

- Present on the importance of belonging within classrooms. Have students write down what they bring to their community on puzzle pieces. Assemble the puzzle for a visual reminder that we need everyone to create a vibrant community.

Classroom Integration

- Prompt Psychology or Biology classes to study the emotional, physical, and psychological effects of connection and belonging.
- Assign Art, Photography, or Creative Writing students to create pieces based on the theme of belonging, or that speak to what they bring to their community.
- Have English or Literature classes read books that speak to the power of belonging.
- Allow Economics, Sociology, or Criminology classes to study the power of positive social ties as protective factors.



“HOST A STORY NIGHT
WHERE PARTICIPANTS
CAN SHARE SHORT STORIES
OF TIMES THEY EXPERIENCED
BELONGING.”

Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Make a poll, and ask students to share about the different groups that make your school or group diverse. Using these words, create a large “Wordle” to display.
- Flowers can be a great symbol of diversity. Create a wall display where individuals write on different shapes and colors of flowers what they bring to the community, to form a wildflower bouquet.

All School Activities

- Band with other community organizations to highlight cultural events where Peer Leaders explain what their group or sub-culture means to them.
- Host a story night where participants can share short stories of times they experienced belonging.

Video and Photography

- Host a photography exhibit where participants take photos with the theme of “Belonging” and put it on display. Scan these photos and make them a running screensaver on school computers.
- Create a booth where groups and individuals can enter and answer the questions, “What do you bring to our community? Who or what makes you feel like you belong?” Share this video in an assembly or during morning TV announcements.

Social Media

- Challenge participants to take photos with people who represent “belonging” to them with short captions. Ask them to tag two other friends to do the same.
- Make your campaign spread further by using hashtags like #YouBelong, #WeBelong, #WhatIBring, or make it fit your context with your town or mascot, such as #BearsBelong.

Audio: Music and Announcements

- Have students and staff submit a song that they consider to represent them and play them during passing periods. Make an effort to include various genres.
- Highlight diversity in every sense by interviewing Peer Leaders in the newspaper about what they offer the people around them.

Modifications (if needed)

- Note that not every student will feel a deep sense of belonging to a group of people. Some students will name objects, places, or animals that help them to feel that they belong. This may be a way that an

individual feels they add to their community. This campaign shouldn't feel like a school spirit campaign.

Ways to partner with other entities

- Have club tables set up and share information for individuals who want to get more connected.
- Have Student Government host opportunities for individuals to volunteer their time and talents within the school or community.

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 for the belonging that the Peer Leader team offers each other!



CAMPAIGN:

Trusted Adults

Summary: One of the best ways we can protect a young person from suicide is for them to have caring, connected, and positive adults in their lives. A Trusted Adult could be a parent, an older sibling, a relative, employer, teacher, coach, faith leader, or community member - anyone that a young person could reach out to. This campaign focuses on helping individuals identify, name and connect to an adult they could go to if they were experiencing a difficult time or if a friend needed help.

Goals:

- Increase youth/adult connectedness.
- Create a culture that increases students' belief that adults can help friends who are at risk and can be trusted in difficult times.
- Practice help seeking pathways.
- Use positive norming to encourage healthy trust and connection between youth and adults.



"A GREAT MENTOR IS
AN ADULT WHO SEES
WHO YOU REALLY ARE AND
BELIEVES IN YOU ANYWAY"
- HIGH SCHOOL PEER LEADER.

Research:

- A student who tells a Trusted Adult that they play an important role in their life is more likely to return to that adult during a difficult time.
- A student is more likely to go to a Trusted Adult if a trusted friend names an adult, and explains why they have earned their trust.
- Students who have a Trusted Adult they can go to have significantly lower suicide rates.

Peer Leader Meeting:

Fun: Take a survey of Trusted Adults around your school and create a Trusted Adult BINGO card. Have Peer Leaders sign the boxes of the Trusted Adult they named. Some boxes can be specific and others can be more general, like "My mom", "My grandfather", "My boss".

Share: Hand out postcards that say, "Thank You for Being a Source of Strength in My Life" and encourage students to write a short note thanking that person for showing up in their lives. Then encourage Peer Leaders to hand deliver their notes to the adults they named within the next 4-5 days. If you have already done this, have 5-10 Peer Leaders share with the group who they named as their Trusted Adult and why.

Plan: Discuss ideas about how to include 90% of your student body in this same process of identifying, connecting to, and sharing about their Trusted Adults.

School Wide Campaign:

- Now that you have planned your campaign, help your school and community grow in youth-adult connectedness. Here are some ideas you might want to layer in.

Mediums:

Presentations

- Send trained Peer Leaders into classrooms to describe the value of Mentors and ask students to share their own Mentor stories.
- Have Peer Leaders attend a staff/faculty meeting to lead a short discussion about who their Mentors are;

have Peer Leaders lead staff in shouting out others they feel are good Mentors.

Classroom Integration

- Lead students in reading and discussion of the literary classic, *The Giver*. Is *The Giver* a Mentor to Jonas? If so, how?
- Read or watch *The Hunger Games* and compare and contrast the Mentor figures of Effie Trinket and Haymitch or Cinna.
- Read or watch *To Kill a Mockingbird* and examine the Mentor relationship of Atticus Finch to Jean Louise.

Art/Murals and Hall Displays

- Create hallway displays with Trusted Adults named during campaigns.
- Create a pair of paper wings where the feathers are names of Trusted Adults. Encourage students and staff to take photos in front of the wings and tag the photos on social media.

All School Activities

- Host a March Madness Mentor Month where the staff and faculty members who were named by students as Trusted Adults can participate in small competitions until one is left standing. Make the competitions fun and silly, i.e. which Mentor can fit the most marshmallows in their mouth at one time. Use the hashtag #MentorMadness to capture everything.
- Walk around the school with an empty frame and have students take photos with their Trusted Adults. Allow Peer Leaders to print these photos and give them to those adults to display in their classroom as a way of saying thank you for their support.

Video and Photography

- Interview Peer Leaders to share stories of their Trusted Adults in a short video which could be shown in classrooms, student news, on social media, or during assemblies.
- Host a Dress Like Your Mentor Day and take selfies at a photo booth - then print and hang up the photos!

Social Media

- Post selfies from the Trusted Adult photo booth on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat with a short caption describing why they were named. Then have Peer Leaders tag three friends to do the same.
- Post interesting Trusted Adult stories on social media, telling about times when an adult was helpful or supportive in a situation.
- Use hashtags like #Mentors, #TrustedAdults, #WholsYourTrustedAdult, #MyTrustedAdult, or make it reflect school spirit with your team or town, such as #TrustedEagles, #MentorsGiveGreeleyWings.

Audio: Music and Announcements

- Host "Mentor Mondays" where morning announcements feature a student sharing a story about their Mentor each Monday.
- Collect a favorite song from each teacher or staff member. Play a new song each week and give a prize to the student who can identify which mystery adult chose that song.

Ways to partner with other entities:

- Invite the National Honor Society to help sponsor the event.
- Ask student clubs, athletic teams, and groups to participate.



"HAVE STUDENTS INCLUDE THEIR NAME AND THE NAME OF THEIR TRUSTED ADULT IN THE DISPLAYS. THIS MAKES THEM MORE PERSONAL AND CAN ALSO HELP STUDENTS LOOKING FOR A TRUSTED ADULT GET CONNECTED."

- Make sure that teachers, coaches, paras, and community leaders know about the event and are invited to participate.

Modifications (if applicable)

- These campaigns can be applied outside of a traditional school context, such as youth detention facilities, a recently reorganized school, or an environment with low adult-student relationships, but they may take some extra work and care. Before engaging in a large-scale Trusted Adult Campaign, have staff dedicate time to building one-on-one relationships with students. This can be in the form of circle sharing during “Community Meetings” or lunchtime conversations with smaller groups of students where staff are sharing (but not oversharing) about their own experiences and also learning about students. It is not unusual that students who may not see themselves as “leaders” in the traditional sense, or who have low trust in adults, may need to be invited several times to join the program, or even to share about their experiences during a campaign. It is one job of the Adult Advisors to “woo” students into their potentially positive leadership roles.

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?
 - How many different Trusted Adults were named?
- 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 team’s creativity and hard work.

Sources of Strength Week

The Sources of Strength Week is designed to engage your school or community in a targeted and fun manner. Through various mediums, the campaigns will get students and staff talking about, engaging in, and developing their Strengths and connections to others. This guide is simply a set of suggestions and examples for how a Sources of Strength Week can be developed in a strategic and efficient manner. We strongly encourage you and your team to personalize every event and campaign to fit the needs and culture of your school or community. Please don't hesitate to contact Sources of Strength staff with questions about planning a Sources of Strength Week.

A typical Sources of Strength week will assign a Strength to each day of the week, either choosing five of the eight Strengths, assigning two Strengths for three days of the week, or running the campaign over the course of two weeks. Each day will have targeted messaging surrounding one of the Strengths, looking to tackle the Strength in a variety of fun and engaging ways. This means engaging students in games, classroom presentations, small group discussions, wall displays, social media posts and challenges, school-wide activities, photo booths, sidewalk chalk, art, posters, videos, school announcements, etc. The possibilities are endless and teams can decide what the scale and scope of the campaign will be and what will best fit their school schedule. This campaign is often run at the end of the year.

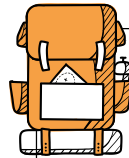
Tips for Preparation Planning

Use one or two of your Peer Leader meetings to strategically plan and prepare for a Sources of Strength Week. Brainstorm all the various activities and partnerships that can be developed. Break Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders up into focus groups that will work on specific topics, mediums, or activities. Think about ways to engage as many students and staff in the campaign as possible.

Adult Support

It is important to have administrative and staff

support for a campaign of this size. In the run up and preparation to a Sources of Strength Week, it can be helpful to get your Peer Leaders to present at a staff meeting to run the staff through the strategic plan for the week and elicit their support and participation.



FOR MORE CAMPAIGN
IDEAS SEE STRENGTH
SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS
ON PAGE [81](#).

Partnerships

It is important to partner with other groups, clubs, sports teams, activities, planning committees, and outside prevention agencies to achieve the broadest reach and impact of the campaign. Each focus group or planning team can tackle different kinds of partnerships that will help them achieve the widest reach of their efforts. Here are some ideas for groups to involve in your Sources of Strength Week:

- Ask Graphic Design students to participate in making posters with local faces and Sources of Strength messaging.
- Know students who love photography? Invite them to document the events of the week and help create great visual content for posters, social media posts, yearbook, or school newspaper articles.
- Invite Video Club at your school to help make Sources of Strength Week videos. There could be a promo video to get students excited about the week, as well as a video documenting the events of the week and the fun that was had by all.
- If you have a school newspaper, invite a few of the journalists to report on the run up to, as well as the events of the week, highlighting Hope, Help, and Strength. They can also detail resources and supports that are highlighted during the week.
- Involve all the sports teams and clubs in a Healthy Activities day, highlighting the numerous Healthy

Activities that are available in your school or community.

- Invite the Counseling, Mental Health staff, and Psychology classes to participate in a Mental Health day, leading students in positive Mental Health practices and highlighting and connecting students and staff to Mental Health supports and resources that exist in your local community.
- Connect with local service organizations that serve your community or school and invite them to participate in and support your Generosity day. Connect to and highlight existing efforts of Generosity that are practiced in your school or community.
- Engage your local news agencies and invite them to write about and highlight the efforts of your Peer Leader team and the events of the week.
- Engage local agencies that work with families and can help offer resources, content, and support for a Family Support day.
- Many local businesses would be willing to donate food, supplies, or prizes to your Sources of Strength week if asked. Help some Peer Leaders ask for their support in a way that also invites their participation.

Fun

It is essential to ensure that the Sources of Strength Week is fun, engaging, and remains focused on Hope, Help, and Strength. We do this by coming up with relevant ways to infuse games and a general sense of playfulness and fun into every activity. Avoid making activities or presentations too serious or long, or ever slipping into lecture or one-way presentation mode. Instead, engage students and staff in dialogue and discussion, always ensuring that the trajectory of your activities, social media posts, or challenges are pointed toward Strength and help to highlight

connection and resiliency. If done right, a Sources of Strength Week can quickly become the highlight of the school year.

Remember, this week is designed not only to highlight the Sources of Strength program and the efforts of your Peer Leaders, but to help connect existing efforts under the umbrella and philosophy of Strength, and help connect students

and staff to the Strengths, supports, and resources that are all around them.

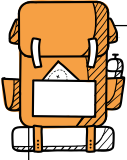


“PLEASE DON’T
HESITATE TO CONTACT
SOURCES OF STRENGTH STAFF
WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT
PLANNING A SOURCES
OF STRENGTH WEEK.”



IDEAS FOR STRENGTH-SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS

Over the years, we have found great success in schools that choose to focus on one Strength at a time in various mediums. A school may choose to focus on one Strength a month for the whole school year. For example, a wall display about Trusted Adults may interest some students, while a colorful art project, morning announcement about a peers' Mentor, or clever social media campaign may catch the attention of others. This could also be a great resource for planning a Sources of Strength Week. There is no limit to the number



FOR MORE
INFORMATION ON
HOW TO CALENDARIZE
A CAMPAIGN, GO TO PAGE [53](#).

of ways a Strength can be explored or expressed, so get creative! As you are moving through a Strength, check in with a wide range of Peer Leaders, asking them if the students from their corner of the social network are getting involved or interested.

The possibilities for creating events and campaigns to raise awareness of Strengths are endless! We are constantly impressed by the creativity and insight of Peer Leaders

and Adult Advisors to come up with unique ideas that can change their school's culture for the better. The following are a few ideas in each category to help you get started.

Family Support

- Make a Family Tree and write down the positive qualities you appreciate about each of the members of the tree that you named. This could be the family the Peer Leader was born into, or their "chosen" family.
- Host an art show around the theme "Family" and allow artists to share what family looks like to them in many different mediums.
- Create a paper chain. On each link, write the name of someone in your family (the one you were born into, or the one that you chose) that you feel supported by. Pass out pieces of paper to everyone in the school, either in classrooms or the lunchroom and then add each piece to the paper chain. Display it in the school or a community space.
- Start a hashtag #WEAREFAMILY and have people post pics of their family - whatever that looks like for them, and print them up as posters to hang around the school.
- Host an awkward family photo competition where students are invited to find a funny picture of their family (the one they were born into, or the one that they chose), and then to post that photo to social media (#awkwardfamilyphoto, #FamilySupport), with a comment about how their Family Supports them. Have a prize for the winner.

Positive Friends

- Challenge everyone in the school to meet five new friends and learn two truths and a lie about each of them.
- Host a school-wide kickball tournament. Each Peer Leader is a team captain, but they have to find five people they don't know to participate as their teammates.
- Hold auditions for a lip-sync battle: All band names and songs have to be about friendship.
- Each morning for a week, have a Peer Leader do a shout out for someone over the morning announcements, explaining what makes them a great friend.
- Host a poetry/story slam, where Peer Leaders tell powerful stories of unexpected friendships.
- Invite the Literature/Language Arts Departments to get involved. Assign an essay about unlikely friendships, using novels, essays, and poems that tell stories of Positive Friends that changed people's lives.

Mentors

- Throw a Mentor's parade and invite local Mentors to the school to accompany high school leaders at the local middle or elementary schools. This can build community and celebrate the impact of Mentors. (This could include parents, 6th grade reading buddies, coaches, Young Life leaders, etc.)
- Host a Dress Like Your Mentor Day, then host a fashion show, voting on who captured the essence of their Mentor the most.
- Host classroom presentations about the importance of Mentors, allowing students to chat with one another about an adult they trust.
- Mentor Madness Bracket: Have the student population submit a list of Mentors/Trusted Adults in the school and/or community. Help the Sources team rank them in a March Madness style bracket with fun activities, feats of Strength, and silly challenges during lunch or passing periods. Advance different Mentors to the championship round and each year give out a trophy for the winning Mentor.
- Host a table in a common area with construction paper, markers, pens, stickers, etc. for students and staff to write thank you notes to their Trusted Adults. Challenge them to deliver that card to their Mentor in order to practice a help-seeking pathway.
- Set up a speed-dating style Mentor event, where a variety of known adults in the community who have a desire and a capacity to Mentor a student can meet them in a safe way, creating space for connection.

Healthy Activities

- Set up a photo booth and have students bring in props to showcase what their Healthy Activities are. Print those photos and put them on display.
- Do a Mannequin Challenge video down the halls of the school where everyone is frozen in the pose of their favorite healthy activity.
- Create an art contest for Healthy Activity submissions; photography, spoken word, painting, poetry, music, etc.
- Trophy cases are usually reserved for athletic and academic achievements. For a period of time, replace those awards with "artifacts" that represent Healthy Activities of students and staff around the school. Include short explanations about why a person chose to submit a certain item.
- Set up different rooms in the school featuring the Healthy Activities preferred by students on the outsides of the social networks, not just the traditional (or more sporty) joiners. Rooms could include a video game room, poetry writing workshops, board game room, Iron Chef-style cook-offs, instrument jamming room, etc.
- Create partnerships with local organizations and have school-sponsored nights at bowling alleys, mini-golf courses, volleyball courts, water parks, amusement parks, etc. Have people post selfies to show how your school is tapping into their Strengths.

Generosity

- Start a Random Acts of Kindness campaign so that the domino effect is seen (or the tidal wave, or snowball effect), showing more and more kindness catching on.
- Host school supply drives, winter coat and glove drives, food drives, etc., as is seasonally appropriate.
- Host a Day of Giving where students can sign up for service at retirement homes, animal shelters, Boys and Girls Clubs, or other local charities.
- Host a between-class competition to raise money for a special cause such as ALS, suicide prevention, or breast cancer research.
- Partner with an organization to help support a local immigrant family in need.



"I HAVE FOUND THAT,
AMONG ITS OTHER
BENEFITS, GIVING LIBERATES
THE SOUL OF THE GIVER."
- MAYA ANGELOU

- Host a book drive to bring books to an under-funded school library.
- During morning announcements, allow Peer Leaders to highlight a classmate or staff member who they think exemplifies Generosity.
- Set up a volunteer board next to the jobs board at the school. List opportunities for students to help others with homework, tutoring, yard work for the elderly, carpools for underclassmen, etc.
- Create a Get You Some Generosity wall display (could be renamed, Get Generous, Be Generous, Giving is Living, Share is Caring, etc.), where Peer Leaders write acts of Generosity on Post-It notes so other students can take a note off the wall and then go and participate in that act of Generosity. This activity is focused on inviting other students into acts of Generosity.

Spirituality

- Run a Thankfulness Challenge for 21 days, based on research showing how our brains change when we are focused on gratitude. Allow students to share their experiences.
- Survey the entire student body about their top 20 things they are thankful for, then compile the list to highlight how many similarities there are among the students.
- Host an assembly where a diverse range of spiritual practices are showcased. This will require some prep to ensure that the event doesn't function as an evangelistic tool of one set of beliefs or practices. Instead, highlight the beauty that each spiritual practice offers.
- Invite the Literature/Language Arts Departments to get involved. Assign an essay about rites of passage in various cultural and religious practices, then have the student body create a rite of passage for students as they move up a grade level or as they graduate.
- Draw a tree with branches growing out. Hand out colored paper in the shape of leaves and have students write down things that they are thankful for, posting them on the branches when they are finished.
- Create an art contest for Spirituality submissions. Use photography, spoken word, poetry, or music to complete the sentence, "I feel connected to something bigger than myself when I _____."
- Have each class start with a three minute mindfulness exercise, gratefulness challenge, or a breathing practice.
- Offer a donut to anyone who participates in a gratefulness challenge. To earn one, each person writes down three things they are grateful for. Then put these papers on display.

Physical Health

- Host a blood drive or eye exam station on campus. You could do a blood drive competition with other Sources schools in your area.
- Host a panel of medical practitioners to talk about Physical Health during an assembly or in classroom presentations.
- Invite a local Zumba instructor to visit and lead a fun class in the gym or outside, reminding participants of the importance of getting active.
- Create a poster campaign of students with stereotypical physical injuries to make a connection between getting access to Physical and Mental Health resources, i.e., the hockey player with a blacked out tooth saying- "When I lost my tooth, I went to the Dentist, and when I lost my way, I went to the School Counselor."
- Have Peer Leaders share short stories of when they accessed medical care and received help.
- Print and post information around the school about accessing affordable medical care.
- Print posters with your School Nurse or Doctor introducing themselves, reminding students of their role and their desire to help, and inviting students to stop by.

Mental Health

- Survey the student body to see what helps them manage their anxiety, then create opportunities for those stress-relievers to be on campus during finals week (yoga, therapy dogs, open gym, etc.)
- Create a de-stress space at the school, where students can hang out when they are wrestling with one of

the Big Three Emotions- Anxiety, Anger, Depression. Use this during testing weeks, where students may come by and make a cup of tea, meet a counselor, stretch briefly on a yoga mat, color, or listen to relaxing music.

- Cut feathers out of construction paper and ask participants to share something that helps them when they are experiencing the Big Three Emotions. Assemble the feathers into wings including the hashtag #WHATLIFTSUSUP and pose with the wings for a social media campaign.
- Host a viewing party of the Pixar movie *Inside Out* and have the Peer Leaders facilitate a Q&A about managing big emotions.
- Host a community night where students and their families learn more about Mental Health resources in the area.
- Create a video contest for Mental Health submissions. Use videos (imagery/scripts/songs) to tell a story of how Peer Leaders manage big emotions. Remember to keep it focused on Hope, Help, and Strength.



POSTVENTION GUIDELINES:

DO'S AND DON'TS IN THE EVENT OF DEATH BY SUICIDE

These guidelines are intended to assist with messaging to the general public and to groups of teens or young adults in the event of a suicide. The focus should be on Hope, Help, and Strength-based messaging. We do believe that suicide survivors can and should have an opportunity to tell their stories in detail as part of the grief process. These detailed stories also have tremendous impact on policy makers, and can be a powerful tool in training professionals how to better respond to families experiencing loss by suicide. However, some research indicates that harm can be done to some groups of youth and individuals by telling traumatic stories as a prevention message. With all of this in mind:

DON'T	DO
Don't sensationalize or memorialize an individual's death by suicide.	Do acknowledge the loss of an individual by suicide and give ongoing support to family and friends impacted by suicide.
Don't create a false norm or sense that everyone is suicidal or that dying by suicide is extremely common.	Do raise awareness of suicide as a significant health issue and give an accurate sense of rates of suicide fatalities, injuries, and ideation.
Don't try to shock and make the general public or teens aware of suicide by giving descriptive details of death or focus on methods used in a suicide attempt or fatality.	Do give messages of hope and Strength and highlight how individuals have recovered.
Don't focus on messaging around sad or traumatic stories.	Do focus on where help is available, as well as hope-based stories, and stories of resiliency.
Don't assume that if you talk about suicide it will make others become suicidal.	Do use care with how you present suicide prevention messages, and be sure to relate to the size of the group you are addressing.
Don't allow an overextended, distressed, or stressed teen to over-involve themselves in suicide prevention where it harms rather than heals.	Do assist these teens in maintaining balance in their lives and making healthy decisions.
Don't assume that Peer Leaders in suicide prevention are immune to "codes of silence".	Do have a caring adult, Mentor, or Adult Advisor engaged and involved in the process of creating trust and "peer-adult relationships".
Don't allow Peer Leaders to give public negative messages regarding blame, trust, nobody caring and similar themes, as these add to the groups sense of hopelessness.	Do talk to Peer Leaders about the vital importance of this hope and help message, rehearse public messaging, and encourage corrective and helpful feedback from other peers.

DON'T

Don't allow vulnerable youth early in recovery from depression or addiction to tell highly personal stories in public that might harm or embarrass them. Also don't let them present as the "all-knowing expert."

Don't take Peer Leaders for granted.

Don't give the message that peers or adults can effectively do suicide prevention on their own.

DO

Do provide vulnerable youth with individual and small group support and encourage maturity and listening to others in their healing and recovery process.

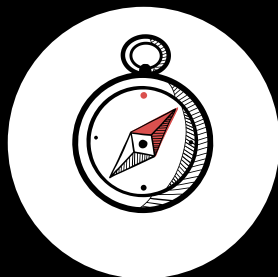
Do provide a variety of ways in which they can be recognized and honored for the good work they are doing.

Do continue to encourage the building of peer-adult relationships. We need each other.

Steering THE Course



Seeing how far we've come, correcting course for the future, and
choosing between many paths.



CHAPTER FOUR:

EVALUATING YOUR EFFORTS AND IMPACT

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](#)

MULTI-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Social change doesn't happen overnight. It's not a one time event or a day hike. It takes time, strategic planning, action, navigation, and skilled orienteering. In a multi-day hike, there can be many challenges and switchbacks, various paths and possible missteps in the hopes of reaching a destination. We hope that the following section will provide you with trail markers along the way, helping to gauge your current location on the trail, as well as possible next steps. Remember, this journey is fluid. You might be a Year One team passing Year Three milestones or you might be a Year Three team circling back to Year One trail markers. Either way, the journey is the destination. Wherever you find yourself, you can always take the next step in moving your team forward.

Year One Trail Markers

Year One typically consists of nominating and recruiting an Adult Advisor and Peer Leader team, having your team trained, engaging in Peer Leader meetings and gaining initial experience with messaging campaigns. You will then focus on evaluating your efforts, identifying successes and challenges, and planning for the following year.

Assembling Your Team

Visit the First Things First and Assembling Your Team sections of the Sources of Strength website for a more detailed version of this step-by-step process. Here we will outline a few key elements in case you need to circle back to steps that were initially missed during Year One of implementation.

Trail Marker 1: Nominate/Recruit Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders

- Focus on building a diverse team with Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders from different social groups and walks of life.
- Your Peer Leader team should be at least 5%-10% of your student population and have a 1:10 Adult Advisor to Peer Leader ratio. Choosing your school's target number of Peer Leaders should be determined in collaboration with the Trainer prior to the nomination process.
- Having your Peer Leader team be 10% of the school population if it has 0-600+ students. If you have a student population of 1,000 - 1,500+ you

might move to a partnership model, recruiting other student led groups, clubs, and sports to amplify your impact.

- Building your team isn't a one-time event; it requires consistent invitations and follow up, making sure you are circling back with Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to re-engage them in meetings, activities, and the process.
- Make sure Sources doesn't become an exclusive club by developing a clear and transparent protocol for inviting and adding new Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders throughout the year, especially if participation wanes.
- Be careful to make sure one friendship group isn't dominating your Peer Leader or Adult Advisor Teams.



"IF YOU WANT TO GO
FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT
TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER"
- AFRICAN PROVERB

Trail Marker 2: Train Your Team

- A Trainer certified in Sources of Strength should train Adult Advisors (3-6 hours) in the philosophy and practice of Sources of Strength's model of peer leadership.
- A Trainer certified in Sources of Strength should train Peer Leaders (4.5-6 hrs) in using Strength-based messaging to practice and spread a community of Strength.
- It is optional, but highly recommended, to provide an all staff training (admin, teachers, custodians, bus drivers, food-service, resource officers ect.) using Peer Leaders to model Strength-based sharing and activities.
- Sources of Strength also offers All Staff Trainings, Community Nights, and Parent Trainings. Please contact your local Trainers or Sources of Strength National if you are interested in scheduling one of these additional components.

Trail Marker 3: Meeting and Carrying Out Campaigns

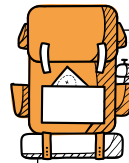
- Start meeting with your Peer Leader team and practice sharing Strength with the wider student population.
- We recommend meeting at least twice a month for about an hour each time. This can happen in many ways. (See page [33](#) for further details on Peer Leader meeting recommendations.)
- Carry out 3-6 of our templated campaigns-Getting the Word Out, Trusted Adults, I Am Stronger, What Helps Me, Connect, We Belong, Thankfulness Challenge, Sources of Strength Week, or specific Strength-focused Campaigns (see page [54](#) for more details on campaigns).
- Work toward building layered messaging campaigns that incorporate multiple mediums of messaging (see page [52](#) for more detail on layered messaging).
- Develop an initial system and campaign calendar that work for you and your team.
- Use Strength-based prompts and sharing at staff meetings, school assemblies, parent meetings etc.
- Involve Peer Leaders in opportunities to share about Sources of Strength with school board, community organizations, PTAs, etc.
- Partner with elementary and/or middle school classes to lead Strength-based conversations and activities around the Wheel.
- Incorporate the Wheel and Strength-based sharing at athletic, club, and academic events hosted throughout the year.

Trail Marker 4: Evaluate

- Develop a pattern of evaluation after each campaign.
- What worked well and what didn't work so well? How can you do this campaign more effectively next time?
- What are the challenges your team experienced throughout the year?
- What did you learn through those challenges?
- How has it helped you improve your efforts?
- Get Adult Advisor and Peer Leader feedback on how they are experiencing their involvement in the program.
- Do you feel we have a diverse Peer Leader team? Do you feel we have a diverse Adult Advisor team? Do you feel like you've made an impact in

your school or amongst your peers? (See Seward Alaska's end of the year Peer Leader Survey, page [128](#) of Field Guide.)

- What are the successes that your team experienced throughout the year?
- Complete the Team Assessment/Self Evaluation (see website or page [105](#) of the Field Guide) and request consultation or coaching from the Sources of Strength National team.
- Check in with Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors who have decreased their involvement and find out why. Have the team create solutions for those challenges and problem solve strategies to keep individuals involved.
- Start making a plan to turn Year One challenges into opportunities for growth and development in Year Two.



IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU COLLECT DATA TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF YOUR EFFORTS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, TURN TO PAGE [107](#).

Year Two Trail Markers

By now you have a Sources of Strength team, you have received a year one training, and you have had some experience in running meetings and carrying out campaigns. After evaluating your efforts in Year One, you may decide that you need to circle back and attempt to hit Year One Trail Markers in Year Two. Or you may realize that you accomplished far more than you expected and you are ready to move forward with new focus and clarity. Either way, remember that the journey is the destination and wherever your team finds itself, it is all a part of the social change process. Some schools or communities are ready for social change when they are presented with the possibility and other schools or communities have to make incremental change along the way to prepare the groundwork for future change. As Myles Horton says, "We make the road by walking it."

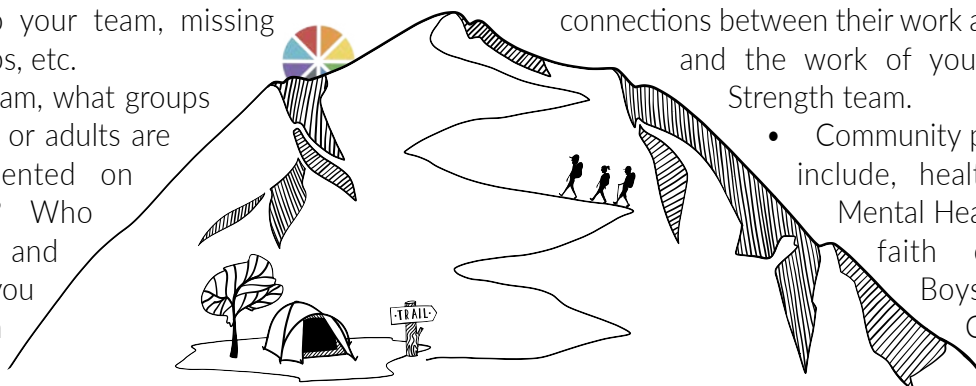
Trail Marker 1: Increase Peer Leader Ownership

- Give Peer Leaders increased ownership of Peer Leader meetings.

- Encourage Peer Leaders to plan and lead games.
- Peer Leaders facilitate the sharing process and learn to lead small group sharing.
- Peer Leaders plan and facilitate brainstorming and campaign planning sessions.
- Remember to set Peer Leaders up for success by continuing to support them and by providing the necessary training and sounding board they need to understand the process and skills for the task at hand.
- Give Peer Leaders increased ownership of messaging campaigns.
- Help Peer Leaders systematize the campaign planning and action steps process.
- Ask Peer Leaders: Are there steps that can be repeated each time? Who do they need to talk to to get permission for wall displays, classroom presentations, hanging posters, or delivering the morning announcements?
- Consider forming a Peer Leader Advisory Board. This can help with pre-planning for Peer Leader Meetings. That way, you can start Peer Leader meetings with a clear structure and agenda that has been shaped by student voices.
- What campaigns do Peer Leaders want to run, when, and what mediums would they like to use?
- Remember to keep this group invitational and inclusive so that all Peer Leaders feel welcome if they have the time and energy to participate.
- Give regular time and space for Peer Leaders to voice their concerns, challenges, and ideas.

Trail Marker 2: Grow Your Team

- Plan to increase the diversity, size, and quality of your team.
- Has your Peer Leader team reached 10% of your student population? If not, how many new Peer Leaders do you plan to add towards that goal?
- Common recruitment strategies include inviting incoming freshmen from feeder middle schools, friends of Peer Leaders, students that add diversity to your team, missing social groups, etc.
- Ask your team, what groups of students or adults are not represented on our team? Who is missing and how could you invite them



to be part of your efforts?

- Some teams will run a social mapping exercise to map out the diverse groups in a school or community and then to invite specific individuals from those groups to participate. Remember to mention that we are mapping these groups to include rather than exclude.
- Have Peer Leaders invite other students/staff members they would like on the team? You can find a form to inform and invite others on the website.

Trail Marker 3: Layering Campaigns

- Layer templated campaigns using various messaging mediums.
- Avoid running “one-and-done” campaigns.
- Help Peer Leaders extend their campaigns over 6-8 weeks, strategically building momentum and giving space for multiple forms of sharing; remember, time and space are needed for Strength to be internalized.
- Experiment with rotational campaign planning by using stations in a Peer Leader meeting. This will build multiple layers of a campaign in a short period of time.
- Create multiple subgroups to build various parts of a single campaign. Peer Leaders and adults can sign up for mediums that interest them.
- Calendarize activities with other groups/teams/clubs.
- What are others already doing that incorporates Strength and how can the Sources team support their efforts?

Trail Marker 4: Community Partners and Community Spread

- Encourage Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to communicate the Sources of Strength mission to various community partners, community organizations and entities.
- Invite community partners to imagine creative connections between their work and resources, and the work of your Sources of Strength team.
 - Community partners often include, health providers, Mental Health providers, faith communities, Boys and Girls Clubs, local

companies and businesses, youth services organizations, YMCA's, etc.

Trail Marker 5: All Staff Engagement

- Clarify specific roles and responsibilities for Adult Advisors, including key coordinators focused on strategy, coordination, and communication; subgroup facilitators focused on campaign planning; some focused on retention and recruitment; some primarily focused on building relationships with students during planning meetings; as well as program advocates and champions.
- Have Peer Leaders update building staff on upcoming campaigns, share example stories from their own lives, prompt staff to share their own stories of Strength related to the campaign, and give three to four options (from simple to more engaged) for participation in the campaign.
- Schedule a few Peer Leaders to present briefly at staff meetings at least one time per semester.
- Encourage classroom teachers to use Strength-based language and concepts in their assignments or classroom activities.
- Use Strength-based prompts before class starts or over the intercom.
- Use Strength-based prompts to encourage staff wellness and sharing.

Year Three Trail Markers

After evaluating your efforts in Year Two, you may decide that you need to circle back and attempt to hit key Year One or Year Two Trail Markers. Or you may be ready to move onto higher level tasks and objectives.

Trail Marker 1: Increase Internal & External Partnerships

- Formalize internal partnerships with other student led groups, sports, and clubs.
- Have Peer Leaders support their efforts, give them shout-outs, and lend Sources language to their efforts.
- Ask adult leaders of other groups to sign up to promote Strength through their own activities and initiatives.
- Have a school-wide calendar sign up for campaigns in staff or counseling areas to increase partnership.
- Create a student group advisory board, where

key leaders from various student led groups can meet to strategize and coordinate their efforts for greater impact.

- Formalize external partnerships with community health providers, Mental Health providers, local businesses, and nonprofits.
- Create a community Asset/Strength Map highlighting the various organizations and entities that promote the Strengths of Sources of Strength.

Trail Marker 2: Formalize a System of Calendars, Roles, and Processes

- Develop a formalized system for a school-wide Strength activities calendar.
- Have students and staff map out the school calendar, incorporating annual events, Sources campaigns, activities of other groups, as well as stressful or challenging times of the year where additional Mental Health supports or activities are needed.
- Clarify specific roles and responsibilities for Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders so that you can rely on individuals to carry out activities on a regular basis.
- Develop checklists for repetitive processes like wall displays, classroom presentations, announcements, social media campaigns, or school-wide activities.
- Support students in learning and following these agreed upon checklists.

Trail Marker 3: Broad Based Adult Support

- All-staff in-service training.
- Ensure that all staff receive a 30-90 minute Sources of Strength workplace wellness training to increase their own Mental Health wellness, understand Peer Leader efforts better, and embed these Strengths into their classroom curriculum whenever possible.
- Have Peer Leaders present to the school board on their efforts and activities.
- Have Peer Leaders present to parents or host a Parent Night.
- Offer mini trainings to local groups that want to support student wellness and Peer Leader efforts.
- Partner with outside entities to develop trained Trusted Adult volunteers to support your Peer Leaders efforts and connect with students.

Trail Marker 4: Embed Strengths in Classroom Curriculum and School Culture

- Encourage or incentivize teaching staff to embed Strength-based language in their classroom curriculum. (See pages [60-79](#) for examples of campaigns.)
- Literature teachers can assign essays on books, Such as *Catcher in the Rye* where students research a Strength and then interpret the story and how this Strength may have helped the main character (i.e. Holden Caulfield) overcome adversity or Mental Health struggles.
- Science teachers can assign research projects on the impact thankfulness and gratitude have on the brain and our outlook on life.
- Industrial Arts teachers can assign projects creating the Wheel either for the purpose of games or sharing, or as art pieces.
- Health teachers can assign research projects on the impact of specific Strengths on overall health and wellbeing.
- Math teachers can commit to having a mindful moment at the beginning of every class to reduce stress and anxiety around the subject.
- Teachers can commit to having a thankfulness question as the first question on tests, to help students recalibrate their approach to testing.
- Teachers can commit to hanging a Strength Wheel poster in their classroom and referencing the Strengths when necessary throughout class time.
- Teachers can create their own Strength story on a poster so that students can read and know their teachers go-to Strengths and coping strategies.
- Teachers can hang up the Trusted Adult Pledge (Page [141](#)) on their doors or in classrooms.



DISTRICT/COMMUNITY LEVEL STRATEGY

As we all know, health and wellbeing don't take place in isolation from our lived experience or simply inside the walls of our schools. It is a natural and encouraged progression for Sources of Strength schools or districts that have thriving and healthy programs to move beyond the walls of their school and start coordinating district/community wide collaboration, communication, and strategic efforts and events. This kind of collaboration can broaden the impact of your peer led efforts and bolster the Sources message with other schools, groups, or initiatives, fostering shared language and common vision for health and wellbeing in the community. The following strategies can be employed by a school, district, or community at any phase of implementation.

Core District/Community Level Strategies

District/community-wide quarterly or semester meetings for Adult Advisors.

- Create a community of learning and collaboration by having groups share Strengths and challenges, campaign ideas, Peer Leader meeting facilitation techniques, and creative messaging strategies.
- Develop a communication strategy, platform, or newsletter for regular communication, follow up, shared ideas and resources.

Annual district/community-wide Peer Leader conference.

- Highlight strong/healthy Peer Leader teams and campaigns or strategies that they have developed.
- Invite facilitators to lead Strength-based breakout sessions on cultural practices, meditation, yoga, brain science, campaign planning strategies, etc.
- Coordinate district-wide Peer Leader campaigns with shared resources, planning, and social media challenges.

District/community wide year end Peer Leader celebration/recognition event.

- Invite parents, community members, Adult Advisors, and local media to highlight peer led prevention efforts.

Staff, parent, or other adult training opportunities.

- Host a district/community wide Sources of

Strength night (or parent night)

- Provide opportunities for district-wide staff wellness trainings or staff wellness campaigns.

District/Community-wide stakeholders meeting.

- Invite various stakeholders (sheriff's office, health providers, public health agents, Mental Health providers, faith-based communities and organizations, youth facing organizations, etc.) to a Sources of Strength informational event.
- Pitch the program and the work that Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders are doing in all district schools.
- Invite community stakeholders to imagine new connections, flow of support, communication, and resources. How could Sources of Strength language be used in other arenas or services to create a degree of shared or common language across organizations and the community?

Other district/community level strategies.

- Incorporate Sources of Strength messaging and language into existing programs, events, conferences, newsletters, messaging, or professional development days to foster shared vision, language, and wellness.
- Foster connection between high schools and their feeder middle schools. Encourage collaboration to support transitioning freshman and partner on campaigns and community events.
- Create district resources for supporting graduating seniors using a Strength framework. Encourage graduated Peer Leaders to attend meetings when home on breaks and give them an opportunity to share how they are using their Strengths in life beyond high school.
- Use the Strength Wheel in supporting incoming or transferring students to identify and plug into Strengths in their new context.
- Insert standing Sources of Strength highlight section into District newsletter.
- Work with local media to highlight Strength-based stories, positive messages and efforts, and hopeful work happening in the district/community.
- Organize community level campaigns/events, such as a Strength-based color run, amazing

race, storytelling evenings, etc.

- Peer Leaders can give presentations to local community, civic groups, organizations, and faith-based communities (i.e., Rotary, Lions Club, YMCA, churches, etc.).
- Use the Wheel in re-entry meetings.
- Collaborate with juvenile justice systems to help transition students back into the education system.

District Level Integration Strategies

Potential ways to weave Sources of Strength into the fabric of what you're already doing as a district:

Academics

- Teachers should engage students in the power of thankfulness, positivity, maneuvering transitions such as college and career readiness, etc.
- Teachers and coaches can partner with Peer Leader teams at other schools to share about Strengths, including working together to run events or even co-hosting campaigns at sports games.

Social-Emotional Learning

- Sources of Strength is well-integrated with the five core SEL competencies outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning. This includes helping individuals and groups grow in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Staff Wellness and Professional Learning

- Sources of Strength can aid in staff readiness to face district/school level stressors big and small. Utilize Sources to support all staff in building out their own "resilience plan".

Asset/Strength Mapping

- At the district level, assess what is already in place in your current prevention, intervention, and postvention support structures (think broadly). How can Sources integrate with these supports?
- At the community level, what organizations, businesses, and physical spaces help promote the different Strengths? How can these community entities be recognized for the support they are providing? Are there ways for your Sources of Strength team to collaborate with these community groups, or to uplift them as part of your own work?

Working with Elementary Groups

- Consider how Sources of Strength can be used across different ages. Sources of Strength Peer Leaders can go into classrooms to work with younger students and teach them about the Strengths on the Wheel. While young students may not interact with the whole Wheel, they can greatly benefit from talking about ways they can be generous, cope with big emotions, or ask for help.
- Peer Leader teams can take the message of Strength back to their families by engaging siblings and family members at home.



FIRST-AID KIT: TROUBLESHOOTING KEY CHALLENGES

We all know that change does not happen overnight, but we easily forget this when we are rolling out a new program. In schools, we are very familiar with Post Programmatic Stress Disorder (see the Glossary on page [10](#)), so take a deep breath, you are not alone! We move along a trail one step at a time. Three common challenges that we want to help you through are: administration support and teacher buy-in, finding an effective meeting time, and Peer Leader retention.

Remember that part of Sources is identifying some of the challenges we face and overcoming them by activating our Strengths. Every time you become aware of a challenge, remember that it is an opportunity for growth for you, your team, your Peer Leaders, and a chance to talk about what Strengths you are using to get through.

Key Challenge #1: How to Garner Administration Support and Teacher Buy-In

A challenge schools often face is getting much-needed administrator support and teacher buy-in. Administrator support is a key step in a sustainable and successful program. We find that it is helpful to communicate the impact that Sources can have on school culture, student empowerment, and engagement. As an evidence-based program, we boost protective factors

to reduce risk, not only of suicide and suicidality, but also to reduce risk of violence, bullying, and harassment behaviors, as well as substance use and misuse. As we increase these protective factors and students feel physically and mentally well, they have more capacity to attend, engage, and excel at school.

Buy-in can really boost the power and influence of the Peer Leader team. Coach your Peer Leaders to lead a mini-presentation with administrators and/or teachers during a staff meeting. Admin-supported, regularly scheduled meetings are essential as a culture change program. Meetings are where Peer Leaders have the opportunity to share and apply Strength to their own lives, begin to incorporate the language of Hope, Help, and Strength into their daily conversations, and plan for whole school engagement. Keep inviting administrators and teachers to your meetings and events. Use the Activities Tracking Form (located on page [107](#)) to keep track of all Sources events, campaigns, and positive interactions and share those numbers with administration/staff as often as possible. Make a point to publicly thank your administrators for making it possible to run Sources at your school. Regularly ask Peer Leaders with powerful stories of Strength to share those stories personally with administrators (you can even create a regular schedule for when and who will share these stories).



It is also a good idea to have your Peer Leaders present to the school board or civic groups and then thank school administrators for their support. Don't be discouraged! Culture change is a slow process, celebrate the little successes and remember that a hiker doesn't reach their destination right away.



“IF YOUR TEAM HAS FEWER OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF LUNCH AND AFTER SCHOOL, IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO THINK OF CREATIVE WAYS FOR EVERYONE TO STAY CONNECTED THROUGH SMALL WORK-GROUPS, QUARTERLY MEETINGS, AND/OR CELEBRATIONS.”

Key Challenge #2: Finding an Effective Meeting Time

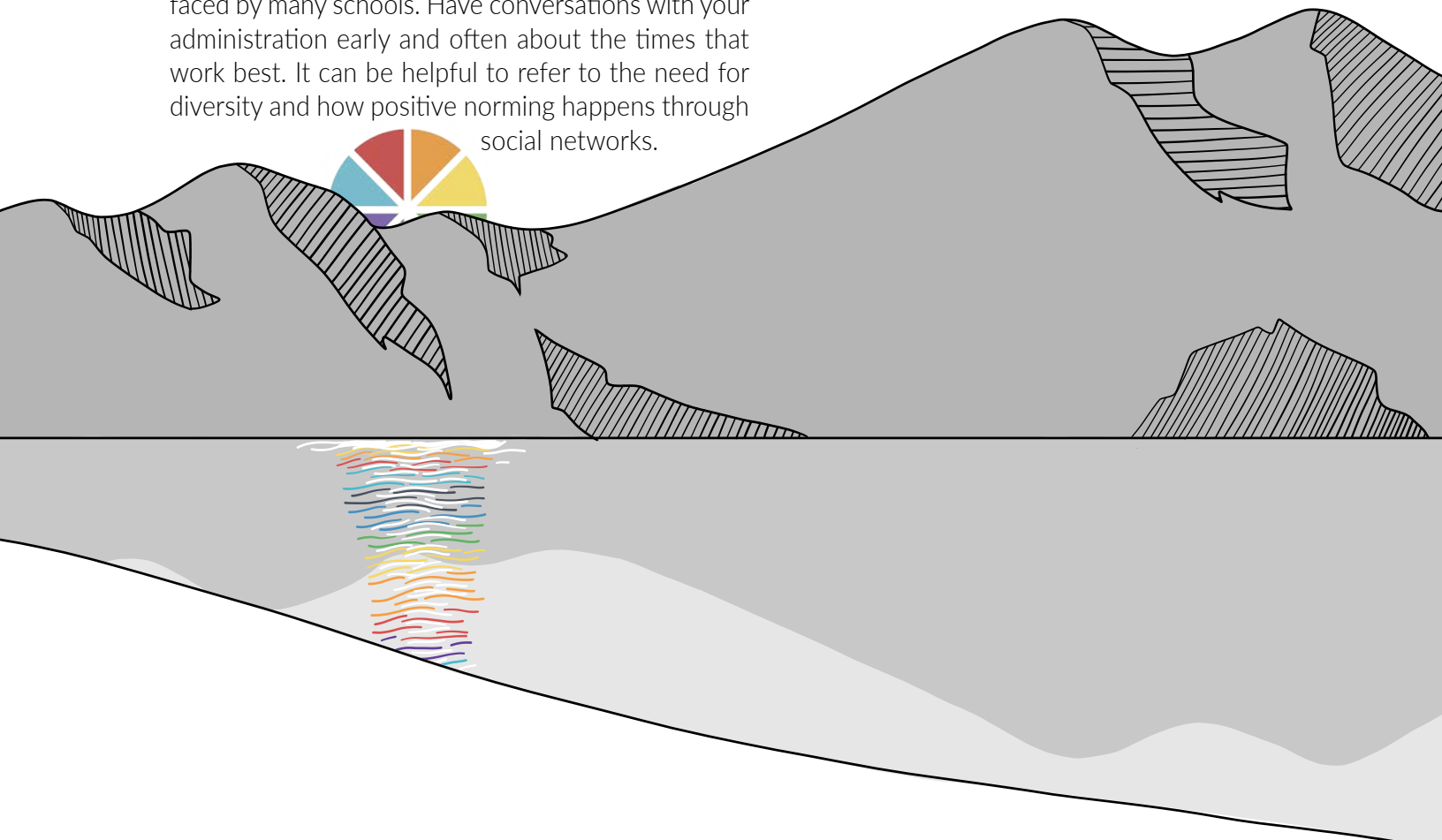
Finding an effective meeting time is a challenge faced by many schools. Have conversations with your administration early and often about the times that work best. It can be helpful to refer to the need for diversity and how positive norming happens through social networks.



With diversity in mind, what meeting times will be most easily attended by all social, athletic, and otherwise diverse groups? It is common to meet during lunch and after school, which can work.

However, transportation, work, sports, and clubs can impact diverse participation. We suggest that your school look to share the commitment to the program with the students. If you are asking students to give up lunch or meet after school then the school should also give of their time.

When meetings only happen on student time, the underlying message sent to the students can be that their wellbeing is less important than academic achievement. It can be helpful to meet as an Adult Advisor Team and administration to brainstorm suggested times and the pros/cons. Schools have found success in having a rotating schedule where, for example, week one, Peer Leaders meet for 45 minutes during first period, then the following meeting shifts to second period, and so on. By the end of the semester, no single class has been more impacted than any other.



Homeroom or Advisory classes are also effective meeting times. If your team has fewer options outside of lunch and after school, it can be helpful to think of creative ways for everyone to stay connected through small work-groups, quarterly meetings, and/or celebrations.

If you want to create a Sources of Strength class, please contact us and we can connect you with schools that are doing this successfully. Considerations for a class include maintaining diversity in Peer Leaders, how to include those who can't attend the class, and fidelity to the formula of learning through play, sharing, and planning.



“IF YOU WANT TO CREATE
A SOURCES OF STRENGTH
CLASS, PLEASE CONTACT US
AND WE CAN CONNECT YOU WITH
SCHOOLS THAT ARE
DOING THIS SUCCESSFULLY.”

Key Challenge #3: Peer Leader Retention

We find that a Peer Leader team that is diverse and makes up about 10% of the student body is needed for population-level wellness norms to take hold. If your team's numbers are shrinking, there are a few things you can do to retain and recruit Peer Leaders.

A good starting place is to take attendance at your meetings to notice when Peer Leaders are gone and reach out. The invitation back can go a long way to communicate that their voice matters, catch them up, and find out if there are barriers to attendance. Teams have found it useful to involve Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to do follow up with Peer Leaders who miss a meeting, as this can increase positive connections and be a leadership opportunity. Remember to dig a bit deeper, if their answer is “too busy” there might be more going on, such as group conflict, not having fun, or they do not feel heard. If there are barriers, have the team brainstorm ideas to resolve it together.

When a Peer Leader stops attending; it is important to connect with them so they know when and if they are able to return, they are welcome. Remind them that they are a positive agent of change, and thank them. If a Peer Leader ultimately decides they need to drop out of the program, that is alright; they are always welcome to return. Ask them if they are willing to stay involved by promising to promote Sources campaigns and activities amongst their friendship group.

When there is a need for recruitment, do a quick scan of the lunchroom and see if you have students from all tables, or ask the students what groups are not represented in the team. You will also benefit from periodically asking your Peer Leaders some of the following questions:

- Are they still having fun? Does your team play enough games?
- Do they feel like they have time to share and grow their Strengths and connect with other students and staff on the team?
- Are meetings being structured efficiently? Is the team on task so that Peer Leaders feel they are really accomplishing their goals and being effective with their use of time?

Finally, **Celebrate, Celebrate, Celebrate!** Publicly celebrating the work that is being done to build a culture of wellness is powerful and empowering for your community. Celebrate the Peer Leaders with the administration, staff, school board, and community. Think about the recognition that athletes and academic all-stars get and recognize Peer Leaders during a public event such as a pep rally, give each a certificate, a letter, pin for a school jacket, or graduation honor cords, and share stories of impact and Strength. This can boost morale and momentum for the team. Keeping your Peer Leaders coming back is fun for everyone!

FIDELITY MARKERS (CHECKLIST)

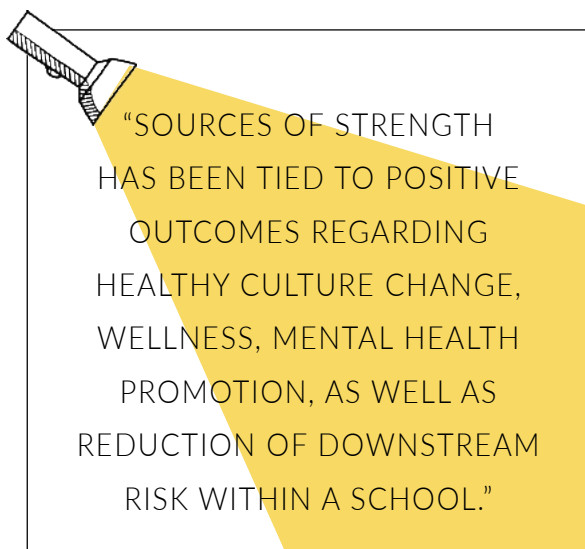
Rationale:

Sources of Strength is an evidence-based, best practice prevention program. As such, there are several important elements that must be present to maintain a fidelity implementation of the program in order to provide the intended impact and outcomes.

These include Fidelity Markers in terms of:

- **Preparation and Planning,**
- **Training,**
- **Follow-Through**
- **Ongoing Implementation.**

This checklist serves as a resource in planning, implementation, and course-correcting to make sure that your Sources of Strength program is within fidelity and delivers the culture change we all hope to see.



Preparation and Planning

- Someone from our Adult Advisor team spoke with Sources of Strength staff and watched the Implementation Overview Video prior to nomination, recruitment, and training.
- Administration values the ability of diverse Peer Leaders to positively change campus culture and time and resources will be available for training, meetings, and messaging campaigns.
- Safety/suicide protocol is in place and staff are trained in it. If not, we have reviewed the

Sources of Strength protocol and developed our own protocol and referral process for handling suicidal students.

- Our Adult Advisors are volunteers who are excited to be a part of Sources of Strength and have 4-6 hours per month in their schedules to support the Peer Leader team. Adult Advisors were not assigned or told to participate.
- Our core Adult Advisor team is made up of people who are caring, connected, and positive; they believe that social change is possible and are excited about empowering a group of students to enact change.
- Our Adult Advisor team consists of at least a 1-10 Adult to Peer Leader ratio and can include school, staff, parents, or community members.
- Our Peer Leader team is a diverse and representative sample of the student body and reflects our population in terms of: race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, grade level, soci-economic status, and social group.
- Our Peer Leader team consists of at least 5-10% of the student population, keeping in mind that 10% of the school population is the goal by Year Three, as this is a crucial tipping point in peer to peer spread of attitudes, norms, and behaviors.

Training

The room for our training provided:

- Appropriate space for all Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to sit in chairs in a circle.
- Room to play games.
- Adequate acoustics and ability for the group to hear each other (no loud fans/interruptions/through traffic, a sound system provided for larger groups over 50, etc.)

Training Participation Checklist

- We have conducted an Adult Advisor training of at least 3-6 hours.
- We have conducted a Peer Leader training of at least 4.5-6 hours.
- Our Adult Advisors participated in both the Adult Advisor and Peer Leader trainings.
- We received training from a Sources of Strength National Trainer or locally Certified Trainer.
- Our Adult Advisors were fully engaged in the trainings; they played the games, participated in poster groups, shared and connected with the Peer Leaders.
- Our Adult Advisors did not engage in power struggles with Peer Leaders through lecturing, shouting, or disciplining during the training.

Follow-Through and Ongoing Implementation Meetings

- We conducted regular meetings of at least 2x per month with our Adult Advisor and Peer Leader team. If most meetings were held during student free time (before and after school, during lunch, etc.), the school will also invest some school time for Peer Leaders to meet and implement activities.
- Our Peer Leader meetings over a month included 1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, and 1 Part Planning.
- At least 70% of our Peer Leader team and 50% of our Adult Advisor team consistently attended meetings
- If our meetings were typically 30 - 45 minutes, we met more frequently to reach two hours, especially in the first three to four months to establish peer team identity and complete activities.
- The first peer meeting was conducted within 10-14 days after training.

- The first campaign was completed within the first 30 days.
- Three campaigns were completed within the first four months.



Messaging

- 100% of Peer Leader campaigns and messaging was Hope, Help, Strength focused and did not use Sad, Shock, or Trauma techniques, statistics, or images.
- Our Peer Leader campaigns and messaging were engaging and interactive and invited the broader population to apply Sources of Strength principles and content into their own lives.
- We conducted the recommended minimum number of campaigns or activities:
 - Year 1: 3-6
 - Year 2: 4-7
 - Year 3 and beyond: 5-8
- Our campaigns reached the required percentage of the school population:
 - Year 1: 40%
 - Year 2: 70%
 - Year 3 and beyond: 90%
- We conducted a Celebration/Recognition

event or activity to honor our Peer Leader team.

For Sustaining Programs (Sources of Strength Teams after initial Implementation)

- We completed the Fidelity Markers Checklist and Team Assessment (located on page 101) at the end of the year and engaged in a period of reflection and goal setting for the following year.
- We nominated and recruited new Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to add to the Strength and diversity of our team.
- We conducted an Adult Advisor or Peer Leader training every year for at least the first three years of implementation.

- We learned about the Sources of Strength Train the Trainer model and considered developing a locally certified Trainer. (Optimal for building sustainability)

- We paid our \$500 ongoing licensing fee to Sources of Strength and have continued to reach out for support and guidance.

We participated in the Sources of Strength support framework by:

- Watching the support videos emailed to us.
- Reading and utilizing the Field Guide.
- Accessing resources, templates, and content from sourcesofstrength.org.
- Participating in a support call with Sources of Strength national staff.



FIDELITY ASSESSMENT

Fidelity Check in Preparation and Planning:

Date: _____
Items completed: _____ of 8.
Percentage of Fidelity for section: _____%

Fidelity Check in Follow-Through and Ongoing Implementation Meetings:

Date: _____
Items completed: _____ of 7.
Percentage of Fidelity for section: _____%

Fidelity Check in Training:

Date: _____
Items completed: _____ of 3.
Percentage of Fidelity for section: _____%

Fidelity Check in Messaging:

Date: _____
Items completed: _____ of 5.
Percentage of Fidelity for section: _____%

Fidelity Check in Participation Checklist:

Date: _____
Items completed: _____ of 6.
Percentage of Fidelity for section: _____%

Fidelity Check in Sustaining Programs:

Date: _____
Items completed: _____ of 5.
Percentage of Fidelity for section: _____%

Fidelity Check in Support Framework:

Date: _____
Items completed: _____ of 4.
Percentage of Fidelity for section: _____%

Based on these numbers, what are your strongest areas? What areas may you need to focus on in the coming year?

SELF EVALUATING YOUR SOURCES OF STRENGTH TEAM

Please circle the number in the box that most closely matches your school or community Sources of Strength team. This is intended take a quick look at the overall health and quality of your peer efforts.

Partnership Support (State, Provincial, Regional, other systems)	0 Our program is not linked with any outside entities, coalitions, or groups.	1 We communicate with our state-provincial, regional, or coalitions about our Sources of Strength efforts. They are aware.	2 Our Sources program has shared funding, coordination, and training resources with other groups or have had our Peer Leaders present to coalitions.	3 Our Sources program partners with a variety of groups and coalitions that are focusing on different issues. (i.e. – suicide, bullying, substance abuse, dating violence, LGBTQ, etc.) We are well known.
Administrative Support	0 Our Administrator is not very supportive of Sources of Strength.	1 Our Administrator is aware of Sources of Strength and passively supportive.	2 Our Administrator actively supports Sources of Strength and makes time and space available for Peer Leaders.	3 Our Administrator is an active champion promoting Sources of Strength to staff, parents, other schools, and community agencies.
Adult Advisor Team	0 Our Adult Advisor/coordinator team does not work well together or does not find time to coordinate the program.	1 Our team has one very active Adult Advisor/coordinator who feels somewhat overwhelmed.	2 Our Sources of Strength project has 2-3 Adult Advisors/coordinators that communicate and share responsibility.	3 Our Sources of Strength project has an active group of adults/coordinators from both inside the school/agency and outside that work well together.
Peer Diversity	0 Our Peer Leaders are not very active and not diverse.	1 Our Peer Leader team is made up of good and active students but is not overly diverse.	2 Our Peer Leader team started with diverse students and we have been able to keep over 60% engaged.	3 Our Peer Leader team is extremely diverse for our setting and we have been able to keep over 75% engaged.
Peer Leader Ownership	0 Our Peer Leaders are driven almost totally by the ideas of the Adult Advisors.	1 Our Peer Leaders wait for adult initiative before pursuing many ideas or the Adult Advisors are using the Peer Leaders to initiate the Advisors ideas.	2 Our Peer Leaders actively facilitate most of the planning, meetings, games, and are effective at organizing messages and activities.	3 Our Peer Leaders have a high level of ownership, and engaged diverse Peer Leaders in facilitating/leading. Peer Leaders are acting on many of their own ideas.
Staff and other adult presentations	0 Our Peer Leaders have not presented to school staff, parents, or other outside groups about their Sources efforts.	1 Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least 1-2 activities or messaging campaigns.	2 Our Peer Leaders have presented at least once a semester to staff, parents, or other adult groups about their efforts.	3 Our Peer Leaders have presented several times to staff, parents, or other groups and also presented to school boards, councils or administrative groups.
Level of Peer Leader activities	0 Our Peer Leaders did not successfully complete any activities or messaging campaigns.	1 Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least 1-2 activities or messaging campaigns.	2 Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least 3-5 activities or messaging campaigns.	3 Our Peer Leaders have conducted more than five activities or messaging campaigns reaching more than 75% of our students. Almost all students and staff know about Sources of Strength and have participated in an activity.
Peer Leaders engaging other students	0 Our Peer Leaders have not engaged other students in conversations or activities involving Sources of Strength.	1 Our Peer Leaders have conducted a few non-interactive activities that other students did not seem overly engaged in, i.e., gave presentations with powerpoints, but used few personal stories, or did not engage other students in sharing examples.	2 Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least two interactive activities, shared personal Strengths stories, and engaged some students in sharing Strengths, naming Trusted Adults, or actively engaging in peer led activities.	3 Our Peer Leaders have led very interactive activities, such as high level discussions with classes, small groups, or engaged many students in writing, art, video, drama, or sharing about their Strengths and supports.

Planning meeting frequency	0 Our Peer Leaders did not meet for the first two months after training.	1 Our Peer Leaders met less than once a month for the first three months after training.	2 Our Peer Leaders met at least two times a month during the first three months after training.	3 Our Peer Leaders met at least two times a month during the first three months and continued to meet, plan, and implement ideas after that time.
Retention of Peer Leaders	0 We have less than 25% of the Peer Leaders involved that were originally trained.	1 We have between 25% - 50% of the Peer Leaders involved that were originally trained.	2 We have over 50% of Peer Leaders trained involved and active.	3 We have over 75% of Peer Leaders trained involved and active.
Recognition of Peer Leaders	0 Our Peer Leaders have received little or no recognition for being involved in Sources of Strength.	1 Some of our more outstanding Peer Leaders have received some verbal thank yous.	2 Our Peer Leaders have been given personal recognition and recognition as a group within our school or community.	3 Our Peer Leaders have received public and personal recognition in front of staff and other students and have had a celebration event for their accomplishments.
Fun Factor	0 Our Peer Leaders did not seem to enjoy planning meetings or doing peer to peer activities.	1 Our Peer Leaders had fun doing activities that were occasionally led by Adult Advisors.	2 Our Peer Leaders regularly used humor, led fun games, and built fun into their activities and messaging events.	3 Our Peer Leader team was contagious with its fun and became known for leading great activities and enjoyable planning meetings. Other students want to become involved.
Core Messaging: A. Getting other students to publically name or display Trusted Adults, Mentors, etc. B. Interactive classroom or small groups where students talk or apply Strengths to their life. C. Put on a Sources of Strength week.	0 Our Peer Leader team did not complete any of the core messaging activities.	1 Our Peer Leaders completed one of the three core messaging activities.	2 Our Peer Leader team completed two of the three core messaging activities.	3 Our Peer Leader team completed all three of the core messaging activities.

Add up your total score _____

If you score yourself a 7 or under: We might want to build some supports for the program and review your readiness level for a full program. It might be best to adapt and focus on individual pieces of the program and get success going in a couple of small areas before attempting the full program.

8-14 : OK progress, but it may be helpful to build on Strengths, but address 2-3 areas that may strengthen the program.

15-24: Good progress, highlight your areas of greatest Strength and focus on a couple to strengthen in the next year.

25+: Great program – Make sure to capture and share some of your experiences with the Sources team and help share or lead some of Sources of Strength national webinars.

What are your program's areas of greatest strength (highest scoring areas)? What are your program's areas of greatest challenge. What realistically would help your Sources of Strength program meet that challenge?

TRACKING ACTIVITIES

It is vital that your Peer Leader team regularly track and evaluate your efforts. We want to touch both minds and hearts with the impact of our efforts, and one of the best ways to touch minds is to have numbers associated with the reach of your campaigns (for example, “We had 350 people engage with this campaign and name 1,100 Trusted Adults in our school and community!”). One of the best ways to touch hearts is to share stories of impact (“A sophomore came to our counselors with one of his friends he was worried about after participating in our Connect campaign; we were able to have a conversation and conduct a suicide risk assessment and get this person the help they deserve. That is because of you all!”) Here, you can note what you did and how many people you helped engage with Strength.

It is also very helpful to keep a record of what went well and what could be improved upon in the coming year. While it can be fun to continually come up with all new ideas, it is not always necessary. Some great campaign ideas can be used again and made fresh with some minor adjustments. This Activities Tracking form is to help Peer Leader teams

work smarter, not harder. A common maxim in the business world is, “You can’t manage what you don’t measure.” Collecting data gives teams insight into what is working and what isn’t; it allows teams to strategize more effectively and efficiently, making them more productive in their mission to create culture change with Hope, Help, and Strength. This helps you capitalize on opportunities for growth, but it is also great for helping celebrate the efforts of your Peer Leaders. How many donuts did we hand out at your “Donut Worry, Be Grateful!” campaign? How many people named a Trusted Adult in a wall display? How many people showed up to interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives this year? Take some time to thank and celebrate the creativity and hard work of your team. This is powerful stuff!

Finally, stories and numbers can speak to the importance of a Sources of Strength program. It can be powerful for an administration, school board, or local business partner to hear about the great impact students are having in the community. Please take the time to note details about your events and campaigns.

ACTIVITIES TRACKING FORM EXAMPLE

<i>Name of Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i># of PLs Involved</i>	<i># Reached</i>	<i>Brief Description of Activity</i>
School Staff contact	1/17	32	108	Peer Leaders broke into teams of three and gave all teachers, secretaries, administration staff, janitors, cooks, and bus drivers a Sources magnet, thanked them for their support, and explained their program and plans.
School Announcements	9/14	29	800	Peer Leaders gave a two minute school announcement about Healthy Activities. They gave examples of how they helped manage stress and difficult emotions.
Dodge Ball Tournament	11/10	15	200	Peer Leaders partnered with Student Council for a dodge ball tournament during Spirit Week. They wore their Sources t-shirts and gave out humorous prizes.

ACTIVITIES TRACKING FORM

<i>Name of Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i># of PLs Involved</i>	<i># Reached</i>	<i>Brief Description of Activity</i>



the wilderness



Or as some less creative minds may call it, The Appendix.



CHAPTER FIVE:

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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](#)

GAMES

We believe that play is an essential way to learn, connect, create, and build trust alongside others. At Sources, we aim to celebrate our Strengths, and one way we do that is through play. Play fosters connection and relationships, and helps break down barriers among social groups in a low-risk setting, and games can make anyone feel like a champion, regardless of ability. Not all of the games we play require physical activity or acumen. You have a choice of high-activity games or games that depend on luck. For more games, check out sourcesofstrength.org

1-2-3 LOOK

Time: 2-10 minutes

Group Size: Small or Medium

Buy-In: Low

Objective: A quick game for transitions, or to redirect attention.

Optional Teaching Point: Do you ever feel like no one sees you? It can be hard when we try to connect and don't get the result we want/need. It's important to keep looking for help!

Materials Needed: None

Directions:

1. Have participants stand in a circle and look down at the ground.
2. Explain that you will count, "1-2-3" and when you say, "LOOK!" they need to look up and look into someone else's eyes.
3. If the person they are looking at is also looking at them, they both are out and they each sit back down in their chair.
4. As participants are eliminated, the remaining people should close in the gaps, and the circle will get smaller.
5. Play a few practice rounds so the group can get the hang of it.

Rules

- Participants **MUST** look at one other person's eyes each round; they can't look at the wall, above their head, etc.
- Participants **MUST** look at **ONLY ONE** person's eyes each round, and they cannot change their mind.

Variations

- When two people make eye contact, you can have them shout, or you can have them make animal sounds to signal they are now OUT. If the game has been going on for too long without anyone making eye contact, have the participants move to another place in the circle. Change it up!

BALL TOSS

Time: 5-15 minutes

Group Size: Small or Medium

Buy-In: Low

Objective: Get students to find different solutions to a problem and teach students that our problems can have multiple solutions.

Optional Teaching Point: Sometimes we get stuck, but other perspectives can help us solve problems. There are times in life when the simplest solution is the best! Friends who may be depressed or suicidal can get tunnel vision, and sometimes offering a different perspective is helpful.

Materials Needed: A small/medium ball or "balled up" paper

Directions

1. Have the group stand in a circle and raise their hands in front of their chest, indicating they are ready to catch the ball.
2. Explain that each person will throw the ball to someone who hasn't received the ball yet; they need to remember who they threw the ball to, and who threw the ball to them. Put your hands down once you receive the ball so we know who is still in.
3. Once the ball has made it around the entire group and back to you, challenge the group to pass the ball around to each participant in the same order, as fast as they can. Start with a generous time goal (i.e. 45 seconds), and then lower the time challenge after each round.
4. Take suggestions from the group of how they can decrease the amount of time it takes to get the ball into everyone's hands in order (They may suggest taking steps closer together, or raising their hand when it is their turn to catch the ball).
5. For the final round ask if you can get the time under 3 seconds. Help them problem solve until

someone suggests rearranging their place in the circle so the ball can simply be passed around the group in order.

6. The shortest round will occur when a fast player runs in a circle, getting everyone to touch the ball in order...but you didn't hear that from us.

Rules

- You have to throw the ball to the same person each round.
- Everyone should touch the ball once.

BLIZZARD

Time: 10 minutes

Group Size: Any

Buy-In: Medium

Objective: To get moving and have fun! Middle school groups tend to love this game.

Optional Teaching Point: Sometimes, when we have a lot of different things going on, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. When that happens, accomplishing one thing at a time can make us feel better (This game can naturally lead into a stressors/protective factors discussion).

Materials Needed: Balls of paper or small soft items (fruit snacks, Hershey Kisses, Sources of Strength sunglasses or popsockets) for everyone in the group. You might include one unique item that can be thrown/caught easily.

Directions

1. Everyone gets a wadded up piece of paper or small soft item and stands in a circle.
2. Stand in the middle of the circle and ask everyone to "make it snow" by throwing their item up in the air and landing on/near you.
3. Try to catch one or two items.
4. Ask everyone to collect their item and ask if anyone wants to trade places with you and beat your record.
5. Allow them to use their clothing to catch the items, or bring a friend in the circle and use more hands to catch more items.
6. After a few cycles, add a new item (different color, size, etc.) and tell the person in the middle they MUST catch it. They can try to catch as many original items as they want, as long as they catch the ONE different item.

Rules

- You're not allowed to throw your ball directly at the person in the middle. That game is called dodgeball.

CHAIR GAME

Time: 10-20 minutes

Group Size: Small/Medium/Large

Buy-In: Medium

Objective: Get to know names in a fun environment! Give every student the opportunity to use their voice and share in a low key way.

Materials Needed: Enough chairs for all participants

Directions

1. Have the group sit in chairs in a circle. Walk into the circle and ask for volunteers to stand with you in the middle (limit to a fifth of the total group. In a group of 30, limit 6).
2. Have everyone in the middle introduce themselves with their name, their grade, and something fun they've done recently (or if nothing fun comes to mind, their favorite food).
3. Once everyone in that circle has shared, have the group applaud, but don't let them sit back down! Explain that this is a competitive chair game. Have students turn around the empty chairs that once belonged to the group standing with you in the center of the circle.
4. Explain that you'll say a statement ("Get ready to move...IF...") that could apply to most people in this room. If that statement applies to them, they have to move to another chair.

Example questions ("Get ready to move... IF..."):

- *You showered in the last three months*
 - *You're wearing shoes*
 - *You have siblings or pets*
 - *You're wearing underwear*
 - *You're at school today*
 - *It was hard to get out of bed this morning*
 - *You have seen a movie or show in the last month*
 - *You cannot breathe underwater*
 - *You have caught a fish*
 - *You have been out of the state*
5. Everyone left without a chair will make up our new center crew. The game is over when everyone has introduced themselves.

Rules

- One person per chair.
- You **MUST** move to a chair at least 5 chairs away from you.
- If you are on the inside circle, you can choose any chair you want, just **PICK A CHAIR!**
- If you end up in the middle of the circle more than once, change places with someone who has not been in the circle yet.

Variations

- Change the sharing question based on how familiar the group is with one another. As the group bonds, you can deepen the question. "Who makes you feel like you belong?" or "Which part of the Wheel are you feeling strongest in this week, and why?" You can also use questions from the helpful prompts for group discussion on page [41](#).

CUPS (HEAD, TOES, CUP!)

Time: 5-10 minutes

Group Size: Any

Buy-In: Low

Objective: Get the energy up and have fun!

Materials Needed: Solo cup, or similar small item like markers (one for each pair of partners)

Directions

1. Ask for two volunteers to demonstrate the game.
2. "When I say 'GET READY!,' I want you to become silent sumo wrestlers, facing each other. Show me what that looks like." Make sure they are squatting down and silent so they can hear the instructions.
3. "Once you're in the ready position, I'll start calling out parts of the body that you need to touch with both hands."
4. Call out a few body parts ("knees... head... ears... elbows...") and then shout the word, "CUP!" (or whatever the item is that you are using as a stand-in).
5. Whoever grabs the cup first is the winner who advances to the next round of the tournament.
6. At this point everyone in the room finds a partner and a cup, and places the cup on the ground, equal distance between partners. And you shout out, "GET READY!" and then various body parts, ending each round by shouting, "CUP!".
7. Those who didn't "win" their round should become

the silent cheering section for those who did, following behind each winner until the finals, shouting and clapping silently, so everyone can still hear the commands.

8. Winners continue to stack their cups with other winners, until there are only two or three who remain in the final round.

Variation(s)

- Place cups on desks/chairs to increase accessibility for those who may not be able to squat/bend down.

DANCE MASTER

Time: 10-15 minutes

Group Size: Medium/Large

Buy-In: High

Objective: Get energy up and get people laughing!

Materials Needed: Music/Speakers

Directions

1. Have the group stand in a big circle and ask for a volunteer.
2. Explain that the volunteer will step out of the room while you assign a Dance Master.
3. Play some fun music; the Dance Master will then start dancing and it's everyone else's job to copy their movements exactly (but be sneaky!). The Dance Master can change their sweet moves any time they want to.
4. The volunteer will return to the center of the circle and try to guess who the Dance Master is. The goal for the volunteer is to figure out who the Dance Master is; the goal for everyone else is to keep that information a secret! The volunteer will get three guesses or 90 seconds - whichever happens first.
5. When the person in the middle guesses the Dance Master or runs out of time, the Dance Master becomes the next guesser.
6. Play as many rounds as you see fit.

Rules

- Make sure your moves are easy to follow.
- No flips, save it for America's Got Talent.

GOTCHA/HOT HANDS

Time: 5 minutes

Group Size: Any

Buy-In: Low

Objective: Give yourselves a brain break and have an easy laugh.

Materials Needed: None

Directions

1. Have the group stand in a circle (about shoulder to shoulder) and lay their right palm face up in front of the person next to them.
2. Then have them make a pointer with their left hand, and put that pointer in the palm of the person on their left.
3. When you say "Gotcha!" it's their job to grab the finger that's in their palm AND keep their own pointer finger from being grabbed.
4. Play a few rounds and then have the group switch hands (left palm out, right hand pointer).

Variation(s):

- Get really quiet when you say "gotcha."
- Say words that SOUND like gotcha (Gorilla, Gone with the Wind, Gotta Catch 'Em All, Godzilla, etc.)

GROUP CHARADES

Time: 10-15 minutes

Group Size: Medium

Buy-In: High

Objective: Get a low-energy group moving and have fun!

Materials Needed: Charades Prompts

Directions

1. Set up three chairs side-by-side on one side of the room.
2. Have the group divide into two teams, and give them time to come up with a team name and a team chant.
3. Tell each team to pick the most dramatic (or best actor/loudest/funniest) player and send them to the front. Ask the two team members to take a seat on the two outside chairs.
4. Explain that the groups will be playing competitive charades, but instead of ONE person acting out the prompts, the whole TEAM will be acting them out.

5. The two seated players will be the guessers.
6. You will stand on the middle chair and hold up prompts.
7. Tell teams to cheer when they guess the prompt, so you know who got it first.
8. For each correct guess, tally a team point.

Rules

- Guessers cannot look at the prompt.
- No words.
- No mouthing words.

Variation(s):

- Change up your charade items.
- Give a student the job of keeping score.
- Switch guessers after a few rounds.

HOG CALL

Time: 5 minutes

Group Size: Small/Medium/Large

Buy-In: Low

Objective: Get the students to find each other in the midst of chaos.

Optional Teaching Point: Sometimes there's a lot of "noise" distracting us and finding help can be difficult, but if we listen closely to strong messages, we can get through hard times.

Materials Needed: Space for people to walk around with their eyes closed and not be in danger (i.e. not on a stage, or in a room with pillars/poles).

Directions

1. Have everyone find a partner and choose a team mascot. Their "call" is the noise that animal makes.
2. Ask a few groups to demonstrate their "call."
3. Ask the partners to go to opposite ends of the room.
4. Explain that we're going to find our partners again with our eyes closed, using only our "call."
5. Prompt players to raise their "bumpers" up to ensure they won't run into other players or objects.
6. Ask players to spin three times and say, "Go!"

Rules

- No peeking!
- Once partners have found each other, prompt them to be quiet while the other pairs meet up.

Variations

- Instead of animal noises they can choose related words like “HOT” and “DOG” or “HOT” and “COLD.”
- Groups instead of pairs (Four dogs, three cats, five geese)
- This game can also be played in a circle.

JEDI MIND TRICK

Time: 5-10 minutes

Group Size: Small

Buy-In: Medium

Objective: To build team rapport using non-verbal communication.

Teaching Point: Sometimes things are happening with our friends that we don't even notice. Communicating with them helps us get a clearer picture of what's going on.

Materials Needed: None

Directions

1. Have the group stand in a circle and ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle.
2. Without voices, those who are in the circle will trade places with each other at random and as often as they like.
3. The goal of the person in the middle is to escape the center by filling a hole that another player left.

Rules

- No voices
- No body-slams
- No throwing elbows

Variations

- After a few rounds, add the rule that if you move, you HAVE to make a noise when you trade places (Chewbacca, lightsaber, sound effects are encouraged).

JUMP IN, JUMP OUT

Time: 5 minutes

Group Size: Any

Buy-In: Medium

Objective: To get the group moving together.

Teaching Point: Sometimes our brains can get jumbled, and what used to seem like simple instructions can feel overwhelming. We need to calm down our brains and our bodies in order to listen and

follow directions.

Materials Needed: None

Directions

1. Have the group stand up and hold hands in a circle. Tell them that we're going to be jumping in some different ways.
2. Explain that the four ways to jump are “Jump In,” “Jump Out,” “Jump Right,” and “Jump Left.”
3. For the first round, explain that the group will SAY what you say, and DO what you say.
4. Call out 4 or 5 commands, and have the group celebrate their success.
5. For the next round, explain that the group will SAY the opposite of what you say and DO the opposite of what you say (when you say “Jump Out,” the group will say “Jump In” and jump in).
6. Call out a few commands, and encourage laughter in the group.
7. For the next round, explain that the group will SAY what you say, but DO the opposite of what you say (when you say “Jump Out,” the group will say “Jump Out” but jump in).
8. Call out a few commands and watch chaos ensue.
9. For the next round, explain that the group will say the opposite of what you say, but do what you say. So if you say "Jump Out," the group will say "Jump In" but will jump out.
10. End on a good note! Go back to Step 3.

PTERODACTYL

Time: 5-10 minutes

Group Size: Any

Buy-In: Medium/High

Objective: Get silly and get loud!

Materials Needed: None

Directions

1. Have the group stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle.
2. Tell everyone to cover their teeth with their lips (think of dentures), and to lift their arms and bend their wrists in front of their chests (like dinosaur arms).
3. Instruct them to “pass” the word “pterodactyl” around the circle, one at a time, by screeching “PTERODACTYL!” without showing their teeth or dropping their hands.
4. The order of the circle can be reversed when

someone chooses to stop and reverse by screeching, "CAW!" This sends the word "pterodactyl" back in the other direction.

5. People are eliminated if they disrupt the order, if they show their teeth, or if they drop their arms.
6. The circle gets smaller and smaller, and the pterodactyls get sillier and sillier, as the game goes on, until a single dinosaur remains.

Rules

- If you show your teeth, or drop your hands, you're out!
- If you have some talented actors that are not getting out, feel free to give a one minute warning before you end the game.
- If you have a large group you can start with multiple groups, and then condense when the groups get smaller.

Variations

- Car "vrooming" in one direction and "honking" to reverse the circle.

ROCK/PAPER/SCISSORS TOURNAMENT

Time: 5 minutes

Group Size: Any

Buy-In: Low

Teaching Point: Fun, LOUD way to get the energy up and break down social barriers and isolation.

Materials Needed: None

Directions

1. Ask for two volunteers to demonstrate a round of "Rock, Paper, Scissors" for the group (Clarify if players throw their hand on "scissors" or "shoot").
2. Hold up the hand of the victor, and explain that they will go on to battle another winner; the loser becomes the winner's cheering section, shouting their name and clapping behind them.
3. Eventually there will be two finalists; each finalist will have roughly half of the room cheering behind them. Encourage them to get LOUD.

Rules:

- This is a sudden elimination tournament, not best two out of three.
- Winners battle winners, until only one remains.

- Everyone must play several rounds - don't stand to the side while others are eliminated - No one likes that guy, Scott!

Variations:

- This game can be just as fun with silent celebrations (fist pumping and muted clapping) to limit the sensory overwhelm that comes with everyone shouting.
- "Full Body Charades" can be played with slightly different moves. Instead of only making motions with their hands, players can jump into "scissors" by crossing their legs, "paper" by sticking their arms and legs out like a star, or "rock" by crouching into a ball.

THUMPER

Time: 15-20 minutes

Group Size: Medium/Large

Buy-In: Medium

Teaching Point: Get the group up and moving! Laughter is encouraged.

Materials Needed: None

Directions:

1. Have everyone in the group pick a partner.
2. Have the group form two circles, one small inside circle and one large outside circle; have the partners face each other (one partner in the small circle, and one in the big circle).
3. Explain that the small circle is going to move clockwise, and the big circle will move counter clockwise. You'll call out a command and it's their job to find their partner and follow the command as fast as possible.
4. Have them practice one round and call out something simple like, "Ear to elbow" or "Link arms."
5. After the commotion has died down, explain we'll be playing more rounds, but there will be a few different commands.

Rules:

- Partners must return to the circles after each round.
- The last group(s) to find their partner and follow commands are OUT!

Example commands:

Thumper - One partner forms the bunny ears above their head, the other is the "foot" by crouching and thumping their foot in front of their partner as fast as possible.

Barbarian - One partner lies on the floor, the other will put their foot over their chest (not stepping on them) and hold their hands over their head in victory, shouting, "HUZZAH!"

Princess/Scooby - One partner leaps into the other's arms (or one arm around their shoulders and one leg up in their arm).

Cowboy - One partner kneels on one knee so their partner can sit on that knee while lassoing and yelling "YEHAW!!"

Scarlet/Beauty - One partner will dip the other as seen in ballroom dancing (*Beauty and the Beast*).

Moose - Each partner makes moose antlers, drops their necks, and touches antlers together while shouting, "MOOOOOOSE!"

Have partners reform the circles. Explain that after every command you'll reform the circles, but the last group(s) to find their partner and do the command will be OUT that round.

Play several rounds until only one pair remains.

WALK AROUND COOL

Time: 10-15 minutes

Group Size: Medium/Large

Buy-In: Low/Medium

Objective: Gets people moving and encourages new partnerships.

Materials Needed: None

Directions:

1. Ask for 5 volunteers to help demonstrate with you in the center of the circle.
2. Start by saying, "This game is called Walk Around Cool; the first thing I need you to do is show off your coolest, swaggiest, silliest walk." Demonstrate different silly ways to walk to encourage them.
3. Next say, "While you're walking around cool, I might say any one of five words. Based on what I say, you need to jump into action."
4. The group will then walk around in whatever style they would like. The leader should shout out the key words, paying attention to which groups form last, which groups form wrongly (i.e., their move is wrong or they have the wrong number in their group), and which individuals do not find a group.

These groups are out and should sit down.

5. Here are the moves for the original version of Walk Around Cool:

Bicycle: Five players will stand in a straight line with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them.

Huddle: A group of four people pull together, linking arms in a closed circle.

Tepee: Three people jump into a group with their arms raised above their heads and hands touching; together, they should form a triangle.

Knuckles: Two people will create two fists and hold a "fist bump" position with each other.

Selfie: Every player should stop and freeze as if they are taking a photo of themselves.

6. It is helpful to have a couple practice rounds so that people can get the hang of the game.

Variation(s):

Walk Around Cool can be played in a few other editions that we created or learned from our friends! Feel free to create your own editions. While they all start the same, here are two alternative options groups have enjoyed.

Pirate Edition:

Starfish - A group of five is formed, making peace signs with their right hands and forming a starfish in the middle.

Octopus - A group of four is formed, standing back to back and waving the eight octopus arms.

Row Row Row Your Boat - A group of three is formed, standing in a line and rowing their imaginary oars.

Man Overboard - A group of two is formed with one partner on hands and knees, while the other brings their hand to a salute so they can scan the sea.

Beached Whale - Each person drops to their belly, and flops around like a beached whale.

Walk Around Ghoul Edition: A SPOOKY Halloween variation!

Prompt Players to walk around with their hands in the air, making ghost noises.

5: **Zombie** - Five people in a row with their arms sticking straight out in front of them.

4: **Pumpkin** - Four people linking arms in a circle.

3: **Haunted House** - Two people form a house and one person hides inside.

2: **Spider** - Two people stand back to back, wiggling their arms and legs out in the air.

1: **Werewolf** - Every person stops, raises their hands around their mouths and howls at the moon.

YARN KNOT

Time: 10 minutes

Group Size: Any

Buy-In: Low

Teaching Point: Many of us feel stuck in problems, and sometimes it's hard to see the solution. Sometimes getting unstuck is simple when we have some strategies, techniques, or help.

Materials Needed: Three feet of yarn with slipknot loops on each end; one string for each participant.

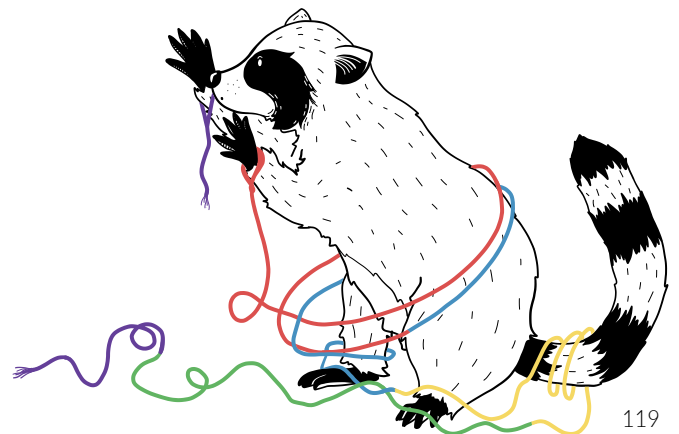
Directions:

1. Have one or two Peer Leaders pass out yarn to each participant.
2. Ask for a volunteer to help model the activity with you.
3. Explain "In a moment, everyone will get a partner and become 'linked up' like this," - link yourself to your volunteer. Have the volunteer place their wrists into the loops at each end of their yarn. Place one of your wrists through one of your loops, then pass your string around your partner's yarn and attach the other loop around your remaining wrist.

4. Explain "Your job, once you are linked, is to become unlinked. You cannot pull it off your wrists, break it, bite it, or burn it. There is a way to solve this puzzle. Go!"
5. After some laughter and struggling, show one or two groups how to become unlinked. Encourage them to go teach other groups.
6. Once everyone is unlinked, have the group sit back in the large circle and have one volunteer collect the strings.
7. Ask (with hand raised), "How many of you got unstuck all on your own?"
8. Ask "How many needed a little help from friends?"
9. Explain "Sometimes we feel like we're trying everything to get unstuck, but really we're trying the same thing over and over, and in some cases, we get even MORE tangled. There are times in life when we get stuck. We're here to talk about how to get unstuck."

Rules:

- You cannot remove the string from your wrists.
- You cannot break the string.
- No biting, flossing, sawing, burning, or cutting the string.
- Seriously, the string shouldn't break.
- If the string broke, something has gone terribly wrong.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our Adult Advisors ask great questions about how to implement Sources of Strength in their areas. Here are some of the most common questions we come across. More questions are addressed elsewhere in this guide (for example, see “Troubleshooting Key Challenges” on page 98). If you don’t see an answer to your question, don’t hesitate to contact the Sources of Strength team!

Why can’t we have a training on a Saturday, summer break, or other holiday?

While we want to be flexible for all of the different communities we serve, we have found that a lot of Peer Leaders (and Adult Advisors, as well) are unable to attend a training that is not during school hours. Things like lack of transportation, individual responsibilities, and other issues impact attendance, or can make someone feel like it is too much of a sacrifice to attend the training. Leaving those people out impacts the diversity (and therefore, the impact) of your Sources of Strength team. If we are only attracting the students who love to be at school (even on a weekend), we are probably missing out on some of the edgier students. Additionally, taking time out of the school day to host the training shows the Peer Leaders that this program is truly important to the Strength of the school and that the administration views them as partners in a public health effort, not simply members of a club.

How can we get students to follow through on their ideas for campaigns and activities?

Students oftentimes come up with amazing ideas that have a lot of moving pieces. Keep in mind that this might be their first time taking a leadership role or managing a project. So, even though we want to encourage student empowerment, we also want to balance that with higher levels of guidance for Peer Leaders, especially as they are starting out. With the help of the students, you can break up the larger campaign idea into some smaller, more manageable pieces, then form small groups based on each person’s Strengths or interests. Set some deadlines, and if there are any students who demonstrate a knack for leadership or project management skills, recruit them to help you weave the different parts into a bigger picture. We want to set Peer Leaders

up for success so don’t commit to huge tasks or goals that are unrealistic or very difficult right off the bat. Instead, focus on quick wins at the beginning and build in momentum as you go. Remember to celebrate small successes as you work towards the larger goal, and it’s often a great morale booster to throw in some smaller, easy-to-complete campaigns, alongside a larger campaign, so students can gain some more “wins” to increase their motivation along the way.

Who is Rumpelstiltskin?

A character with roots in German folklore, made popular by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. A mysterious and magical old man, Rumpelstiltskin promises to turn straw into gold in return for the queen’s first-born child. Seriously, we have no idea why people keep asking us this question.

We have an unhealthy adult administrative resistance. What can we do?

Resistance at the higher levels of school power can be a frustrating challenge, but there are ways to still run a great team. Sometimes, adults fear that time and effort will be put into a program that may not make a lot of difference. We might suggest sitting down with your principal or administrator and presenting the research that has been done with Sources of Strength (available on our website, or by request). Sharing our research shows the overall health of the school level population can be improved - both socially and academically - and this can be a common goal your team has with the administration. They may not be a champion for suicide prevention, but they may have a heart for preventing bullying, increasing mentorship, or leadership opportunities. Talk about how Sources of Strength can address all of these things. This same presentation can be given with some well-prepared Peer Leaders speaking in front of the teaching, administrative, or coaching staff. Asking some enthusiastic Peer Leaders to openly give credit, or write thank you notes to an often resistant principal can pique that administrator’s interest. Inviting them into the room to see the power of a Peer Leader team empowered to work in positive ways can be a powerful tool, as well. However, the most important adult in any Sources school are the Adult Advisors. If they are

caring, connected, and positive people who believe that Peer Leaders truly can effect change, a team can do well. Sources of Strength team members are also happy to have phone calls with your administration if they have questions. Let us know how we can help!

Why do we train one time per year?

The initial training is meant to be a launching point for Sources of Strength teams, giving them a foundation of knowledge, team building, and internalizing their own Strengths, which they can fuse into their messaging to others throughout the year. Sometimes, teams will host a “booster training,” which is an option if you think that it would improve team/school climate. Sources of Strength is not a one-time program but rather a multi-year culture change public health initiative. Culture change like this takes time. Teams become more skilled and sophisticated with a broader impact over multiple years.

How do we navigate Peer Leader conflict?

If at high school, pitch that the middle school Peer Leader team is having a problem and then brainstorm ideas for helping them solve that problem. Peer Leaders might get excited and volunteer ideas and help. Then circle back around whether we should integrate some of these ideas into our own High School team.

How do we involve parents?

Parents can be a great support for a Peer Leader team and there are several ways to get them involved. A school could host a Parent Night for family members to learn about ways they and their family could live healthier lives. A team could set up a few Peer Leaders at parent/teacher conferences to explain Sources of Strength and ask parents to interact with the Wheel, sharing where they are strong. Some schools have chosen to send home a Sources newsletter with discussion topics and activities to do at home. Once a team has had some success inside their school, they can consider hosting a community event where parents and other family members can experience Sources of Strength for themselves.

The truth is, the burden of suicides are experienced by the middle aged population. Our parents and students can actually be a powerful public health arm when they are empowered with a message of

Hope, Help, and Strength.

Can new or interested students join mid-year? If yes, how?

We believe adding new students throughout the year can be very helpful in growing a team and maintaining impact on the whole school. Additionally, adding new voices can help bring in new talents, ideas, and perspectives that a team needs if they are to truly make a school-wide impact.

If a student would like to join, invite them to the next meeting or ask them to participate in an upcoming campaign. When intentionally growing your team, ask your Peer Leaders to invite someone new to a meeting, giving small prizes or candy to each person who brings a potential Peer Leader.

Peer Leader ideas are not Hope, Help, and Strength focused! What do we do?

First, remember that it takes time to learn how to shift paradigms. Peer Leaders usually want to make a positive difference in the lives of their peers, but they may have been exposed to very few examples of positive, Strength-based messaging. As much as you can, speak to them in a supportive way, ask questions and help them see a more positive option within their ideas. State your concerns in a caring and firm way, and ask them to try to frame a message in Strength. Remind them of why we focus on Hope, Help, and Strength and the dangerous and unhelpful outcomes that might result from using sad, shocking, or traumatic messaging. It isn't just rose colored glasses; we can acknowledge and talk about really hard things and still have a hopeful lens. However, if the Peer Leader team never makes a more positive turn, it is your job as the Adult Advisor to stop a campaign that could be unhelpful or dangerous.

How the heck do I explain Sources?

This is a great question with several different options. First, it can be really helpful to have everyone on a Peer Leader team come up with a short “elevator speech” that could sum up a team’s mission in 30 seconds. An example of this might sound like, “Sources of Strength is a group of students and adults working together to enact positive change that helps create health and wellness, and prevent negative outcomes like suicide, substance abuse, violence, and other risk factors.”

You can refer people to the Peer Leader Mission Statement, available on our [website](#) as well as in the Peer Leader Guide (page [132](#)). If you have a few minutes, you could share the Upstream Prevention parable on page [16](#), and talk about how we are trying to help individuals practice resilience before a situation feels dire. Positive Psychology is a key engine of success for Sources of Strength, so sharing the Shawn Achor Ted Talk, *The Happy Secret To Better Work* is helpful as well.

We've lost some of our edgier students. What suggestions do you have to get them back/recruit more?

See [Troubleshooting Key Challenges](#) on page [98](#).

How can we partner with other schools doing Sources?

If you are in the same district/area consider doing a community event at a park, mall, or other community gathering area. Schools who have been using Sources of Strength for a while can meet regularly with other local Sources teams to share lessons learned, ideas, best practices, etc. Contact your local trainer or our national office to get connected if you are not sure where to start.

We cannot seem to find a time to meet! What should we do?

See "[Troubleshooting Key Challenges](#)" section, located on page [98](#).

What do we do with a perception that Sources is lame, ineffective, "not real", or a counseling program?

When there is a misconception about Sources of Strength, it can be helpful to refer to the research of its impact within a community. Consider using the Upstream Prevention parable (on page [16](#)) to help others better understand our goals, and speak to how it teaches 21st century skills of social innovation and leadership. Often, people don't understand the difficulty of measuring prevention or the impact that internalized Strength stories can have; helping them understand the underlying theory and impact can help.

Equip every Peer Leader and Adult Advisor with an "elevator speech" to communicate our mission. Consider if your team is truly diverse: if it does not

really represent your school, it can be easy for people to misunderstand our mission or intentions.

Talk to your Peer Leaders: do they feel that these are accurate criticisms? How do their friends see Sources of Strength? Ask them to help you brainstorm solutions to this problem and engage others in these conversations. Sometimes your team may need to be more authentic or Strength focused in their messaging.

Where can I see what other schools have done?

We are so glad you asked! There are a few ways you can do this! First, check out our website for photos and explanations of some campaigns. For the most up-to-date ideas, check out our [Instagram @sourcesofstrength](#) for frequent posts and ideas. Additionally, talk to the national team or a local trainer to see if you can get connected to another school with a strong team.

Why is Physical Health on the Wheel?

When people are in times of crisis or wrestling with mental illness, having good Physical Health can be incredibly important to help navigate through difficult times. We also stress that Physical Health is not just about healing from injury or sickness, but also about taking intentional steps towards overall body and mind health (consider check ups, nutrition, hydration, etc.).

How do I share Sources with other staff members?

Sharing your own stories of how you use the Wheel is a powerful way to spread the word. However, the most powerful way to share Sources of Strength is to get people to interact with the Wheel, applying Strength to their own lives. Make a point to share what Strengths you are using to get through the day, week, or month. Invite a group of Peer Leaders to the next staff meeting and have them teach about the Wheel. A student sharing what Sources means to them can be very impactful. With administrator buy-in you can ask to do a Strength check-in at the beginning of staff meetings and professional development sessions.

How do I take Sources outside of the school?

See the section on "[District and Community Level Strategy](#)" on page [95](#).

What do I do if a student says they don't think they have any Strength?

Once in a while, this happens. Ask them what some of their favorite things to do are when they're by themselves, with friends, or with their family. What kinds of activities bring them joy, help them feel less anxious, or help them cope with a difficult situation? Big or small, those are all Strengths. Have a conversation about how they might grow or strengthen their Strengths alone or with other people. How might they work on, practice, or grow a Strength? It is also important to remind groups and individuals that the Wheel is not static - it is always changing. This means we can always grow stronger in an area on the Wheel. Knowing this, ask the individual which Strength they might like to start growing in on that day, and help them identify practical steps towards that goal. You or other Adult Advisors should follow up with this individual in the following days and weeks, asking how it is going and offering support.

Is there funding available for food and swag? How can I fund future fun stuff?

This is unique to each school and depends on your funding source. Talk to your administration, funder, or Sources support staff to inquire whether there is any funding available for these needs. Many teams run fundraisers or speak to local rotary groups or Chambers of Commerce to raise funds for these needs. Sometimes local businesses enjoy contributing to such efforts as well. You can purchase swag, and campaign materials through the [Sources of Strength store](#).

How can a team share the Adult Advisor load and not leave one Adult doing all the work?

It is really important to have strong communication and collaboration between the Adult Advisor team. Consider the best way to communicate with them and update each other. Is that a Slack channel? An email chain? Owl message delivery?

It can be great to have a standing meeting amongst your Adult Advisor team to chat about planning, problem solving, and role sharing. Try to divvy up the load so multiple Adult Advisors are responsible for a portion of a meeting or campaign.

We had a death: What do we do or say?

See "[Suicide Intervention Protocol](#)", located on page [125](#). Please also contact your National Staff to discuss next steps.

What do we do if an adult is upset that they were not named as a Trusted Adult or they were not asked to be a part of Sources?

This can be a difficult situation. In an ideal world, every school would have Trusted Adults in every classroom. However, this is not always the case. Our most important characteristics of an Adult Advisor is that they are caring, connected, and positive. In the event that an Adult would like to be involved in Sources, we ask that they actively work to embody these characteristics. If a person comes forward saying that they are frustrated they were not recognized, this could be a great time to gently ask them why they got into working with students in the first place. Ask them why they like working with students, and if they believe young people can create a difference in the school and community. Then, encourage them to name one or two students who they could grow in a positive relationship with. Additionally, you might share the Trusted Adult Pledge with them as an invitation for them to work towards being a Trusted Adult for at least one student in their lives.

How does Sources pair with other programs such as Signs of Suicide or PBIS?

Sources of Strength is a program that strives to compliment other programs and approaches in your school, not compete with them. We are all working towards a similar goal and mission and can be stronger together. We find that coupling Sources with other programs can help create a more comprehensive approach. You can integrate Sources language and philosophy into these other programs to create common language and help increase the effectiveness and synergy between them. Make sure that they are willing to partner on Hope, Help, and Strength-based messaging.

Why don't we talk more about Suicide?

We are certainly not afraid to talk about suicide at Sources of Strength. Research demonstrates that talking about suicide will not increase the chances of someone else dying by suicide. However, we find that the suicide prevention field talks a lot about the risks

and warning signs, but rarely talks about what helps a person grow strong after hard times. We are able to talk about what hurts, but never without also sharing what helps.

What if we have the wrong Adult Advisor in charge of Sources?

This is a tough one! First, we want to make it clear that many different types of people can run amazing and thriving Sources of Strength teams - classroom teachers, coaches, administrators, school resource officers, counselors - you name it! The biggest requirement of a great Sources leader is that they be

caring, connected, and positive and truly believe in the power of a young person to affect positive change. If you truly believe that the person running your team may not be the best option, consider who might be. Is it you? Talk to them about how you may best support them and give them gentle but honest feedback about what you are seeing. Offer to help take on more responsibility on the team, even offering to take it off their hands. If this does not work and you feel that damage is being done, have a kind but firm conversation about what needs to change and make a plan going forward.



SUICIDE INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

As you are getting started, we know it is important that every school have a suicide intervention protocol in place. If Peer Leader teams are creating effective messaging and shifting culture around help-seeking, you can expect to see an increase in risk referrals after Sources of Strength is implemented. While this can be concerning, it often means that students and staff are watching out for each other and connecting others to help sooner or more often than they previously would have, breaking those codes of secrecy and silence. This is good! If your school already has a protocol in place, we recommend that you review it in staff meetings to ensure it is up to date and that all adults in the school are familiar with the actions they should take if they are concerned about someone in the school. Who should they go to with a concern? What is the plan for follow up after an intervention? These are just some of the important questions that each staff member and volunteer should know the answers to.

Developing or strengthening a protocol for how to respond to distressed or suicidal students is an important part of preparation for Sources of Strength. This protocol review includes basic suggestions to include in your policy and protocols, and in staff and volunteer training. This is not intended to replace or discard effective protocols that already exist, but to be used as a checklist and guide. If you do not currently have an updated document, here are some things to keep in mind.

Part 1: Importance of bonding, connectedness, and relational support

Research has shown that long-term relational support is very effective in preventing young adults from becoming suicidal or acting on suicidal feelings and impulses. It is our policy that all staff and volunteers be intentional about developing caring relationships with students and young adults, especially those who report low levels of trust towards adults, or have few connections to supportive adult relationships. It is important that staff and volunteers have caring conversations with students during life's ups and downs, and not just during a crisis. Anyone working with young people can work towards being a Trusted Adult.

Sources of Strength is designed to help students and young adults develop multiple Strengths and supports in their life, as represented in the Sources of Strength wheel. Our staff and volunteers should play an intentional role in introducing students and young adults to a variety of Strengths.

It is our policy that staff and volunteers support the Peer Leaders trained in the Sources of Strength program as they deliver peer-to-peer Hope, Help, and Strength-based messages. Providing personal encouragement, sharing expertise, allowing access of approved Peer Leader messaging activities, and allowing time for Peer Leaders to participate in scheduled activities are examples of support. Trained Peer Leaders are often aware of suicidal peers much earlier than adult staff or volunteers, and they usually turn first to an adult they trust. They are an important partner in suicide prevention and their efforts should be encouraged and valued.

Part 2: Awareness of Warning Signs/Symptoms of Distress for Suicide

At the beginning of each year, the principal or lead administrator should arrange to have the staff and volunteers briefed on student self-destructive and suicidal behaviors. It is important to remember that suicidal ideation or behavior may be linked with isolating behavior often associated with depression, aggressive or impulsive behavior, substance abuse, trauma, or among friends of a student that has died by suicide or made serious suicide attempts.

Part 3: Referral of Suicidal Student to Designated Staff

Each school or entity should have a person or group of individuals within the organization who are trained in handling a beginning level assessment, conversation, and referral process of a suicidal individual. It is mandatory that all staff and volunteers refer a student they suspect is suicidal or threatens to harm self or others to the

designated staff person(s) that same day.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to talk to young adults they identify as distressed, and in a caring and calm manner ask them if they are thinking of suicide, or of killing themselves. If an adult is not comfortable having this conversation with a student, a referral should be made to a counselor immediately. They should personally bring students to the designated staff and introduce them. If the situation is a medical emergency, 911 should be called immediately.

Part 4: Discussion with Youth/Young Adult

The student/young adult should be:

- Privately assessed to determine the level of risk.
- Offered immediate support and assistance.
- If the individual is determined to be at risk, they should be kept under constant adult supervision until parents or other protective custody can be arranged.

Part 5: Notifying Parents

Contact the custodial parent or guardian regardless of the individual's age and ask them to come immediately to the school/agency/entity, or in some cases meet at a hospital or Mental Health clinic/provider. The custodial parent or guardian should leave with the student after being supported and strongly encouraged to take them to a facility/treatment provider of their choice. These recommendations should be put in writing and sent to the parents on formal letterhead. Explain that signing a Release of Information form from the treatment provider is very helpful. If the student is displaying signs and/or symptoms of suicide/homicide, and the parent refuses to have them assessed, it may be necessary to contact your local child welfare or juvenile justice agencies.

Part 6: Mental Health Provider Contacts and Agreement

Your school or entity should have contacts or agreements in place with Mental Health providers who agree to provide same-day assessment of suicidal individuals. Depending on your region and availability, these providers may be emergency rooms, clinics, Mental Health facilities/centers, or private providers. It is important for parents to be provided with a specific name and number, and it is usually best to assist the parent by making the call and appointment together. Always provide the student and parents with 24-hour phone contacts and hotline numbers to access.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:

1 - 8 0 0 - 2 7 3 - 8 2 5 5 (T A L K)

Head Counselor Name: _____

Number: _____

Part 7: Follow-up and Providing Long-term Support

Upon returning from hospitalization, intervention, or treatment, encourage all individuals to use Mental Health and medical resources, but also engage them in conversations regarding other supports and Strengths using the Sources of Strength wheel as a guide. Help the student/young adult identify a supportive, caring adult who can be activated in support. This adult can be within their family system, school, faith community, setting etc. If an adult is mentioned by the student, assist in encouraging regular contact and supports that can last at least two years. Provide the adult with a brief training in suicide warning signs and who to contact if concerns arise. Help the adult understand that they are there as an older friend to walk alongside, not to fix all the student's problems. Also assist them in identifying some other interests around Healthy Activities, Generosity, Positive Friends, or Spirituality. These other supports and Strengths can be sustained over time

and be extremely protective. See the Self Care Card on page [131](#).

Postvention: Next Steps

A school should also be aware of appropriate steps to take in the event of a death by suicide. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) has created a Toolkit for Schools in the wake of a tragedy, which can be found for free online.

In general, your school should strive to treat each death within a school community the same way, taking care not to glamorize or memorialize the death. Work quickly to reach out to the young person's family, offering condolences, support, and to identify friends who may be in need of extra support.

Bring your Peer Leader team together, acknowledge the pain of the loss and remind them that the work they do is vital in the wake of a crisis. Ask them to keep their eyes and ears open to identify where there may be unresolved pockets of grief around the school and community that may benefit from extra support. Remind Peer Leaders that they are not junior psychologists or student counselors, but connectors to help and agents of change.

Additional postvention resources and documents can be found at sourcesofstrength.org. An Adult Advisor should contact Sources of Strength staff as soon as possible to relay the information and get support.

SOURCES OF STRENGTH PEER LEADER END OF YEAR SURVEY

1. Do you feel that we have a DIVERSE Peer Leader group?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

2. Do you feel that we have a DIVERSE group of Adult Advisors?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

3. Do you feel that you have CONNECTED with at least 1 Adult Advisor?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

4. Do you feel HEARD?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

5. Do you feel like you have a safe space to SHARE?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

6. Do you feel like you are APPRECIATED for being a part of Sources Of Strength?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

7. Do you feel ACCEPTED as part of the Peer Leader team?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

8. Do you feel like you've made an IMPACT in your school or amongst your peers?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

9. Do you feel APPRECIATED by school staff for your work with Sources Of Strength?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

10. Do you feel like you've grown in your own STRENGTHS this year?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

11. Do you feel like your VOICE has an impact on your peers?

Strongly Disagree **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **Strongly Agree**

12. Do you feel like you have made a friend in Sources Of Strength?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**

13. Has participating in Sources Of Strength made you feel a greater sense of BELONGING?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 **Strongly Agree**

14. Is there a question you WISH this survey would have asked you?

15. What do you think our greatest STRENGTH as a program is?

16. What is one area where you'd like to see us become STRONGER?



ADDITIONAL FEATURES: VISUALS AND TEAR-OUTS



The great ideas that we see from Peer Leader teams are never ending. We could fill many books with amazing handouts, photos, and tips. However, we have collected a few popular items here that we hope your team finds helpful.

Feel free to use them in the way that works best for your school and community!

MY STRENGTHS - SELF CARE CARD

1. Positive Friends I can talk to (list name and phone number):

- a.
- b.
- c.

2. Trusted Adults I can talk to:

- a. Family:
- b. Community:
- c. School or Church:

3. If I am feeling down or sad, I can do these activities:

a. Physical activities/stress relievers (such as walking, biking, working out, yoga):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

b. Quiet, calming activities (such as taking a nap, writing in my journal, petting my dog):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

c. Concentration activities (such as watching a funny show, reading a novel, writing thank you notes):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4. Some things I can do to help others right now are:

- a.
- b.
- c.

5. Three things that I am grateful for:

- a.
- b.
- c.

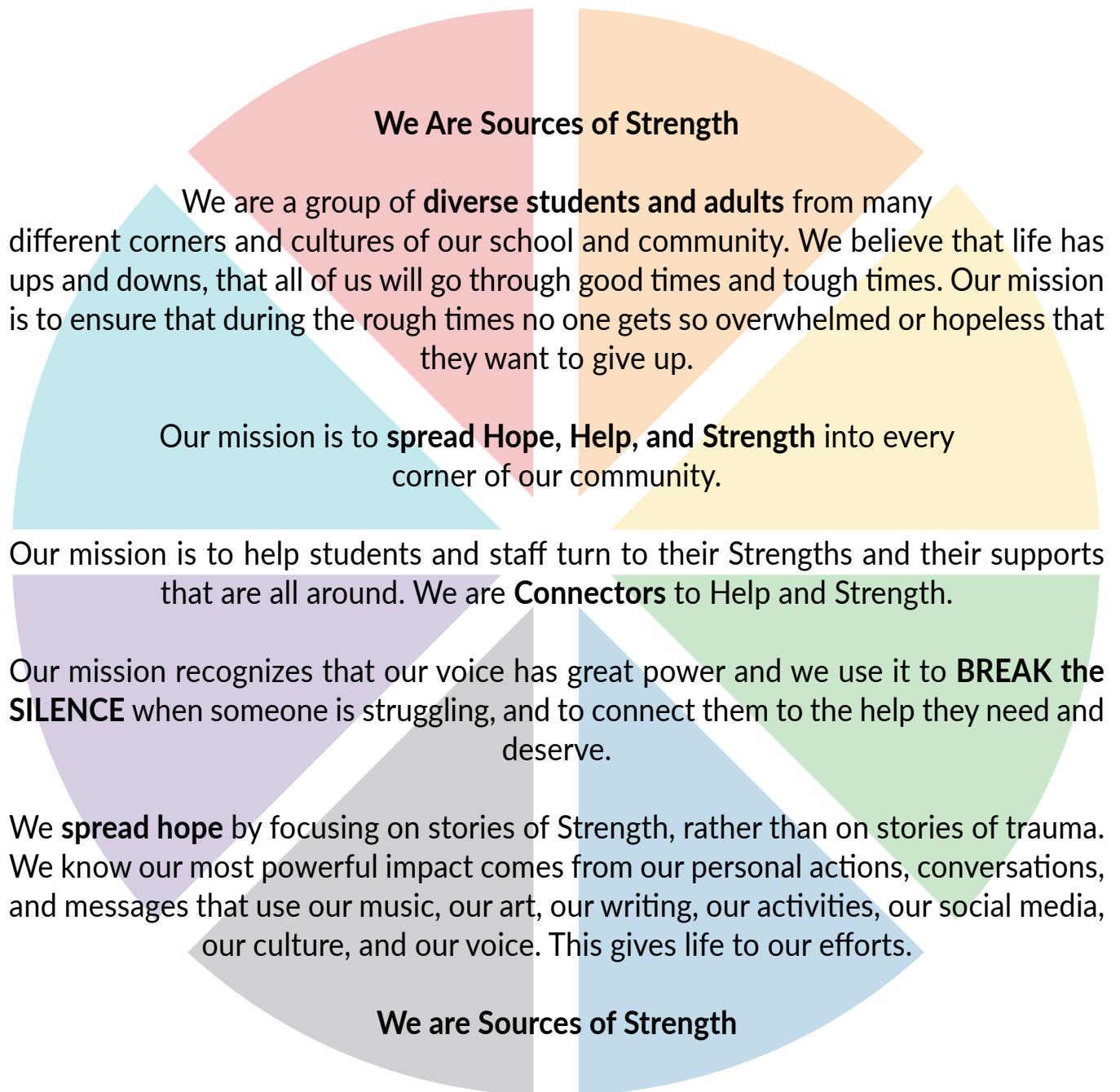
6. Something good that has happened today or yesterday even in the midst of tough stuff:

If I am concerned about my thoughts right now, I can call a counselor at _____
or the hotline at **800.273.8255**

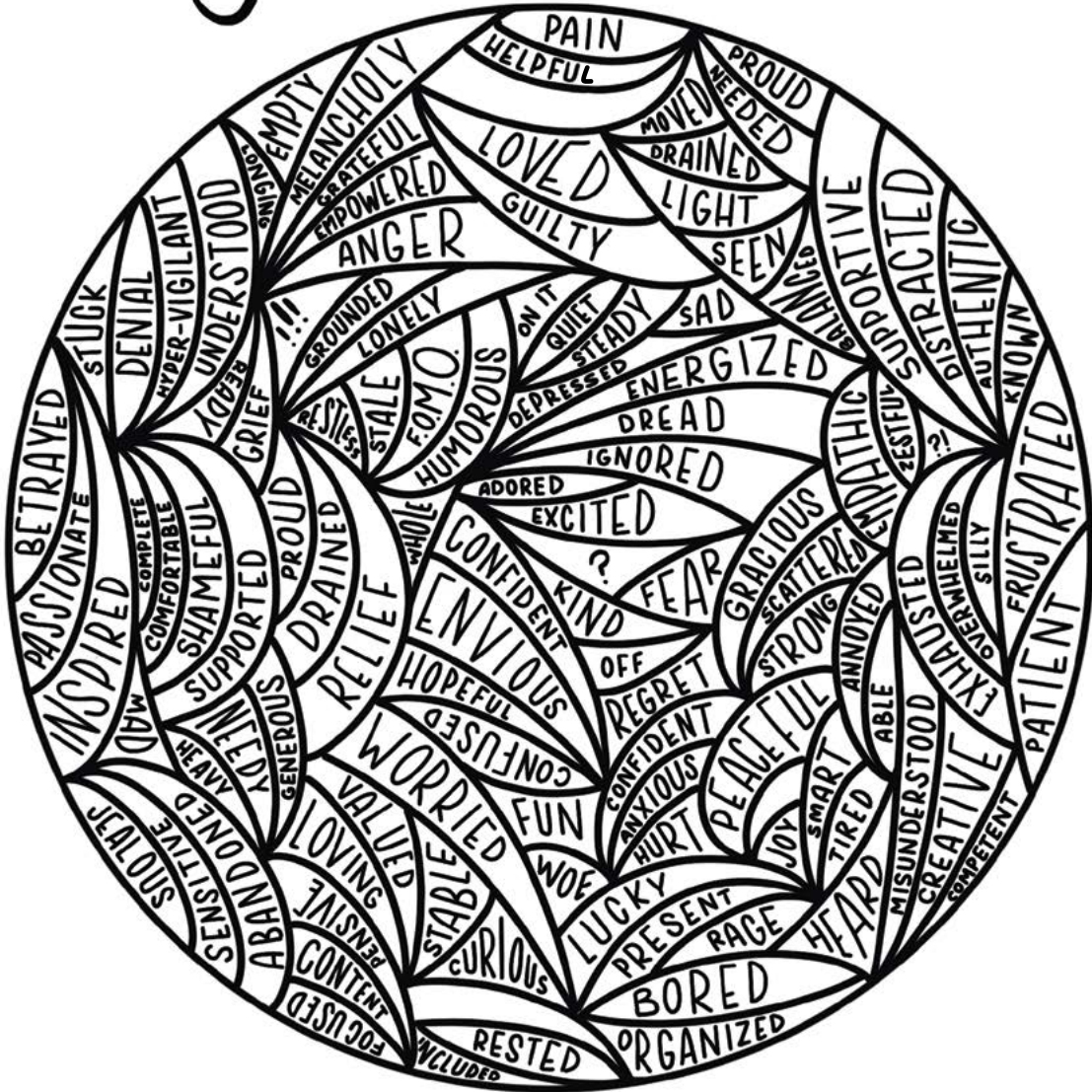
I have Strengths, and I am strong enough to ask for help if I need it.
One adult I can ask is _____ and their phone number is _____



SOURCES OF STRENGTH PEER LEADER MISSION STATEMENT



the tangled ball of emotions



- = Emotion I'm feeling right now.
- = Emotion I've been feeling recently.
- = Familiar emotion, but not recently.
- = Emotion I rarely experience.



CHECK IN!

HOW DO YOU FEEL?



I FEEL AWESOME!



I'M DOING WELL.



NOT GOOD, NOT BAD, I'M FINE.



I FEEL SAD.



I AM ANGRY!



I FEEL WORRIED OR ANXIOUS

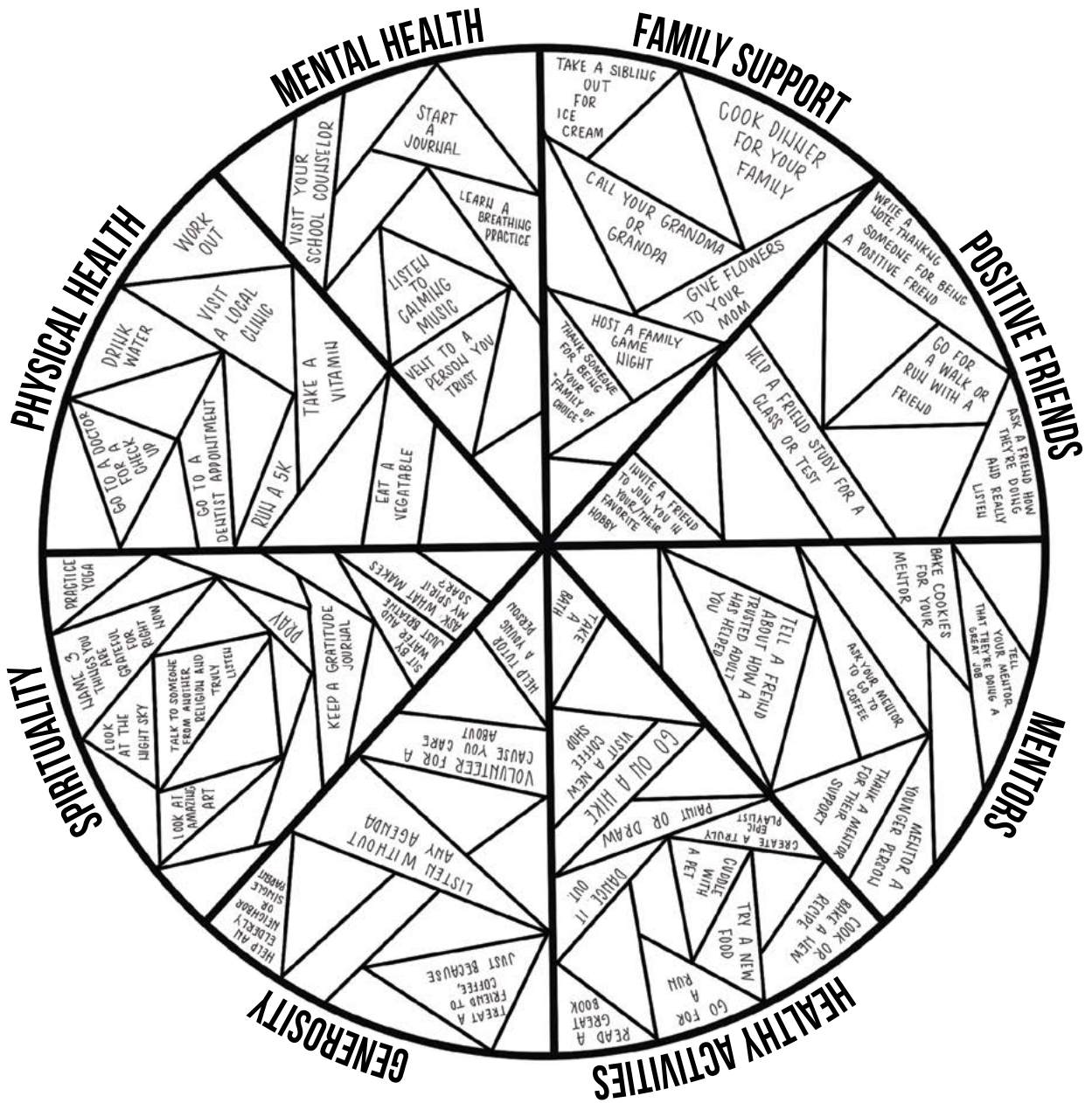


I AM TIRED!

**WHAT'S A STRENGTH
YOU USED THIS WEEK?**



strength check in

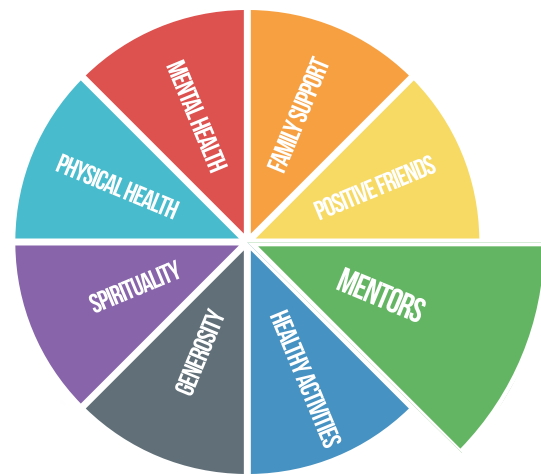


DIRECTIONS:
 COLOR IN THE ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW.
 FILL IN BLANK SPACES WITH OTHER WAYS TO PRACTICE STRENGTH

- = Activity I regularly do
- = Activity I've done recently
- = Activity I'd like to try



I AM A TRUSTED ADULT



BY DISPLAYING THIS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS TO SEE I PROMISE TO:

Acknowledge that reaching out for support is a Strength

Listen and react non-judgementally

Respond in a calm and reassuring manner

Reflect back the feelings, Strengths and ideas I hear when listening

Ask how I can be helpful and respond as I am able

Do what I can to other supports if asked

Maintain confidentiality and communicate if exceptions exist.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A more complete list of helpful resources may be found on our website at sourcesofstrength.org.

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Brown, B. (2015). *Rising Strong*. New York, New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Joiner, T. E. (2005). *Why People Die by Suicide*. Boston, Massachusetts: First Harvard University Press.

Kidder, J.T. (2003). *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. New York, New York: Random House.

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Soloman, A. (2001). *Noon Day Demon: An Atlas of Depression*. New York, New York: Simon and Schuster.

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Wyman, Peter A., et. al. (2010). *The Role and Value of School-Based Health Care: An Outcome Evaluation of the Sources of Strength Suicide Prevention Program Delivered by Adolescent Peer Leaders in High Schools*. *American Journal of Public Health*: 1-8.

