social network, including alternative learning classrooms, part-time students, teachers and administration, immigrant populations, ELL students, sports teams, clubs, and special interest groups!

Ways to Partner With Other Entities

- Introduce yourselves to Student Council and invite them to work with you on projects that can make your community stronger.
- Throughout the year, think creatively about groups that may not be as included and invite them to work with you.
- Don't take over another good club: join together to make even more of an impact!

Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
 - How many Peer Leaders participated?
 - What percentage of students and staff participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned:
 - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight stories of

- Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
- Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude for your team's ideas and efforts.
- Share stories of success in a newsletter to staff, board of education, parents, community, or other prevention groups.
- Tag us, #sourcesofstrength, so we can celebrate with you and share your great ideas with other teams around the world.

What's Next?

- Continue meeting as a Peer Leader team and plan your next campaign.



CAMPAIGN:

What Helps Me

Summary: *The What Helps Me Campaign focuses on highlighting emotional regulation and what Strengths help us to cope or manage our emotions in times of stress or difficulty. No one gets through life without regularly experiencing one of the Big Three Emotions: anger, anxiety, or feeling down, sad, or depressed. The What Helps Me campaign is about helping individuals to identify which of these emotions they wrestle with the most, and which Strengths function as positive and healthy coping strategies for them. We know that these emotions are common and pervasive but we don't as often hear how people cope or manage them. Let's tell that story, and give others hope that they are not alone; they too can discover Strength to overcome.*

Goals:

- To increase participants social-emotional awareness of how they react to stress, difficulty, or challenges.
- To identify ways to manage difficult events in healthy ways.
- To share options that could help others with emotional regulation and resilience.
- To normalize healthy coping strategies and change the narrative on how we respond to hard times.

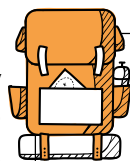
Peer Leader Meeting:

Fun: Lead group in a round of the Shoe Kick game (see games list on our Website). When the shoe's owner comes to claim their shoe, each person should share which of the Big Three Emotions is most familiar to them when stressed, and what helps them when they are feeling big emotions.

Alternative Option: Lead the group in the Chair Game (see page [113](#)), where each round participants are prompted to answer the question, "Which of the Big Three Emotions is most familiar to me when I'm stressed, and what helps?"

Share: Break into small groups and give Peer Leaders time to share about a time when they felt one of the Big Three Emotions. They should then share what they did or what Strengths they used, that helped them find balance, or feel better. After small group sharing, gather back together and ask 8-10 Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors to raise their hands and share briefly about what Strengths they used to work through difficult emotions.

Plan: Have Peer Leaders brainstorm ideas for how they might engage the rest of the school to reflect on and share what helps them with the Big Three Emotions. (For ideas about different ways to facilitate brainstorming, see page [44](#).)



REMEMBER TO
RECORD YOUR EFFORTS
IN THE ACTIVITIES TRACKING
FORM ON PAGE [107](#).

School Wide Campaign:

Now that you have planned your campaign, develop some campaigns elements that you can layer over a period of time that will help people practice Strength in their own lives.

Help Peer Leaders carry out their ideas in creative and attractive ways that invite people to interact and engage with a Strength, and apply it to their own lives. Help students and staff to share their own stories, internalizing Strength in a way that makes it relevant to their everyday lives. This will help both groups and individuals better cope with the natural ups and downs of life. It will also normalize that big emotions are a part of life and that we already have a number of skills that help us cope and overcome.

Mediums:

Presentations

- Have Peer Leaders come before the school board or staff and lead a short discussion around how these adults find balance during times of stress.
- Help Peer Leader teams go into classrooms and lead discussions and activities about What Helps Me. This is also a good time to get students to complete elements to add to a wall display, i.e., What Helps Me feathers, snowflakes, balloons, or leaves.

Classroom Ideas

- English teachers can give writing assignments interpreting Strengths that might have helped literary characters manage difficult emotions, relationships, or circumstances, i.e., Catcher and the Rye, Lord of the Flies; have students research the effects of various emotions and Strengths, and write essays of how specific Strengths may have or did help the characters to cope.
- Psychology teachers could teach on emotional regulation and the body's reaction to stress over time, as well as what helps relieve stress.
- Biology teachers could teach on the human stress response and how it effects our brains neurological and physiological processes.

Art, Mural, Wall Displays

- Create a wall display where everyone lists which of the Big Three Emotions they wrestle with the most and what helps them. Common wall displays or sharing prompts have been: Leaves on a tree; elements of school mascots; seasonal displays like snowflakes or fall leaves; feathers on two big wings; petals on flowers; bricks on a wall of Strength etc.
- Create photo displays or story posters of students sharing their own stories of Strength.



“DON'T FORGET TO
EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR
THE EXPERIENCE AND THANK
YOUR TEAM.”

All School Activities

- Host a screening and discussion of the Pixar movie *Inside Out* and discuss the Big Three Emotions and how we can find balance.
- Host a “Chill Room” during stressful seasons where students can visit to take a break and mentally get away from the demands of the day. Have tea, yoga mats, coloring pages (see the Tangled Ball of Emotions or Strength coloring pages from page [130](#)), relaxing music, and have school counselors there to introduce themselves. Peer Leaders can take shifts to share about the Big Three Emotions and how we can find balance in stressful times.

Video and Photography

- Get a number of the Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors to state “What Helps Me with _____ (emotion) is _____ (Strength) and _____ (Strength) and _____ (Strength) on video. Example: “What helps me when I get too anxious or worried is playing my guitar, talking to my mom, and going for a run.” Stories can be simple or more detailed, as long as they remain Strength focused and hopeful. Show video in classrooms, at events, or on morning TV announcements. The more students and staff that can participate in these videos the better.
- Fun Tips: shoot B-roll footage of students engaging in their Strengths in a funny way; i.e., running through a forest screaming, playing with their dog, jamming out airband style to their favorite song, climbing a tree, listening to music on their bed, or retail therapy in the local mall.
- Host a photography show where individuals take photos on the topic “What Helps Me” and display it in a public area with short captions about people's stories.

Social Media

- Ask Peer Leaders to make short videos sharing how they recover from stress and then challenge others to share their own stories.
- Create a school wide Instagram challenge: anyone who enters a photo and caption sharing their story of which Strength helps them with stress will be entered to win a prize at the end of the week or month.

Audio: Music and Announcements

- Take a poll for students' favorite "chill out" song. Once they have been reviewed, play them during passing periods during a stressful season, like testing.
- Have Peer Leaders share their stories of "Strength Over Stress" on morning announcements. One Peer Leader can share a one to two minute story each morning for a week.
- Start a school podcast with students sharing what helps them with difficulties, stress, or challenging emotions.

Ways to Partner With Other Entities (students, staff, community).

- Team up with a local yoga studio or Zumba instructor to teach a one hour event focusing on stress relief and easy practices for students to use in life.
- Partner with coaches to help them spread the word about dealing with stress with their athletes. Have athletic trainers check in with athletes about how they are dealing with stress at each interaction.
- Math teachers can share about how their subject is historically one of the most anxiety provoking subjects and how calming yourself, breathing, sharing a moment of gratitude, or meditation for a few minutes before class can often help calm fears and help students focus and perform better.

Modifications (If needed/applicable)

- Identifying and speaking about emotions is not an easy skill for everyone. Be sure to give support in teaching how an emotion might feel physically in someone's body (such as tense shoulders, a tight chest, clenched jaw, sweating, etc.), as this will help increase mind-body awareness.

Evaluation (mini)

- Ask for stories of success of impact with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection, coping, or emotional regulation.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
 - How many Peer Leaders participated?
 - What percentage of the school body participated? (Remember, we are aiming for 90%!)
- Consider the impact and/or lessons learned:
 - Did you (adults or Peer Leaders) learn something about how you or others manage difficult emotions?
 - Did you hear stories from friends or peers about stresses they experience and how they cope with them?
 - Do you feel like we helped normalize these emotions and break the silence on how people cope with them?
 - Were various resources, coping strategies, or management skills promoted or highlighted?
 - How could you increase or diversify participation in this campaign?
 - Did you keep this campaign fun and engaging?
 - Did you highlight student stories of Strength?
 - Was there diversity in the stories highlighted?
 - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year and how you could improve the campaign next time.



Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as an Adult Advisors or Peer Leader team.
- Share powerful stories of Strength, coping, or connection with each other and with your staff or community.
- Express gratitude for the experience and thank your team.



CAMPAIGN:

I Am Stronger

Summary: *The I Am Stronger Campaign focuses on Strengths that have grown for you. This campaign spreads the idea that the Strengths on the Wheel are not static; just because one area on the Wheel isn't strong for you now, doesn't mean you can't strengthen it in the future. You are not stuck. The I Am Stronger Campaign is about collecting stories of Strength from your school and community and sharing them through photos, videos, conversation, wall displays, and social media.*



“AFTER RUNNING A CAMPAIGN, ASK YOUR PEER LEADERS IF IT WAS INTERESTING TO THEIR FRIENDS. IF NOT, ASK WHAT THEY THINK COULD GET A GROUP’S INVOLVEMENT.”

Goals:

- Encourage Peer Leaders to tell their stories of Strength.
- Promote resilience through the development and growth of Strengths/protective factors.
- Promote the development of a growth based mindset.
- Aid Peer Leaders in thinking about and sharing ways that they have grown physically, socially, spiritually, or emotionally in the last season by developing their Strengths.

Research:

Research indicates that being able to identify Strengths increases a person’s likelihood to use that Strength later. A

young person who learns skills tied to resilience can return to these habits when difficult times arise. When we practice telling our difficult stories through a lens of Strength, we are able to grow by reframing and internalizing Strength that we can then share with others.

Peer Leader Meeting:

Fun: Pass around a Sources of Strength basketball. When a student catches the ball, encourage them to share which one of the Strengths they have grown stronger in during the last year. This can also be played with a Sources of Strength frisbee.

Play the Chair Game with the prompt being, “Hi my name is _____, I have gotten stronger in _____ because...” This game should be done in a safe environment where trust is high.

Share: Peer Leaders write down short stories about how they have grown or want to grow on the I Am Stronger cards. After they have had a chance to write, have them break into small groups and share what they learned about themselves.

Plan: Talk with your Peer Leader team about ways in which you could bring out a school-wide campaign. Remember, your goal is to involve at least 90% of your school population, so challenge your group to think of ways to reach to all corners of your school.

School Wide Campaign:

Now that you have planned your campaign, take it to the rest of your school in a way that helps others interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives.

Mediums:

Presentations

- Help Peer Leaders lead a short explanation of the Strengths in classrooms or during a pep rally, then ask the class/crowd to turn to a friend and share how they have grown stronger.
- Help Peer Leader teams prep short presentations about the Strengths and ways in which we can grow stronger. Have these groups present to Freshman English classes. Or, involve the local community by taking these presentations to libraries, elementary schools, rotary clubs, or veterans groups.

Classroom Integration

- Ask English, Writing, or Newspaper classes to interview friends on ways in which they have grown stronger. With permission, feature some of the most inspiring stories in the school newspaper.
- Have Science or Psychology students learn about Post Traumatic Growth by watching and discussing Jane McGonigal's TED Talk, "The Game That Can Give You Ten Extra Years of Life". Discuss areas in which they have grown or Strengths in which they would like to grow.

Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Place a large blank canvas up outside. Provide paint that matches the colors of the Wheel. Prompt participants to share a short story of how they are growing in a specific Strength; create a painting with everyone's painted handprints spelling out the word "Strong". Find a high-traffic area to display your new work of art.
- Collect short stories of Strength on pieces of paper, then create a wall display, inspiring anyone who walks by to commit to growth today!

All School Activities

- Host a color run at your school! Connect different colors of chalk to Strengths on the Wheel. When participants arrive, share a short description of each Strength. After learning about the Strengths, encourage participants to choose one Strength in which they have grown in the last year. As they run, the participant will be covered in that color of chalk. At the end of the run, have two or three Peer Leaders share their own stories by following a simple script: "Hi my name is _____ and I have grown in _____ because..." Every participant should then turn to a neighbor and briefly share their own story how they have grown stronger.
- Host a bocce ball or hotshot basketball tournament where the balls are the colors of the Wheel. Before a student throws their ball, they should briefly share how they have grown in a certain Strength. The winners of the tournament could receive a Sources of Strength t-shirt, basketball, or frisbee.

Video and Photography

- Find individuals who are willing to share short, Strength-based stories about ways that they have grown in the last year using the Strengths on the Wheel. Take a photo of each person and create a display with the photos and stories.
- Ask a local movie theater to donate some before-film screen time to Sources of Strength. Use the time to show a short video of local faces sharing very brief stories of ways that they have grown stronger during the last year. Challenge the audience members to turn to a neighbor and share their own stories.

Social Media

- Challenge students to take photos that represent them engaging in a Strength they have grown in. Captions explaining how this Strength has helped them should be included. Have students tag a friend to share their story too.
- Make your social media efforts more contagious by using hashtags like



#IAmStronger, #HowHaveYouGrown, #GrowingStrong, or make it personal by using your mascot or school name such as #WildcatsStrong or #LittletonIsStrong.

Audio: Music and Announcements

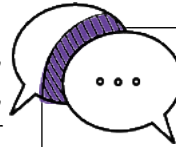
- Create a playlist of Peer Leaders' favorite songs that pump them up or encourage them. Play these during lunches or passing periods for mini school-wide "dance parties".
- For one week, have one Peer Leader share a brief story about how they have grown by using one of the Strengths. Allow the participants to share these brief stories during morning announcements.

Modifications (if needed)

- Not every individual naturally has the social-emotional skills to reflect on their lives and see specific growth. Help participants to recognize signs of growth in various areas of their lives to help lead them to their own stories of Strength.

Ways to Partner With Other Entities

- These stories are not simply powerful for middle and high school students. They are helpful for everyone! Involve other groups to listen to stories of Strength and apply it to their own lives, such as younger students at an elementary school, local faith groups, retirement communities, or civic-minded coffee shops.
- If your Peer Leaders want to host a large event, invite another group like Student Council to partner, ensuring a lighter load, wider audience, and higher involvement. Visit our website and watch the video "Creating Partnerships" for more inspiration.



"GIVING PEER LEADERS OPPORTUNITIES TO REFLECT ON AND SHARE ABOUT THE STRENGTHS IN THEIR OWN LIVES INCREASES THEIR SKILL LEVEL, INTERNALIZATION, AND AUTHENTICITY AS THEY MOVE FORWARD WITH CAMPAIGNS."

Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of Strength.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
 - How many Peer Leaders participated?
 - What percentage of the school body participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
 - How could you increase or diversify participation?
 - Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
 - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude for your Peer Leader team's creativity and hard work (Hint: a cookie can say "Thank You" when words fail).

CAMPAIGN:

Thankfulness

Summary: Studies have shown that practicing gratitude can have powerful positive impacts on your brain and life. A simple way to practice thankfulness is writing down or journaling about things that you are grateful for. When we share these things with others, the benefits spread to those around us, infusing our community with Strength and changing the way we look at the world around us. No matter who we are, or where we come from, we believe that gratitude is a spiritual practice which can make us all more positive, mindful, and content.

Goals:

- To increase a culture of gratitude among students and adults.
- To build awareness of gratitude as a protective factor.
- To catalyze students and adults to train their brains in being more positive, hopeful, and resilient.

Research:

- Writing down three new things we are grateful for each day for 21 days can physically change our brains, creating neural pathways that help our brains focus more on the positive.

Peer Leader Meeting:

Fun: Gratitude BINGO: In one meeting, collect a list of specific things individuals are grateful for. Turn those things into BINGO cards and allow Peer Leaders to sign the blocks that they listed the previous week. Have a small prize for the first person who gets BINGO!

Host "Thankfulness Family Feud." Have a student take a poll of things people are grateful for. At the next meeting, have Peer Leaders guess what the most common, silly, or unusual answers were.

Share: Allow students to write and draw on posters the people, places, and things they are grateful for. Have them share their answers in creative ways, i.e. a rap, poem, song, interpretive dance, group charades, etc.

Plan: Brainstorm ways your Peer Leader team could get the entire school involved in naming things they are grateful for.

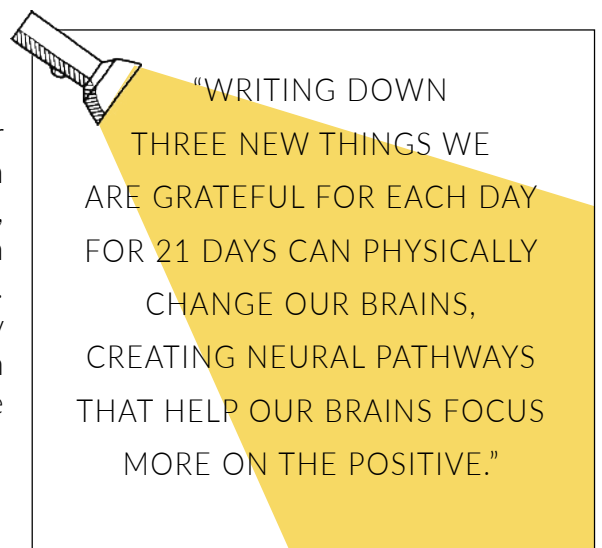
School Wide Campaign:

Now that you have planned your campaign, take your message out to your school and community, helping them share in fun and interactive ways. At Sources of Strength, we often refer to gratitude as the "secret sauce." It's an incredibly powerful force for health in our brains and lives. If your team can develop a habit of sharing things they are grateful for, they will reap the positive Mental Health benefits. Everyone can grow from naming things they are thankful for.

Mediums:

Presentations

- Help teams of Peer Leaders go into classrooms (their own or a partnering elementary school, etc.) and talk about the importance of gratitude.
- Lead a class in a mindfulness/gratitude exercise.



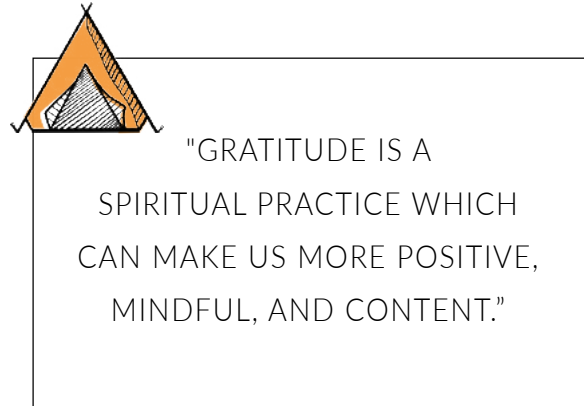
- Have Peer Leaders present the importance of gratitude to the staff/administration. Thank these adults for their dedication and ask everyone to name what they are thankful for.

Classroom Integration

- Start class with a three minute mindfulness exercise, gratefulness challenge, or a breathing practice.
- Study how regular gratitude practices can heal the brain.
- Watch Shawn Achor's TED Talk, The Secret to Better Work, and discuss his findings on gratitude's role in success.

Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Create a tree with branches growing out. Hand out many colorful paper leaves and ask participants to write things they are grateful for on them. (If this is happening around Thanksgiving, the leaves could be turkey feathers instead. Get creative with other holidays or school events.)
- Host a week at lunch where students can contribute to gratitude posters by drawing images of what they are thankful for. Put the posters on display.
- Create a display case filled with artifacts that represent things people in your school are grateful for. Allow them to include a short written explanation with their artifacts.



All School Activities

- Host a card-making station where participants can create a thank you card for someone they are grateful for. Encourage participants to deliver the card within the week.
- Hand out 21 Day Gratitude Journals and give small prizes to individuals who show an Adult Advisor their completed journals at the end of the campaign.
- Collect inspiring testimonials about how gratitude has helped participants and share them on social media or in morning announcements.
- Hand out colorful paper slips to classrooms and encourage every class to start the day by having individuals write down things they are grateful for. Collect the slips at the end of the week and create a giant paper chain around your school.

Video and Photography

- Create a video with participants sharing things that they are grateful for. Use the video as an opportunity to show how many things we have in common.
- Host a photo booth where students can bring props or write things they are grateful for on paper. Print photos and put them on display.

Social Media

- Use the hashtag #ThankfulThursdays to have participants take a photo of something or someone they are grateful for, and post it to social media with a caption. Encourage them to tag others to do the same.
- Get others to join your social media efforts with tags like #ThankfulThursdays, #GratitudeChallenge, or make it specific to your school or town with names like #CouerdAleneGrateful or #GratefulTigers

Audio: Music and Announcements

- Poll the school for what people are grateful for, read several items from the list each morning during announcements.
- Have Peer Leaders or Adult Advisors give shout outs to someone they are grateful for in morning

announcements or an assembly. A Peer Leader team could choose to host “Thankful Thursdays”. These could range from funny (“Junior Sam Reynolds is thankful that he has been told his eyebrows will grow back after last week’s chemistry incident”) to serious (“The whole CHS community is grateful to hear that Mr. Samson has been declared cancer-free”).

Modifications (if needed)

- Make sure to include any alternative learning or distance learning classes or programs in your campaigns. We need everyone’s voice to create a grateful culture!

Ways to partner with other entities

- Have students volunteer at a local shelter to gain perspective on gratitude as well as Generosity.
- Ask a local restaurant or coffee shop if your team could display some gratitude posters or paper chains in their shop, allowing the community to participate as well.

Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
 - How many Peer Leaders participated?
 - What percentage of students participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
 - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
- Make note in your Activities Tracker of what to keep in mind for next year.



Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Of course, express gratitude for your Peer Leader team!
- Bring some sparkling cider to your Peer Leader meeting and offer toasts of celebration and thankfulness to each other.



CAMPAIGN:

Connect

Summary: *The purpose of the Connect Campaign is to use positive social norming to break down codes of silence and secrecy, while increasing the acceptability of seeking help for one's self and for others, especially in the area of Mental Health. This is accomplished by creating space and opportunities for students and staff to share stories of times they either got connected during a difficult time in their lives, or connected someone else they saw struggling. As in all Sources of Strength campaigns, the goal is to create opportunities for the general population to engage, interact, and apply the principles underlying this campaign to their own lives and personal contexts. By creating space to tell personal stories of connection, the Connect Campaign contextualizes and normalizes help-seeking and the importance of getting connected to Mental Health during difficult times.*

Goals:

- Increase and normalize help-seeking behaviors.
- Decrease secrecy requests and codes of silence.
- Increase norms and knowledge around seeking Mental Health help through sharing our stories.
- Normalize the idea that asking for help is a sign of Strength, not a sign of weakness, and that getting help for a friend is being a good friend.
- Increase awareness of what resources and pathways are available for seeking help for oneself or a friend in the school or community.

Research:

- Young people are incredibly powerful in setting norms among their peers. While we often talk about negative norms, positive ideas and habits can also spread through social networks.

Peer Leader Meeting:

Fun: Peer Leaders love the game "Walk Around Cool". Play the game and then share a light teaching point about the importance of connection, asking for help, and looking for those who need connection. Other games could be "The Human Knot," "Hog Call," or "1, 2, 3 Look".



Share: In a large group, ask students about times that they have reached out and received help, or when they have reached out to another person to connect them to help. You might prep a Peer Leader with a good story ahead of time so that they can lead with an example: "My name is Angela, and I saw that a friend of mine on the volleyball team seemed to be struggling. She was missing practice and I felt like she looked really down. I texted her to ask if she was okay and at the end of our conversation, she agreed to go see Miss Sanchez, our school counselor about some stuff she was dealing with. She's doing a lot better now."

Plan: Move into a time of brainstorming about how you could help spread the norm of connecting others to help to the rest of your school. Remember, your goal is to reach 90% of students and staff with a message that breaking codes of silence and reaching out is something that makes individual and communities stronger.

School Wide Campaign:

Consider what could be hindering young people from reaching out for Mental Health support and work to remove those barriers by highlighting stories of Strength.

Mediums:

Presentations

- Allow students to present to younger classrooms about stories of help-seeking and connection. You could have a school counselor accompany the students so that everyone could meet them.
- Form teams of Peer Leaders to present at halftimes at sports games. Allow 2-3 Peer Leaders to briefly share a story of connection and remind people of resources available, whether at the school or in the community.



“IF PEER LEADERS SEEM NERVOUS TO START A CONVERSATION, IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO GIVE SMALL PRIZES, (STICKERS, SUNGLASSES, CANDY, FULL RIDES TO COLLEGE, ETC.) TO GET THINGS MOVING.”

Classroom Integration

- Study the impact of various therapies on a person's well being.
- Study and discuss Social Network Theory.
- Use a novel to discuss how a character seeks help to get through a difficult situation. Bring up the importance of multiple Strengths, and seeking out access to Physical and Mental Health support.

Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Create a poster campaign of students with stereotypical physical injuries to make a connection between getting access to, and using Physical and Mental Health resources, i.e., the hockey player with a blacked out tooth saying- “If I lost my tooth, I'd go to a dentist, and when I lost my way, I went to the school counselor.”
- Collect individuals stories of connection, starting with “I Got Connected” or “I Am a Connector”. Post these stories up in a colorful wall display.

All School Activities

- Host a basketball tournament where a counselor, social worker, or Trusted Adult is on every team. Several times throughout the event, have Peer Leaders share brief stories of connection and help-seeking. Have signs and posters up in the gym that reinforce help-seeking and breaking the silence when someone is struggling.
- Join together as a community to host a walk or a 5k to raise money and awareness for Mental Health resources, and to hear stories of Strength and connection from different perspectives across your community.
- Create a short survey, asking students if they feel they can reach out for help for themselves or others, and ways that the school might make it easier (“Have counselors in their office during lunch hours, post signs of how to find the office, etc.”)
- Explore help-seeking pathways amongst staff at your school or organization, as well. Who might benefit from additional opportunities for mentorship (or mentee-ship)?

Video and Photography

- Create a photo booth where students can take photos with someone they have connected to help, or holding up short stories of connection they have experienced. Print these photos and put them on display.
- Create a lighthearted and uplifting video with individuals sharing times that they have gotten connected or connected others to hope, help and Strength. Share this video on social media, in classrooms, during halftime shows, at pep rallies, during morning announcements, etc.
- Make a fun video introducing your school to the counselors and social workers at your school. Have the video include how to locate the counselors and social workers, provide their office hours, and give different ways to reach out.

Social Media

- Show short videos about how individuals were able to find help and healing through help-seeking for themselves or someone else.
- Create a fun Instagram or Snapchat story about how a person can find the school's counseling office.
- Take a portrait of each school counselor and social worker, and allow them to include a caption introducing themselves and inviting people to visit.

Audio: Music and Announcements

- Help Peer Leaders share a story of connection or help-seeking during morning announcements. Share appropriate resources available to students and staff.
- Host an open mic night where students can share stories of help-seeking and connection through their storytelling, poetry or music. It is advisable that an Adult Advisor listen to the entries ahead of time to check that they reinforce a message of Hope, Help, and Strength by centering 90% of the story on getting better rather than the difficult situation (See page [40](#) for more on the 90:10 ratio).

Modifications (if needed)

- Don't assume that all students could seek out a counselor (or even walk into their office) with ease. This can be a scary thing! Make sure there are multiple avenues for a student to get in contact with a counselor or social worker. Additionally, ensure that your school has culturally informed counselors in regards to religious practices, family engagement, and views of Mental Health.

Ways to Partner With Other Entities

- Invite the Student Council to co-host an event that focuses on connection to Mental Health and help-seeking.
- Talk to coaches about reminding athletes of resources available to them and the importance of refusing to keep secrets when a person needs help.

Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
 - How many Peer Leaders participated?
 - What percentage of students participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
 - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
 - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude.

CAMPAIGN:

We Belong

Summary: Everyone has something to offer their community. Whatever one's culture, talents, knowledge, experiences, or perspective, we need everyone's voice for a community to thrive. We miss out when people are excluded. The You Belong campaign focuses on the idea that diversity is something to be honored and celebrated. In this campaign, Peer Leaders help solicit stories of times when someone felt they belonged and highlight what groups and individuals bring to the community.

Goals:

- To recognize that diversity is to be celebrated within a community.
- To help individuals champion stories of diversity and belonging.
- To aid individuals in recognizing what they uniquely bring to their community.
- To foster a sense of belonging for students who don't feel like they belong.



Peer Leader Meeting

Fun: Play Cups or Rock Paper Scissors - When players find new partners, they have to introduce themselves and name someone who makes them feel that they belong.

Conversely, they could also choose to share what makes them feel they belong. For example, "When someone takes the time to ask me about the traditions in my family's culture, they help me feel interesting and celebrated."

Share: Break into smaller groups, and ask students and staff to share what they feel like they bring to the community. Answers should range widely and could include things like, "I bring my love of tennis", "I bring my gender fluidity", "I am a strong black woman", "I am an artist with a view all my own", "I bring my passion for politics", "I bring my faith", etc.



"WHATEVER ONE'S CULTURE,
TALENTS, KNOWLEDGE,
EXPERIENCES, OR PERSPECTIVE,
WE NEED EVERYONE'S VOICE
FOR A COMMUNITY TO THRIVE.
WE ALL MISS OUT WHEN
PEOPLE ARE EXCLUDED."

Plan: Now that you have taken time to share about the importance of belonging and diversity, it's time to strategize together about ways your team could help the rest of your community internalize stories about the Strength that comes with belonging.

School Wide Campaign

Now that you have planned your campaign, how will you bring a celebration of diversity to the rest of your school and community?

Mediums:

Presentations

- Go to a local elementary school; read and discuss diversity and belonging with one of the following books:
1. **3 Balls of Wool** by Henriqueta Cristina
 2. **Fur, Feather, Fin, All of Us are Kin** by Diane Lang and Stephanie Laberis
 3. **The Word Collector** by Peter J. Reynolds