



**SOURCES**  
OF STRENGTH



# TRAINER MANUAL



## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Sources of Strength**

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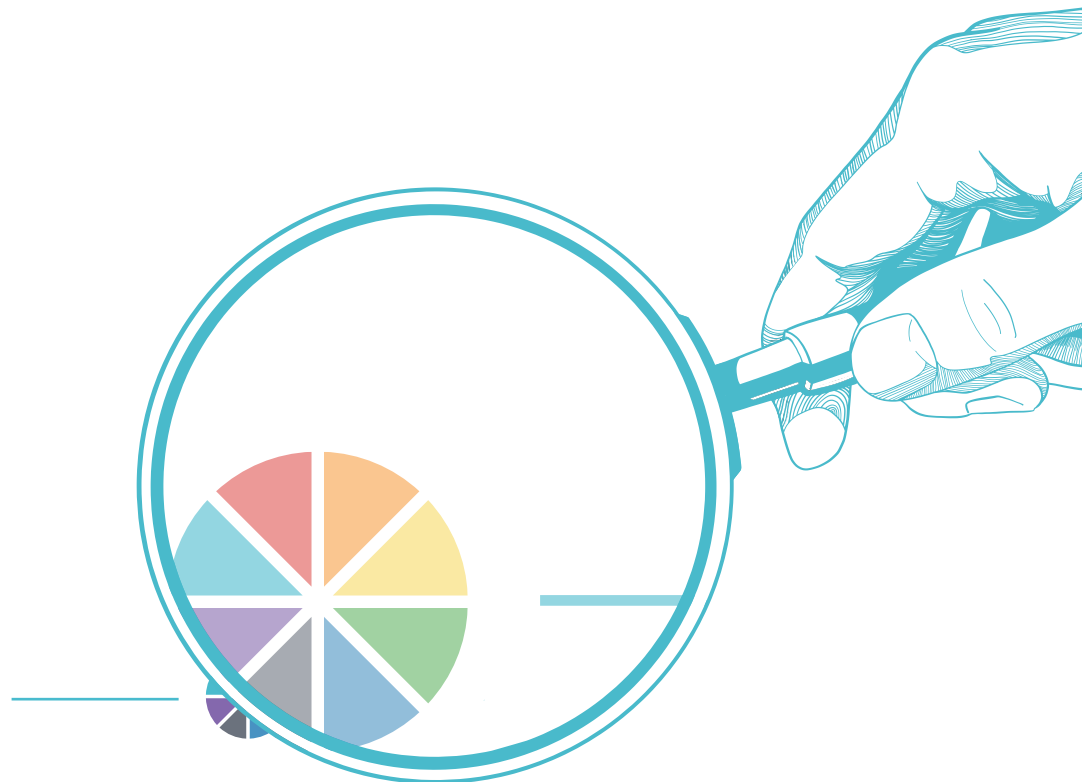
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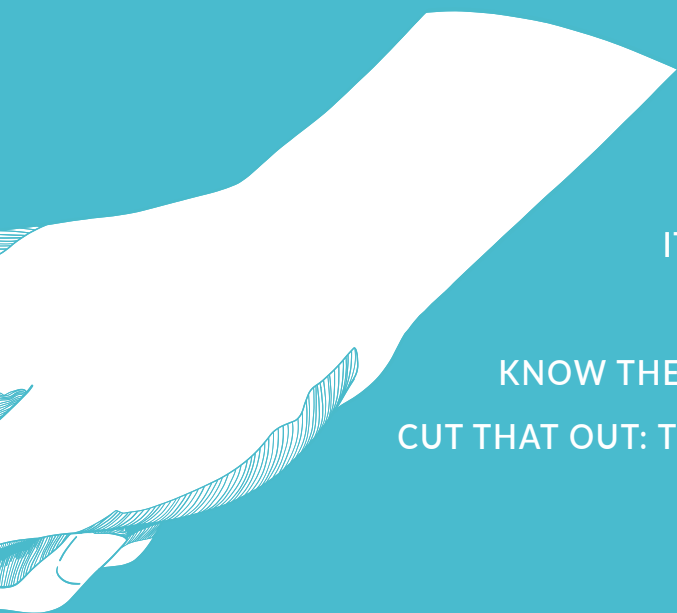


# CHAPTER 1:

# PRE-TRAINING



As a Sources of Strength Trainer there are some elements to consider before you ever enter a training room. Use these resources to solidify your understanding of how to do this work safely, effectively, efficiently, and equitably.



## PRE-TRAINING

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Welcome to your Sources of Strength Trainer Manual! By becoming a Trainer, we are inviting you into our Community of Learning, and our sincere hope is that this Trainer Manual will be an invaluable resource to help you along the way.

This Trainer Manual was thoughtfully crafted to be your companion as you work to deliver the Sources of Strength Adult Advisor and Peer Leader trainings to fidelity. In this manual you will find all of the games, discussions, and modules that comprise an Adult Advisor and a Peer Leader training, along with a supplemental games appendix. The script to be learned and delivered is indicated with “**quotation marks and blue text**”, while the supplemental information is written in black text. You get to bring the script to life, using your authentic voice.

Please use this manual to help you set up a strong and brave space for participants to share, and reflect on their Strengths in powerful ways. We must be intentional about facilitating this training safely AND equitably, so before you read any more, turn to the next page and read “It’s About Belonging from the Beginning: Equity and Inclusion at Sources of Strength.”

Here are a few more tips for how to use this Manual. Every game and module has a note for **Time**. Use this as a guide, not necessarily a restriction. Each module also has a list of **Materials** needed to deliver the content, or run the game effectively.

Think of the **Key Point** like the thesis statement of each module. It helps reinforce the big idea of each segment of the training. The **Key Summary**, on the other hand, is what the participants should have learned after each module has been delivered.

Each module also has a **Trainer Overview**, which is our note to you, establishing where each module or game fits within the larger narrative of the training. We also scattered **Trainer Tips** throughout the manual. Each tip offers insight we’ve learned over countless trainings across thousands of communities. We hope these tips help keep you from making the same mistakes we’ve learned from over the years.

Finally, each module or game has a checklist to help us coach you as you work through the **Trainer Certification Process**. Use these **Trainer Feedback Tools** to help you study and guide your preparation for any Sources of Strength training.

Within this manual you’ll find a Suicide Intervention Protocol, a Glossary of Terms, your Trainer Certification Checklist, some notes on how to prepare and study, as well as what to cut if you’re running short on time. If you do not find what you are looking for in these pages, please do not hesitate to visit [sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org) and schedule a support call with one of our National Trainers or Support Staff.

We are committed to helping our Trainers develop the skills, tools, and techniques they need to deliver safe, fun, and empowering Sources of Strength trainings. We consider this Trainer Manual to be one of several tools we’ve developed to equip you. Other tools include our website [sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org) (register as a **TRAINER**, using the invitation code **TRAINER**), training videos, setlists, slide decks, and support from our National staff. We hope that these tools and resources aid you in your development from a Provisional to a Certified Sources of Strength Trainer partnering with us to **Empower a Well World** in your schools and communities.

## IT'S ABOUT BELONGING: EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT SOURCES OF STRENGTH

The vision of Sources of Strength is to **Empower a Well World**. We live out this vision by bringing together a diverse group of students and adults from across a school or community's social network. We then foster relational connection and belonging through play, Strengths-based storytelling, and strategic messaging campaigns to invite people to discover and share their own stories of Strength.

The power of Sources of Strength isn't limited to the training - no matter how fun it is to play Walk Around Cool or how impactful the small group sharing is. We host our trainings in hopes of launching a team that continues to meet and create something new; not just a collection of students and staff, but a Community of Strength. A community where everyone belongs, has dignity, and can thrive, not in spite of their differences, but because of them.

At the very beginning of this Trainer Manual, we want to cast a vision about what it means to promote and sustain belonging; to create strong and brave spaces for Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors as we empower them to build a Community of Strength.

“AT ITS BEST, A SOURCES OF STRENGTH TEAM BECOMES THE PRACTICE GROUND FOR ORIENTING OURSELVES & OUR COMMUNITIES NOT JUST AWAY FROM DEATH, BUT TOWARDS LIFE.”



We know our vision and mission are aspirational. Systems of exclusion and oppression create significant barriers to mental health and overall wellbeing, particularly for marginalized and minoritized populations. We are continually learning the ways specific groups of people, especially BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities, have historically been and are currently being disenfranchised and marginalized. As an organization working in public health and mental health, we are committed to promoting equity and justice in partnership with the communities we train, support, and engage.

We recognize neither our training nor our program are implemented in a vacuum, but rather both are part of larger systems already at play in a school or community. No one comes to Sources of Strength

as a blank slate; we are all shaped by our history and experiences. People often come into our trainings impacted by loss, violence, and bias. This is not because of anything they have done, but because of harm perpetrated and perpetuated by society. Some people come into our trainings at heightened risk not because of who they are, but because others have excluded them and violated their dignity. Despite what is often said, individuals and communities are not simply “at risk.” They are put at risk by harmful systems, and this risk is often reinforced by the decisions made within programs, practices, and educational spaces.

We also know individuals and communities come into our training with assets, strengths, experiences of connection and belonging, and deep roots of resilience. This is true not in spite of their identities and past experiences, but because of them.

Social-emotional curriculum and prevention programs have often been guilty of placing the locus of change back on individuals, those who have been forced to be resilient to survive because of systems of oppression and exclusion. But, as Pamala End of Horn from Indian Health Services Suicide Prevention and Care Program, so powerfully shares, “Resilience is a form of resistance.” We are committed to empowering individuals and communities to practice strength and resilience as an act of resistance. We do this while also deeply listening to the powerful voices of youth and adults who name the systems and structures that must change, be dismantled, or transformed. We work

to support people as they thrive, not simply survive. We work to create life-giving spaces in our trainings where individuals and communities can not only share but also internalize their stories of Strength, learning they are strong in the face of overwhelming adversity.

In their book, *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation*, Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple write:

***“Inclusion is engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it affirms the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of its members.”<sup>1</sup>***

Inclusion does not happen by accident, it happens by design. Belonging also happens by design when individuals are honored for their experiences. People can grow confident in their belongingness when a group works to reflect each other’s inherent dignity regardless of background, identity, or ability.

Our commitment as an organization is to reduce risk and increase safety, connection, belonging, and wellbeing. We invite people to identify the assets and strengths that already exist within a community and to build from there through conversations and campaigns to Empower a Well World.

We are also committed to educating ourselves on the explicit as well as implicit (and often unspoken, but impactful) forms of bias, prejudice, and racism that thwart belonging and wellbeing. While most of us are familiar with overt forms of oppression, much of what marginalized groups experience on a daily basis remains invisible or largely unnoticed by majority culture, embedded within our societal systems and structures.

In order for all students and staff to experience connection, belonging, and dignity, these explicit and implicit biases need to change. Just because it’s Sources of Strength doesn’t mean everyone feels safe. Just because a team is diverse, doesn’t mean it is equitable or inclusive. In fact, if we fail to do the intentional work to create brave and inclusive space in trainings and meetings, it is possible to cause harm.

As our friend Avery Belyeu (South Central Regional Director for Lambda Legal) says, “If you build systems designed to serve the most vulnerable or marginalized first, they end up benefiting all people.” Sources of Strength was developed in partnership with Native leaders and Tribal Nations in the Dakotas. This training has been adapted for delivery across America, Canada, and Australia, in rural, urban, and suburban communities. There are Sources of Strength teams from the south of Florida to north of the Arctic Circle in Alaska, teams in Sheridan, Wyoming and Palo Alto, California. We have designed this training, sequenced the games, activities, and sharing prompts to scaffold authentic and impactful participation in diverse communities. We know a team’s most powerful impact comes from their personal actions, conversations, and messaging campaigns that use their culture and their voice. We use art, music, small groups, and games to break down social barriers and build relationships.

Pause for a moment here and take a deep breath.

It’s not about remembering all the directions to the games or the exact words for every module. **It’s about connection and belonging.**

It’s not about making sure nothing goes wrong. **It’s about health and wellbeing.**

It’s not about perfection. **It’s about growth and inclusion.**

By all means, memorize the script. Practice the games. Do not try to wing this training! But above all, set out to

1. Cobb, F. & Krownapple, J. (2019). *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation*, Mimi and Todd Press. Pg. 33

continually shape a space that keeps others and their stories safe. And let this practice be informed by humility, compassion, and kindness. Kindness that you demonstrate towards yourself and others.

Create a rhythm within yourself and the teams you train, asking, “How can we continue to recognize the dignity of each person in the room?” Purposefully consider the impact of your words and actions on communities of color. Remember that there is diversity in every team in terms of language, identity, affinity, cognitive and physical ability, as well as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and culture. Choose to celebrate diversity as a strength that makes systems and communities more resilient.

One of the simplest ways to foster belonging is to interact with people, using the names and pronouns they share with you. An individual will not automatically feel they belong simply because you said the “correct” words, but they will know they are not welcome when something harmful or thoughtless is said or done. And remember, dignity is not given to people, but recognized and affirmed. Again quoting Cobb and Krownapple:

***“Inclusion is not about identity diversity as much as it’s about our response to the already existing diversity in all of its forms. We respond with inclusion by changing our culture to ensure all people feel that they belong, not in spite of their differences but because of them. In the process, everyone is honored and feels welcome, not by accident but by design. In fact, inclusion is about design, the process through which we (as a community) intentionally co-create the environment. Inclusion is about people partnering with one another to change the culture so that everyone experiences access and unconditional belonging.”<sup>2</sup>***

We invite you to partner with us in this work. To intentionally design inclusive trainings (and ongoing meetings, and messaging campaigns) where students and adults are empowered to initiate changes in their own lives and in the lives of their peers. Changes in community climate and culture that are necessary to ensure that everyone experiences unconditional belonging. To do this we might have to let go of the way some things are, so we can transform ourselves and our communities into the way things should be; equitable, inclusive, and just.

We have a sense that far too much prevention is centered primarily around standing against something (anti-drug, anti-bullying, anti-suicide) and fails to offer a vision of the world as it should be. At its best, a Sources of Strength team becomes the practice ground for orienting ourselves and our communities not just away from death, but towards life. Through our work with Peer Leaders, Adult Advisors, and Trainers, we believe that each training, meeting, or campaign can offer a glimpse of a world with more hope, more help, and more strength.

We will not do this perfectly, but perfect isn’t the point. Perfect isn’t possible. This work takes practice. In moments where we have failed to honor the dignity of another person, we can practice building (and rebuilding) a Community of Strength. We do this by holding ourselves accountable, apologizing for any wrong-doing (even if it was unintentional), and committing ourselves to continued learning. This work requires humility, creativity, and flexibility. This is work that must be done by each of our Trainers in their own lives, and work that must be done together in partnership between local stakeholders, our student leaders, and adults.

In the words of the brilliant Dr. Maya Angelou: “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

You are a part of our Community of Learning, and each and every one of you is vital to the health of Sources of Strength and to the health of the communities we live and work in. Help us challenge the harmful stories and unconscious biases that underpin our society, so together we can foster stronger, more resilient, more connected communities. We invite you to know better, and do better. Learn and grow with us as we seek to Empower a Well World.

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2. Cobb, F. & Krownapple, J. (2019:29-30).

## TRAINER CERTIFICATION GLOSSARY

**Trainer Certification Process:** The process by which an individual may become certified to implement Sources of Strength and provide ongoing secondary training in their school, clearly defined region, or service area.

**Train the Trainer Advanced Skills Session (T4T):** A four day training where individuals learn about the Sources of Strength trainings and program, and gain information on how to implement in their local area. Upon completion of the T4T, individuals become Provisional Trainers.

**Provisional Trainer:** An individual who has completed a Train the Trainer Advanced Skills Session and is going through the Trainer Certification Process to become eligible to implement the Sources of Strength program at the local level.

**Local Trainer:** A Provisional Trainer who has been certified and is implementing Sources of Strength in their school, district, or other clearly defined region or service area.

**Regional Trainer:** A Trainer who has completed additional certification requirements to implement the Sources of Strength secondary program at multiple sites across a clearly defined region or service area, such as a school district, county, or region within a state. A Regional Trainer must be supported through a regional level initiative or strategy for Sources of Strength implementation and support. Ongoing observation, coaching, and support from the Sources of Strength National team is required to maintain Regional Trainer status. Regional Trainers, unlike Local Trainers, are certified to co-train with, and then certify, Provisional Trainers to Local Trainer status.

**State Trainer:** A Trainer who has completed additional certification requirements to support Sources of Strength secondary programming at the state level. A State Trainer must be supported through a state level initiative or strategy for Sources of Strength implementation and support. Ongoing observation, coaching, and support from the Sources of Strength National team is required to maintain State Trainer status. State Trainers, unlike Local Trainers, are certified to co-train with, and then certify, Provisional Trainers to Local Trainer status.

**National Trainer:** A full time staff member of the Sources of Strength National team who can partner and co-train with Provisional, Local, Regional, and State Trainers to implement Sources of Strength.

**Contract Trainer:** An individual who has previously been certified as a Local, Regional, or State Level Trainer, who has shown a high degree of confidence and competence in implementing Sources of Strength secondary with fidelity. A Contract Trainer has demonstrated a high degree of skill in facilitation and has the time, energy, and capacity to provide secondary training in partnership with Sources National. A Contract Trainer requires an additional level of certification, observation, coaching, and support from the Sources of Strength National team and can co-train with Provisional, Local, Regional, and State Trainers to implement Sources of Strength at the secondary level.

**Practice Training (Mini Training):** An abbreviated practice or informational session wherein a Provisional Trainer facilitates up to four modules from the Sources of Strength Adult Advisor or Peer Leader training for other participants. These training sessions can be done in a classroom, a book club, a staff meeting, a family gathering, or any other setting with two or more individuals. Four Practice Trainings must be completed as part of the Trainer Certification Process to achieve full certification as a Local Trainer.

**Trainer Feedback Tool:** A checklist-style form used by a Regional, State, or National Trainer to provide feedback to a Trainer seeking certification and/or development, and coaching in their training and facilitation.

**Co-Training:** A Peer Leader or Adult Advisor training wherein a Provisional Trainer leads several modules alongside

a National, Contract, State, or Regional Trainer and receives coaching, feedback, and guidance for the Trainer Certification Process. Four Co-Trainings (two Adult Advisor trainings and two Peer Leader trainings) must be completed as part of the Trainer Certification Process to achieve full certification as a Local Trainer.

**Training Log:** An online form completed by all Trainers, tracking an individual's progress towards certification and their continued training and implementation of the Sources of Strength secondary program after certification. A Training Log must be completed after every Sources of Strength training, including each Practice Training, Co-Training, and all ongoing trainings. This is the primary way the Sources of Strength National team tracks and supports Trainers, as well as schools and communities implementing Sources of Strength.

**Community of Learning:** Sources of Strength Trainers who are deeply committed to growing their facilitation skill and increasing their awareness through reading, webinars, conversations, and other forms of continued education. Inclusivity, humility, belonging, curiosity, care, and an eye towards justice are integral qualities of this community.

**Certification Review:** The process by which the Sources of Strength National Team reviews all completed certification requirements for a Trainer and makes a decision on their certification from Provisional Trainer to Local Trainer status (as well as certifying Regional, State, and Contract Trainers). The Certification Review will commence once four Practice Trainings and four Co-Trainings have been completed, and all corresponding Training Logs have been submitted. In specific circumstances and in partnership with Sources National, a Regional Trainer or State Trainer may certify a Provisional Trainer to Local Trainer status to implement Sources of Strength in their school or community.

## TRAINER CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Please use the following Train the Trainer (T4T) Certification Process and Checklist to track your progress toward certification as a Sources of Strength Local Trainer.

Upon completion of the Train the Trainer Advanced Skills Session training, you will become a Provisional Trainer, and be tasked to carry out the following activities before receiving full certification as a certified Local Trainer:

1. **Watch all training videos for the Adult Advisor and Peer Leader trainings** (virtual and in-person) Training Videos can be found under the Trainer section of [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org) website.
2. **Facilitate four Practice Trainings:**
  - A Practice Training is a 30-minute to one hour training session, where a Provisional Trainer facilitates a portion of the Sources of Strength training, with the goal of developing confidence and competence with various sections of the training.
  - A Practice Training can be with any group a Provisional Trainer has access to, including:
    - Introducing the program to a group of students;
    - Pitching the program to a group of administrators or school staff;
    - Introducing Sources practices to your family, friends, or colleagues.
  - Provisional Trainers will use the Trainer Feedback Tool to self measure fidelity to the Sources of Strength Trainer Manual.
  - Provisional Trainers will provide feedback on each Practice Training through the Sources of Strength Training Log.
3. **Facilitate four Co-Trainings with a National Trainer:**
  - Provisional Trainers are required to facilitate portions of two Adult Advisor trainings and two Peer Leader trainings to complete this step.
  - Provisional Trainers will provide feedback on each Co-Training through the Sources of Strength Training Log.

- National Trainers will use the Trainer Feedback Tool to provide Provisional or Local Trainers with coaching, feedback, and guidance on the certification process.

4. **Participate in an ongoing Community of Learning** for Trainers by engaging on our Slack channel, watching all the training videos, connecting with the Sources National team with questions or concerns, and participating in our National Professional Development Webinars.

Participation in the Trainer Certification Process will help Provisional Trainers gain experience delivering Sources of Strength Adult Advisor trainings and Peer Leader trainings in accordance with Sources of Strength protocols. Practice Trainings can be conducted on your own or with a colleague, while Co-Trainings must be conducted with a National Trainer, or specially certified Contract Trainer, State Trainer, or Regional Trainer. During this process, we ask that you maintain continued communication with the Sources of Strength National office to evaluate your progress. As you complete each stage of the Trainer Certification Process, please log your trainings under the Training Log page of the [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org) website. The Training Log helps to keep a record of your progress as a Provisional Trainer and certified Local Trainer.

## TRAINER CERTIFICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Upon completion of the Trainer Certification Process, Provisional Trainers will undergo a Certification Review led by a National Trainer, or specially certified State Trainer or Regional Trainer.

The Certification Review will include the following:

- Review of all Training Logs for previous Practice Trainings and Co-Trainings, as well as Training Feedback Tools for past trainings.
- Check to confirm all training materials, including the Trainer Manual, training videos, and other training resources have been read, watched, and studied.
- A phone call to confirm all the necessary steps have been completed and a Provisional Trainer has displayed confidence, competence, and a high degree of fidelity to the Sources of Strength Adult Advisor and Peer Leader training. We also hope to answer any questions or concerns a Provisional Trainer may still have regarding moving forward with facilitating a Sources of Strength training.

The Certification Review includes asking if the Provisional Trainer is demonstrating confidence, competence, and fidelity in delivering the Sources of Strength training with fidelity.

1. **If Yes:** A Provisional Trainer will be certified as a Local Trainer for a geographical region for a three-year period (starting from the date of the last completed T4T), or
2. **If No:** A Provisional Trainer will be asked to facilitate further Co-Trainings and/or Practice Trainings to gain further confidence and competency in the training before being certified to Local Trainer status. Certified Local Trainers are asked to renew their certification every three years, by attending a Train the Trainer Advanced Skills Session (starting from the date of the last completed T4T).

Once the below checklist has been completed, the Provisional Trainer must contact the National Sources of Strength team to verify that all Practice Trainings and Co-Trainings have been logged and they are ready for their Certification Review to begin. This checklist includes:

- Completion of a Train the Trainer Advanced Skills Session training;
- Facilitation of four Practice Trainings;
- Facilitation of four Co-Trainings: two Adult Advisor trainings and two Peer Leader trainings;
- Submission of eight Training Logs (four Practice Trainings and four Co-Trainings)
- Ongoing participation in Sources of Strength Community of Learning;

The following pages also have an extended checklist for your records.

## FOUR PRACTICE TRAININGS

### FIRST PRACTICE TRAINING

TRAINING DATE:

GROUP TRAINED:

TRAINING NUMBERS:

TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES

### SECOND PRACTICE TRAINING

TRAINING DATE:

GROUP TRAINED:

TRAINING NUMBERS:

TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES



## THIRD PRACTICE TRAINING

TRAINING DATE:

GROUP TRAINED:

TRAINING NUMBERS:

TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES

## FOURTH PRACTICE TRAINING

TRAINING DATE:

GROUP TRAINED:

TRAINING NUMBERS:

TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES

## FIRST CO-TRAINING

**TRAINING DATE:**  
**GROUP TRAINED:**  
**TYPE OF TRAINING (AA/PL):**  
**TRAINING NUMBERS:**  
**TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:**

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES

## SECOND CO-TRAINING

**TRAINING DATE:**  
**GROUP TRAINED:**  
**TYPE OF TRAINING (AA/PL):**  
**TRAINING NUMBERS:**  
**TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:**

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES

## THIRD CO-TRAINING

TRAINING DATE:

GROUP TRAINED:

TYPE OF TRAINING (AA/PL):

TRAINING NUMBERS:

TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES

## FOURTH CO-TRAINING

TRAINING DATE:

GROUP TRAINED:

TYPE OF TRAINING (AA/PL):

TRAINING NUMBERS:

TRAINING LOG COMPLETE:

MODULES COVERED	AREAS FOR GROWTH	NOTES

# KNOW THE RULES BEFORE YOU BREAK THE (RIGHT) RULES

## How to Make Scripted Material Come Alive

“YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE RULES  
BEFORE YOU CAN BREAK THE RULES.”

- *Pablo Picasso*

We want this Trainer Manual to be a helpful tool as you facilitate Sources of Strength trainings in your school or community. We have designed the Trainer Manual to make expectations clear, so that you can practice and deliver a Sources of Strength training with fidelity. Because of the subject matter, it is important to understand what a module is teaching within the context of the larger training, and we have spent many hours working to find just the right words to foster thoughtful and invitational upstream prevention.

However, we are not training a group of robots to simply mimic every word on these pages. Sources of Strength values and honors people’s stories, contexts, and personalities! As you learn the material, find ways to stay true to the script while using unique words or phrases that work in your context. This is what Picasso was talking about in the quote above - you have to start by learning and practicing the basics, before you can safely incorporate your own energy, style, and stories.

We can’t make this clear enough: don’t try to wing it! Not only does too much improv take away from the power of the program, it can be dangerous. While you are not being made into a carbon copy of one of our National Trainers, you should make sure you truly understand and are clearly sharing the main points in each module. Once you have the basics down, your task is to bring the material to life with energy and style.

To illustrate this point, we’ve developed three different examples of delivering the Biosphere script from the Stressors Question and Biosphere module. We hope this will serve to illustrate the balance we would like you to strike:

- **Strictly Script** (Is it a little dry? What could have made it more engaging?),
- **Winging It** (Benign at best, damaging at worst),
- **Knowing the Rules and Breaking the (Right) Rules** (Does it pull people in with facts as well as a human touch?).

## EXAMPLE: BIOSPHERE STORY

**Strictly Script:** “Did you know that scientists created a biosphere to study how all different parts of nature work? They planted trees in the biosphere, but these trees kept falling over. After research, the scientists realized what was happening: there was no wind in their environment. While a strong wind can push a tree over, some level of wind is needed to help trees grow deep roots that will be strong when wind, rain, or floods come their way. Trees need some resistance to develop the necessary strength to help them stand strong in future storms.

“Stress can act in a very similar way with humans. We don’t live healthy lives by completely avoiding stress altogether. Some stress can actually make us stronger. However, we’re also worried about what happens when stress becomes overwhelming. What we want to explore today is how we can reframe stress to cope with it in healthy ways. I want to know what gives you Strength and what helps you with the stressors you face.

“Thanks for sharing about some of those stressors. Let’s shift our focus now towards Strength.”

**Our Thoughts:** There is nothing particularly wrong with this text. It is, after all, the script. But we think it may lack some personal touches that a Local Trainer familiar with the script and in touch with their community can provide. It is, as the youths say, rather “basic”.

**Winging It:** “Some scientists made a giant dome to look at plants. It was like a garden with lots of plants. But some of the plants were acting weird. The scientists were like, “Wait, whaaaat?” And that’s because there wasn’t wind. Which we need.

“Stress is actually a good thing. Who wants to share a story about the most stressful situation you’ve ever been in?”

“You shouldn’t try to get over stress. It makes you grow. Whatever you’re facing right now, it’s going to make you stronger. Just look for the silver lining and stay positive. Smile! Fake it til you make it! Just deal with it.”

**Our Thoughts:** Yikes. It does not feel like this Trainer truly prepared or really understands the main teaching point here. Their sloppy summary means that this story has lost a lot of its power. Additionally, this can be harmful in that participants can unintentionally hear that all stress is good, greatly undermining the impact some events or structures have had on many people’s lives. Students would call this “cringy;” we would say that this version is both confusing and risky.

**Knowing the Rules and Breaking the (Right) Rules:** “Did you know that scientists in Arizona created a biodome called Biosphere 2 to study the nature of nature? It contained everything from tiny moss to tall trees, similar to the ones we have outside near our baseball field. But the strangest thing happened: Trees would grow up, and up, and up, and then...CRASH! They would fall over. The scientists didn’t understand why this was happening, so they researched it (as scientists do!). They found something very simple was missing from this biosphere....wind. There was no wind in this environment. And while a hurricane-force wind can really damage a tree - like that storm we had last summer - some wind is actually needed to help trees grow deep roots that can hold fast to the earth even when wind, rain, or floods come their way. Resistance can create resilience.

“Stress can act in the same way. I know we have members of the Drama club here - has stress ever pushed you to memorize your lines really well? Raise your hand if anyone here ever studied hard to pass a test. Soccer players: how hard did you have to work to memorize all those plays Coach Garcia taught you? That sounds kind of stressful to me!

“We worry about what happens when toxic stress becomes overwhelming in a person’s life, we also know that we don’t live healthy lives by trying to avoid stress altogether. What we want to talk about today is how we can meet that stress with strength and ultimately grow deep roots of resilience in our lives, individually and collectively. At this point, let’s shift the conversation from stressors to the strengths we draw on to cope and overcome the tough days. And speaking of drawing, I don’t want to just talk about strength, I think we should create some art to share about the things that are giving us strength right now.”

**Our Thoughts:** How fun! This Trainer clearly knows the group they are talking to. While they stuck to the facts and teaching point of the script, they also made it applicable to the audience in a personal way, helping the audience feel seen and understood. Young people would call this “lit”. You, however, should not call it “lit”.

# CUT THAT OUT: TRAINING ADAPTATIONS BASED ON TIME LIMITS

We all wish we had more time. A Sources training is no different. We can plan and prepare, but sometimes things don't work out as neatly as we'd like. Our expectation is not that you would rush to fit every module possible into a training, rather that you would adapt the modules and setlist with fidelity to best serve the group you are training and move the team forward in Hope, Help, Strength-based messaging. However, it can be a challenge for Trainers to know what to cut or abbreviate from the setlist when a training has to be shortened, while still maintaining fidelity to Sources of Strength evidence base. Here are some guidelines to lean on when you don't have all the time you need.

**Do not cut games entirely from your training due to time.** Laughter is a vital part of the connection that these trainings can offer; a group may not remember every logistical detail you told them, but they will remember if they had fun or connected meaningfully with others. While you can choose shorter, less complicated games, don't skip out on the fun!

## PROTOCOL FOR SHORTENED ADULT ADVISOR TRAINING

A **full Adult Advisor training** that includes every module in this setlist (below) without shortening or cutting any modules would be five to six hours.

A **four to five hour Adult Advisor training** would still include all non-negotiable modules but require shortening negotiable modules.

A **three hour Adult Advisor training** would require shortening negotiable modules and cutting modules listed in the first order and last resort cuts.

SETLIST FOR ADULT ADVISOR TRAINING
INTRODUCTION DISCUSSION
CHAIR GAME
UPSTREAM PARABLE AND PREVENTION
BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
BRIDGING THE GAPS
SOURCES OF STRENGTH MODEL
SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY
QUICK GAME
EVIDENCE-BASE AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS
INTERCONNECTED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS
STRESSORS QUESTION AND BIOSPHERE STORY
STRENGTHS POSTER ACTIVITY
GAME BREAK
STRENGTHS WHEEL: INTRO TO STRENGTHS AND STORIES
MULTIPLE SUPPORTS
WHAT HELPS ME
I AM STRONGER
SMALL GROUP FACILITATION

QUICK CHANGE GAME

SHAWN ACHOR TED TALK (OPTIONAL)

RECENT LOSS OR SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND PROTOCOL REVIEW

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

PRACTICING AND SHARING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH (MEETINGS)

HOPE, HELP, AND STRENGTH

MESSAGING CAMPAIGNS

RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

BUILDING BELOW THE WATERLINE AND CLOSING CIRCLE

### Pre-Training Strategy

There are things you may be able to do ahead of time that could help you maximize your training time.

- Advocate for the necessary amount of time prior to the training.
  - Prevent shortening by asking the school for more time up front. You will need at least three hours for content, if the training includes lunch, ask for 15-30 additional minutes.
- Ask Adult Advisors to come in early before the start of the school day.
- Plan to have a shortened lunch time (or a working lunch).
- Pacing plays an important role in how much of the training is completed, so start on time, keep time during breaks, keep track of time during modules, and prepare ahead of time to shorten specific modules if necessary.
- Communicate clearly around start times and training location so you are able to begin the training on time.

### Training Non-negotiables

Whether a trainer is aware of a shortened training time during the pre-training phase or only becomes aware of it during, or directly before a training, **never cut the following features of the training:**

- Fun Factor: There is always time for connection and joy!
- Opening game
- Frequency of games (play games, but choose shorter games and facilitate them more quickly)
- Upstream Parable and Prevention
- Sources of Strength Model
- Strengths Poster Activity
- Recent Loss or Significant Events and Protocol Review
- Building a Community of Strength
- Practicing and Sharing a Community of Strength (Meetings)
- Hope, Help, and Strength
- Messaging Campaigns
- Resources & Next Steps (if you skipped content, this is where they can brush up on what they missed)

### Training Negotiables

The following is a protocol for cutting or shortening training modules during a shortened training:

- **Shorten All Modules** and be very aware of pacing before deciding to cut any training modules.
  - Hear from one or two participants when you ask a question rather than three or more
    - Consider inviting participants to share with a neighbor rather than in a large group setting
  - Take shorter breaks - start on time after breaks
  - Reduce lunch break or shift to a "working lunch" (if applicable)
  - Eliminate players from games more quickly and choose shorter games
  - Hit highlights and key points of modules, but go into less depth and detail
  - Shorten Bridging the Gaps

- Shorten Social Network Theory
  - Shorten Stressors Questions and Biosphere Story
  - Shorten Strength Poster Activity
  - Shorten The Strengths Wheel: Introduce the Strengths Wheel but spend less time sharing around each Strength or share on the first three Strengths before quickly summarizing the rest
  - Shorten What Helps Us
  - Shorten Small Group Sharing by picking two or three Strengths to share on with fewer people in each group.
  - Shorten Takeaways and Closing Circle
- **First Order Cuts**
    - Cut Shawn Achor Ted Talk
    - Cut Brief Overview of History and Philosophy
    - Cut Closing Story
    - Cut Takeaways
    - Cut Multiple Supports
    - Cut I Am Stronger
  - **Last Resort Cuts**
    - Cut Small Group Sharing

## PROTOCOL FOR SHORTENED PEER LEADER TRAINING

A **full Peer Leader training** that includes every module in this setlist (below) without shortening or cutting any modules would be six hours.

A **five to six hour Peer Leader training** would still include all non-negotiable modules but require shortening negotiable modules.

A **four to five hour Peer Leader training** would require shortening negotiable modules and cutting modules listed in the first order and last resort cuts.

SETLIST FOR PEER LEADER TRAINING
PREPARING FOR A TRAINING
ARRIVAL
INTRODUCTION DISCUSSION
CHAIR GAME
QUICK GAME
STRESSORS QUESTION AND BIOSPHERE STORY
STRENGTHS POSTER ACTIVITY
GAME BREAK
STRENGTHS WHEEL: INTRO TO STRENGTHS AND STORIES
MULTIPLE SUPPORTS
WHAT HELPS ME
I AM STRONGER
SMALL GROUP SHARING



QUICK CHANGE AND CONVERSATION
RISK FACTORS AND WARNING SIGNS
INVITING SOMEONE ELSE IN
PEER LEADER MISSION
BRAINSTORMING AND CAMPAIGN PLANNING
RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS
TAKEAWAYS AND CLOSING CIRCLE
ADULT ADVISOR DEBRIEF

### Pre-Training Strategy

There are things you may be able to do ahead of time that could help you make the most of your time.

- Advocate for the necessary amount of time prior to the training.
  - Prevent cutting and shortening by asking the school for more time upfront: at least four and a half hours, including lunch.
- Discuss shortening the Adult Advisor training to get more time with Peer Leaders.
- Ask Adult Advisors to come in early before the start of the school day.
- Plan to have a shortened lunch time.
- Pacing plays an important role in how much of the training is completed, so plan to shorten particular modules and prepare ahead of time.

### Training Non-negotiables

Whether a trainer is aware of a shortened training time during the pre-training phase or only becomes aware of it during, or directly before a training, **never cut the following features of the training:**

- Fun factor: There is always time for connection and joy!
- Opening game
- Frequency of games - (play games, but choose shorter games and facilitate them more quickly)
- Strengths Poster Activity
- The Strengths Wheel - Briefly introduce each Strength on the Strengths Wheel and facilitate one or two Strength stories for each
- What Helps Me
- Peer Leader Mission
- Brainstorming and Campaign Planning
  - Help the group understand what safe messaging looks like as well as the Peer Leader Mission Statement, and that they will continue to meet to create strategic messaging campaigns to spread Hope, Help, and Strength
- Resources and Next Steps

### Training Negotiables

The following is a protocol for cutting or shortening training modules during a shortened training:

- **Shorten all Modules** and be very aware of pacing before deciding to cut any training modules. Hit key points without going into as much depth or detail. Call on fewer participants to share, or have them share in dyads.
  - Cut some games or choose shorter games
  - Combine Quick Change and Conversation (both lines turn around at same time)
  - Shorten Strengths Poster Activity
  - Shorten Strengths Wheel sharing
  - Shorten Multiple Supports and I Am Stronger
  - Shorten Risk Factors and Warning Signs

- Shorten Brainstorming and Campaign Planning
- Shorten Takeaways and Thank You Cards
- Shorten Closing Circle and Closing Story
- Shorten Small Group Sharing
- **First Order Cuts** or shortened modules:
  - Cut Closing Story
  - Cut Favorite Part of Training - only share who a Trusted Adult is for each participant
  - Cut Multiple Supports and I Am Stronger
  - Cut Risk Factors and Warning Signs and prompt Adult Advisors to lead this discussion in a follow up meeting
- **Last Resort Cuts:**
  - Cut Small Group Sharing
  - Have participants turn to their neighbor and share who their Trusted Adult is or cut naming Trusted Adults

### **Post Training Debrief**

Provide Adult Advisors with details and resource documents for important training modules that were skipped during the training.

1. Small Group Sharing
2. Trusted Adult Postcards
3. Risk Factors and Warning Signs

# SUICIDE INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

As you are getting started, we know it is important that every school has 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? Your protocol should answer these questions and include the information below.

Developing or strengthening a protocol for how to respond to a distressed or suicidal student 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 shows 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. 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 who has died by suicide or made attempts resulting in injury or hospitalization.

## **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 or potentially suicidal, 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 invite in the designated staff and introduce them. We want to 'invite others in' and not 'make a hand-off'. If the situation is a medical emergency, 911 should be called immediately.

Not all clinicians, or emergency service providers are socially, linguistically, culturally or contextually competent. Among BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities, there are documented incidents of risk and/or harm as they have sought emergency services. It is critically important to continue to advocate for emergency and intervention services to support ALL of our students and staff, regardless of racial/ethnic identity, gender, sexuality, class, age, religious affiliation, English proficiency, literacy and/or ability.

#### **Part 4: Discussion with Student**

The student should be:

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

#### **Part 5: Notifying Parents/Guardians**

Contact the custodial parent/guardian regardless of the student'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 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 guardians 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 or homicide, and the guardian 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, tele-health, 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. See opposite page.

#### **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 identify a supportive, caring adult who can be activated in support. This adult can be within their family system, school, faith community, 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 Friendships, or Spirituality. These other supports and strengths can be sustained over time and be extremely protective. See the Self Care Card on page 131 in the Field Guide.

#### **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. Sources of Strength has also created a resource for utilizing Sources of Strength teams after a traumatic event, available at [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org).

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](http://sourcesofstrength.org). In the wake of a loss or a death in the school and/or community, please contact Sources of Strength. Our staff is available as a resource for your Sources of Strength team with meeting agendas, campaigns specifically geared towards Mental Health and help-seeking, as well as staff support.

	<b>NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE:</b> <b>1 - 8 0 0 - 2 7 3 - 8 2 5 5 ( T A L K )</b>
	Head Counselor Name: _____ Number: _____

 <p><b>THE TREVOR PROJECT</b> <i>Saving Young LGBTQ Lives</i></p> <p><b>24/7 HOTLINE</b> <b>1 - 8 6 6 - 4 8 8 - 7 3 8 6</b> <a href="http://www.thetrevorproject.org">www.thetrevorproject.org</a></p>
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 <p><b>THE STEVE FUND</b></p> <p><b>Text STEVE to 741-741</b> <a href="http://www.stevelfund.org">www.stevelfund.org</a></p>
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<b>Local Crisis Lines:</b>
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Adult Advisor:** Adult member of a school or community who builds a community of strength with staff, Peer Leaders, and students, and works to facilitate safe, strategic, Strength-based messaging.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Shared Risk and Protective Factors:** A Public Health model predicated on the notion that certain risk factors

increase risk for a variety of negative health outcomes, while certain protective factors decrease risk for these outcomes. Focusing on shared risk and protective factors allows for less siloed prevention strategies that have a more comprehensive impact using a wider variety of funding streams.

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

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

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

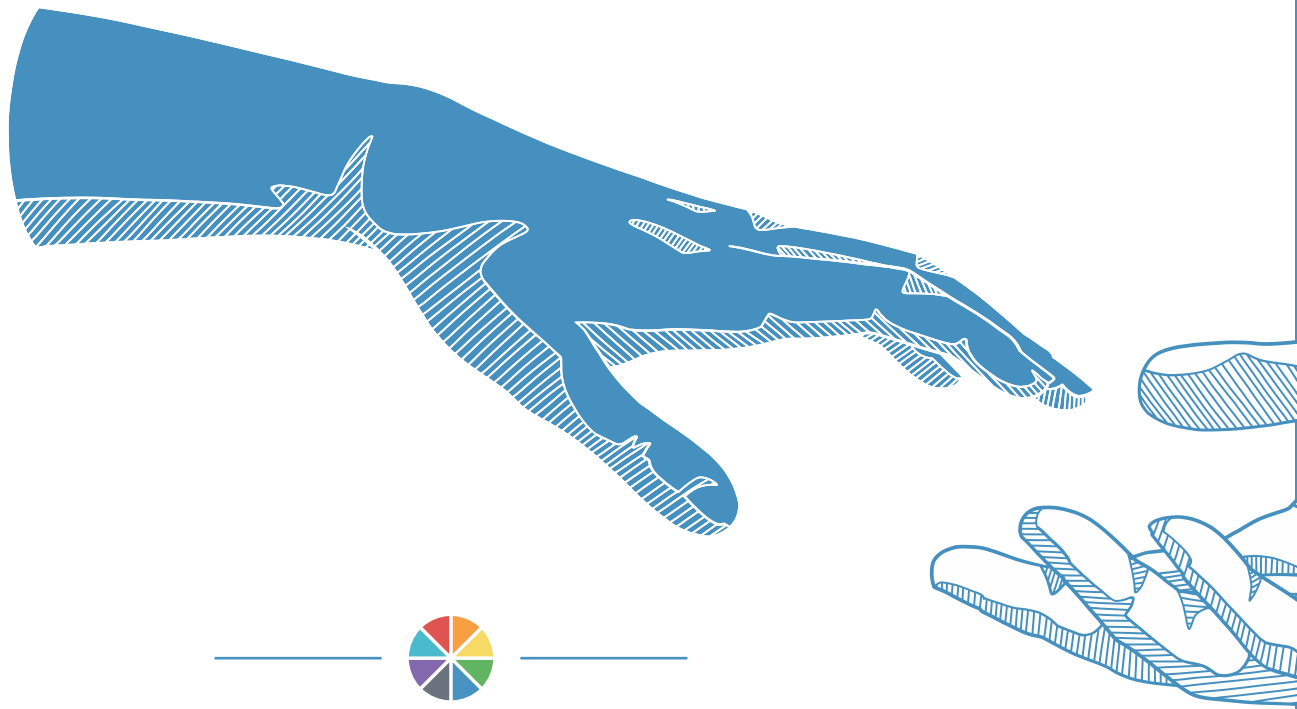
**Trusted Adult:** Any adult who exhibits attitudes and behaviors towards youth that contribute to the youth's sense of well being, connection, and support.

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

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

## CHAPTER 2

# ADULT ADVISOR TRAINING



The three to six hour Adult Advisor Training provides a detailed overview of the training and covers important elements for the program's longterm sustainability.



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# PREPARING FOR A TRAINING

The training space is an important factor to consider when preparing for a training. The wrong space or room setup can make a Trainer's job much more difficult, while a little prep work will go a long way. Here are a few things to keep in mind to set yourself and your training up for success.

## The Do's and Don'ts of Training Preparation

DON'T	DO
Assume that the group you are training will have a good space ready to go	Communicate with your hosts about the type of space you need ahead of time and show up early to help
Apologize for the space and materials you need	Advocate for what you need to create a training that fosters connection and bravery
Set up chairs in rows	Set up chairs in one large circle
Guess how many participants you will have	Ask your host how many Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors you will be expecting
Choose a space that has pillars or objects inside your training circle	Train in a room with space to move around safely while playing games and sharing in small and large groups
Hold a training in a busy or loud space	Ask to train in a quiet space that will not have much through-traffic
Try to yell all day	Ask your hosts ahead of time to provide a wireless microphone and speaker system, if needed
Assume that your host knows lunch plans	Learn about lunch! When will it arrive, what will it be, and where can we eat?
Forget your posters	Bring and set up sticky posters and markers ahead of time
Train in the middle of an echoey gymnasium or cafeteria	Move your training circle to the quietest corner of the room to keep noise and echoes down if possible
Forget name tags	Set out name tags and markers where people will walk in
Make it awkward	Crank some fun tunes and greet people energetically as they walk in!
Be a stranger	Be a friend
Wing it	Prepare and practice in advance

## Materials Checklist

- Flip Chart Posters with sticky side (1-2 pads)
- Colorful markers (enough for 2-3 per person)
- Name tags for all participants
- Sources of Strength campaign materials
- Peer Leader Guides (one for every participant plus a few extra)
- Swag prizes for games
- Bluetooth speaker (if available)
- Fun and uplifting playlist (Sources has curated playlists available on the Sources of Strength Spotify channel)
- Yarn Knots (we recommend every Trainer have about 150 as they tend to break and get lost)

## Room Checklist

- Open space that is quiet and free of cross-traffic
- Chairs (not desks) in one large circle
- Posters up on the wall:
  - Hope, Help, Strength not Sad, Shock, Trauma
  - Connectors to Help and Agents of Change
  - Targeted Messaging
  - Sources social media as well as mental health resources like the National Crisis Helpline, Trevor Project, Steve Fund, and any other relevant local resources
- Table with name tags and markers and a sign modeling and inviting pronoun use or an example name tag

## Names

- Set out a variety of markers with name tags at the entrance to the space

- Make sure to model and invite pronoun use, if you choose, with a sign and example name tag
- Read more about pronoun use at [sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns](https://sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns)
- Make sure to write your own name and pronouns on your name tag

## Don't Forget...

- To wear your own name tag (add your pronouns, if you choose, to model inclusion)
- To get a microphone and sound set up if needed (for groups larger than 50-60 people or if you have trouble projecting your voice a wireless microphone is preferable)
- To learn where the bathrooms are for breaks
- To ask what the plan for lunch and where snacks are (if applicable)
- To practice and prepare for the parts you will lead - Winging it is for the birds!
- That you've worked hard and are going to do great!

## TRAINER TIP

When deciding on the best location for your training, consider details such as ADA access to building, inclusive bathroom availability, symbolism present in a building, and names of spaces. Ask: Will every individual feel welcome here?

Training Room set up example



# ARRIVAL

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Name tags

Markers

Music

Chairs

## Key Point

We want to start the day off strong with a well set up room, a fun atmosphere, and friendly interactions.

## Trainer Overview

Participants are already learning when they walk through the door. Take advantage of the opportunity to build rapport and connect with as many people as possible.

Your circle of chairs is set up. You've set out markers and name tags. People are starting to filter in. You might be thinking your training is about to start, right? Actually, the training has already begun!

The arrival portion of the training sets a tone for how the entire training will go. We often hear that Adult Advisors or Peer Leaders may feel a little nervous as they enter the room: "What will today entail? Why did I get asked to come to this training? Will I know anyone else?" The space that they enter can tell them a lot: "Today is going to be fun! Today is going to be interactive. The person in charge seems really friendly. I know that I need to put on a name tag and sit in a chair."

### In a World of Thermometers, Be a Thermostat

Before you start the training: wherever it is, we invite you to consider how to make the space comfortable. Some training spaces can feel quite cold, and impersonal. Others are hot and cramped. No matter what is happening in the room, as the host, you can be a thermostat, not a thermometer.

A thermometer reflects the temperature of the room. If your participants are disengaged, then your energy starts to drop. If your students show up buzzing from a long weekend, your anxiety spikes. What if instead of simply reflecting the energy of the room, like a thermometer, you set the temperature, like a thermostat. You set the tone. You keep the pace. When you enter a room with

warmth and energy others will match that. You have an opportunity to create the environment you want.

Have the training space already set up before people walk in. When they enter, greet them enthusiastically. Invite adults to create a name tag with their first name large enough to read, and their pronouns. They can leave their bags or purses out of the circle or on the edge of the room, and grab a chair in the circle. As people are getting settled, have some upbeat music playing in the background. Set people at ease by casually walking around and introducing yourself to participants. Even if you are nervous yourself, try to be as genuinely positive about the day as you can. Once it seems like everyone has settled in a chair, turn off the music and take a deep breath: Let's go!

**Transition:** "Hello everyone! It's great to see you. My name is...."

### Key Summary

- Set the room up well.
- Help people feel comfortable by welcoming them and helping them get settled.
- Invite participants to create a name tag with their first name large enough to read, and their pronouns.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: ARRIVAL

- Set up training space before Adult Advisors arrived
- Greeted participants enthusiastically

# EDUCATE:

## TELLING THE STORY OF SOURCES OF STRENGTH

In the first portion of the Adult Advisor training, participants will learn a bit about the history and philosophy of Sources of Strength. Simply put, these modules explain why we do what we do the way we do it. A tremendous amount of research and thought has gone into each part of the program, and understanding the context and philosophical approach helps build a solid foundation for a safe and effective Sources of Strength implementation.



# INTRODUCTION DISCUSSION

## Time

3-5 minutes (up to 10 minutes for a 6 hour training)

## Key Point

The Sources of Strength Adult Advisor training has three sections:

1. Educate participants on the history, model, philosophy, and process of Sources of Strength.
2. Experience, share, and practice a Community of Strength (staff wellness).
3. Equip and Empower participants for the Peer Leader training and supporting a Peer Leader team moving forward.

## Trainer Overview

During the introduction, set a participatory and interactive tone, clearly lay out the day's progression, and provide logistical information. Building rapport and connection with Adult Advisors is as important as setting a clear vision for the day.

## Introduce Yourself

Share your name, pronouns (see Pronoun Usage Document at [sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns](https://sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns)), where you're from, your local role, and/or your relationship with Sources of Strength. Maybe you are a National Trainer or perhaps you are a state, regional, or Local Trainer, or you might be training in your own school, school district, or with your own colleagues. No matter what, make sure to introduce yourself.

## Introduce the Training

"Welcome to the Sources of Strength Adult Advisor training! I am excited to be here with you. This training has three main segments: Educate, Experience, and Empower/Equip."

1. **Educate:** "First, we'll cover a brief history of Sources of Strength (who we are as a program and where we come from), the theories and philosophies behind the program (what we do, and why we do it), as well as some of the research that makes up the program's evidence-base."
2. **Experience:** "Next, we will experience the model of Sources of Strength for ourselves. Sources isn't just a prevention program for young people, it's a wellness model for everyone. It is just as applicable to you and me as it is to our students. We will apply the model to our own lives and share our strengths."
3. **Empower/Equip:** "Finally, we will discuss your role as an Adult Advisor, both during and after

the Peer Leader training, as you continue to meet, and I will empower you to build a Community of Strength. Before you leave I will equip you with all the resources Sources of Strength has developed to support your team, and this program."

## Housekeeping and Logistics

It is important to confirm:

- How long the training will last
- Where the restrooms/facilities are
- What time breaks, snacks, and/or lunch will be

This will vary from training to training. Be sure to communicate this information clearly to the group.

## Humility and Curiosity

Humility is an organizational value of Sources of Strength. As a Trainer, you are a facilitator and a guide, but you are not the only expert in the room. You have the responsibility and the opportunity to draw out stories and insights from the Adult Advisors, to create space for games, activities, connection, and laughter.

"I recognize that there is a lot of wisdom and experience in the room, so please jump in to share relevant stories and insights, I welcome your participation. Your contribution will make this training a richer experience. We will be playing games, breaking into smaller groups, and taking breaks throughout the morning/afternoon together."

If you have the luxury of a longer training, it can be

helpful to have the group go around the circle and briefly introduce themselves (name/pronouns, and role in the school/community).

### TRAINER TIP

If you are working cross-culturally, or training outside your community, invite participants to share something you should know about their context or community.

“As a Trainer visiting from outside your community, I welcome any insights into your culture or context that will help me train in this space. You are the experts on your community, so please share your wisdom.”

This will give participants an opportunity to educate you on what you don't know or what you should be aware of as a Trainer. You may learn the majority of the students in the room are being raised by grandparents, the principal resigned yesterday, or the best place to grab a slice of pizza. Asking early implies humility and curiosity, two of our organizational values. Trainers should be patient and respectful, while keeping the conversation moving.

**Transition:** “Now that I've introduced myself and the schedule for the day, let's play! I need \_\_\_ (take the number of participants and divide by five) volunteers to join me in the center of the circle.”

### Key Summary

- Briefly Introduce yourself and Sources of Strength.
- Today will include some of Sources' history and research, a chance to practice Strength in our own lives, and the resources to support a Peer Leader team going forward.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: INTRODUCTION DISCUSSION

- Introduced self and provided clear vision for the day
- Modeled a relaxed and participatory tone
- Trainer outlined three part structure of training
  - 1. **Education:** Brief history and overview of Sources
  - 2. **Experiential:** Apply Strengths to our own lives
  - 3. **Empower/Equip:** Adult Advisor role in training and for program moving forward
- If it is a longer training, facilitated initial introductions to each other and the community

# CHAIR GAME

## Time

5-20 minutes

## Materials Needed

Enough chairs for all participants

## Key Point

We want everyone to participate during the training, so let's have fun setting the expectation for participation as we introduce ourselves.

## Trainer Overview

Invite all participants to introduce themselves in a playful and engaging way. Make sure you set a fun tone with laughter and movement. Use your sense of humor!

You are about to start a 3-6 hour suicide prevention training and your Adult Advisors might not know what to expect. From the beginning of the training we want to set the tone of the day as fun, interactive and unique to the participants in the room. It's important to use this game to learn more about who showed up, and to help the Adult Advisors warm up to what the day will hold.

**"I am interested to get to know everyone in the room, so can I get a group of \_\_\_\_ (1/5 of the group) of you to come join me in the middle of the circle."**

If you have the luxury of a longer training, you may have already gone around the circle and had everyone briefly introduce themselves and share something you should know about their school, community, or culture, if you are not a local or are working cross culturally. The Chair Game can still be played in this scenario, as you invite adults to hear everyone's names/pronouns again and learn more about them with the Food or Fun prompt!

## Introductions

- Invite about a fifth of the group to come stand in the center of the circle with you (so the game should be complete in about five rounds).
- Invite the small group in the middle to share their name/pronouns, role in the school or community, and either their favorite food, or something fun they've done recently (Food or Fun!).
- Facilitate the first round of sharing.
- Close out sharing by asking for a round of applause, but don't let participants return to their seats just yet.

**"A big thank you to this group for getting us started. But this isn't just about introductions... this is a competitive Chair Game!"**

Prompt people sitting near an empty chair to turn it around the other way.

**"I'm about to make a statement. If that statement applies to you, get up out of your chair and move across the circle to find a new chair. If you don't find a chair and get stuck in the middle, you will do what we just did, share your name/pronouns, role, and something fun or favorite food."**

**"Those of you starting in the middle with me, find a new chair no matter what. If you get stuck in the middle a second time, you don't have to go again, instead find someone who hasn't shared yet and switch places. You sit down and they come up and share their name/pronouns, role, and either something fun or their favorite food."**

**"Now there are a few rules:**

1. **"You cannot sit in a chair that is facing backwards: those chairs are out of bounds."**
2. **"You can't just move to the chair right next to you. Move at least five chairs away."**
3. **"Only one person per chair!"**

**"Let's get a little competitive! This game isn't any fun if you meander across the circle to a chair. You can do a little hip check, or an elbow bump ...I'm gonna look the other way, just don't hurt anyone."**

**"OK, are you ready? Everyone who is wearing shoes, move!"**

At this point, the group should get up and scramble for a chair, leaving the same number of participants to share in the next round. If someone is in the middle twice, invite them to pick someone who hasn't introduced themselves and exchange their place in the middle.



### Examples of Statements:

- Move if you drove to work this morning.
- Move if you have ever sung in the shower.
- Move if you drink coffee.
- Move if you have ever got a speeding ticket.
- Move if you have pets/siblings/brown hair/etc.

### TRAINER TIP

The more people moving around in each round, the more fun the Chair Game can be. Never make a statement that could isolate, alienate, or expose someone in the room.

Throughout each round, keep a general sense of how many people haven't shared (you can even ask participants to raise their hand if they haven't been in the middle yet). You don't want to end with a "lone winner" who may be shy or uncomfortable with that level of attention. You can have multiple winners by inviting everyone who hasn't been in the circle to jump up together for the last round.

### Adaptations for Small Groups

With less than five participants, this game can be awkward! So eliminate the scramble, but use the same prompt for introductions around the circle. Have each person share their name/pronouns, role, and something fun they've done recently or their favorite food. You can also invite everyone to share one thing they think you should know about their school or community.

### Adaptations for Large Groups

**Groups over 75:** If you have more than 75 participants, this game can take too long! Here are a couple options to save time while still letting people use their voices:

### Wheelhouse Connection:

- Ask the group to partner up and then get into two circles facing their partner; an inner circle and an outer circle. Ask the inner circle to walk clockwise, and the outer circle to walk counter-clockwise (in opposite directions) until you tell them to stop. Play music as the circles move in opposite directions, similar to musical chairs. When the music stops, ask them to face their new partner in the other circle and have a one minute discussion (30 seconds per person). When time is up, ask them to thank their

partner and start walking/dancing again in opposite directions until the music stops. Do this for five or six rounds before letting people return to their seats. Discussion topics might include but are not limited to:

- What is your name/pronouns and role?
- What's your favorite part of your community or school?
- What's the best restaurant in town?
- Who is a Positive Friend for you and why?
- What's the most fun thing you have done recently?
- What is something you are grateful for today?
- Who is a Mentor for you and why?

It can sometimes take a while for pairs to form when you call out stop. Instruct participants to either raise their hand if they don't have a partner and then move across the circle to pair up with another participant or simply join another pair creating a group of three.

**Note:** Try to alternate the discussion prompts between fun/silly and strengths-based/storytelling.

### Human BINGO:

- Bring copies of Human BINGO (page 208). Pass them out along with pens or markers. Give the group five minutes to move around, introducing themselves to people and getting them to initial a BINGO square that applies to them. The first three people to get BINGO or Blackout (all of the squares) wins a prize.

### Adaptations for Mobility

Often in trainings there will be participants who have crutches, casts, service animals, or use a wheelchair. You can easily make accommodations in this first game so all participants can play. Simply ask your participants what they need. Introduce yourself and explain that you're going to lead many games today, some of which require movement. You can invite them to share in the first round of introductions, or wait to move into the circle with the final group. Perhaps they'll have an idea we haven't tried yet! Stay flexible, get curious, be creative and you can ensure that everyone is included.

**Transition:** "Thanks so much for introducing yourselves. You can head back to your seat and I'm going to share more about Sources of Strength."

### Key Summary

- Invite one fifth of the group to join you in the middle.
- Invite participants to share their name/ pronouns, role, and either their favorite food or something fun they've done recently (Food or Fun!).
- Deliver Chair Game instructions.
- Facilitate the Chair Game until all participants have introduced themselves.

Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: CHAIR GAME

- Explained directions clearly
- Divided group so the game was approximately five rounds
- Facilitated flow and pace of game

# UPSTREAM PARABLE AND PREVENTION

## Time

10 minutes

## Materials

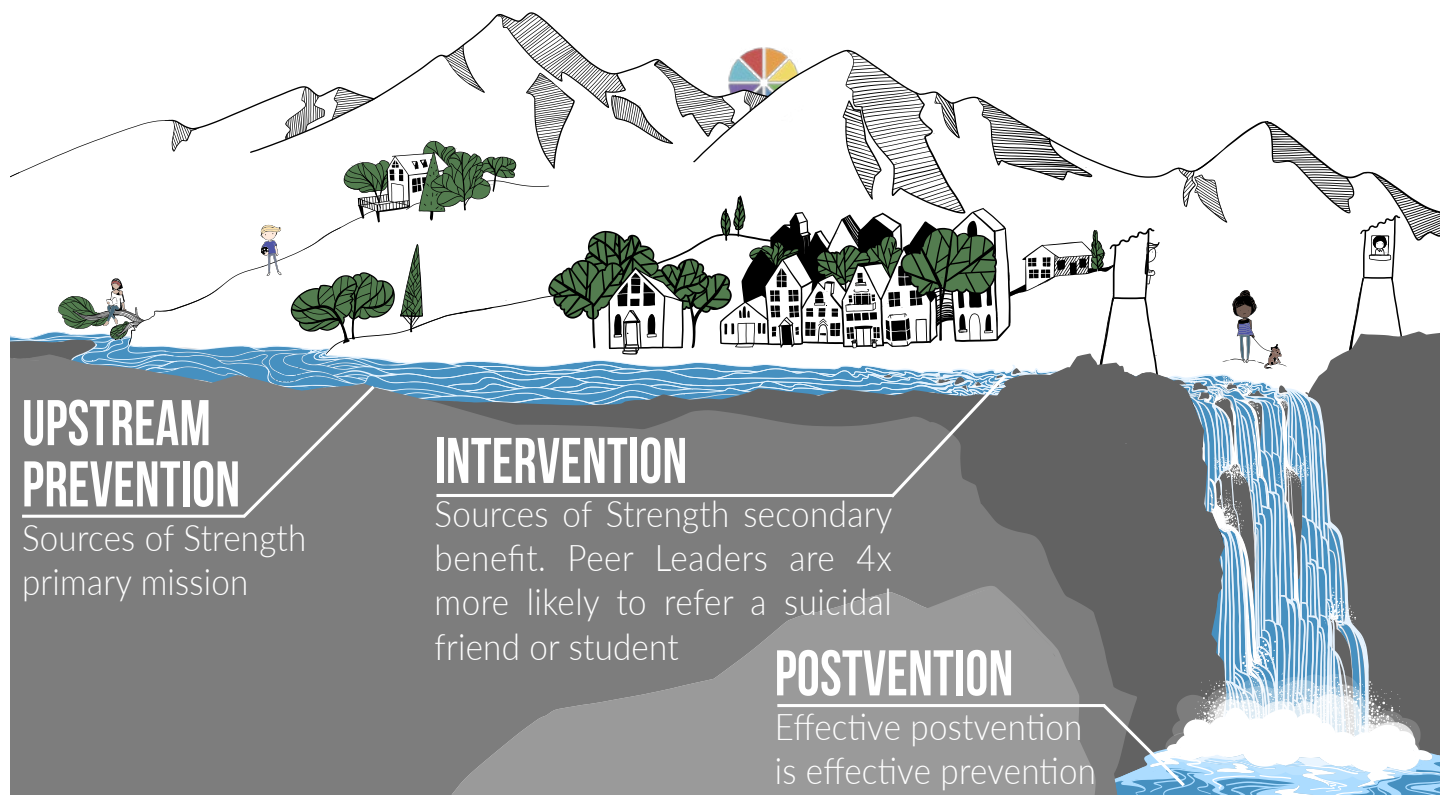
Projector and Screen (if possible)  
Adult Advisor Presentation Slides

## Key Point

The primary mission of Sources of Strength is to move upstream in the prevention cycle, although Sources also has a positive impact in the intervention and postvention space as well.

## Trainer Overview

In this section, you will explore the concept of Upstream Prevention, using the Upstream Parable to highlight the different spaces in the field of prevention. This concept is fundamental to understanding Sources of Strength, and why we do what we do the way we do it.



## Introduction to Parable

“Sources of Strength is a radically strength-based, upstream, suicide prevention program. All of these things are key to understanding who we are, and why we do what we do, the way we do it. We are an evidence based suicide prevention program, but we don’t actually spend all that much time talking about suicide, because we are so strength-based. We talk about eight specific Strengths, or protective factors, that help us navigate life’s ups and downs, and as we build up these strengths we move upstream in our prevention efforts.”

## Upstream Prevention Parable

“There is a common parable in the prevention field about a woman who lives in a community, situated alongside a river that spills off into a waterfall. The woman gets up and each morning takes a walk alongside the river. One day she hears a shout and realizes that someone has fallen in the water, is caught up in the current, and in danger of going over the falls.

“She springs into action, dives into the water, scoops up the person and pulls them back to shore. She performs CPR, and a life is saved. The community is thankful that this woman happened to be in the right place at the right time. She goes to sleep, wakes up, and takes another walk alongside the river’s edge. She hears

another shout. Another person has fallen in the water, is caught up in the current, and is in danger of going over the falls. She jumps in and pulls them to safety, and as she gets to shore she hears another shout. At this point, the community organizes to respond as they realize there are many people getting caught in the current and at risk of going over the falls. They build watchtowers, they train lifeguards, and they train the whole community in CPR. Unfortunately their efforts aren't able to keep everyone from going over the falls.

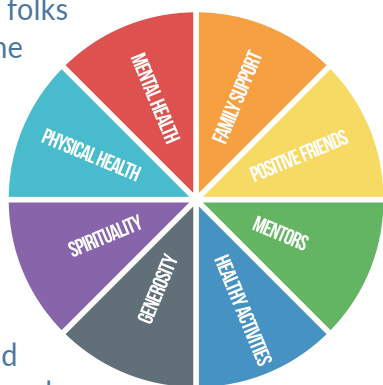
“I’m heading upstream to see if I can keep people from falling in the water in the first place.”

“One day this woman starts walking upstream. Everyone in the community shouts after her, ‘Where are you going? It’s a crisis! It’s all hands on deck!’ She responds, ‘Of course. That’s why I’m heading upstream to see if I can keep people from falling in the water in the first place.’”

### Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention

“Most of the time, when folks talk about suicide prevention, what they are really describing is intervention. Intervention at those waterfall moments is often focused on educating people about risk factors and warning signs, training ‘lifeguards and building watchtowers’ (i.e., gatekeeper training), identifying individuals at risk and in crisis, and making the appropriate mental health referrals.

“This is incredibly important work. However, our primary mission is to move further upstream to help keep people from falling in the river in the first place, and build resiliency so folks can get back out of the water while the river is still relatively tranquil. We want to increase Strength and protective factors, help seeking, trust towards adults, healthy coping skills, and belonging so that people don’t get to the point of crisis in the first place. And so that when they do find themselves in the river, they are much more likely to have the tools and the help to get



back to shore before they find themselves at the waterfall.

“Those waterfall moments might look a variety of ways. That waterfall might be a suicide attempt, dropping out of school, an act of violence, or developing an addiction. By moving upstream we are able to have impact on a whole host of adverse outcomes.

“Sources has an impact in the intervention space as well. Our research shows that Sources Peer Leaders are four times more likely to refer a suicidal friend to a Trusted Adult. When we are able to move upstream and shift help seeking norms and break down codes of secrecy and silence, we are able to help more people get out of the river. We have also found that our Peer Leader teams can be effective in the postvention space, the space below the waterfall, after a loss or a death. This could be a death by suicide, or the loss of a community member to illness or accident.

“After a loss, our Peer Leader team can be mobilized in two different ways. One, as eyes and ears looking out for people that might be struggling after the loss and connecting them to resources. This is what it means to be a Connector to Help. Two, Peer Leaders can be Agents of Change, a powerful force to help the community as a whole lean into their strengths and resilience, to practice help seeking, and to move through that difficulty in a way that is healing and helpful.”

**Transition:** “This waterfall image helps place the work of Sources of Strength within the broader field of prevention.”

### Key Summary

- There are several different levels of prevention where Sources of Strength has an impact; upstream, intervention, and postvention.
- The mission of the Peer Leader is always the same; to be an **Agent of Change**, and a **Connector to Help**.
- While primarily upstream in its prevention efforts, Sources of Strength has been shown to have great benefits at the intervention and postvention levels as well.

Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: UPSTREAM PARABLE AND PREVENTION

- Introduced Sources of Strength using key words including, radically strength-based, upstream, and suicide prevention program
- Clearly told the Upstream Parable
- Unpacked Upstream Prevention
  - Sources primary mission of Upstream Prevention
  - Sources benefit at the Intervention level (Peer Leaders 4x more likely to refer)
  - Sources response at the postvention level

# BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Projector and Screen (if possible)

Adult Advisor PowerPoint or Keynote Presentation

## Key Point

Provide Adult Advisors with a clear understanding of the upstream prevention roots of Sources of Strength.

## Trainer Overview

This module provides Adult Advisors with a better understanding of the history behind Sources of Strength, including how Mark LoMurray began the program. This should be a brief introduction to Sources of Strength's origin story.

## History

"The founder of Sources of Strength, Mark LoMurray, is a lot like the person in the parable. While working in juvenile justice as the head of the Police Youth Bureau in North Dakota, Mark and his team were involved in statewide intervention and crisis response with teenagers and their families. At the time North Dakota had some of the highest teen suicide fatality rates in the nation and over a period of three years in his position, Mark attended more than 30 funerals of teenagers. Some of the funerals were results of drunk driving accidents, some were accidental overdoses, and many were suicide deaths.

"Mark came away from the experience with a profound sense that more could be done to get ahead of these issues and move beyond reactionary and crisis-driven responses. Mark left his job at the Police Youth Bureau to begin what would become Sources of Strength with the vision to move further upstream in prevention efforts.

Founded in 1998, Sources of Strength's first iterations were developed in partnerships with American Indian communities in the Dakotas experiencing high suicide rates, and limited access to mental health resources. Today, there are active Sources teams in most U.S. states and Canadian Provinces, in rural, urban, suburban, tribal and Indigenous communities all across North America.

"Sources of Strength is one of the most evaluated and widely disseminated prevention programs in North America. This evidence base began with a partnership with national researchers out of the University of Rochester who were observing young people as immensely powerful change agents within their natural peer relationships and that a peer component was necessary for effective prevention. The partnership with the University of Rochester produced data to demonstrate the positive impact of Sources on population level health norms, and landed Sources on SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) NREPP list (National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices), the gold standard for Evidence-Based Programs and Practices. We'll talk more about the Sources of Strength evidence-base in a bit."

**Transition:** "Over the last twenty years, we've identified other gaps in the field of prevention that Sources of Strength works to bridge."

## Key Summary

- Mark LoMurray founded Sources of Strength using a proactive (not reactive) approach to teen suicide prevention

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

- Briefly explained how Sources of Strength got started
- Focused on the shift from crisis response to upstream prevention

# BRIDGING THE GAPS

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Projector and Screen (if possible)

Adult Advisor Slides

## Key Point

Sources of Strength engages in suicide prevention in unique and powerful ways, shifting our focus from risk to strength, spreading messages of Hope, Help, and Strength rather than Sad, Shock, and Trauma, while partnering Peer Leaders with Adult Advisors.

## Trainer Overview

Moving upstream in our prevention efforts sets Sources of Strength apart in the broader field of prevention, but so do our strategies and our tactics. In this section, Adult Advisors should better understand gaps within traditional prevention efforts, as well as the ways that Sources of Strength attempts to bridge them, as we share more of our philosophy.

## Bridging the Gaps

“Sources of Strength strives to move upstream in the prevention field and bridge gaps found in traditional prevention and public health efforts.”

## From a Risk Focused to Strength Focused Approach

“The first gap Sources of Strength bridges is a shift away from a primarily risk-focused approach to a strength-focused approach. Many prevention programs focus heavily on risk factors and warning signs, teaching people how to identify when others are in crisis, and how to make the appropriate mental health or emergency referrals. Engaging in effective intervention and crisis response is incredibly important but focusing primarily on risk represents a gap for two significant reasons.

“First, when we ask groups of students to name the risk factors and warning signs for suicide, they can typically list them off. This shows that good and important work is being done in the intervention space. However, when we flip the script and ask students ‘How does someone who is feeling suicidal get better? How does someone who is addicted to drugs and alcohol recover? How does someone who has been harassed or abused or experienced violence get through that and move towards healing?’ We hear silence.

There is not always a lot of dialogue happening around what resilience looks like. What recovery feels like. What meeting the adversities of life with strength, and connection, and help can look like. We need to broaden the conversation we are having around these issues. We can’t only talk about what hurts, we need to talk about what helps people get through tough times. We

can help people tell their stories of strength, encourage them to ‘recover out loud,’ and in doing so, normalize recovery, help seeking, and resilience.

“The second reason why a risk-focused approach is a gap, is that it takes a deficit-based approach. We don’t want to speak about people as if they are the sum total of their risky environments. Human beings are more complex than that. Many groups often referred to as ‘at-risk’ could more aptly be described as being put at risk by our society or systems or circumstance. These groups and individuals are incredibly resilient and have tremendous strengths and assets in their lives.

“A strengths-based approach provides a mirror to reflect a community or an individual’s strengths back to themselves. An individual is a survivor and not a victim. A community is not defined by what it lacks, but by its culture and connections.”

## From Sad, Shock, Trauma to Hope, Help, and Strength Messaging

“The second major gap is that historically many prevention programs, and suicide prevention programs in particular, have used a messaging strategy defined by sad images, shocking statistics, and traumatic death stories. These tactics, while emotionally activating, can sometimes unintentionally cause harm. For the most vulnerable people this approach often reinforces a sense of hopelessness and inevitability. Throwing out a bunch of shocking statistics can create a false normalization effect, making the very thing we are trying to prevent seem more common than it truly is.

“You may have heard that suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people. While this is technically true, it is also misleading. After all, not that many things kill young people, they are not typically dying of heart disease and cancer, so suicide comes up on the list, even though they are actually dying by suicide at lower rates than middle aged and elderly populations. The statistics and stories around youth suicide can feel shocking. We know one death is too many, which is why we do this work. The truth is the vast majority of people who struggle with feeling suicidal do not go on to die by suicide; recovery and resilience are the true norm. We need to tell those stories. This provides hope to people who might be struggling.”

**From Adult Driven to Peer-Led Prevention Strategies**

“The third and final gap is a serious lack of teens involved in teen suicide prevention. A lot of suicide prevention trains adults to do this work on behalf of young people but research shows that students will often know much sooner when their friends are struggling, often long before the adults trained in suicide prevention, risk factors, and warning signs. Research also shows us that codes of secrecy and silence are very prominent in many schools, keeping students from connecting to help for themselves or their friends.

“Shifting to a peer-led approach empowers Peer Leaders to break down codes of secrecy and silence, create a healthy culture around: help seeking, healthy coping, building resilience, Strengths, and protective factors. We are all influenced by the beliefs and behaviors of our closest friends, so we capitalize on the power of peer-to-peer social networks. If we want to impact teen behavior and the beliefs that inform behaviors, we have to empower teenagers to lead by example and support their friends; to become Agents of Change and Connectors to Help. By partnering Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors together, we can harness the power and influence of teen voices, and pair it with the protection and care of Trusted Adults.”

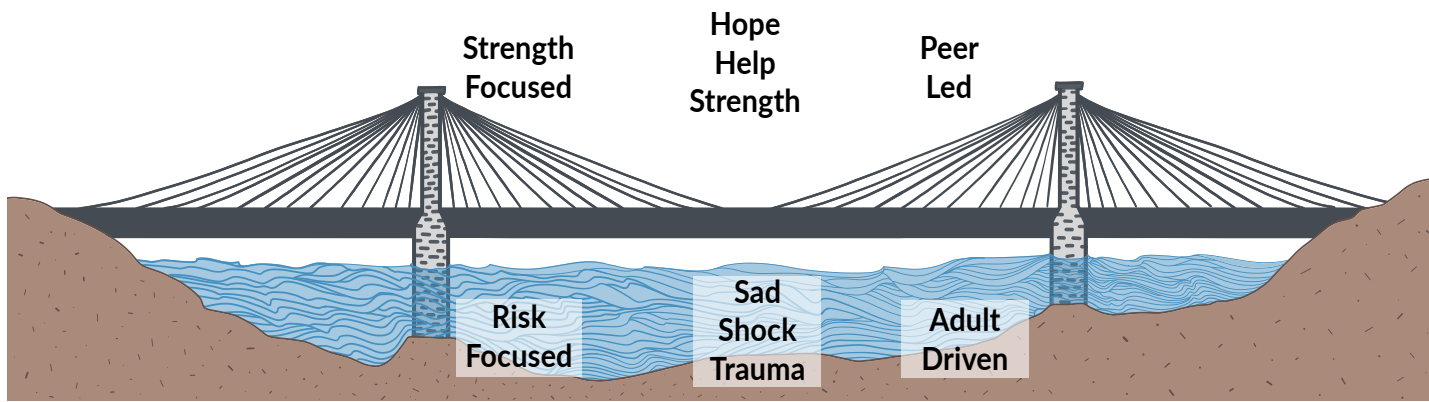
**Transition:** “Now that we’ve placed Sources in the broader field of prevention, and identified some of the gaps we are working to bridge, let’s get practical! Let me explain the model, from a ten thousand foot perspective.”

**TRAINER TIP**

While advocating for more comprehensive upstream prevention, and shifting away from Sad, Shock, Trauma approaches, don’t speak poorly of other prevention programs. Highlight these gaps in the field without implying that nothing else is working, or singling any other programming out.

“We want our messaging campaigns to look and feel hopeful. We want to talk about help: what helps, how to get help, where to get help, and to normalize early help-seeking behaviors. And we need to talk about the Strengths that are protective in our lives. We are shifting from a Sad, Shock, and Trauma messaging strategy to a Hope, Help, and Strength messaging strategy.”

**Bridging the Gaps in Prevention**





### Key Summary

- There are several gaps within the traditional prevention field.
- Sources of Strength's mission is to move efforts from risk-focused prevention to strength-focused public health with prevention outcomes.
- We shift from Sad, Shock, Trauma messaging styles towards messages of Hope, Help, and Strength.
- Sources of Strength shifts our prevention efforts from adult driven to peer-led, in a partnership between Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: BRIDGING THE GAPS

- Explained why a focus on risk is limiting, and why a strength-focused approach is necessary
- Explained why a Sad, Shock, Trauma approach can be harmful and how a Hope, Help, Strength approach is safe and effective
- Explained why an adult-driven approach is a gap and promoted the power of Peer Leaders

# SOURCES OF STRENGTH MODEL

## Time

5-8 minutes

## Materials

Projector and Screen (if possible)  
Adult Advisor Slides

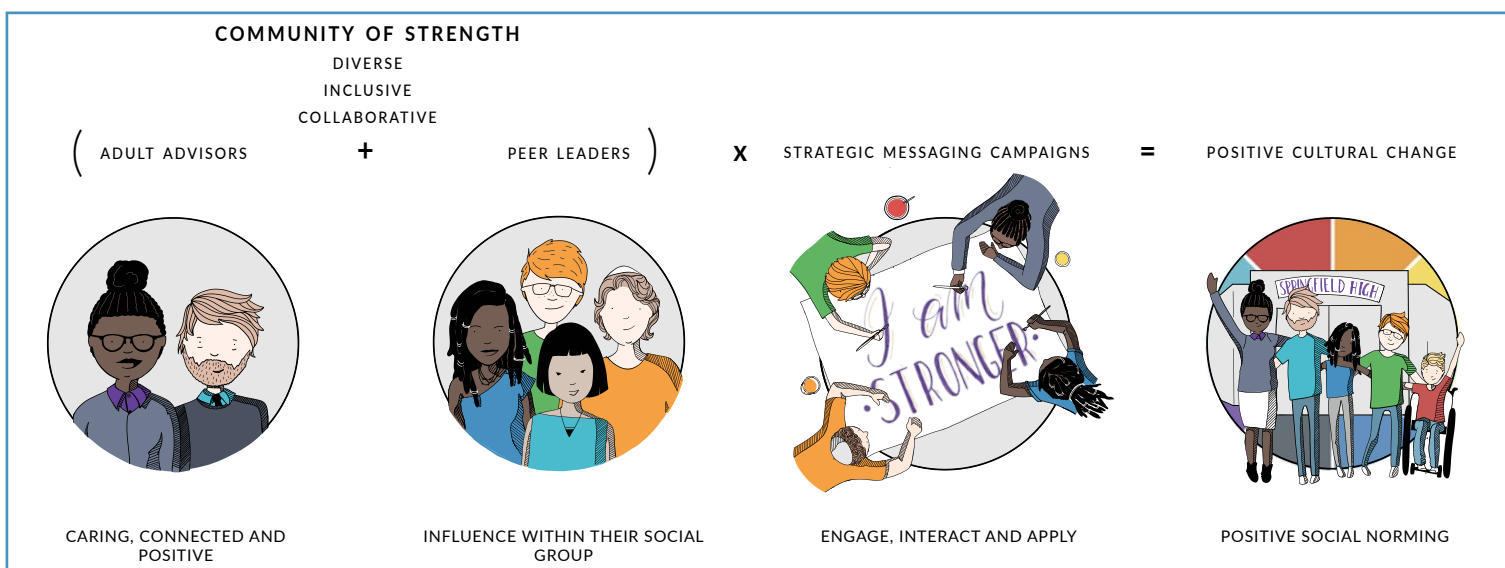
## Key Point

The Sources of Strength model is a diverse group of Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders working together to practice, build, and share a Community of Strength through strategic messaging campaigns to create positive climate and culture across a school or community.

## Trainer Overview

The Sources Model module helps Adult Advisors understand the basic structure or elements of the program and how the overall philosophy gets put into practice. Take time to highlight each element of the model, which will be unpacked in greater detail throughout the day.

## Sources of Strength Model



## Introduction

"The model of Sources of Strength consists of a diverse group of Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders working together to practice, build, and then share a Community of Strength through strategic messaging campaigns to create positive climate and culture across a school or community. Let's break that down."

## Adult Advisors

"We have learned that prevention and public health programs work most effectively when adults and students are working together. If we just train adults or just train students, it won't be as effective. One without the other lacks prevention power. To bridge the gaps commonly found in prevention and create lasting change, we need to recruit a team of Adult Advisors from every corner of our school and/or community.

"A diverse Sources of Strength team is a fidelity

requirement, not a recommendation. If your school staff is relatively homogenous (with regard to race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, ability, etc.) be sure to recruit community members, and adults with great kid skills from outside of your school staff to ensure that each Peer Leader can build relationships with an adult whose identity and/or experience is similar to their own."

An Adult Advisor team should include representatives from different departments, with various skill sets, roles and responsibilities, identities, and connections to students. These Adult Advisors should be volunteers rather than voluntolds, and they need to be caring, connected, and positive.

**Caring:** "They should be people who care about others, particularly young people and their mental health and overall wellbeing."

**Connected:** “They should be connected to different groups of students and have the ability to develop trusting relationships.”

**Positive:** “They should be positive, meaning that they truly believe in the power of young people to leverage their voices and influence to create positive social change.”

### Peer Leaders

“Adult Advisors then work with their school staff to nominate and recruit a group of Peer Leaders from across the social network of your school. The Peer Leader team should reflect your school or community in terms of racial and ethnic identity, gender and sexuality, religious affiliation, grade level, socioeconomic experience etc. We also want the Peer Leader team to be socially diverse. The Peer Leader team should be composed of students with influence and sway, selected from every social group, club, clique, or cafeteria table on campus.”

### Community of Strength

“Together these Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders will meet regularly and form a Community of Strength. We recommend teams meet at least twice a month, for 30-60 minutes, to share and connect, to laugh and play, and to plan events, activities, and initiatives that we call campaigns. This team is practicing, building, and sharing stories of Strength. Over time this team becomes a Community of Strength, especially when it is:

- **“Diverse** and reflective of the broader school and community. Your Sources of Strength team should be diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, class, age, and ability.
- **“Inclusive** in its language, policies, storytelling, and leadership to create brave and strong spaces for everyone involved.
- **“Collaborative** in its strategic partnerships within the school and the broader community (i.e., other peer led initiatives, groups, clubs, and student activities).



“If your Sources of Strength team fails to represent the diversity of your school or community, then it will likely perpetuate inequality and lack efficacy. Remember it’s not enough to simply recruit and nominate a diverse team of students and adults. From our meetings to our messaging campaigns, a Sources of Strength team needs to create equitable practices and use inclusive language. If your school has a high bus population and you host your meetings right after school, it’s not just a transportation problem, it’s an equity issue.

“We often say that ‘Everyone’s voice has power!’ This is an aspirational statement we can make more true in our meetings, and our messaging when we use people-centered language, when we make accommodations for accessibility and when we do not tolerate abusive or harassing language.”

### Strategic Messaging Campaigns

“The power of the program does not lie in the training itself, but in what happens after the training. As the Adult Advisors and the Peer Leaders continue to meet together and practice embodying a Community of Strength, they can build and share Strength through strategic messaging campaigns. These campaigns (some of which are templated campaigns from Sources of Strength, others are unique campaigns that your team creates) work to impact the school and community at a population level by inviting everyone to engage, interact, and apply Strength to their own lives. Successful prevention messaging is targeted. Targeted messaging moves us beyond passive forms of communication like posters in the hall or PSA’s. Targeted messaging uses local faces and voices to share stories of Strength; it invites people to interact and share what they think or feel, and it asks, ‘What does Strength look like for you?’ ”

### Positive Culture Change

“These strategic messaging campaigns inspire positive culture change around help-seeking behavior, youth-adult connectedness, trust towards adults, resilience, healthy coping, and recovery using positive social norming. Let me explain what I mean.”

To highlight the importance of positive social norming, and how negative data in a public health campaign can actually lead to unintended behaviors, give one of the following examples.

1. “Good substance abuse and violence prevention have learned the importance of positive social norming. Statistics like ‘82% of students at BHS do not engage in binge drinking’ are far more effective in changing behavior than those that highlight the prevalence or negative impact of the behavior” (highlighting the 18% of students who do engage in binge drinking).
2. “Well intended articles on military suicides that highlight a traumatic death story with a sentence or two at the end on where to get help can unintentionally create a self-fulfilling prophecy of increasing suicidal behavior rather than help-seeking behavior. Think of how impactful it would be if there were hundreds of articles describing how previously suicidal military personnel got better, how they got connected to help, and the Strengths they used to recover. We believe these stories of recovery would have a more positive and lasting impact, helping others to see their own story through a lens of hope, connection, Strength, and recovery.
3. “When researchers studied two approaches to reduce litter in public spaces, they found it was far more effective to run a campaign with a locally known person throwing litter in the garbage or recycling can, rather than sharing facts about the public impact of litter. As humans, we often have to be guided in what to do, not simply told what not to do. Research continues to show that positive social norming is consistently a more powerful and effective campaign strategy.

“So that is the basic model of Sources of Strength. A team of adults and students, creating a diverse, inclusive and collaborative Community of Strength to

shift school culture and climate through campaigns that foster health and wellness for everyone.”

**Transition:** “If we effectively recruit and nominate a Sources of Strength team from every corner of your school and community, they are able to impact positive cultural change because of the power of Social Network Theory.”

### Key Summary

- Sources of Strength combines caring and connected Adult Advisors with influential Peer Leaders. One without the other lacks prevention power.
- An Adult Advisor team should include representatives from different departments, with various skill sets, roles, responsibilities, identities and connections to students.
- Adult Advisors should be caring, connected, and positive.
- The Peer Leader team should reflect your school or community in terms of racial and ethnic identity, gender and sexuality, religious affiliation, grade level, socioeconomic experience etc.
- The Peer Leader team should also be socially diverse and composed of students with influence and sway, selected from every social group, club, clique, or cafeteria table on campus.
- Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders form a diverse, inclusive, and collaborative Community of Strength in their meetings, and share their strength in campaigns. These messaging campaigns allow everyone to apply Strength to their own lives.
- Positive Social Norming refers to the prevention strategy of highlighting healthy norms and behaviors rather than the unhealthy norms or behaviors we are trying to prevent.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SOURCES OF STRENGTH MODEL

- Identified characteristics of Adult Advisors to recruit
- Identified characteristics of Peer Leaders to nominate
- Described how Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders meet together to form a diverse, inclusive, and collaborative Community of Strength
- Explained Strategic Messaging Campaigns
- Contrasted Positive Social Norming and Negative Social Norming

# SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY

## Time

15-18 minutes

## Materials

Projector and Screen (if possible)  
Adult Advisor Presentation Slides

## Key Point

Social Network Theory illustrates how the roles and relationships of Peer Leaders within a school and community can leverage their influence to decrease risk, increase protection, and spread positive norms, beliefs, and behaviors.

## Trainer Overview

While the graphs/slides in this section can seem complicated, they serve to illustrate the important ideas within Social Network Theory. Adult Advisors should have a clear understanding that Social Network Theory shows how social influence can create positive change across an entire school or community.

## Social Networks

It's important to give the Adult Advisors a basic understanding of Social Network Theory for a few different reasons:

1. To reframe the misconception that Sources of Strength is only for students who are, or have previously been suicidal; a Peer Leader team should be recruited from every corner and culture of the school and community, not as mini psychologists or peer counselors, but as Connectors to Help and Agents of Change.
2. To cast a vision of climate and culture change that leverages the different roles people play within a social network; most student leadership initiatives are comprised of popular or central members and serve only a portion of the student body, and Sources aims to have a broader and more equitable approach.
3. To illustrate how peer-to-peer influence can be used for good; risky behavior is contagious, but so is Hope, Help, and Strength.

“We all exist within social networks. I'm not talking about social media. We are connected to people in complex social relationships, and things spread through social networks! If I were sitting in this room with a terribly contagious disease, you would all be heading for the doors, because diseases spread. My illness puts you at risk, but not just you: your colleagues, partners, and students would also be at risk because of their location in your social networks. We know diseases can spread through a network, and we have learned that lots of things like beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes are contagious and can spread through networks in similar ways. We often see this with binge drinking and smoking.

“There is good news though. It's not just disease or dangerous behaviors that spread through networks; positive things can spread through networks too. Things like hope, resilience, altruism, generosity, help-seeking behaviors, trust towards adults, and healthy coping are all contagious as well. We are not training Peer Leaders to be junior psychologists but rather to be Agents of Change and Connectors to Help. Peer Leaders can be the Patient Zero in an epidemic of health, a contagion of strength in their schools and community. You may have realized adults don't necessarily shape teen culture, if we are going to change the culture of a school, it is critical that we have students at the heart of it.”

## HIGHLIGHT

We are not training Peer Leaders to be junior psychologists. We are training and empowering them to be **Agents of Change and Connectors to Help**. We view our Peer Leaders as the Patient Zero in an epidemic of health, a contagion of Strength, in their schools and community.

You will be using this next handful of slides to demonstrate:

1. The roles within a simple social network.
2. Where suicide risk exists within a social network.
3. How the protective factor of Trusted Adults impacts a social network.
4. How equal access to Trusted Adults increases protection and decreases risk.

This data comes from two of our Randomized Control

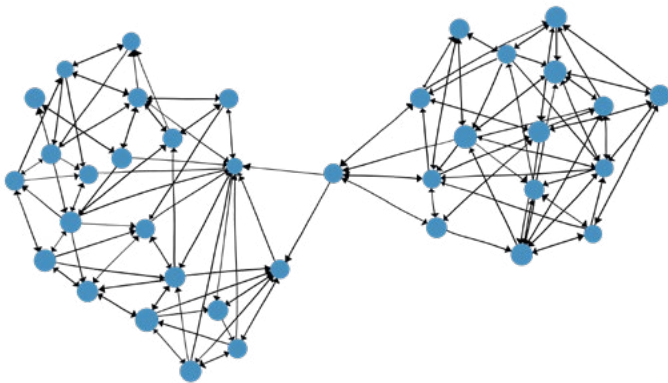
Trials (RCT), run by the University of Rochester, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

The first two social network slides come from the RCT studying 2,700 students in 18 US high schools in Georgia, New York and North Dakota.

The third slide comes from the RCT studying 10,291 students from 38 U.S. high schools in New York, and North Dakota.

In each study students nominated close friends and Trusted Adults to construct social networks. Students were asked whether in the preceding 12 months they had suicidal thoughts and behaviors, as well as if they had adults they trusted and could talk to about personal things. All data reported here is from baseline assessments prior to program implementation.

“So let’s explore the roles and relationships in social networks by looking at the map of this simple social network.”



### Roles Within Social Networks

“This slide depicts a simple social network. Here, every shape is a person and every line is a relationship. Each person was asked to name their five closest friends and this model shows who is connected to whom. If there is an arrow pointing towards a shape, it means that person was named as a ‘top five’ friend. As you can see, within this one classroom, there are two distinct and separate friendship networks, connected by a single student.

“We may all be a part of the same network, but we might occupy very different places within that network. First, let’s talk about the role of a BRIDGE. In a social network, a Bridge has the unique ability to bring different groups together. This is a member of

a network who holds multiple identities, passes from group to group, and can adapt with ease. In a school setting, this may be a student who can sit comfortably at many different lunch tables. The role of a Bridge on a Peer Leader team is to gather multiple groups, connect with lots of subcultures and communities, and help to bridge divisions among them.

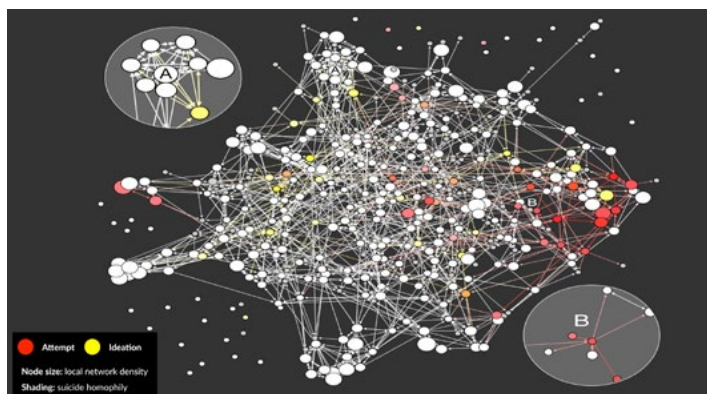
“Now, let’s look at the CENTRAL Member. This is a person in a network who names five friends, but more than five people named them. They are often considered popular and powerful and they hold a lot of influence and sway. They can also be maintainers of the status quo, and resistant to social change, because the network and the power structures already serve their interests. A Central Member is important as a Peer Leader because what they say is cool, is cool! And when they decide to use their power to spread positive change, that change will spread more rapidly because of their connectivity in their central location in the network.

“Next, the role of a PERIPHERAL. These are the people in the network on the margins or the edges. They can be on the margin for many different reasons. Maybe they are very involved with a band, a club, or other groups that are not main-stream in the community. They are often early adopters who are willing to challenge the status quo and can help get the ball rolling; their perspective is powerful when we are thinking about social change and what sorts of campaigns and activities will truly engage the entire student body.

“Finally, let’s notice the ISOLATE. These are members of the network who do not name anyone as a friend and no one names them in return. Our research indicates that about 2-3% of the population in a medium-sized high school self-report as an isolate. That’s a lot of people feeling disconnected. Isolated students have a lot of insight into the barriers and obstacles to belonging and can help us know how to best reach other isolated students.

“A quick word about the roles within a social network: These roles are not prescriptive of where someone will be in every social network, and they are not descriptive of anyone’s character. As adults, for example, we can be CENTRAL members in our own family systems but be PERIPHERAL member to our in-laws. Additionally, an individual’s place within a social network can change;

each network is like a snapshot of the relationships that exist in that moment. A school or community is like a living organism, adapting and reacting to new conditions that arise over time.”



### Risk Within Social Networks

“This is a social network in a high school. You can see it is quite a bit more complicated. Again, each dot represents a student and each line is a relationship. The shape is typical to the kinds of social networks we see in schools; a dense center and a starfish shape with more peripheral groups pulling out.

“On this first slide, the yellow dots indicate a student who self-reported experiencing suicidal ideation, they had thoughts about suicide in the last twelve months, and the red dots indicate a student who self-reported making a suicide attempt in the last twelve months. The shading of the dots indicates homophily, which is the idea that birds of a feather flock together. If a student made an attempt, and is connected relationally to another student who made an attempt, their dots would be more darkly shaded. The size of the dot indicates network density, which means that student relationships are interconnected, for instance a group of friends all naming each other as friends, resulting in their network being dense and clustered.”

If time allows, you can have a more fluid conversation with the Adult Advisors. After explaining the social network, and the key, you can ask questions like:

- “When looking at this social network what do you notice?”, Or
- “What sticks out to you as you look at this model of a medium-sized High School from one of our Randomized Control Trials?”

As observations are shared you can highlight the bullet points laid out below.

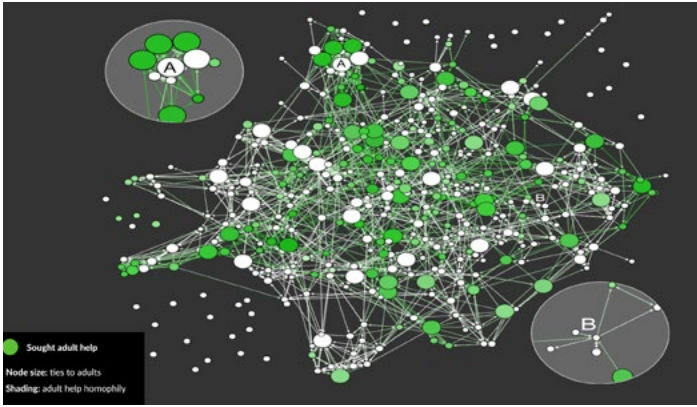
“We can notice a few things about this network:

- “The suicide risk tends to be clustered. In addition to the homophily, it is also a chicken-or-egg scenario. Do students who have made suicide attempts find each other and build relationships? Or does an influential student make an attempt and then that behavior spreads through their social network? We believe it is probably a little of both. Either way, there is a relational connection.
- “Although risk is spread across the population, the vast majority of the students did not self-report suicidal thoughts or previous attempts.
- “Suicide risk is more clustered on the periphery of a social network but there are students who report ideation all throughout the network, including in the center.
- “There is more safety in social density: there is a higher risk among students who do not feel connected and are in less cohesive or interconnected social circles.
- “Not every student who is isolated is suicidal, but it is important to note that they are at greater risk for bullying and harassment, dating violence and substance use and misuse - things that can place them at a higher risk for suicide.

“As you are assembling a Peer Leader team, recruit students from every corner and culture of your school and community. If you only recruit students from the center of the network there may be two, three, or four degrees of separation between them and anyone on the margins who may be struggling. Even if they are working hard, their words may seem inauthentic to someone on the periphery. In the same vein, if you only recruit students from a cluster of higher risk, they may unintentionally spread unhealthy norms, beliefs, and behaviors. A safe and effective Peer Leader team is assembled from all across the social network.

“This next slide is from the same school, and the same network, but instead of highlighting risk, it illustrates trust towards adults and help-seeking behaviors.”

## Protection Within Social Networks



“The green dots indicate a student that has sought adult help in the last twelve months. This may be for anything from relationship advice, support with a situation at home, to a mental health concern. The size of the dot indicates ties towards adults, so the more Trusted Adults a student named, the larger their node becomes. Again, the shading indicates homophily among help-seeking behaviors. A darker shade shows that a student sought help and had friends that sought help as well. It is considered normal in that group to reach out to an adult for help.

“We notice a few things about this network:

- “We see larger, darker green nodes in the dense center of the network, where more of our traditionally connected students name a lot of ties to adults.
- “There are lots of green dots all across the social network.
- “There are less green dots among that cluster of risk we highlighted on the previous slide, indicating a lack of connection to Trusted Adults among those students who self-reported suicidal ideation and attempts.
- “We see little to no green dots among our isolated students.

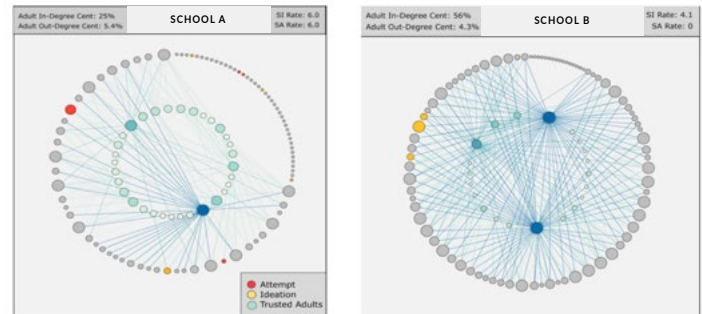
“Looking at Students A and B on the two slides, we see that Student A exists in a social circle with a lot of ties and trust towards adults and without a lot of suicide risk, while Student B is in a network without a lot of ties or trust towards adults, and with a lot of suicide risk.

## Equity Within Social Networks

“We’ve also learned from the research that it’s not just about the quantity, the number of Trusted Adults named, or the quality of the relationship that exists

where students trust adults and feel they can talk to them about personal things, it’s about equity too. The level of protection is directly related to the equitable distribution of those ties towards Trusted Adults across the entire student population.”

“Again, the dots are people and the lines are relationships, but in these models the outer circle are students, and the inner circle are Trusted Adults. The red color still indicates a suicide attempt, and the yellow indicates suicidal ideation, but now we’re using the color blue to indicate trust towards adults. Shading is used to indicate when a Trusted Adult is named multiple times.



“You can see how there are a few of these ‘super connected’ adults in each of the schools. While the network on the left (School A) has quantifiably more adults named than the network on the right (School B), and qualitatively more adults named more times, indicating that many adults are trusted by many of the same students, there is a significant portion of the student body that is not connected to any adults. This lack of equity in access to relationships results in more risk in the school on the left. Suicide risk is elevated in schools with youth–adult relationship ties concentrated among fewer students.

“We know from the research that having one Trusted Adult significantly lowers the risk for suicide among adolescents. We want everyone in our schools and communities able to name at least one Trusted Adult that they can connect with if they are worried about a friend or if they need help themselves.”

## Recommended Resources:

- Christakis, Nicholas. “The Hidden Influence of Social Networks” *TED Talks*, (2010). [https://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas\\_christakis\\_the\\_hidden\\_influence\\_of\\_social\\_networks/footnotes](https://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_christakis_the_hidden_influence_of_social_networks/footnotes)
- Gould, MS, Velting D, Kleinman M, Thomas JG, Chung M. (2004). “Teenagers’ attitudes about



coping strategies and help-seeking behavior for suicidality.” *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 43(9). 1124-1133.

- Petrova, M., Wyman, P. A., Schmeelk-Cone, K., & Pisani, A. R. (2015). Positive-Themed Suicide Prevention Messages Delivered by Adolescent Peer Leaders: Proximal Impact on Classmates' Coping Attitudes and Perceptions of Adult Support. *Suicide and life-threatening behavior*, 45(6), 651-663.
- Pisani, A. R., Wyman, P. A., Petrova, M., Schmeelk-Cone, K., Goldston, D. B., Xia, Y., & Gould, M. S. (2013). “Emotion regulation difficulties, youth-adult relationships, and suicide attempts among high school students in under served communities.” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 42(6), 807-820
- Wyman, P. et al. (2010). “An outcome evaluation of the Sources of Strength suicide prevention program delivered by adolescent peer leaders in high schools.” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 100: 1653-1661.

### Preliminary articles published from the NIMH National Peer Leadership study:

- Pisani, T., et al. (2012). “Associations between suicidal high school students’ help-seeking and their attitudes and perceptions of social environment.” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41(10), 1312-1324.
- Pisani, T., et al. (2012) “Emotion Regulation

Difficulties, Youth-Adult Relationships, and Suicide Attempts Among High School Students in Underserved Communities.” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42, 807-820.

- Wyman, Peter A. et al. (2019). “Peer-adult network structure and suicide attempts in 38 high schools: implications for network-informed suicide prevention.” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 60:10, 1065-1075

**Transition:** “This data looking at social networks is one part of the extensive research that has been conducted on Sources of Strength over the years. We’ll talk more about this after a quick game.”

### Key Summary

- We all exist in roles and relationships within social networks.
- Attitudes, behaviors, and norms spread through social networks.
- Attitudes, behaviors, and norms around suicide risk may cluster within peripheral and less dense/cohesive social groups.
- Positive attitudes, behaviors, and norms around Trusted Adults play a protective role within a social network.
- Peer Leaders, as Agents of Change, can spark an epidemic of health and contagion of strength across an entire school and community.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY

- Clearly defined the Social Network Theory
  - Explained that ideas, beliefs, and behaviors all spread through social networks
  - Mentioned that Peer Leaders are not junior psychologists, but rather Agents of Change and Connectors to Help
  - Noted that Peer Leader can be patient zero in an epidemic of health and a contagion of strength in their schools and communities
- Explained Social Networking Theory
  - Every shape is a student, every line is a relationship
  - Detailed characteristics of the roles in a social network: **bridge, central, periphery, isolate**
- Explained simple social network slide highlighting roles and relationships
  - Explained key concepts related to homophily and network density
  - Reinforced nomination of Peer Leaders from across the social network
- Explained social network slide highlighting trust towards adults
  - Explained key concepts related to homophily and shared protective factors
- Compare/contrast students A and B with reference to risk, network density, and trust towards adults
- Explained social network slide highlighting equitable access of Trusted Adults
  - Trusted Adults as protective factor in a social network relates to **quantity, quality, and equity**

## QUICK GAME

Choose between these three games:

- Yarn Knot Game
- Shoe Kick Game
- Speed Toss Game

### YARN KNOT GAME

**Time**

5-15 minutes

**Materials**

Lengths of yarn with wrist loops, one for each person

**Size**

Best for groups between 10-60 (though it can be played with almost any size group, time permitting)

**Key Point**

Sometimes in life we get stuck, today we're talking about the things that help us get unstuck.

**Trainer Overview:**

Yarn Knot is a transitional game to introduce key concepts in a fun and engaging way, opens up a conversation about stressors that can leave people feeling stuck and the coping strategies, strengths, or skills that people use to get unstuck and overcome adversity. This conversation is simply introduced here and will be unpacked further throughout the training.

**TRAINER TIP**

If you have a group of over 80 people, this game can be time consuming. Prepare materials in advance to save time. Alternatively, you may want to pick a different game. Regardless of the size, invite some people to help you pass out materials.

the strings, bite them, cut them, burn them, chew them, gnaw them, or slip them off your wrists or your partner's wrists. There is a way to get unlinked. You might have to get creative by doing cartwheels, back flips, dislocate your shoulder; whatever it is, your challenge is to get unlinked from your partner. It may seem impossible but there is a way to do this. OK, everyone jump up, find a partner, get linked up and start trying to get unlinked." (Repeat the instructions two or three times if necessary).

Ask for two volunteers who can help hand out yarn to all the people in the room.

**Directions**

"Can I get one person to join me in the middle here to help demonstrate this activity? In a moment, everyone will need to find a partner. One person will put the yarn loops over both wrists, and the other person will put the yarn on one wrist and wrap the free end of yarn around the back of their partner's yarn and then onto their second wrist, creating a chain link. Like this."

Turn slowly in a circle so everybody can see.

"The challenge is for you and your partner to get unlinked and separated from each other. You can't break

**Trainer Tips**

1. There will be lots of energy and laughter as people spin in circles, hop over each other, and do a variety of contortions trying to separate the links. The adults should walk around the room observing participants for about a minute or so.
2. Quietly go around to different pairs, asking if they want help or would like you to show them the trick to this challenge. If they simply want a hint, tell them it involves the wrists and they take the yarn through the back of the wrist and over the hand. If they want help, instruct them to pay attention because they'll need to help others once they have figured it out. Once they have completed the challenge and they are unstuck, ask the pair to begin showing others how to do it so that the information spreads around to everyone in the room, not just from you the expert, but from one another.

3. The trick for getting unlinked is simply sliding slack yarn from one partner, through the back of one of the wrist loops on the other partner's wrists, and then up, over, and around the top of their hand and the links should separate. Please see Yarn Knot video for further instructions on the sources website for reference.

### TRAINER TIP

Be sure you are familiar with the solution to this game prior to playing!

"If you're finished, you can find a seat and someone will come around and collect the yarn." Ask one or two Adult Advisors to help you collect the yarn.

### Teaching Point

"How many of you have ever had a friend, a colleague, a family member, or a student who felt stuck with a problem? They might feel like they're trying everything, but really they're just trying the same thing over and over again, getting more and more tangled up in their problem.

"Today we will talk about what helps us get unstuck when we, our colleagues, our friends, our family, or our students are dealing with a challenge. Whether that's with something bigger like addiction or mental health challenges or just navigating the ups and downs of life. We want everyone around us to know that it is OK to not be OK all the time. It is OK, and even brave, to connect someone else to help or to ask for help for ourselves. Others can help us with our problem or difficulty and help us get unstuck."

### Alternatives to the Yarn Knot Game:

If for any reason the Yarn Knot Game is not the best option for you, you are welcome to try either of these two interactive games that both contain fairly simple teaching points:

- Ball Toss
- Shoe Kick

**Transition:** "Let's return to our conversation about research."

### Key Summary

- Hand out Yarn.
- Give Instructions.
- Help participants to find the solution or show them how to get unstuck.
- Deliver teaching point: Sometimes in life we get stuck and it can seem like no matter what we do, we end up more tangled. Today we are going to talk about what helps us get unstuck.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: YARN KNOT GAME

- Explained challenge instructions clearly
- Helped participants get unstuck
- Delivered simple teaching point clearly
  - Used stuck/unstuck analogy

## SHOE KICK GAME

### Time

10 minutes

### Size

Best for groups of more than 20

### Materials

No materials needed

### Key Point

There are a number of barriers or reasons why someone may not ask for help. Having someone come alongside and connect that person to help can often help them overcome these barriers. Today we want to talk about how we can create a culture where people can get the help they need and deserve.

### Trainer Overview:

Shoe Kick connects to a teaching point about asking for and connecting to help and introduces a conversation about creating a healthy culture around help-seeking. Don't forget to let participants get their shoes back!

### Trainer TIP

Be cognizant of culture as it can be considered rude to expose your feet in some cultures. Consider whether you should play this game at all or whether you should choose another game. Don't force anyone to take off their shoe if they don't want to.

### TRAINER TIP

Don't overstate this or make it cheesy, keep it quick, and light, poking fun at yourself.

"Can I get everybody to kick one of your shoes into the middle of the room?" Take off your shoe and toss it into the middle of the circle to model this.

Most people will laugh and kick their shoe into the middle of the circle quite willingly, but some will hesitate and some will even refuse. Laugh with the group and watch for individuals that are refusing or carefully carrying their shoes out into the middle of the circle. Don't force anyone to kick off their shoe if they aren't feeling comfortable or don't want to. It is totally optional, in fact it highlights and adds to the teaching point.

Ask (with some humor and your hand raised): "Who didn't want to kick their shoe off?" You don't need to point out who didn't, or ask them why.

"There are any number of reasons why you might not want to kick a shoe off.

"I'm getting a little odor drifting my way, maybe you haven't washed your feet in a couple months and they smell."

"Maybe your big toe is sticking through a hole in your sock.

"Some of you have really nice shoes and maybe you don't want them getting messed up.

"Or maybe you have new boots or lots of laces and it's just a lot of effort.

"Have you ever had friends, colleagues, family, or students that are going through a hard time and they don't really want to ask for, or accept help? There can be a lot of barriers to getting help, that can feel a little like the barriers to kicking off your shoe.

"Maybe they're thinking what I've got going on is too messy and I don't want anyone to see it or have to deal with it.

"Or I don't want anyone to see the holes in my life.

"Or mess up the good stuff I have going on.

"Or maybe it just feels like it's just a lot of work."

### Key Teaching Point:

"When someone is struggling or hurting, it can make a big difference if their friends come alongside them and introduce them to supports and Strengths to overcome

barriers and connect them to the help they need and deserve. Today we will talk about Strengths that help people in all kinds of situations and how we can ask for and connect to help when needed.”

**Finishing Directions:**

“When I say go, I want you to go and pick up a shoe you don’t recognize and hold it up in the air. Then I want you to find the person that shoe belongs to. To get your shoe back, you have to tell one truth and one lie about yourself. The other person has to guess which one is true. You get your shoe back whether they get it right or not. Once you get your shoe back, you can grab a seat. OK, GO!” Everybody rushes to the middle to pick a shoe up and find the owner.

**Transition:** “Let’s return to our conversation about research.”

**Key Summary**

- There could be many different barriers or reasons why someone could hesitate to reach out for help.
- Having a friend, family member, or Trusted Adult come alongside you when you are struggling can be a powerful way to break down these barriers and connect them to the help they need and deserve.

**Notes:**

**TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SHOE KICK GAME**

- Explained game clearly
- Delivered simple teaching point clearly
  - Used barriers to help-seeking analogy
- Everyone got their shoe back

# SPEED TOSS GAME

## Time

5-10 minutes depending on group size

## Group Size

Best for groups of 10-40 people

## Materials

Wadded up paper ball or other object for passing

## Key Point

When we're going through something difficult we can sometimes get tunnel vision, which makes it hard to see solutions, how things might get better, or how potential supports and strategies might help. It can be incredibly helpful to ask for help. People with a different perspective on the challenge or adversity we are facing can help us see our challenge in a new light.

## Trainer Overview

Speed Toss is a transitional game that introduces key concepts in a fun and engaging way. It opens up a conversation about creative problem solving and the need for a healthy culture of help-seeking. This conversation is introduced simply here and will be unpacked further throughout the training.

Use a soft ball or wadded up piece of paper and have the group stand in a circle about an arm's length apart. Instruct the group to toss the ball around the circle stating their name and the name of the person they are tossing it to. Ask everyone to remember who threw them the ball, and who they threw it to as well. Have the group hold their hands up and then put them down after they have caught and thrown the ball to someone else. Everyone should catch the ball only once, with the last person tossing it back to you since you started with the ball.

### TRAINER TIP

This game can be time consuming and difficult to manage with a group over 40, so consider the group size before playing. Make sure to do one pass with everyone in the group catching and tossing the ball to establish the order, before speeding up the game or asking for solutions.

After establishing the order state, "Your goal is to see how fast the ball can move through the group while having everyone touch the ball in the same order." Have someone time how fast the group can toss the ball through the whole group. Pass the ball all the way through the pattern once. Whatever the time is, tell the group you know this group can do it in half that time. Give the group a few seconds to talk about a strategy, generally moving closer together. Repeat the previous time and comment, "I think this group can do it in half that time." Give the group a few seconds to strategize and repeat the goal statement if necessary.

Most groups will problem-solve this activity by moving closer together or trying to throw the ball faster (which

usually results in more drops). After the second or third go around, someone will usually suggest physically moving the positions of the circle so they can just hand it to the person next to them. From that point, a group will continue until the ball touches everyone in order in a matter of seconds.

### Key Teaching Point

"Have you ever felt like there was a lot coming at you in life? Or maybe you have had a friend, colleague, family member or student who is dealing with an issue who says, 'I've tried everything,'

when really they've just been trying the same thing over and over? Sometimes in life we get blinders on, or tunnel vision and we have a hard time seeing solutions to our problems. Having someone come alongside us with a different perspective, or someone who has gone through it before, can be incredibly helpful.

"So, today we are going to be talking about how we can ask for help and connect others to help when they need it."

**Transition:** "Let's return to our conversation about research."

### Key Summary

- Give instructions.
- Develop passing pattern.
- Speed up process and invite creative solutions.
- Deliver teaching point: Sometimes in life we can get tunnel vision and not see a way out of a problem. It can be incredibly helpful to ask for or accept help from someone who can see things from a different perspective.

Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SPEED TOSS GAME

- Explained game clearly
- Delivered simple teaching point clearly
  - Used blinders/tunnel vision analogy

# EVIDENCE-BASE AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

Projector and Screen (if possible)  
Adult Advisor Presentation Slides

## Key Point

Sources of Strength is one of the most heavily researched and widely disseminated teen suicide prevention programs in the world.

## Trainer Overview

In this section, Adult Advisors will receive a summary of research outcomes and Sources of Strength's research partnerships. For more information and links to our research, please direct people to <https://sourcesofstrength.org>

## Research and Research Partnerships

Sources of Strength is a radically strength-based, upstream suicide prevention program with demonstrated effectiveness in both preventative upstream and intervention outcomes. Sources of Strength has been involved in several large randomized control trials and is one of the most rigorously evaluated and broadly disseminated prevention programs in the United States. Sources of Strength was one of the first programs to demonstrate effectiveness in using Peer Leaders to enhance protective factors associated with reducing suicide risk across a school population. Sources of Strength teams are active across the United States, Canada, Australia, and many American Indian/Alaska Native and First Nations communities.

“These social networks come from the data in a randomized control trial, published in *The American Journal of Public Health*. This study was the first to show that you can use Peer Leaders to change population-level health norms related to reducing risk factors associated with suicide.”

In a randomized control trial of Sources of Strength conducted with 18 high schools in New York, North Dakota, and Georgia (six metropolitan, 12 rural), researchers found that the program improved attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding suicide, connectedness to adults, and school engagement.

“Among Peer Leaders, this study showed:

- “Increase in healthy coping strategies and norms
- “Increase in connection towards Trusted Adults
- “Four-fold increase in the likelihood of referring a suicidal friend to a Trusted Adult
- “Largest gains in the least connected or least healthy Peer Leaders”

“Among the general student body population, the study showed:

- “Increase in help-seeking acceptability
- “Increased perception that adults can help a suicidal friend
- “Largest gains for the students with a history of suicide attempts

“Sources of Strength not only has a positive impact on our student leaders, it can also shift the way we think about asking for help across the entire student body. Shifting culture so asking for help can be seen as a sign of courage and strength rather than a sign of weakness. Or where getting help for a friend is seen as being a good friend, not being a snitch. And where adults are seen as being helpful, not just people who will make things worse.

“It's important to highlight that we see the largest gains in coping and connection amongst those students who have made previous attempts. This is an encouraging finding as many programs showed modest impact amongst the healthiest portion of the population but little to no impact, or even at times negative impact amongst those who were struggling the most. For us to see our greatest impact coming from the most vulnerable students was incredibly motivating.

“Sources of Strength has a foundational commitment to research and being evidence-based. We never feel like we have a finished product or program but are continually improving and updating the model based on learnings through our research and evaluation efforts as well as what we are learning in the field working with local partners. Sources has engaged in numerous randomized control trials and dozens of evaluation efforts across the United States, Canada, and Australia.



Sources is one of the most rigorously evaluated prevention programs and a model for effective teen suicide prevention. Sources is also one of the more widely disseminated prevention programs with Peer Leader teams active across the United States, Canada, Australia, and many Indigenous American and Alaskan Native and First Nation communities.”

**Transition:** “Recently, Sources of Strength has engaged in a randomized control trial in partnership with the CDC to evaluate Sources outcomes through a shared risk and protective factors lens.”

#### Key Summary

- Sources is one of the most rigorously evaluated and widely disseminated prevention programs. We don't ever feel like we have a finished product or program. We are constantly evolving and improving based on learnings through our research and with our partners in the field.
- Sources of Strength is an evidence-based prevention program.
- Research on Sources of Strength demonstrates Peer Leaders can change population level health norms related to reducing risks related to suicide.

#### Some more information on research efforts.

- In 2005 a project Sources of Strength was a part of received the American Public Health Association’s, National Public Health Practice Award
- In 2009 Sources of Strength was placed on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP).
- Sources of Strength research partners include: The University of Rochester, The University of North Carolina, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The National Institute of Mental Health, The University of Manitoba, Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, Black Dog Institute, Australia National University, and Colorado State University, amongst others.

#### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: EVIDENCE-BASE AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

- Explained Sources is an evidence-based program
- Explained outcomes from initial research trial
- Identified ongoing Sources research studies and partner organizations

# INTERCONNECTED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Projector and Screen (if possible)  
Adult Advisor Presentation Slides

## Key Point

While there are shared risk factors between suicide, violence, substance abuse, and mental illness, there are also shared protective factors. At its core Sources of Strength is a wellness model that can have a broad downstream prevention impact.

## Trainer Overview

This module helps Adult Advisors understand that Sources of Strength can help prevent multiple adverse outcomes including: bullying, harassment, substance use and misuse as well as suicide. This module helps reinforce understanding that this is a wellness program with broad preventative aims.

## Interconnected Risk and Protective Factors



“The risk factors for suicide are not isolated from the risk factors associated with violence, substance abuse and misuse, or mental illness. These adverse outcomes have shared risk factors, but they also have shared protective factors. If we do our job well and we move upstream and increase protective factors such as: resiliency, connectedness, help-seeking, healthy coping, trust towards adults, equity and belonging, we can have an impact on suicide prevention. We can also see a positive impact on substance abuse, violence, bullying, disciplinary interventions, and grade point average. It is a lot easier to focus on your science homework when you are not in crisis.

“At its core, Sources of Strength is a wellness model. Our goal is not to just keep people alive, but to help people live healthy lives and thrive. It’s the idea that ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’. Sources of Strength works to foster and support healthy individuals and healthy communities, which can have broad downstream preventative impacts in many areas of life.

“In suicide prevention, it can sometimes seem like the only solution is to find the student who is struggling and assist them in receiving the help they need. While this is an important element of intervention, Sources of Strength aims to be more expansive. A Sources of Strength program can be a powerful tool to help a student in crisis, but it also has a universal benefit for all students. You may have students that will never become suicidal, never drop out of school, become addicted, or perpetrate a violent crime, but they may face extreme stress over finals or experience anxiety surrounding life transitions. Those students can benefit from having Sources of Strength at their school to assist them in developing helpful coping skills, healthy help-seeking practices, learning to build Strengths, and fostering resiliency in their lives.”

“Ultimately we are not just talking about the leading causes of death, but rather supporting and cultivating the leading causes of life.”

“A shared risk and protective factors approach creates a more holistic and comprehensive prevention model by moving upstream and focusing on health. This is a public health model for prevention, and this comprehensive approach does not require us to silo our funding or our programming. Ultimately we are not just talking about the leading causes of death, but rather supporting and cultivating the leading causes of life<sup>1</sup>.”

1. Gunderson, G.R & Cochrane, J.R. (2012). *Religion and the Health of The Public: Shifting the Paradigm*. Palgrave Macmillan. pg. 13

**Transition:** “Now that I’ve shared a bit about the history and philosophy of Sources, and the theories and research that support this work, lets begin to apply the model to our own lives”

#### Key Summary

- The upstream model is not restricted to suicide prevention. Prevention of substance abuse, bullying, violence, and mental illness can be positively impacted as well. While there are shared risk factors, there are also shared protective factors.
- Sources of Strength helps people to not only survive, but to thrive.

#### Notes:



### TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: INTERCONNECTED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Explained interconnected risk and protective factors approach to prevention clearly
- Used a “rising tide lifts all boats” analogy
- Noted that the upstream prevention model not only impacts students with suicidal intensity, but also students who might be stressed, overwhelmed, or lacking balance

# EXPERIENCE:

## ENGAGING WITH STRENGTH IN OUR OWN LIVES

Sources of Strength is not just content for young people, it is content for all people. This program is just as applicable and helpful to the lives of adults as it is to the lives of students. A Sources of Strength training is not a presentation. It's a participatory and interactive conversation! This powerful prevention work is for all of us. Growing into a Community of Strength requires that we are not just learning but applying Strengths to our own lives in action and in conversation. In this next portion of the training, we engage and interact with the Strengths Wheel and help Adult Advisors apply it to their own lives.



# STRESSORS QUESTION AND BIOSPHERE STORY

## Time

10 Minutes

## Materials

Chairs arranged in a circle

## Key Point

Stress is a normal part of life, and how we choose to view and deal with that stress can help us not only cope but grow stronger and more resilient.

## What to Avoid:

A conversation that feels heavy or turns into intense personal stories of trauma or toxic stress.

## Trainer Overview

This module is a low-risk, low-intensity conversation about real life stressors and invites participants to reflect from a safe distance on the stressors others might be facing (staff members, students, peers, etc.). The conversation seeks to invite reflection on stressors and then help to reframe stress in light of Strengths and/or resilience. This reframe supports protective and reactive practices to help individuals prepare for, and respond to stress in their lives. One of the key goals of this module is to get several participants sharing and having their voices heard. The stressors conversation is an accessible way to get the group talking and engaged.

You want this section to be a very comfortable back and forth conversation between the Trainer and participants. Remember to ask the question about others' stressors rather than their own personal stressors. Facilitate responses by asking for additional insights and thanking participants for sharing. Remember to keep a playful tone and not let things get too deep or heavy while taking care to honor the stressors many people face and not down play or belittle sharing. If someone shares a stressor that feels heavy or intense, address that stressor head on and thank the participant for being honest before moving on to the next answer.

## Stressors Questions

With participants sitting a circle, ask:

"If you were to do a survey of your friends or colleagues and ask them "What are the top four or five stressors in your life?" What kind of answers would we be hearing? This could apply to school, home, personal life, whatever comes to mind. Feel free to raise your hand and I'll try to call on you."

### TRAINER TIP

Keep it quick and light. This is not an opportunity to dive deeply into a stressful or traumatic event in an individual's life.

Facilitate Adults raising their hands and sharing different answers in a back-and-forth style of discussion. Participants may say things like: constant requirements,

financial issues, family life, trying to balance life and work, relationships, etc. Keep this light and allow them to share briefly.

Empower their voices by saying things like:

- "Sure, that makes sense..."
- "Yes, work can be stressful..."
- "Thanks for sharing about that..."
- "Could you help us understand more?..."
- "Absolutely."

### TRAINER TIP

Playfully engage the Adult Advisors while still honoring and acknowledging their stress. This module can be light without making light of anyone's financial, professional, or relational stressors.

After you have heard from a handful of adults, shift the focus of the conversation from their colleagues, to their students.

"Thanks for sharing. A slightly different question: If I were to ask your students what their top four or five stressors are, what do you think I might hear?"

Continue to facilitate in a back-and-forth style of discussion. Participants may say things like: homework, grades, parental or peer pressure. Highlight that students

and adults share many of the same stressors. After a few minutes, bring the discussion to a close by saying:

“That’s a very thorough list. We want to highlight that a lot of what we will be talking about today is how we can help offer tools, resources, and connections to support ourselves and those around us. We know we won’t go through life without dealing with stress. In fact, some stress is actually helpful in life. Stress can help push us to meet a deadline or be honest in a hard conversation.”

### Biosphere Example

“Did you know that scientists created a biosphere to study how all different parts of nature work? They planted trees in the biosphere, but these trees kept falling over. After research, the scientists realized what was happening: there was no wind in their environment. While a strong wind can push a tree over, some level of wind is needed to help trees grow deep roots that will be strong when wind, rain, or floods come their way. Trees need some resistance to develop the necessary resilience to help them stand strong in future storms.

“Stress can act in a very similar way with humans. We don’t live healthy lives by completely avoiding stress altogether. Some stress can actually make us stronger.

However, we’re also worried about what happens when stress becomes overwhelming. What we want to explore today is how we can reframe stress to cope with it in healthy ways. I want to know what gives you Strength and what helps you with the stressors you face.”

**Transition:** “Thanks for sharing about some of those stressors. Lets shift our focus now towards Strength.”

### Key Summary

- Both students and staff face a number of stressors in their school, and in their professional, and personal lives.
- Recognizing what causes stress can help normalize the natural ups and downs of life, and can build a narrative around facing a shared experience with Strength.

**Notes:**

AVOID PERSONALIZING THE STRESSORS QUESTION (I.E “WHAT STRESSES YOU OUT”). IT'S EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO RESPOND TO WHAT COULD BE STRESSFUL GENERALLY RATHER THAN SHARING WHAT IS STRESSFUL FOR THEM PERSONALLY IN THEIR OWN LIVES.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: STRESSORS QUESTION AND BIOSPHERE STORY

- Asked about the top four to five stressors friends and colleagues face
  - Posed questions about others rather than self-disclosure
- Asked about the top four to five stressors students face
- Used conversational style
- Kept it light: Did not get too heavy
- Transitioned smoothly into Poster Activity

# STRENGTHS POSTER ACTIVITY

## Time

10-20 minutes

## Materials

Large sticky posters (one for every 4-5 participants)  
Colorful markers (enough for 2-3 per person)

## Key Point

We all have people, places, and things that give us strength.

## Trainer Overview

Having engaged in a conversation about the stressors that students and adults face, we now want to think about and then write or draw the things that give us strength and help navigate and overcome various stressors. We intentionally facilitate this Strengths Poster Activity with Adult Advisors (as well as with students) to engage participants in exploring the Strengths and coping skills they already use to manage stress and adversity in their own lives. This helps adults to see this initiative as a Staff Wellness model, as much as it is a student focused prevention program: this is not just helpful for young people - this is helpful for humans.

## Instructions for Strengths Poster Activity

“We’ve all agreed that stressors are a part of our lives, but now lets look at what helps with that stress.

“In a moment, I am going to pass out poster papers and markers and:

- “I want you to get into groups of around four or five people and take a few minutes to draw out what gives you strength.
- “Think of the people, the places, and the things that help you when you’re having a tough day or you’re in a stressful season. Include the people, places, and things that bring you joy!
- Think about what gives you strength physically, mentally, relationally, emotionally, spiritually.
- “Use words and pictures - extra bonus points for pictures/drawings!
- “You don’t have to be an artist, stick figures are perfectly fine!
- “Not just a list of words or ideas, I want it to be more like a collage with everyone grabbing their own corner of the paper and writing or drawing their strengths.

“OK, ready? As soon as you have a poster paper jump into your groups, and write and draw everything that gives you strength”

## TRAINER TIP

This activity with Adult Advisors should be paced quicker than with Peer Leaders for the sake of time management and material to cover.

## Logistics

Ask a couple Adult Advisors to help you pass out poster paper (one per group) and markers (a generous handful per poster) to the groups. Put on some fun music as groups spread around the space. As you walk around, you should continue to prompt your directions as well as call out great things you see on posters:

For example: “Write and draw everything that gives you strength - I am seeing lots of pets, music, pizza, ice cream, football, and yoga. I also see some faith symbols as well as family and friends. I see YouTube and books, dancing and nature...”

After a few minutes, you can share an example of what one groups poster looks like by holding up a poster and calling people's attention, saying: “This group gets 4,928,387 points for all their pictures! Looking really good. Keep going everyone, you have about five minutes left!”

## Come Back Together and Share Posters

“In a moment, I want you to move back to the large circle, bring your posters with you, collect the markers, drop them off right here, and sit with your poster groups.”

When facilitating sharing, call on groups all around the room as opposed to going group by group around the circle in order; this will help keep energy levels up and keep participants interested and engaged.

If you have a very small group of adults, feel free to simply allow each person to share a few of the strengths they drew from their own posters. Here are more options for sharing:

### Option 1 - Typical Group Share

“OK, we’re going to share some of the things we put on our posters. When it is your group’s turn, I want your whole group to stand up and every person should share a couple things that give them strength. When your group is done, one person should take your poster and stick it to a wall. Which group would like to go first?”

### Option 2 - Creative Group Share

If the group is highly engaged and comfortable with each other and is not bigger than 60 people, you may want to prompt them to share creatively. The instructions for the Creative Group Share should be given prior to calling the groups back to the circle. Give the groups a few minutes to plan and prepare before calling them back:

“I am going to give you all about four minutes to come up with a creative way to share what you put on your posters. You might want to create a skit, make up a dance, write a poem, lead a game show, or something else entirely. Once your group has shared, one person can take your poster and stick it to the wall.”

Avoid using the Creative Group Share prompt for a group that is still reluctant about the training.

### Option 3 - Large Group Share

If you have a large group (60-100) and are using a microphone, you can invite groups to stand in a line one at a time. Then, holding the mic, walk down the line inviting each member of the groups to share two things they listed as Strengths on their poster. Once everyone in the group has shared, give them a round of applause and ask which group wants to go next.

### Option 4 - Very Large Group or Short on Time Share

If you have a very large group (100+) or are short on time, prompt the groups to form a circle with one other group and everyone can share a couple things that they identified as giving them strength. Give groups about five minutes to share together before you prompt them to hang up posters and for everyone to return to their seats.

### Sharing Facilitation Pattern

After each group has finished sharing, follow this (or similar) facilitation pattern:

- “Can we give this group a round of applause for sharing their strengths?”
- “Hang your poster up on the wall somewhere.
- “Who wants to go next?”
- “Everyone stand up with your group.
- “You all have the floor and our attention.
- “Tell us what gives you strength!”
- Thank the group.
- Call on a new group in a different part of the circle. Keep the sharing moving fairly quickly so that it does not run too long.
- A repetitive facilitation pattern like this keeps the sharing moving, and reduces confusion, awkward silences, or a drop in energy as you hear about strengths from all participants.

Once all the groups have shared, thank the group and help them reflect for a moment:

“Thank you for sharing your different strengths. In looking at these, we have a lot of strengths in common and many that are unique and specific to each of us. I see that a lot of us put different people like family, friends, or colleagues and mentors. We also have a lot of things in common like music, books, sports, nature. A lot of the things I’m seeing on the posters are also Strengths on the Wheel. We’ll get more into these later.

“We will do this same activity with the students. We will invite them to break into small groups, spread out around the room, and make their Strengths Poster. This way the students are reflecting on and naming these Strengths before we even introduce them to the Sources of Strength wheel.

“We will invite the students to choose their own poster groups, so let’s make sure that each group has at least one Adult Advisor drawing and sharing alongside them.



If there are any Peer Leaders that don't naturally join a group, please scoop them up and invite them to join a group with you. It's important that no one is left out during this activity, and we use this as a chance to build relationships and learn about the people, hobbies, and interests that matter to our Peer Leaders.

“If the group gets stuck, or has trouble starting, you can prompt them with questions about their pets, or siblings, or favorite songs and shows. If anyone draws something edgy or inappropriate on the poster, the students will often self-regulate and those marijuana leaves will get crossed out, but please don't shut down student sharing. Remember, we want them to use their voice, and say what's true, so their Strengths Poster is full of good information about what each Peer Leader considers to be the good stuff in their life. Right now lets take a break.”

At this point, it is important to either take a break or play a game with the group. If you choose to take a break, come back to the training with a game to start. This will help them to take a break from sharing and prepare them for more reflection in the next portion of the training.

**Transition:** “Thanks for sharing your strengths with me. Now I think it's time we play a game!”

#### Key Summary

- While stress is something we deal with on a regular basis, we have many things that give us strength to cope well with the ups and downs of life.
- We each drew our own individual strengths, but collectively we have many strengths in common.
- We will draw Strengths Posters alongside the Peer Leaders to see what gives them Strength before we introduce the Wheel.

#### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: STRENGTHS POSTER ACTIVITY

- Introduced Strengths Poster clearly
- Said: “People, places, things that give you strength”
- Said: “Think physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and relationally”
- Asked for pictures and drawings - not just words
- Gave specific examples
- Led group sharing well
  - Bounced around the room to different groups
  - Struck a gracious or playful tone
  - Had good pacing
  - Used the prompt: “Tell us what gives you strength”
  - Had groups hang up their posters
- Reflected gratitude and summarized strength share in the room
- Prepared Adult Advisors for Strengths Poster participation in the Peer Leader training

# STRENGTHS WHEEL: INTRO TO STRENGTHS AND STORIES

## Time

15-45 Minutes

## Materials

Chairs in a circle

Peer Leader Guides

Adult Advisor Presentation Slides

Sources of Strength Wheel on screen if possible

## Key Point

As we navigate life's ups and downs, tapping into these eight Strengths on the Sources of Strength Wheel can help us build resilience, experience recovery, and practice emotional regulation.

## Trainer Overview

Primed by the Strengths Posters, we can help the group connect their drawings to the Sources of Strength Wheel through an interactive storytelling process. We want this storytelling process to be authentic and powerful without encouraging the sharing of heavy or traumatic stories. As a Trainer, you can create an environment that is safe enough for participants to share their stories of Strength, without it feeling like a group therapy session. You should introduce each Strength, ask a clear and concise question, and then facilitate sharing. This is a valuable time to reinforce for Adult Advisors that this is not just content for young people, but for all people.

## Summary of Strengths Wheel: Intro Strengths and Stories

Direct the group's attention to the Sources of Strength Wheel on the front page or on the innermost fold of their Peer Leader Guides. Point out the similarities between their poster examples and the Sources of Strength Wheel.

"When we talk to people who have gone through difficult things and ask them, 'How did you get through that?' The things on this Wheel are what they describe. This is what resiliency looks like."

Lead a process of going around the Wheel, hearing Adult Advisor stories around each Strength. The task of a Trainer is not to tell a group what their Strengths are, but rather to provide an expansive definition of each Strength wherein groups and individuals can find themselves included and reflected in the Wheel.

First, give a short summary about the particular area of Strength, helping the group to understand how each Strength corresponds in a practical way to their own lives. Then, open the conversation with a question. This is a storytelling process, so we want to draw out stories, not just lists, and allow the group to share one to three short examples for each Strength. This process enables everyone in the room to teach each other about coping and connection in honest and authentic ways. Make sure to draw out stories from every corner and culture in the room, folks who are both eager or hesitant to speak.

Remember to affirm stories with phrases like, "Thanks for sharing that," "Great example," or "Sounds like (insert Strength) \_\_\_\_\_ was incredibly helpful in getting through that challenging time". Help signal transitions with phrases like, "Could I get one more person to share about this Strength?"

## TRAINER TIP

If a traumatic story is shared, sincerely acknowledge and honor what is said, and transition the conversation back toward Strength. "I'm sorry about that experience. We're so grateful that you're here with us. Looking at this Wheel, what Strengths have helped you make it through?"

With a large group, you may choose to change up the rhythm of the training and invite the group to cluster their chairs, and tighten up the circle. Practically, this makes it easier for everyone in the group to hear each other. Philosophically, this indicates a shift from presentation to conversation, as you invite everyone to move closer together.

## Adaptations for Time

The Strengths Wheel and the stories shared are the heart of this training. Remember this isn't content for kids, or simply preparation for the Peer Leader training. We all have Strengths to share.

Pacing is important. Watch the group and slow down or speed up depending on their engagement level. Time permitting, aim to facilitate as many stories as possible. However, the Adult Advisor training is often shorter than the Peer Leader training with additional material to cover, which might require you to condense the Strengths Wheel modules. Use the time you have to invite the Adult Advisors to reflect and share in powerful ways as they apply these Strengths to their own lives. Consider these options based on your training time:

- **5+ hour Adult Advisor training:** Enjoy talking through the Wheel, focusing equal time on each Strength. While we will replicate this process in the Peer Leader training, the content of the conversation, the questions asked, and examples shared should be geared towards the staff. This can take up to 45 minutes, depending on the size of the group.
- **4 hour Adult Advisor training:** Highlight every Strength, and facilitate one or two stories for each. You can move quickly through the entire Wheel in about 20 to 30 minutes.
- **3 hour or less Adult Advisor training:** Highlight the first few Strengths on the Wheel, facilitating some storytelling around Family Support, Positive Friends, and possibly Mentors. Then simply introduce the remaining Strengths, without any substantial back-and-forth conversation, noting that we will discuss these Strengths in more detail during the Peer Leader training. This should not take more than 15 minutes.

**Transition:** “I’d love to chat about how some of these Strengths have shown up in your lives. Let’s start with the Family Support piece of the Wheel.”

### Key Summary

- Each one of the eight Strengths can be expressed based on your experience, identities, history, and personal story. Each Strength can look a lot of different ways.
- The Wheel is a framework, helping everyone to reflect, and share their stories of Strength.
- The Strengths on the Wheel help us navigate the ups and downs of life in healthy ways
- This is not just content for young people, but for all people. It is just as relevant for us adults as it is for our students

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: STRENGTHS WHEEL: INTRO TO STRENGTHS AND STORIES

- Facilitated storytelling and conversation using different facilitation techniques
- Encouraged many different voices to share
- Used facilitation techniques to prompt engagement “Raise your hand if you...Keep your hand up if you’re willing to share”, “Tell me more!”, “Who agrees?”, “Who else shares that experience?”
- Used a gracious and playful tone
- Demonstrated good pacing
- Used names
- Listened well, utilizing techniques to reflect, reframe, rephrase
- Trainer honored and acknowledged trauma, and appropriately pivoted towards Strengths
- Expressed gratitude to individuals and the group at end of discussion

# FAMILY SUPPORT

## Summary

“I saw many examples of family on your posters. Family Support can look a lot of different ways. Some of us get strength from the family we were born into; from siblings, parents, or extended family. Some of us draw strength from the families we have created with our partners, and our children, and our fur babies. Or we can have chosen family, those people that aren’t necessarily related to us but they feel like family.”

## Storytelling

- “Is anyone willing to share how Family Support shows up as Strength for you?”
- Alternatively you can ask about specific family relationships i.e. “Is anyone close to a sibling? Could you tell me about how they show up as Family Support for you?” or “Who feels like they have chosen family? Who is that person for you?” etc.

Inform the group that this can be something simple like weekly phone calls between siblings, or more serious things like supporting one another after a death or a loss. As you ask the question, and begin this storytelling process, raise your own hand to indicate how you would like people to participate. Remember to use people’s names, and thank them for their willingness to share.

### TRAINER TIP

If you have a very quiet group or participants are not sharing very willingly, give everyone a chance to reflect first, and write or draw on their posters. You can also start sharing around something less personal, like Healthy Activities.

**Transition:** “Our chosen family is often closely connected to our positive friendships, the next section on the Wheel.”

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: FAMILY SUPPORT

- Explained that Family Support can look different (immediate, extended, and/or chosen family)
- Phrased Family Support question well
- Facilitated storytelling, using conversational style
- Transitioned to Positive Friends

### Key Summary

- Family Support can come from the family we were born into, the family that we create with our partners, pets or children, or the families that we choose.

### Notes:

# POSITIVE FRIENDS

## Summary

With humor and a light touch ask, “By a show of hands, has anyone in this room ever had a negative friend? Has anyone in this room ever been a negative friend? We don’t need to tell those stories right now, but having a negative friend can highlight the value and benefit of a Positive Friend. Positive Friends are those people who help us make healthy decisions, who encourage us, and inspire us. Positive Friends lift us up, make us laugh, are honest with us, and are there for us when we need them.

### TRAINER TIP

Avoid labeling people as either positive or negative friends. After all, any person can grow into a Positive Friend over time.

There are a few ways to facilitate storytelling around Positive Friends. Use these prompts independently, or sequence them for a more dynamic conversation.

## Storytelling

### Option 1:

- “Who feels like they have a Positive Friend in their life?” (Raise your hand to invite a show of hands).

### TRAINER TIP

Call on someone with their hand up. This will give you the opportunity to call on participants that have not yet shared with the group.

- “Who would that be for you, Nisreen?” (Point at someone with their hand up and try to use their name).
- “What is it that you appreciate about them as a Positive Friend?”

### Option 2:

- “Who is willing to share a story of when a Positive Friend was there for you?”

Make sure you help the storyteller to focus most of the story on what helped, and not just on what hurt.

### Option 3:

If Adult Advisors are reluctant to share specific or personal stories of friends in their own lives, ask them:

- “What qualities or characteristics make a person a Positive Friend? What is it that we appreciate about Positive Friends?” Allow the group to generate a list of qualities and characteristics of Positive Friends.
- “Who comes to mind when you think about a friend that is \_\_\_\_\_ (loyal, generous, hilarious, etc.)?”

**Transition:** “Even though our Positive Friends can support us, it can be really helpful to have someone older, or more experienced to guide us. A Mentor can play that role.”

### Key Summary

- Having Positive Friends can bring out the best parts of ourselves.
- Positive Friends lift us up, make us laugh, are honest with us, and are there for us when we need them.

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: POSITIVE FRIENDS

- Phrased Positive Friends question well
- Asked for characteristics of Positive Friends
- Facilitated storytelling using conversational style
- Transitioned to Mentors

# MENTORS

## Summary

“Having a Mentor, role model, or someone older who you trust and can talk to is a powerful source of strength in our lives. This could be a coach or formal mentor, another teacher or colleague at the school, a caring family member, anyone whose wisdom and guidance has made a difference in your life. Research shows that having Mentors throughout our lives can help us be ourselves at our best both personally and professionally.

“Our research revealed something interesting about the importance of Mentors or Trusted Adults in a school and community. Remember the graph I shared when we were talking about Social Network Theory? When it comes to Trusted Adults, it’s not just a matter of quantity, or quality; it’s also about equity. In other words, it’s more protective if a wide variety of students in different social groups identify a few safe adults, than if only a few students point to lots of adults. The equitable distribution of relationships between Mentors and students leads to safer schools, and positive culture change.”

## Storytelling

- “Who in here feels like they have had a Mentor in their lives? Will you tell us who that person is and how they have had an impact in your life?”

Have Adult Advisors raise their hands. Use this as an opportunity to call on individuals who have not shared yet.

**Transition:** “Often we have a Mentor because we connect over something we both enjoy doing, like a Healthy Activity.”

## Key Summary

- A Mentor is an experienced person who shares their insight to guide us, and help us draw on our own Strengths to be the best version of ourselves.
- As an Adult Advisor, you have a powerful role to play as a Mentor or Trusted Adult in your school and community.

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: MENTORS

- Described or asked for descriptions of a Mentor
- Referenced Mentors or Trusted Adults as a protective factor in a school
- Phrased Mentors question well
- Facilitated storytelling using conversational style
- Transitioned to Healthy Activities

# HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

## Storytelling

Reflect on all the activities that were listed on the Strength Posters, ask for a show of hands for who utilizes various Healthy Activities (physical, artistic, musical, outdoors, pets, reading, cooking etc.) Highlight that our Healthy Activities aren't limited to our heart-healthy activities like exercise and sports, but include our art, our music, cooking, and napping. When we feel stressed, our Healthy Activities, whether they are social, physical, mental, or emotional, can help. Ask adults to turn to a partner and share three things they enjoy doing as Healthy Activities.

- “What is it that we love so much about these activities?”

or

- “What do you think it is about these activities that helps us cope with stress, anxiety, sadness, etc.?”

Deepen the conversation by calling on people who raise their hand to share. They might share about Healthy Activities as a stress relief, an endorphin booster, or something that clears their minds. They could talk about the social or community benefits of doing things they enjoy, with people they love. Sometimes our Healthy Activities are the things we would categorize as self-care.

“Thanks for sharing, our Healthy Activities can be really helpful and protective in our lives in so many ways.”

**Transition:** “Let’s look to the next Strength on the Wheel, Generosity.”

## Key Summary

- Healthy Activities can include a wide variety of hobbies, habits and activities.
- When we feel stressed our Healthy Activities (whether they are social, physical, or emotional) can help.

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

- Highlighted a diverse set of Healthy Activities
- Explored what makes a Healthy Activity helpful for people
- Facilitated storytelling well, using conversational style
- Transitioned to Generosity

# GENEROSITY

## Summary

“Generosity is the idea that you go out of your way to help someone else. Maybe sharing a bit of yourself to help others, by giving of your time, or money, or power, or attention. Has anyone ever helped someone out and walked away feeling like you got more out of it than you gave?”

## Storytelling

Allow a few participants to share examples of Generosity they have practiced or received.

- “Who would you all consider to be a really generous person in your school or community?”

or

- “When you engaged in Generosity, what was the impact it had on your life?”

“Generosity is about more than just being nice people. This actually can be one of the most powerful pieces of the Wheel when we are struggling. Generosity helps people feel a sense of purpose, connection, agency, wholeness, and healing. It helps people to feel less burdensome or ashamed. It’s healing for people who are suffering - this is really powerful. Practicing Generosity is like pumping weights for your soul. It can heal the heart and lift the spirit. If you can think of a way to grow in Generosity, give it a try and invite someone else to join you.”

### TRAINER TIP

If a Trainer is worried about time but still wants to encourage storytelling, prompt participants to briefly share about a specific Strength with a neighbor.

**Transition:** “Speaking of things that lift your heart and soul, let’s shift to talking about Spirituality, because in this Strength we focus on that root word; spirit.”

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: GENEROSITY

- Described Generosity clearly
- Facilitated storytelling well, using conversational style
- Transitioned to Spirituality

### Key Summary

- When we practice Generosity, we often feel like we get more out of it than we give.
- Generosity can be incredibly healing and protective.

### Notes:



# SPIRITUALITY

## Summary

Continue to build the conversation on the examples the Adult Advisors drew on their Strength Posters. Point out time spent in nature, or their spiritual practices like mindfulness or yoga, and their traditional cultural or religious expressions of faith and belief. There are many ways that Spirituality is expressed.

“Spirituality can look a lot of different ways. The root of the word is spirit, so think about the people, places, and practices that lift your spirit and help you feel connected to something bigger than yourself. Let’s talk about some of those things now. Who feels like your spirit is lifted by people that love and value you? Who feels like your spirit is lifted by belonging to a group or community of people who make you feel connected? Who feels like your spirit is lifted in a place that feels meaningful or peaceful? Who feels like your spirit is lifted by a special object or a memory? There are so many different traditions and expressions of what Spirituality can look like and this Strength can be incredibly healthy and protective in our lives.”

## Storytelling

“Does anyone have a story they can share of when your Spirituality really helped give you strength?”

“One of the most accessible ways to engage the Strength of Spirituality is to practice thankfulness. Simply practicing gratitude and writing down what you are thankful for can actually change the chemical makeup of your brain. Thankfulness trains our brains to look for the good things going on around us and has a profound beneficial impact on our mental and emotional health.”

At this point, you could ask a few people or the whole group to name one thing that they are thankful for at the moment. This can be a powerful share and you can reflect that practicing gratitude and listening to what others are thankful for feels like it lifts the spirit in the room. Thank the group for sharing.

**Transition:** “These last two Strengths on the Wheel are Physical Health and Mental Health, two sides of the same coin.”

### Key Summary

- Spirituality can be expressed through the people, places, and practices that lift our spirit and help us feel connected to something bigger than ourselves.
- Gratitude or thankfulness is a powerful and accessible spiritual practice.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SPIRITUALITY

- Gave an expansive and inclusive definition of Spirituality
- Highlighted the power of Gratitude as a spiritual practice
- Transitioned to Physical and Mental Health

# PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

“Physical and Mental Health are two areas that we don’t always think about as Sources of Strength until we need them in an emergency. If injured or ill, access to medical care makes a significant difference, but there are a lot of proactive ways that we can strengthen our Physical and Mental Health when we aren’t in crisis.

“Physical Health involves all the different ways we can care for our bodies, whether that’s through eating healthy, getting enough sleep, practicing good hygiene, drinking enough water, exercising, or having medical care when we are sick or hurt.

“Who feels like you drink enough water? We could probably all benefit by drinking more water. If you have your water bottle nearby, let’s practice Physical Health right now by taking a drink!

“Who feels like they could maybe get more sleep?

“Anyone ever had a family member, friend, or yourself need medical care like medication, or surgery after an injury or illness?”

“Physical Health matters and that is why we try as best we can to take care of our bodies. When our bodies feel healthy, we can live healthier lives.

“The same should really be true of how we approach Mental Health, but we don’t always think about it in the same way. Let me explain.

“Take, for example, recovering from a broken leg. If we seek medical attention it can be a ten week recovery, whereas if we don’t seek medical attention it can get worse and become an ongoing challenge.

“If you didn’t go to the doctor you would be walking around in your pain and hurt for longer than necessary, because there are people who know how to help. We would think about it the same way for a friend as well. Imagine you had a friend that had a broken leg, and they tell you ‘It’s fine, I’ll walk it off, it’ll get better on it’s own,’ I imagine you would be pretty persistent in getting them help. Because:

- “We know our friend is in pain,
- “We know that they don’t deserve to stay in pain,

- “We know that they can get better,
- “We know that they need help, beyond what we can give them on our own.

“I would argue we should have that same level of persistence if we saw a friend who was struggling with a mental health crisis, like feeling suicidal. Those same things are true.

- “We know that our friend is in pain,
- “We know that they don’t deserve to stay in pain,
- “We know that they can get better,
- “We know that they need help, beyond what we can give them on our own.

Flow seamlessly into Mental Health.

“Mental Health is really similar to Physical Health. We can invest in our emotional health and wellness by engaging with the other Strengths on the wheel, working with a counselor or therapist, taking medication, and learning how to cope with our emotions in healthy ways.

“Sometimes in life we can get knocked down, through no fault of our own. And we might be wrestling with some big emotions. We might think, ‘I feel so angry all the time, and I don’t know why. Or I’m always stressed out, and worried, and I don’t know what to do. Or I just feel sad, or numb and I don’t know what’s going on.’ Just like if we broke our leg and didn’t go to the doctor, we would be staying in our pain longer than was necessary, there are people who know how to help when we are wrestling with our Mental Health as well. And if we never access that help, we can sometimes be staying in our hurt and pain longer than is truly necessary.”

**Transition:** Thank the group for sharing their powerful stories of Strength and transition to a game, a break, or into the next module by saying, “Looking at this Strengths Wheel, would you all agree, the more Strengths we have, the better off we’ll be?”

### Key Summary

- Physical Health and Mental Health are two sides of the same coin.
- We can strengthen our Physical Health and our Mental Health proactively.
- Physical Health includes the way we care for our bodies on a regular basis as well as when we are hurt or in crisis and need to seek care.
- Mental Health includes the way we care for our brains, our emotions and our wellness on a regular basis, as well as when we are hurting, or in crisis and need to seek care.
- We should advocate for people to get the emergency help they need and deserve for both their Physical Health and Mental Health.

Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Described Physical Health
- Gave a variety of examples for how one can practice Physical Health proactively and access care when needed
- Stressed the equal importance of Physical Health and Mental Health
- Described Mental Health
- Facilitated a helpful conversation around different ways one may practice Mental Health proactively as well as access care when needed
- Transitioned to break or next module

# MULTIPLE SUPPORTS

## Time

No more than 5 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

No one Strength is enough to keep a suicidal person safe. A person should not try to help someone in crisis by themselves but should mobilize as many supports and Strengths in their life as possible, including inviting others in to support that person.

## Trainer Overview

We've just finished exploring the Sources of Strengths wheel broadly. We'll continue the Sources of Strength wheel section of the training by introducing the idea that multiple supports are better than one.

**Positive Statement:** "Would you all agree that the more Strengths you have in your life, the better you will be able to handle life's ups and downs?"

**Safety Statement:** "Would you also agree that no single piece of this Wheel on its own would be enough to keep a suicidal person safe?"

"Let me explain what I mean by that."

### TRAINER TIP

By highlighting the value of multiple supports, we don't want to diminish the value of any individual Strength.

## Physical Health

**Positive Statement:** "If a suicidal person goes to a doctor for help and the doctor prescribes medication as a treatment, we know that medication can be very effective and beneficial in many cases."

**Safety Statement:** "But if all the doctor did was prescribe medication and then sent them out the door, we would say that is a potentially unsafe way to practice medicine. Medication can be helpful, but we are more likely to take our meds and follow up with our appointments when we are supported in relationships by family and friends. Physical Health is more protective when it is connected in with the rest of the Wheel."

## Family Support

**Positive Statement:** "If we had a parent who was worried about their child and thought, 'I am going to keep my kid safe with my love and care and support', we know that love, care, and support are incredibly

powerful and can be incredibly protective."

**Safety Statement:** "But if that parent doesn't connect their child with any other supports and just tries to help on their own, we would say that is a dangerous way to parent. That Family Support piece can be so important, but it is stronger when connected with the other Strengths on the Wheel."

## Positive Friends

**Positive Statement:** "We share this same message with the Peer Leaders and to each of you as we think about being Positive Friends. If we have a friend that we are worried about; our support, care, and connection can be incredibly helpful and protective."

**Safety Statement:** "But if we are trying to help a friend all on our own, and not letting anyone else know that friend is struggling, we would say that is a dangerous way to be a friend. We've seen that end tragically and know that our role as Positive Friends is strengthened when connected to other parts of the Wheel."

"It's important for us to remember that Sources of Strength is not just material for students. This applies to all of us! While we may be great teachers, counselors, principals, partners, friends, or parents, we have to remember that if we have friends, family members, or students who are in crisis, we should not be their only link to help and strength. We want to get that person connected to Mental Health and Physical Health supports, invite others in and maintain our roles as Positive Friends, Family Support, or Mentors. We can help and we can also be Connectors to Help."

We also want to make sure all adults in the school are aware of the school suicide intervention protocols and

what they should do if they have a student or colleague they are worried about. Who is the school go to person that we can invite in to that situation? Let's make sure all staff are aware of that protocol and process."

### TRAINER TIP

This work around the Strengths Wheel isn't just practice for the Peer Leader training. Use this Strengths Wheel section to build resilience and relationships among the Adult Advisor team.

### Key Summary

- While each Strength is important, no one Strength is enough to keep a suicidal person completely safe.
- No one should try to help a suicidal person all on their own.
- Like tethers on a net, the more Strengths we mobilize in our lives, the stronger and more resilient we become.

### Notes:

### Conclusion

"We always want to make sure we are mobilizing as many Strengths in a person's life as possible. Think of the Wheel as a net. If it is only tied off in one place it has less ability to catch you when you fall. But if it is tied off in many spots, it is going to be much more effective in catching you when you fall and helping you bounce back and move through the hard times of life in healthier ways."

**Transition:** Would you all agree that no one goes through life without dealing with at least some stress on a regular basis?"

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: MULTIPLE SUPPORTS

- Explained the importance of engaging with more than one Strength
- Shared examples of why it could be risky to rely entirely on one Strength
- Highlighted that the more Strengths the better/no one Strength is enough
- Used a metaphor to illustrate the strength of multiple supports (net, parachute, trampoline, etc.)

# WHAT HELPS ME

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

Everyone deals with anger, anxiety, or sadness at some point in their lives. The Wheel can help us to find balance and cope with these emotions when they get too big.

## Trainer Overview

In the Strengths Wheel section of the training, we are continuing to explore different ways of using the Wheel. We started with storytelling, sharing what each part of the Wheel looks like in our lives, and then focused our conversation on mobilizing multiple Strengths around people, and now we will explore the Wheel as a tool to find balance and emotional regulation.

## Introduction to the Big 3 Emotions

“Would you all agree that nobody gets through life without experiencing some ups and downs or wrestling with some stress on a pretty regular basis?” (This is a rhetorical question, so no responses needed, but you can nod your head up and down to invite agreement.)

“When we go through something hard, we often experience emotions that feel big or overwhelming. Of course there are a wide range of emotions we experience, but we like to talk about these Big 3 Emotions, which can be difficult to manage, yet are very common when stressed or facing a challenge: anger, anxiety, and sadness.”

### TRAINER TIP

Keep this conversation upbeat, matter-of-fact, and relatively quick paced. This is not a heavy discussion about emotions or emotional disorders. Normalize that we all wrestle with big emotions and we can use the Strengths wheel to bring these emotions back down to size.

Then ask the group (raising your hand every time you ask a question to indicate a desired show of hands – remember to keep this light and upbeat in tone and pace): “How many of you, when you’re wrestling with stress or some kind of difficulty, commonly experience anger; frustration, a quick temper, and/or irritability; maybe your jaw gets tight or your fists clench?” (Wait for a show of hands and follow with the next question)

“And how many of you, when you’re wrestling with something hard, find that it comes out more as anxiety;

feeling worried, maybe you get an upset stomach, or can’t fall asleep at night as your brain can’t seem to turn off?” (Wait for a show of hands.)

“And how many of you, when wrestling with something hard, tend to feel sadness; you feel really tired and run down, or even depressed?” (Wait for a show of hands.)

“And how many of you feel like you have a nice little smoothie mix of all three?” (This comment should be lighthearted and empathetic in tone.)

## Normalizing the Big 3 Emotions

“These aren’t negative emotions, they are human emotions and no one gets through life without wrestling with at least one of these emotions on a fairly regular basis. We may go through a similar situation, but you (point to your neighbor) might get more angry, and you (gesture towards someone else) may feel more anxious, and I (point to yourself) will get down or depressed. Everyone is different. Being an adult or an educator by no means exempts us from feeling these big emotions on a regular basis. When these emotions feel overwhelming, it’s important to pay attention to them, and the Strengths on the Wheel can be a helpful tool in bringing the big emotions back down to a manageable size.”

This is a good time to share from your own experience. For example, when you are stressed or knocked down in life, you might tend to feel some big anxiety, and getting outside to walk your dogs with friends or family might bring that anxiety back down to size. Tapping into Healthy Activities, Physical Health and either Positive Friends or Family Support is what helps when you feel anxious. If you have time, ask the group to turn to

someone next to them and share which of the Big 3 Emotions they wrestle with most often, and what helps them navigate that emotion in a healthy way.

“A lot of times, among our Adult Advisor teams when we share about what helps us with difficult emotions, we list coping skills that take place after the work day is done, like going for a run or to the gym, spending time with friends or family, or engaging in a hobby we love. All of those after-work coping, calming, and connecting strategies are great and may contribute to our overall well being, but why wait until work is over? How can we navigate and cope with emotions during the work day?”

If time allows, you can facilitate a brief brainstorm among the Adult Advisor team around ways to tap into Strengths during the work day.

### Conclusion

“Thank you for sharing. This isn’t just content for students: it is content for human beings. We can all learn to cope and navigate difficult emotions in healthy ways, not only increasing our own well being, but authentically modeling these skills and practices for our students and those around us. This can help us to co-regulate with those around us, being a thermostat that lowers the temperature in the room, rather than a thermometer that merely reacts to it. It is important, however, that workplace wellness efforts incorporate calming, coping, and connecting strategies that can be done at work just as much as they prioritize healthy practices at home.

“We have an entire campaign you can run with your staff or that your students might run in the school, called a What Helps Me campaign. A What Helps Me campaign crowd sources coping strategies, normalizing emotional regulation by focusing on what helps, and not just on what hurts. The goal is to normalize big emotions and spark a public conversation about coping, inviting everyone to share like we just did.”

**Transition:** “We can use Strengths to find balance, to help navigate difficult emotions, and our Wheel isn’t static. It’s always changing.”

### Key Summary

- All of us experience at least one of the Big 3 Emotions of anger, anxiety, or sadness on a regular basis.
- Different people can be in similar situations and experience different emotions.
- These emotions are normal and the Wheel can help us find balance and cope with these emotions when they get too big.
- We can use Strengths to help us cope with big emotions, both at work and in our personal lives.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: WHAT HELPS ME

- Defined and described the Big 3 Emotions as anger, anxiety, and sadness
- Identified Strengths Wheel as a resource for coping with big emotions
- Normalized big emotions and explained the need for balance
- Introduced the What Helps Me campaign

# I AM STRONGER

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

Our Strengths are not stuck or static, we can grow stronger in our Strengths.

## Trainer Overview

The final element of the Strengths Wheel in the training is to explore how the Wheel is dynamic and always changing. We can evaluate where we are currently strong, and reflect on how we have already grown stronger.

## I Am Stronger

“We can use this Wheel to find balance. We may not be strong in every area of the Wheel at the same time, and that is OK. It is important to see these Strengths as dynamic. Our Strengths are not stuck or static, and so our Wheel is always changing. We can grow stronger in our Strengths. So let’s check in with the Wheel today. What areas of the Wheel are you feeling strong in, and how would you like to grow stronger?”

### TRAINER TIP

When you phrase a question in terms of “today” you can shift the power of a question, making it more tangible and personal in someone’s life.

This is a good time to model by sharing from your own experience. For example, you may be feeling strong in Family Support and Physical Health because you have medical issues and your family is helping you keep up with your medications and get to your appointments. You would like to grow in Spirituality so you want to start a 21 Day Thankfulness Challenge. Share an example that is true for you.

“Now, take a moment and turn to a neighbor and share: which of these Strengths do you feel you are strong for you right now, and what is an area that you would like to grow stronger in over the next few months? You have about two minutes, go ahead.”

## Dyad Share

Allow the group to talk for a couple minutes before getting their attention again. If you have an ample amount of time, invite the room to share with an informal poll where they are feeling strong:

“By a show of hands, who is feeling strong in those relationship pieces, Family Support, Positive Friends, or Mentors?”

“Who would say they are feeling strong today in some of those habits or practices like Healthy Activities, Generosity, or Spirituality?”

“And who in the room is feeling strong in Physical Health or Mental Health? Hopefully being here today is an investment in our collective Mental Health.”

“In looking at this Wheel, is there anyone who can share about a way you have grown stronger in one of these areas? Maybe you started a gratitude practice this semester and your mindset has shifted. Perhaps you started a new job and your colleagues have become your Positive Friends. Who has an I Am Stronger story?”

Transition the conversation to draw out a few stories of ways participants have already grown stronger. When we share stories of resilience and recovery, those I Am Stronger stories, we internalize our strength stories.

“We believe the idea that we can grow in strength is so important we actually have a specific campaign built around these conversations. It’s called the I Am Stronger campaign, and it’s a really helpful way to help people share powerful stories of Strength.”

**Transition:** “Now that you’ve had the chance to explore these Strengths in your own lives, let’s talk about how we want you to support your Peer Leaders as they explore their Strengths in our upcoming Peer Leader training.”



## Notes:

### Key Summary

- It is important to check in with our Strengths Wheel.
- We won't always feel strong in every area of the Strengths Wheel, and our Wheel is always changing.
- We can use the Wheel to identify the Strengths we have today and the Strengths we would like to strengthen, as well as to reflect on the ways we have already gotten stronger.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: I AM STRONGER

- Explained it is OK to not be strong in every Strength at once
- Explained the Wheel can always change as we work to grow stronger
- Asked who has a story about how they have grown stronger in one of the Strengths

# SMALL GROUP FACILITATION

## Time

5-15 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides  
Small Group Facilitation Guide (page 171)  
Adult Advisor Training Presentation Slides

## Size

Small groups of roughly 4-6 people

## Key point

Adult Advisors are invited to share their own stories of Strength in small groups, and/or prepare to facilitate small group sharing around the Strengths Wheel in the upcoming Peer Leader training.

## Trainer Overview:

After introducing the Strengths, and hearing personal stories of Strength, invite participants to connect in small groups and apply the Strengths to their own lives. Once Adult Advisors have experienced small group sharing, equip them to host/facilitate small group sharing in the upcoming Peer Leader training.

## Small Group Sharing

Number the Adult Advisors off into small groups of four to six people to share what these Strengths look like in their own lives. Prior to breaking into groups, explain the process:

“We’re going to break up into smaller groups to talk around the Wheel, seeing what each Strength looks like in our lives. Take your Peer Leader Guide with you (hold up the Peer Leader Guide), and open it to the center foldout.

“In your small group, I want you to go around the circle, giving everyone a chance to share. You can start with Positive Friends. Each person in the circle should get a chance to share what that Strength looks like for them. Once everyone gets a chance to share, the group can move on to Mentors. It’s best to go in order around the group so that no one gets skipped. If you don’t feel strong in some areas of the Wheel, that’s OK, you are welcome to be honest about what each Strength looks like for you. If you don’t want to share about a particular Strength, that’s fine too, you can pass. We would just ask that you don’t pass on all of them.

“A few quick notes: When you are at Spirituality, share about a person, place, or practice that lifts your spirit or name one or two things you’re grateful for today. Then when you get to Mental Health, I want you to do two things:

1. “Share which of the Big 3 Emotions you wrestle with most commonly - anger, anxiety, or sadness or a combination of all three.

2. “Identify what helps you navigate that big emotion in a healthy way.”

You can give your own brief example of what this looks like for you: “For example, I tend to feel anxious. When my anxiety grows too big, it is really helpful for me to go for a run, do some art, or call a friend to talk through things.

“We may not have time to get to every Strength, but I’ll keep my eye on the clock and let you know how we’re doing with time. When we near the end of our time, I will ask you to finish the Strength you are on and then transition to share on Mental Health last.”

After giving instructions, send the Adult Advisors into their small groups. They can spread out around the room, or even head outside on a nice day. Give them a time frame, and when you have about seven or eight minutes left make an announcement and invite the group to finish sharing on the Strength they are currently discussing, and then jump to Mental Health so everyone gets the chance to share on the Big 3 Emotions and what helps bring big emotions back down to size.

## TRAINER TIP

If you’re short on time, prioritize sharing on these three parts of the Wheel: Positive Friends, Generosity, and Mental Health.

## Small Group Facilitation

If you facilitate small group sharing with Adult Advisors, start here afterward: “We have just explored the Wheel and listened to each other’s stories of Strength in small groups. During the Peer Leader training we are going to do the same small group sharing process.”

If you skip small group sharing with Adult Advisors, start here: “Following the large group discussion of the Strengths Wheel with Peer Leaders we will break up into small groups and allow individuals to share personally about their own Strengths. At this point in the training we will invite you as an Adult Advisor to host a small group of students to facilitate small group sharing. I will create the groups by numbering off the Adult Advisors and then numbering off the Peer Leaders so you each have four to ten students in your small group. Up to this point in the training we don’t mix up Peer Leaders for activities because we want to see who gravitates to who and get a sense of natural social groups. For small group sharing, we’ve found that mixing the groups up is helpful and the Peer Leaders like learning about others outside their typical social group.

“As a host of a small group we’ll ask you to facilitate a discussion around the Strengths Wheel and give each Peer Leader in your group a chance to check in on what each Strength looks like for them right now. Consider starting with Positive Friends because it tends to be an easier Strength for people to share. It’s best to go around the circle until everyone has a chance to share on Positive Friends, before moving on to Mentors. We’ll ask students to share honestly how these Strengths look in their own lives. If they’re feeling weaker in a particular area it’s OK to acknowledge that. As an Adult Advisor, be authentic and share some simple, appropriate examples from your own life.”

### TRAINER TIP

If Adult Advisors are hesitant to lead a small group alone, partner them up with someone who feels confident to facilitate Strengths sharing safely.

“We don’t force any students to share. If they want to pass on sharing about a Strength they can, but ask them not to pass on every Strength. Everyone has Strengths in their lives, even if they don’t immediately see it that

way. If you find one Peer Leader passing on multiple Strengths or saying they don’t have any of a particular Strength, you can ask them to share which area of the Wheel they would like to grow stronger in. This can help reinforce that the Wheel is always changing, and that we can grow our Strengths.”

## Logistics To Keep in Mind for Facilitating Small Groups:

“Small Group sharing is a very powerful part of the training. Many people name this as the most inspiring or connecting part of the day. Here are some tips for facilitating a safe and smooth small group experience:

- “Sit in a circle where everyone can see each other and talk at a comfortable volume.
- “Start with Positive Friends and move clockwise around the Wheel.
- “Focus on one of the Strengths at a time. Once everyone has shared, move on to the next Strength.
- “It’s a good idea to identify a person who is willing to share first and move clockwise around the circle. When groups “popcorn” it can slow down sharing as some take up more sharing time while quieter individuals may feel uncomfortable volunteering to share.
- “If your group finishes before others do, stay seated until the Trainer ends the activity. When individuals start walking around, other groups are likely to feel distracted or rushed.
- “Your Trainer will keep an eye on the clock and indicate remaining time as they bring small group sharing to a close.
- “Your Trainer will be available if there are questions or if an Adult Advisor needs to step out with a Peer Leader.”

## Tips and Techniques for Small Group Facilitation:

There are a handful of tips and techniques that you can share with the Adult Advisors to equip them to facilitate a safe and smooth small group experience in the upcoming Peer Leader training. Use the Presentation Slides to supplement this conversation.

- “**Write or Draw First:** If your group is very quiet or hesitant to share, have them write or draw their Strengths on the poster foldout in the center of their Peer Leader Guides before sharing with the group.

- **“Share But Don’t Overshare:** Our general rule is that Adult Advisors should share but not overshare. If the students start to worry about you, you may have overshared.
- **“Avoid 20 Questions:** Remember that this is not a counseling session, so avoid 20 questions. Occasionally ask a simple, clarifying question, such as, ‘Can you say a little more about that?’ or, ‘What was that like for you?’ but keep the conversation relaxed. Students who feel like an adult is preaching or lecturing them are less likely to share. Students (not Adult Advisors) should be doing the vast majority of the talking during small group sharing.
- **“Honor, Acknowledge, & Turn Towards Strength:** If a student shares something vulnerable or traumatic, honor and acknowledge what they have shared, and then turn towards Strength. For example: ‘I’m so sorry that happened. That’s such a tough thing. And you’re here today as a leader wanting to make a difference, looking at the Wheel, what Strengths have you found to be helpful?’

“This practice of turning to Strength allows the student to share about their resilience, and not just their risk. It also reminds the rest of the small group that our focus is on what helps, and not just what hurts. Without that gentle redirection, the sharing can devolve into ‘trauma time’ where people work to out-do each other with stories about the hardest things they’ve ever been through. This isn’t a grief counseling or group therapy session. Those can be helpful settings, but that is not what this space is set up as and we don’t want students to come away from this time feeling overwhelmed or traumatized.

- **“Support Emotional Students:** Infrequently, a student might become emotional and need to take a moment and step out of the room. If this happens, we would like one of the local Adult Advisors to go with them and offer support so no one is walking through the halls feeling vulnerable or alone. When the student is ready, bring them back to the training. In the rare event that an emotional Peer Leader doesn’t want to return, connect them to another Trusted Adult so they can get the help they need and deserve.

- **“Confidentiality:** Most of what happens in the training today, we want you to take and share with your friends and family, but, if someone chooses to share something personal, could we all agree to show respect to those stories, that they are not ours to take out of this room? Could I get a thumbs up if that’s something we can all agree to? Great, thank you!

“This is a quick and simple way to set expectations without sounding any alarms. We don’t want to unintentionally lead people to believe that we are expecting stories or disclosures that require interventions. However, as an adult working with youth, we are all most likely mandatory reporters, so if you hear anything that indicates a student is thinking about hurting themselves, hurting others, or is a victim of harm, we need to immediately enact our protocols for safety. (This should be said during the introduction of the Peer Leader training or before small group sharing)

- **“Debrief:** After the Peer Leader training I’ll ask Adult Advisors to stick around for about half an hour to debrief, talk through the training, identify any students that need follow-up or support, ask questions, and discuss next steps.

“Those are some tips for facilitating small groups with Peer Leaders. If you’re not feeling prepared we can pair you with another Adult Advisor. Is everyone comfortable leading a small group of Peer Leaders? Would anyone like to partner up?”

The ideal small group size is four to seven Peer Leaders with each Adult Advisor, so take this into consideration and make a note of any accommodations you will need to make for the Small Group Sharing module in the Peer Leader training. Work to set everyone up for success.

**Transition:** “We have finished the second part of our training, applying Strengths to our own lives, and it’s time to talk about what’s next, but first let’s take a break/play a game!”

### Key Summary

- Small group sharing can create a powerful space for personal application of the Strengths.
- When checking in on Mental Health, participants should share which of the Big 3 Emotions is most common for them as well as what helps them navigate that emotion in a healthy way.
- Adult Advisors can facilitate a safe and smooth small group experience.
- If someone shares something traumatic, it's important to Honor and Acknowledge what is said, and turn toward Strength.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SMALL GROUP FACILITATION

- Invited Adults to share in small groups about their own Strengths
- Equipped Adult Advisors to facilitate Small Group Sharing effectively, highlighting these key points:
  - Logistics of Small Group Facilitation
    - Sit in a circle, and share one at a time, around the circle
    - Start with Positive Friends and have everyone share on the same Strength, before moving on to Mentors
    - Stay in your small group until the Trainer ends the activity
  - Tips for facilitation
    - Peer Leaders can write or draw their Strengths
    - Share, but don't overshare
    - Avoid 20 questions
    - Honor, acknowledge, and direct back to Strength technique
    - Support emotional students
- Confidentiality and reporting
- Discussed the debrief process

# QUICK CHANGE GAME

## Time

5-7 minutes

## Materials

None

## Key Point

This activity is a fun and quick way to mix up the training and the room while creating an opportunity to discuss changes we notice in our friends who might need help.

## Trainer Overview

This is a quick activity used to get participants moving, and creates a natural segue from noticing changes in the people around us into a conversation about recent loss and a protocol review for suicide risk assessments and interventions.

## Directions:

- Ask everyone to find a partner and form two parallel lines facing each other.
- Once the lines are formed, ask everyone to take a quick look at their partner, noticing their shoes, hair, if they have jewelry on, if they're wearing a name tag etc. keep this very brief to avoid feeling awkward.
- Ask all participants to turn around.
- Prompt one line to change three things about their physical appearance.
- After a moment, ask players to turn and face their partners, calling out which three changes they made.
- Repeat this process again, but switch it up, and ask the other line to change three things about their physical appearance, turn back around, and challenge their partners to notice the changes.

### TRAINER TIP

Depending on the size of your training space, have the group form multiple sets of parallel lines, or an inside circle and an outside circle, with partners facing each other. The most important elements of this game are that partners can turn away from each other (back to back), and everyone can hear you give directions.

"In a moment I am going to ask you all to find a partner, maybe someone you have not partnered with yet today. I want you to all form two long lines, facing your partner, about an arm's length away from each other. Our goal is to form a long tunnel where I could run under your hands. Ready? Go!"

Once everyone has a partner and the tunnel has formed:

"Alright, take a quick look at your partner. What kind of shoes are they wearing? What hairstyle are they sporting today? Are they still wearing their name tag? Smile and wave at them! Okay, now I want everyone to turn around with their back towards their partner.

### TRAINER TIP

Keep these directions moving quickly to cut down on any potential embarrassment or awkwardness.

"This line facing the windows (or wall, bleachers, etc.), you all have one minute to change three things about your physical appearance. It could be big or small, just make sure it's visible to your partner. Please, keep your pants on, people!"

Most people will pull pockets out, untie shoes, take off an earring, or change the position of their name tags, lanyards, or badges, etc. Wait for people to make their changes.

"When I say go, I want everyone to turn around, face your partner, and point out the three changes they made. When partners are finished, give each other an air high-five or a fist-bump and stay where you are. Ready? Go!"

The group will turn and chatter about the changes they notice. Give the group about a minute to point out the changes as you walk up and down the lines. Gather their attention again, and ask everyone to turn around and swap roles.

"Now it's the other line's turn! You all have one minute

to change three things about your physical appearance. It could be big or small, and maybe a little bit sneakier or more subtle than your partner. Thirty more seconds... and when I say go, turn around and face your partner. Call out the three changes made by your partner. When partners are finished, I want you to give each other an air high-five or a fist-bump and stay where you are. Ready? Go!"

### TRAINER TIP

Keep this game quick and playful. If you are short on time, invite both lines to turn around at the same time to spot the quick changes!

The group will turn and chatter about the changes they notice, and after a minute or so, you can informally poll the room to see who was the most observant, and who had a hard time spotting the quick changes.

"How many of you got at least one thing? Who noticed two? Did anyone in the room spot all three things? Congratulations to those of you who were able to notice these changes.

"In the Peer Leader training we will use this activity about noticing changes to make a few teaching points about noticing and naming the positive and good we see in others, noticing and supporting those who may be feeling isolated, and noticing if someone might be struggling or feeling suicidal."

**Transition:** "Let's go ahead and grab a seat and we'll talk a bit more about your school's protocols for supporting students that might be feeling suicidal."

### Key Summary

- Instruct group to face a partner in two parallel lines.
- Have each line turn away and change three things about their appearance.
- Ask each partner to try to identify the changes.
- Transition into a conversation around school intervention protocols.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: QUICK CHANGE GAME

- Asked participants in the room to find partners
- Explained directions clearly
- Facilitated game playfully and didn't make it awkward

# SHAWN ACHOR TED TALK (OPTIONAL)

## Time

20 minutes (12 minutes for video, 5-8 minutes for discussion)

## Materials

Computer, Projector, Screen, "The Happy Secret to Better Work" TED Talk by Shawn Achor

## Key Point

- Positive Psychology suggests that our brains perform better when positive rather than negative, neutral, or stressed.
- The opposite of sickness is not health. We can't just focus on the things we want to prevent, we need to engage in positive social norming.

## Trainer Overview

This is not a formal module and this video should only be shown during an Adult Advisor training if there is enough time. Shawn Achor, popular author, speaker, and advocate for Positive Psychology, reinforces our messaging philosophies with charisma and humor; His talk is worth a watch during the training or as a recommendation for Adult Advisors to utilize later.

Achor's TED Talk highlights his research around positive psychology, his focus on how our brains are affected by the lens through which we view the world, in our perception, and provides a framing for a strength-based approach. This TED Talk is a great tool for Adult Advisors to share with the rest of their staff and reiterates many of the teaching points within Sources of Strength.

## Teaching Points:

- "The lens through which we view our reality begins to shape our reality." We are often surrounded by negative messaging and norming, which can cause a false normalization effect, making the negative seem more prevalent and the positive seem less prevalent than it truly is. This is why it is important to take a strength-based approach.
- Seeing stress as a challenge instead of as a threat can have a direct impact on improving outcomes and developing resilience.
- That's not a wellness week, that's a sickness week. The opposite of disease is not health, here is how we get to health." We must intentionally work towards cultivating health. At Sources our goal isn't just to keep people alive but to help them live healthy lives and foster healthy communities. We want to work towards wellness and building a Community of Strength. If we only focus on what can go wrong but neglect to focus on what health looks like, we are will not be nearly as effective.
- Anchor states "If happiness is on the other side of success, your brain never gets there. What we've done is we've pushed happiness over the cognitive horizon as a society. We think we need to be successful, then we will be happy. We need to reverse the formula, If we can find a way of becoming positive in the present, our brains can work more successfully." How often are do we do

this in our lives, or in our student's lives. We need to be conscious of our definitions of success and learn to engage in our strengths now in order to move through life in healthier ways.

- Practices for growing in positivity based on research:
  - Gratitude Journal
  - Journaling about a positive experience
  - Exercise
  - Meditation
  - Conscious Acts of Kindness

## Discussion Questions:

- What was a highlight or take away from Shawn Achor's talk?
- Has anyone here ever maintained a gratitude practice? How has it impacted you?
- Does Shawn Achor's work have any practical implications for your classes or interactions with students?



“IF HAPPINESS IS ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF SUCCESS, YOUR BRAIN NEVER GETS THERE. WHAT WE’VE DONE IS WE’VE PUSHED HAPPINESS OVER THE COGNITIVE HORIZON AS A SOCIETY. WE THINK WE NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL, THEN WE WILL BE HAPPY. WE NEED TO REVERSE THE FORMULA, IF WE CAN FIND A WAY OF BECOMING POSITIVE IN THE PRESENT, WE CAN LEARN WHAT OUR BRAINS ARE TRULY CAPABLE OF.”

- *The Happy Secret to Better Work*  
TED Talk by Shawn Achor

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SHAWN ACHOR TED TALK (OPTIONAL)

- Introduced Shawn Achor and TED Talk clearly
- Facilitated a rich discussion

# RECENT LOSS OR SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, AND PROTOCOL REVIEW

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Suicide Intervention Protocol (Page 27)

## Key Point

As a Sources of Strength team begins to function in a school and community, it's helpful to identify any recent significant events or losses that the Trainer should be aware of, and to ensure that the safety protocols and procedures are in place to connect suicidal students to help.

## Trainer Overview

It is helpful for the Trainer (especially a Trainer from outside of the school or community) to know about any recent losses or significant events, particularly with regard to suicide and violence, that may impact the training. At this point, we also want to ensure that the school has a suicide intervention protocol in place and that staff are aware of and familiar with it. We also want to make sure the Adult Advisors feel prepared to respond to suicide risk that could be disclosed, and to connect any students to help in the future.

## Recent Loss or Significant Events

**"Do you all remember that story about the waterfall? The primary mission of a Sources of Strength team is to move upstream in the prevention cycle, but we do have a role to play in the intervention and postvention spaces as well, in those moments of crisis and after a loss. Speaking of postvention, I'd like to have a brief conversation about any recent loss or significant events that I should be aware of before the Peer Leader training. The intention with this question is not to gossip or bring up drama. It is simply helpful for me to know about any significant events or recent losses in the community so I can be aware as a facilitator and we can support any vulnerable students or staff who may be more likely to feel those big emotions. Is there anything you think I should be aware of?"**

**This section should be fairly brief and informational. As a Trainer, you should be compassionate and curious, but this is not a time to gossip or ask anyone to disclose unnecessary information.**

Adult Advisors will typically share if there have been any recent losses; including deaths by suicide, high profile attempts, incidents of violence, natural disasters, etc. Staff also often share socio-economic or cultural information to give you a better idea of the community context. Take notes during this time and follow up with the administration or counseling team to ensure that you have an appropriate understanding.

If someone close to the school community has died, follow up by asking if that person's family members, friends, or classmates will be in the training. Inquire if the impacted student(s) know about the nature of the Peer Leader training. Although the training is Strengths-focused, it can sometimes be overwhelming for vulnerable participants or those who have recently experienced loss. Make a plan as to which Adult Advisors will help support those individuals with check-ins and partnering in the day's activities.

**Note:** If it comes to your attention that a Peer Leader has made a recent suicide attempt, we recommend that they wait at least 8-12 months before participating in a training. While they are welcome to participate in future campaign events, it is more important for them to focus on their healing in a supportive environment. We would say the same about a Peer Leader who has recently lost someone very close to them to suicide. While we believe that these students have great strength to offer, we want to make sure they have the time and space to focus on their own healing before being put into a prevention role. Make it clear that this student is welcome to attend meetings and participate in activities, but they should take some time to recover before they have a lead role in campaigns or Peer Leader meetings.

Once you have received the relevant information, thank the staff for their openness, and shift the conversation from the postvention realities to the intervention protocols.

## Protocol Review

This is a good time to ask about the school or community protocol for referring suicidal students. In most cases there will be a protocol in place, even if the Adult Advisors are not immediately aware of what it is. Use the following questions to determine if there is an intervention protocol, if there is a point person, if this information is widely known, and if there is a postvention response protocol. If there is not a protocol in place, refer them to the Sources of Strength Suicide Intervention Protocol in chapter one or in the Adult Advisor Field Guide on page 125. If the Peer Leaders are connecting their friends to help, and reaching out to their Trusted Adults, then it is essential for staff to follow through and make the proper referrals. It is a good idea to clarify this protocol with the Adult Advisors and then suggest a review of this protocol at a staff meeting in the coming days or weeks, so that all school employees are aware of the protocol and informed of the proper procedures.

These questions should be asked with care and curiosity, this should not feel like an interrogation or quiz. If the Adult Advisors are unaware of the protocol, that is helpful information to know, as other staff are likely unaware as well, and we can make a plan to make sure everyone is brought up to speed.

- “Our research has shown that Peer Leaders are four times as likely to refer a suicidal friend to a Trusted Adult, so we need to make sure that our Trusted Adults know what to do when this happens.
- “Are you aware of your school’s protocol for handling a student in a suicidal crisis?
- “Are you all aware of the first steps taken when someone becomes aware of a suicidal student or young adult?
- “Who is the ‘go to’ person in the school, organization, or community to be contacted when someone becomes aware of a suicidal student or young adult?
- Has the entire staff been trained on this protocol? Have your new staff members been updated on this protocol each year?
- “Who is responsible for follow up support for a student after a risk assessment? After a hospitalization? When they return to school?

**Note:** If there is a disclosure in the training of a student contemplating violence to self, violence to others, or

that they are a victim of violence, respond immediately; do not wait until the end of the day.

“We particularly want to ensure that when Peer Leaders or other students become Connectors to Help and invite school staff to support a friend or fellow student in crisis, that all school staff know what the proper next steps are. When properly informed of a school’s protocol, staff can continue the chain of connection, getting people the help they need and deserve.”

“Although we don’t anticipate that students will disclose suicidal intent or ideation during the training, it is important to determine who, either in, or outside the training, we can invite in to offer support and conduct a risk assessment as needed.

- “If someone discloses suicidal ideation or intent during the Peer Leader training, who is the person in the building that we can invite in to offer them immediate support?”

### TRAINER TIP

Avoid the term “hand-off” when describing suicide protocols and procedures. Instead consider using the term ‘invite in’ to reinforce that we want to wrap multiple supports around someone who is suicidal. Once you invite a Counselor, Mental Health, or Behavioral Health support into the process of supporting a suicidal student or young adult, you don’t stop providing support for them, your support simply takes the form of a Mentor or Positive Friend.

“Thank you for clarifying your safety protocols around suicide interventions. I expect our upcoming Peer Leader training to be a powerful time of connection, and I am confident that this conversation has helped to ensure that it can be a strong and brave space for everyone who participates.”

**Transition:** “Now that we have reviewed your intervention protocols, I want us to shift our focus back upstream.”

### Key Summary

- Inquire if there have been any significant recent events that might impact the Peer Leader training.
- Identify if there are any students who may need additional support throughout the training.
- Follow up with appropriate staff members to prepare a supportive environment for potentially vulnerable Peer Leaders.
- Conduct a brief protocol review, to ensure that school staff know how to connect students to help when they or a Peer Leader are worried about someone who is or may be feeling suicidal.

Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: RECENT LOSS OR SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, AND PROTOCOL REVIEW

- Facilitated a conversation about recent significant events, deaths, or attempts in the school or community.
- Reviewed the school/community suicide and safety protocols
- Identified a Trusted Adult that can be invited in to support a student if necessary during the training.
- Referenced Sources of Strength Suicide Intervention Protocol document (if applicable)

# EMPOWER AND EQUIP:

## PRACTICING AND SHARING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

We've laid the groundwork, looked back at our history, learned what Sources of Strength is, and reflected on our own stories of Strength. Now it's time to make some plans! In this section, we will get practical and help Adult Advisors plan what Sources of Strength will do in their school and community. We want to empower Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to sustain this Community of Strength by meeting together regularly and carrying out strategic messaging campaigns, while equipped with all of the tools and resources Sources of Strength has developed.



# BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

## Time

10 minutes

## Materials Needed

Projector

Adult Advisor Presentation Slides

Adult Advisor Field Guides

## Key Point

Adult Advisors are an integral part of the power of this program. It's not just about the training, it's the ways they create a Community of Strength alongside the Peer Leaders to positively impact their school culture. Sources of Strength will be successful when Adult Advisors engage with students in consistent, encouraging, empowering, and inclusive ways.

## Trainer Overview:

A Sources of Strength team can be a powerful and positive Agent of Change in any school and/or community, but it will take everyone's help. Set yourself and your participants up for success by giving clear expectations of what you need from the Adult Advisors before, during, and after the training. This module serves as a shift towards the third movement of the Adult Advisor training. So far, we have EDUCATED participants about the history and philosophy of Sources of Strength. Participants have EXPERIENCED the model, engaging with the Wheel and applying Strengths to their own lives. Now we will EMPOWER them to build a Community of Strength and EQUIP them with the resources they need moving forward.

## Building a Community of Strength

"Remember the primary mission of Sources of Strength is to move upstream in our prevention efforts. And our model is training a team of Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to create a Community of Strength that positively impacts school culture and climate through strategic messaging campaigns. This is not just content for young people! This is a framework of wellness for all people.

"Sources of Strength isn't just a club or a class; it's powerful prevention work that changes culture. But it starts with us. We can't just tell others how to be well. We have to talk the talk and walk the walk. When we play and laugh together, and reflect and share together we are creating community. When we are authentic in the ways that we grow Strengths ourselves, and then share those stories using our art, our writing, our activities, our social media, our culture and our voice, we create a Community of Strength.

"Our trainings are designed to be fun and to help catalyze your local social change initiative. The real work of this change happens as teams meet together regularly, growing in and practicing their Strengths, and then seeking to spread Hope, Help, and Strength-based messages and stories across a school or community at a population level.

"In a few moments we will talk about meetings and I

will introduce you to many of the resources we have to help you build your messaging campaigns. First, however, I want to make sure you're clear on what your role is in this social movement. We need help to build a Community of Strength together with the Peer Leader team, and that role will start during the training, and then continue as you support the team moving forward in the next few weeks, and in the ongoing months and years.

## Adult Advisor Expectations During the Training

"Here are three of our expectations for you during the training with students, to help build a Community of Strength: **Participate Fully, Engage Playfully, and Connect Strategically.**"

### Participate Fully

"First, **Participate Fully** means we want you to come prepared to participate just like you did today. Wear your name tag, sit in the circle with students, play the games - and try to win! Join in and share during the poster groups, small groups, and brainstorming times. Eat lunch with students and engage with them during the breaks. A student is much more likely to feel comfortable connecting with others or asking for help if they feel seen and welcomed by the adults in the room. This helps to establish/grow a true partnership between students and adults.

"Another way that we can ensure full participation, is

to create a strong and brave space where everyone is welcome. If you remember back to the model, a Sources team truly becomes a Community of Strength when it is inclusive. Part of the way we ensure that our space is inclusive is through the invitation for folks to share their names/pronouns when they introduce themselves, and on their name tags. The research shows that when our trans/non-binary/gender expansive students are able to use their names/pronouns at school, home, work, and with friends it reduces their risk for suicide by 65% (Russell, Pollitt, Li and Grossman, 2018). This isn't a preference, it's our protocol and it's life saving prevention!

“As a national organization we don't want to introduce this practice without a local adult who can maintain it after we leave. We want to make sure there is an Adult Advisor ready to be an ally and to support the use of names/pronouns in the training and ongoing meetings, willing to field questions as they arise, honor and acknowledge student feedback if a campaign or experience is harmful or exclusive, and be accountable for repair and enacting necessary change. So, by a quick show of hands, is anyone willing and able to play this role?”

If no one raises their hand, then there are a few next steps:

1. Note that in the Peer Leader training you as the trainer can choose to share and model your own name/pronouns in your introduction and on your name tag (simply modeling the practice yourself can be a signal to transgender and non-binary youth that you acknowledge their existence and affirm their identities), even if you don't specifically ask the Peer Leaders to share their name/pronoun (because no one volunteered to maintain the practice safely).
2. Reinforce with the Adult Advisor team that this is a simple, though not necessarily easy practice, that fosters safety, dignity, and belonging for all students and is life saving. Invite the team to continue exploring the practices further and recommend that they institute the practice when they are confident they can create safety.
3. Indicate you will send them more information about the research so they can learn and grow their best practice prevention work.
4. Identify that this is a recruitment opportunity to find the adults in their school and community who ARE willing and able to support the use of names/

pronouns and invite them to play a powerful role in this Adult Advisor team.

When someone does raise their hand, thank them for joining us in this powerful practice, and continue the conversation by asking them to start the Peer Leader training at the name tag table with you. As students arrive, we want to ensure that if there are questions about what pronouns are, or why we use them, this local Adult Advisor is available.

At Sources of Strength, we are working to **Empower a Well World**. We know that there are systems (institutional, structural, and social) in our communities that negatively impact some people's access to mental and physical health. One way that we embrace and empower health and wellness in our training is through the use of names and pronouns. Names and pronouns, when misused can cause harm, but names and pronouns, when used correctly and consistently, are extraordinarily powerful for building relationships. This is a simple practice that reduces harm, but the conversation is not always easy. Read the document “Using Pronouns at Sources of Strength” and share it with your Adult Advisor teams if they have questions. That document and more can be found at [sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns](https://sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns).

### TRAINER TIP

Model the behavior you want to see. For example, put your pronouns on your name tag and in your initial verbal introduction say something similar to, “My name is Raquel, and I use she/her/hers pronouns. I am a local trainer with Sources of Strength.”

### Engage Playfully

“Secondly, we ask that you **Engage Playfully!** This is a trauma-informed strategy to avoid power struggles while inviting participation! At Sources, we work to avoid a top-down approach with students. Sometimes this can mean being patient with ‘teen engaged behavior,’ like side conversations. Often we have found that this is simply how young people learn and engage with what they're hearing. If a student or group is particularly challenging/distracting, I may ask an Adult Advisor who has a relationship with them to take them

aside privately during a break and ask what we could do to make the training more helpful or engaging for them. Non-participation should not be taken as a sign of disrespect, attitude, or rejection, but possibly fear, confusion, or overwhelm, all of which are an invitation for further connection. As adults, let's engage all of the students with creativity and kindness, always inviting people in, and never calling people out."

### **Connect Strategically**

"Finally, we want you to **Connect Strategically**. Let's build relationships with everyone in the room, and work to make sure no one is left out of a group or activity. While we never try to elicit big emotions, we also don't always know what is going on in a young person's life. You all know your students better than I do, so please watch for signs of distress during the training. If a student seems agitated, distant, or upset, it would be helpful for an adult who knows them to check in with them periodically throughout the day. Simply using their name, offering to partner with them in a game, or listening if they need to talk can go a long way.

"If a student does become overwhelmed or activated and decides that they need to take a break, please stay with them, especially if they leave the room. We would never want a student feeling alone and vulnerable in the halls. Both of you are welcome to join back in the training when you're ready. If the student is unable to rejoin the training, please connect them to another Trusted Adult or mental health support staff. This could look like walking them to a counselor or teacher, but do not let them leave alone. It doesn't happen very often, but we want to be prepared to wrap multiple supports around a student who has a hard time in the training or has indicated that they or a friend are suicidal."

You can direct the Adult Advisors to Chapter 2 of the Adult Advisor Field Guide, *Building Below the Waterline: Practicing a Community of Strength* for more resources.

### **Adult Advisor Role in Building a Community of Strength**

"We have often said that the power of this program is not just what happens in the training, but in the relationships formed, the resilience practiced, and the Strengths shared across your school and community. Adult Advisors play an integral role to co-create a Community of Strength alongside Peer Leaders, to positively impact their school culture. Sources of Strength will be successful when Adult Advisors engage

with students in consistent, encouraging, empowering, and inclusive ways.

"Here are some tips that outline the roles of an Adult Advisor moving forward.

- **"Show Up: Continue to Participate Fully** in this Community of Strength; in the meetings, in games, in the sharing prompts, and the campaigns. **Playfully Engage** with the Peer Leaders as they move through the ups and downs of life. Encourage them when they ask for help and **Connect Strategically** with Peer Leaders and their friends. Together you can build resilience individually and collectively.
- **"Be a Trusted Adult:** While you may all have different responsibilities within the Adult Advisor team, we all play the role of a Trusted Adult. You are not here as a chaperone, and you'll never work yourself out of a role, even as student ownership and leadership develops. One of the expected outcomes of a program that increases protection, and reduces risk, IS the relationships built between youth and adults. Share from your own lives, engage as a Mentor, and be ready to listen and learn alongside your students.
- **"Listen to Student Voices:** We all know the difference between someone who is listening and a person waiting for their turn to talk. Be the kind of Adult Advisor who develops and models the skills of active listening; valuing student voice, perspectives, opinions, and ideas.
- **"Facilitate Equity, Inclusivity, and Belonging:** As time progresses, it's important that you pay attention to the overall team composition with your Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders. Are all corners and cultures of your school represented? Do you have diversity in race, ethnicity, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ability/mobility, hobbies, language, and social groups? Do all students feel supported by, and safe with the Adult Advisors?

"If not, what needs to change? Who else needs to be recruited? Who needs to be invited? What conversations do you need to have? Sometimes, you'll need to have hard conversations to address exclusion, bullying and/or harassment. How can



you continually invite people in, and not call people out?

“It’s important to remember that just because a group is represented in the room does not mean that they feel that they actually belong. Who is sharing? Who is leading games? Where and when are you meeting? We often say that everyone’s voice has power, but that’s an aspirational statement. We need to make it true in our meetings and in our messaging campaigns.

*“Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.”*

- Vernā Myers  
VP of Inclusion Strategy at Netflix

- **“Focus on Peer Leader Retention:** Improve Peer Leader retention by continually listening to student feedback and then reshaping your meetings and campaigns in light of their thoughts and experiences. Use the Peer Leader Survey in the Adult Advisor Field Guide (see page 128) or work with Peer Leaders to create your own.

“Pay attention to attendance at your Peer Leader meetings to notice if certain individuals or social groups stop participating. A simple invitation to come back can go a long way. Sometimes students drop off because they are too busy, and involved in too many activities. Others may leave because of conflict or a sense that they don’t belong. When a Peer Leader stops attending it can be a litmus test for how inclusive your Community of Strength truly is.

- **“Celebrate and Thank Peer Leaders Regularly:** It is really important that Peer Leaders are recognized and celebrated on a regular basis in your meetings, and especially at the end of the year. Some Adult Advisors recognize their Peer Leaders at half-time during a sports game or annual awards ceremony. Other schools allow students to letter in Sources. Some schools have honored senior Peer Leaders by giving them cords to wear with their graduation gowns. They should be thanked for using their voice, giving their time and leveraging their power

to influence their school and community.

- **“Coordinate Logistics:** Organize the meetings, send reminder texts, get permission from administration for campaigns, and track activities. Each team needs an Adult Advisor who will be a primary contact who can reach out to the Sources of Strength national and/or state and local teams for celebrations, support, and troubleshooting, but every Adult Advisor on the team should have roles and responsibilities suited to their personalities, their passions, and their schedules.”

**Transition:** “Practically, you build this Community of Strength as you meet regularly with your team, so let’s talk meetings!”

### Key Summary

- The Peer Leader training can be a powerfully connecting experience, but the power of this program is what happens as the team forms a Community of Strength.
- Adult Advisors are invited to Participate Fully, Engage Playfully, and Connect Strategically in the Peer Leader training, and moving forward.
- Inviting participants to share their name and pronouns is a proven form of suicide prevention.
- Adult Advisors can build a Community of Strength by showing up, being a Trusted Adult, listening to student voice, facilitating equity, inclusivity, and belonging, focusing on Peer Leader retention, celebrating Peer Leaders, and coordinating logistics.
- Just because a team is diverse, doesn’t automatically mean it is inclusive, so invite Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors to co-create a culture that is brave and strong for everyone.

**Notes:**

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

- Described a Community of Strength
- Explained expectations for Adult Advisors during Peer Leader Training:
  - Participate Fully
  - Engage Playfully
  - Connect Strategically
- Asked Adult Advisors to volunteer to continue to create an inclusive space through consistent and continued use of names/pronouns
  - Invited at least one Adult Advisor who volunteered to stand at the name tag table as Peer Leaders arrive for their training
  - OR**
  - If no Adult Advisor volunteered, trainer provided more information, resources, and opportunities for the Adult Advisor team to learn and grow in this best practice prevention work
- Described expectations for Adult Advisors after a Peer Leader Training:
  - Showing up
  - Being a Trusted Adult
  - Listening to student voice
  - Facilitating equity, inclusivity, and belonging
  - Focusing on Peer Leader retention
  - Celebrating Peer Leaders
  - Coordinating logistics

# PRACTICING AND SHARING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH (MEETINGS)

## Time

8-10 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

Adult Advisor Training Presentation Slides

## Key Point

Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders should meet consistently and follow the formula of One Part Fun + One Part Sharing + One Part Planning in order to practice and share a Community of Strength.

## Trainer Overview

After exploring a vision for building a Community of Strength it's important to break down the when, where, and how of Sources of Strength team meetings. While the Peer Leader training tends to be fun, energizing, and inspiring, the power of the program comes in what happens after the training. Use this module to help Adult Advisors understand when to meet and how to host meetings that empower their Peer Leaders.

## Practicing and Sharing a Community of Strength

“Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders need to meet regularly to build a Community of Strength. These meetings are where you practice your mission together and they are most effective when you:

- **“Meet within 10 days of the training:** If you wait longer, you might lose the momentum and excitement that was sparked during the training. We have created templated meeting agendas to get you started, which can be found on our website [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org). For your first meeting we recommend playing a game, revisiting the Peer Leader Mission Statement, and circling back to your campaign brainstorm ideas.
- **“Meet consistently:** Continue to meet with your team regularly. We recommend meeting twice a month for 60 minutes.
- **“Share roles and responsibilities:** Pass leadership opportunities over to Peer Leaders in supportive ways. This can be done by asking them to play various roles: DJ the music, lead games, introduce discussion topics, and facilitate brainstorming or sharing.
- **“Follow the formula of One Part Fun + One Part Sharing + One Part Planning:** Each of the elements of this formula will keep students engaged. We find that if any one of these elements goes missing the Peer Leader retention and impact of the team can suffer.

“I want to spend some time talking about this formula.

These are three essential elements for a Sources of Strength meeting.

**Fun:** “We believe in the power of PLAY! Games and laughter not only help break the ice, but they break down social barriers. They also help build relationships and rapport among youth and adults. Prioritize time for games, music, food, and laughter.

**Sharing:** “We also focus on building relationships and connection through sharing: in small groups, in dyads, using art or writing, and in large group storytelling. This helps students and staff internalize the Strengths in their own lives, this authenticity allows all campaigns to be far more effective.

**Planning:** “Having experienced a Community of Strength, your team can creatively and strategically plan campaigns to share their stories of Strength with the entire school. The Peer Leader team is often very excited about making a difference. Planning and delivering campaigns helps students take positive action to see this change.”

## Next Steps

“Have you scheduled your first meeting, and do you know when you’ll continue to meet?”

**If YES:** “Great! When is the meeting, and can we announce this during the Peer Leader training?” And “How will you communicate with your students/staff about Sources meetings and activities? Will you use the Remind App, school email, announcements, Google Classroom, or something else?”

**If NO or WAITING ON ADMINISTRATION:** “OK! It can be a challenge to coordinate the meeting details but it is worth the work. Who will be the point person to follow-up with the administration and communicate with the rest of the Sources of Strength team?”

“One of the biggest challenges for a Sources of Strength team is finding consistent meeting times where a majority of your Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors can attend. Take into consideration transportation, other clubs and activities, and room size, and plan your meetings accordingly. Some teams meet during lunch, some during advisory, and others after school. If a time does not seem to be working, don’t be afraid to try something new! The consistency of these meetings is necessary for building community and trust, and very important to the overall success of a group.”

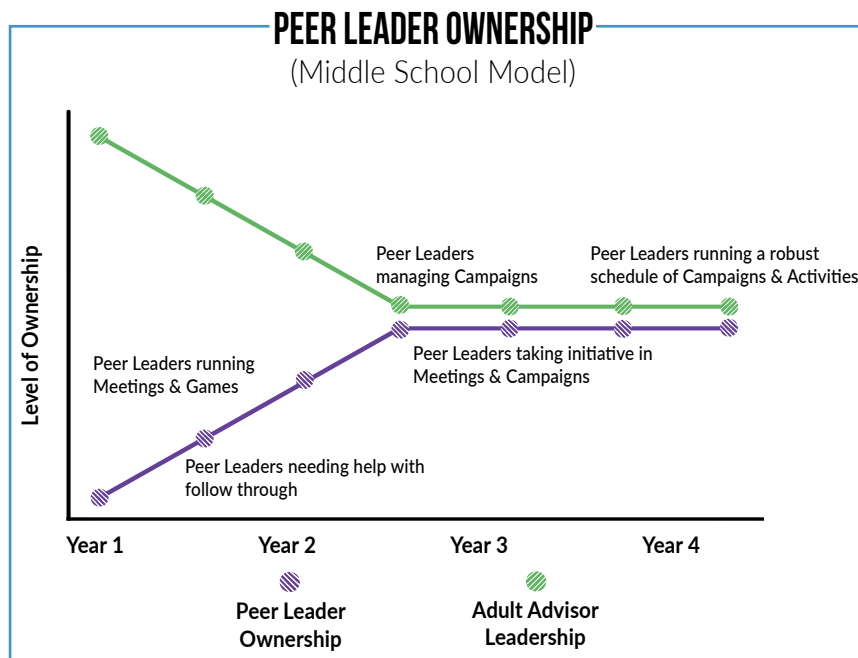
**Peer Leader Ownership**

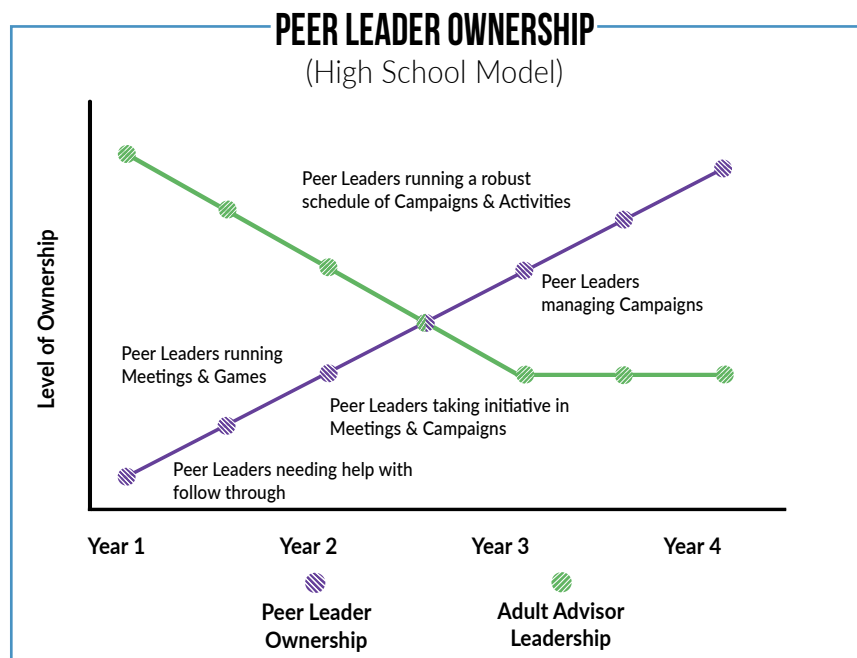
“As your team grows, find creative ways to empower their leadership and voices. It can be easy for Adult Advisors to jump into a new program and either take over or to stand back and watch until it fails. Resist the temptation to do it all yourself! Likewise, resist the urge

to believe that a peer-led program means students are on their own.

“Students have really amazing ideas for sharing stories of Strength out to their school, but that doesn’t mean they know how to navigate all of the logistical details needed to run a campaign. You can empower their ownership by advocating for them with your administration, helping them reserve rooms they may need, and helping them design their plans in practical and realistic ways.

“This balance of roles and responsibilities can look different for middle and high school teams, (as seen in the Peer Leader Ownership charts below) so delegate appropriate roles and tasks. While a high school Peer Leader may eventually run games, meetings, and campaigns, a middle school team may require more guidance and support, but in healthy teams peer leadership and ownership will grow over time. The key is listening to their ideas and their voice, and then creating systems that help students to co-create the team culture, as well as the wider culture and climate of the whole school.”





**Transition:** “As you meet together and create campaigns to build a Community of Strength, another one of your primary roles as an Adult Advisor is to ensure that everything is run through the lens of Hope, Help, and Strength.”

#### Key Summary

- Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders need to meet regularly to practice and share a Community of Strength.
- Sources of Strength meetings should incorporate Fun + Sharing + Planning.
- Peer Leaders can build ownership over time, but the Adult Advisors should always be involved.

**Notes:**

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: PRACTICING AND SHARING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH (MEETINGS)

- Explained that meetings:
  - Happen within 10 days
  - Should be regular and consistent
  - Give Peer Leaders roles and responsibilities
  - Use the formula One Part Fun + One Part Sharing + One Part Planning
- Explored Peer Leader ownership
  - Highlighted differences between middle school and high school teams

# HOPE, HELP, AND STRENGTH

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

Adult Advisor Presentation Slides

## Key Point

Hope, Help, and Strength-based messaging is a foundational lens through which we run all of our conversations and campaigns.

## Trainer Overview

We spent some time unpacking Hope, Help, and Strength as a fundamental philosophy of Sources of Strength at the beginning of the training when we talked about Bridging the Gaps in prevention. Now we want to reinforce that a primary role of Adult Advisors is to apply this Hope, Help, and Strength lens to everything we do.

## Hope, Help, and Strength

“As you meet with your Peer Leaders to carry out their mission, and begin to create their messaging campaigns, we hope to:

- Increase youth-adult connection
- Practice healthy coping and emotional regulation
- Develop our Strengths and protective factors
- Reduce isolation and increase belonging, and
- Break the silence and connect people to help

“Adult Advisors play a key role in achieving these goals by ensuring that all of our work is Hope, Help, Strength focused. Hope, Help, and Strength is not just a catch phrase, it is a foundational lens through which we approach this work. It is easy to find examples of prevention strategies that are based in Sad, Shock, Trauma approaches. This could include sharing sad images, telling traumatic death stories, or using shocking statistics or death data.

“We can remind the Peer Leaders that while these strategies may have an emotional impact, they can often harm our most vulnerable students and staff. Sad, Shock, Trauma tactics contribute to a false normalization effect, making suicide seem more common than it is, and reinforce a sense of hopelessness for those who are struggling most. The truth is that the vast majority of people who struggle with suicidality do not go on to die by suicide; they heal, recover, and find the help they need and deserve. Recovery and resiliency are the true norm so let’s tell those stories.

“There are times, at least initially, when students need support in learning this skill. If a group does not seem to be able to pivot away from sad, shocking, or traumatic messaging, you may need to kindly but firmly pause the

campaign and help the team reframe the messaging in a more Hope, Help, Strength-based way.

“Strength and resilience don’t assume the absence of pain or struggle. In fact, as we learned in the Biosphere story earlier, they almost always coexist. We don’t deny that hard things happen or that mental illnesses can be persistent and overwhelming. It’s OK to not feel OK. Hope, Help, Strength-based messaging simply shifts the focus away from solely talking about what hurts to also talking about what helps. In the public health field we tend to spend a lot of time talking about the leading causes of death, we need to also shine a light on the leading causes of life.

“The messaging philosophy of Hope, Help, and Strength helps us engage in this work in safe, effective, and impactful ways.”

- **Hope:** “Hope isn’t passive or wishful thinking that things will magically get better, it is the practice of strength and resilience that helps us to meet adversity and overcome it. We can share inspiring, encouraging, empowering stories and images of local students and staff committed to coping, connecting, recovery, and resiliency.”
- **Help:** “We can normalize a culture of help seeking. That getting help for a friend is being a good friend. That asking for help is a sign of courage and strength. We can highlight how to get help, where to get help, who we can ask for help, and what connecting to help looks like. We can normalize help-seeking behavior with everything from homework and homecoming, to harassment and our physical and mental health.”

- **Strength:** “Focus on the eight protective factors on the Wheel; which Strengths have helped us through tough times, which Strengths we feel strong in or are developing, and which ones have we already grown stronger in. Focusing on stories of Strength is a focus on individual and community assets, it’s a focus on building from what we already have, rather than focusing on what we lack.”

#### Key Summary

- Hope, Help, and Strength is a foundational lens.
- An Adult Advisor can help redirect a Peer Leader team away from Sad, Shock, Trauma towards Hope, Help, and Strength.

**Transition:** “Keep this focus on Hope, Help and Strength in mind as we begin to discuss campaigns.”

**Notes:**

“IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH FIELD WE TEND TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME TALKING ABOUT THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH. WE NEED TO ALSO SHINE A LIGHT ON THE LEADING CAUSES OF LIFE.”

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: HOPE, HELP, AND STRENGTH

- Explained the importance of Hope, Help, and Strength
  - Reinforced that it’s OK to not be OK
  - Cautioned against sad, shock, trauma messaging tactics
- Highlighted the role of the Adult Advisor team to move students towards Hope, Help, and Strength messaging
- Cast a vision for campaigns within a Hope, Help, and Strength lens

# MESSAGING AND CAMPAIGNS

## Time

15 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides, Adult Advisor Presentation Slides, Adult Advisor Field Guide, Templated Campaign Packs

## Key Point

Messaging campaigns are powerful tools for sharing stories of Strength that can positively impact an entire student population.

## Trainer Overview

We are nearing the end of the training and this is the chance to explain what the Adult Advisors need to know for their team to carry out campaigns. Not all suicide prevention messaging campaigns are safe or effective, so use this module to ensure the Adult Advisors know how to support safe and successful campaigns in their school and community. All of this information is also written in the Adult Advisor Field Guide, so while no one needs to memorize what you are saying, they do need to understand the philosophies behind messaging and campaigns.

## Messaging Campaigns

“At its best, Sources of Strength is not simply a club or a program, but a powerful community-wide public health initiative. Peer Leaders are Agents of Change; the patient zero of an epidemic of health and a contagion of strength that spreads across the entire school or community. This spread is facilitated through personal conversations and relationships and through targeted messaging campaigns.

“We are about to do a deep dive on campaigns, but remember, this work is not about the campaigns, it’s about what the campaigns help facilitate: connection, community, belonging, resilience, hope. Students and staff need a place to first practice the skills of sharing stories, laughing together, and applying Strength to their own lives. Once a Peer Leader has experienced a Community of Strength amongst their team, they are ready to share Strength with their friends.

“As an Adult Advisor, you have the privilege to help your team create safe and effective messaging campaigns.”

## Messaging Campaign Cycle

“Each messaging campaign follows a cycle:

- **“Brainstorm & Prioritize:** Peer Leaders brainstorm ideas for a particular campaign, thinking about how they could use various modalities like videos, photography, art, presentations, all-school activities, and social media to help engage people in that campaign. This piece should conclude with getting realistic and specific about what is possible/affordable/actionable and running each idea through the Targeted Messaging lens.
- **“Calendarize:** Sequence various campaign modalities over the course of six to eight weeks and lay it out on a calendar that corresponds with the school calendar.

## MESSAGING CAMPAIGN CYCLE





- **“Action Steps:** Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders break the modalities and campaign ideas down into action steps and assign individuals or groups to specific tasks with deadlines or dates.
- **“Roll Out Campaign:** Launch the campaign and roll it out over six to eight weeks, inviting the majority of the student body to engage, interact, and apply Strength to their lives.
- **“Record:** What did you do, and how did you do it? Save copies of the campaign calendar, develop protocols for planning, and capture the highlights of student engagement and stories shared.
- **“Share:** Continue to share the stories, pictures, videos, and posts back with you students and staff. Get the word out about what you accomplished to your staff, parents, district officials, and your local news organizations.
- **“Reflect & Celebrate:** Reflect on the campaign, what worked, what didn’t, and celebrate what the team accomplished and learned together. Celebrations throughout the year, whether large or small, can help Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors to feel a tangible sense of accomplishment.

“A note about brainstorming: Sometimes a group may be so excited that their ideas get a little more ambitious than what can be accomplished. Help great ideas grow by problem solving and paving a way for them to be successful. These successes will help keep students engaged.

### Templated Campaigns

“We aren’t coming in here with a national campaign and posters of celebrities. The most effective prevention messaging uses local stories and local faces. However, it can be hard to start from scratch so we have developed several templated campaigns for your team to take, and then make your own.”

You do not need to explain every campaign, but you can introduce the campaign material packs, as you describe a few of these templated campaigns. You can use presentation slides to supplement this module, showing photographs of various campaigns, using different modalities, from other Sources of Strength schools.

- **Getting the Word Out:** An introduction to the school or community to the Strengths Wheel and to your Sources of Strength Peer Leader team.
- **Strengths:** Specific focus on engaging and

interacting with one area of the Strengths Wheel (i.e. Generosity or Healthy Activities).

- **Trusted Adults:** Name and thank a Trusted Adult that you would connect with if you needed support or were worried about a friend. Then find ways to celebrate them and share stories of how or why they are a Trusted Adult.
- **Thankfulness Challenge:** Identify three things you are thankful for every day for 21 days and see how your mindset shifts.
- **I Am Stronger:** What is an area of the Strengths Wheel you have already grown stronger in and how?
- **What Helps Me:** This looks at how we regulate, manage, or cope with the Big 3 Emotions. When I experience Anger, Anxiety, or Sadness, What Helps Me is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- **Connect:** We all go through ups and downs, and when we are down, who or what did you connect to for help? Or who connected you to help and how?
- **We Belong:** How do you experience belonging? How do we ensure that everyone, no matter who they are, feels like they belong in our school/community?
- **Sources of Strength Week:** Spirit Week Sources-style (i.e. Mentor Monday, Thankful Thursday, etc.)

“Use the Adult Advisor Field Guide, the website [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org), and Sources Social Media platforms (specifically Instagram @sourcesofstrength) for campaign ideas, meeting agendas, sharing prompts, activity trackers and documents to help you reflect and celebrate when a campaign is complete.

“These resources are full of campaign ideas to help fuel your brainstorming, but make sure every campaign you run features ideas from your Peer Leaders. We also created these templated campaign packs, from Thankfulness Journals to Trusted Adult Thank You postcards. Think of these starter packs like building blocks, as you build out your campaigns.

### Campaign Modalities

“Every campaign starts with personal reflection, expands to conversations among social networks, and then spreads out to the entire school or community. Your team will use their voices, conversations, and personal messages to bring each campaign to life using these modalities:

- **Art** (murals, posters, hallway displays, sidewalk chalk, etc.)
- **Presentations** (classrooms, staff meetings, school

board events, etc.)

- **Curriculum Integration** (Health, Psychology, English/Language Arts, etc.)
- **All School Activities** (assemblies, Field Days, orientation, etc.)
- **Videos** (documentaries, lip-dubs, movie trailers, etc.)
- **Social Media** (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.)
- **Audio** (music and playlists, announcements, podcasts, etc.)

“As you plan campaigns, think creatively of different mediums your community naturally gravitates towards. Do your students love art? Could a classroom presentation help with exploring Strength more personally? What is a widely used social media platform among your student body? How can your Peer Leader team partner with another club or organization to make the most of their efforts and help people engage with Strength in a variety of different ways?”



### Example of a Trusted Adult Campaign (optional)

If you are training a first year school, it can be helpful to describe a specific templated campaign, highlighting the goals and the broader purpose, as well as the various modalities that can be layered over the course of six to eight weeks so Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors can engage the entire school and community in a conversation about help-seeking, belonging, Mentors, or thankfulness. If you don't have time, skip ahead to discuss Targeted Messaging.

“Let me walk you through an example of one of our templated messaging campaigns. A Trusted Adult campaign focuses on helping students identify a Trusted Adult they would go to if they, or a friend, needed help, and then creates opportunities for them to invest in an ongoing relationship with those adults. We know from our research that having a Trusted Adult, someone

who is caring, connected, and positive, in your life is one of the most important protective factors a young person can have. Having a Trusted Adult significantly reduces the risk of suicidal behaviors and attempts. A Trusted Adult could be a parent, older sibling, relative, employer, teacher, coach, or community member. Connection is protection!

“At the end of the Peer Leader training we will pass out Thank You postcards and invite everyone to name and thank a Trusted Adult. We then go around the circle to all say the name of our Trusted Adult out loud, before hand delivering our postcards to our Trusted Adults in the next week or so. Embedded in this sharing activity, participants name their Trusted Adult and then travel a help-seeking pathway when they aren't in crisis. It's like a dry run of a help-seeking pathway. The more we can travel these pathways the more they become second nature and greatly increases the likelihood that we will seek help when we are in crisis or have a friend in crisis.

“During your first meeting you can work with your Peer Leader team to brainstorm and prioritize ideas that will invite 90% of the student body to name and thank their Trusted Adults in creative ways. Create opportunities for everyone to travel a help-seeking pathway when not in crisis.

“First, break into small groups and invite Peer Leaders to write a reflection about the impact their Trusted Adults have had on their life. Then, curate a handful of stories to be shared by Peer Leaders over the announcements, or in homeroom classes as they introduce the Trusted Adults campaign to the school.

“The team can build a photo booth and invite students to pose with their Trusted Adults on #MentorMonday, sharing the photos back out on the school website and a parent Facebook page. They could host a table in the lunch room with colorful paper wings cut out so students can write the name of their Trusted Adult on a feather, and create a mural of wings to represent the way that students are lifted up and supported by these adults (Trusted Adults give us wings). They can interview students using audio or video for a podcast, or a documentary short, featuring stories of students who have connected to their Trusted Adults and the ways they have shown up for them through the good and the tough times. All of these creative messaging strategies will increase youth/adult connectedness,

create a culture that increases students' belief that adults can help friends who are in trouble, and use positive norming to encourage healthy relationships between youth and adults.

"At the end of the campaign, it's not about the mural, or the photo booth, it's about the relationships fostered and celebrated among students and their Trusted Adults. This helps shape the culture by normalizing that the vast majority of students in your school do trust adults and go to them when they need help. For a student that might not trust adults - and maybe for good reason because they have been burnt by adults before - they get the opportunity to hear and see a number of the ways in which adults have shown up and been supportive and kind listeners, companions, guides, coaches, teachers, and Mentors. Maybe I can trust that adult. If my friend trusts them, maybe I can too."

### Targeted Messaging



"Let me be clear, it's not enough to simply post passive messaging around your school. Successful and effective prevention messaging is targeted; it is positive, it builds awareness of the Strengths, and it invites everyone to engage, interact, and apply the Strengths to their own lives. This kind of messaging allows people to internalize their Strength stories, and change their beliefs and their behaviors in healthy ways."

**Positive:** "All of our messaging needs to be positive. But our goal is not to simply make people smile. We want to strengthen and support them in the midst of the stressors we mentioned in the beginning of our training. To become like deep-rooted trees that can withstand the storms, and grow stronger and resilient. We also want to change systems in our country and community that require people to be resilient as they respond to oppression, and violence, and prejudice, and harassment.

"Don't get stuck in positivity, or toxic positivity. There is a kind of inauthentic or surface level positivity that doesn't honor or recognize life's stressors, systemic inequalities or historical traumas, and can get pushback or cause students or staff to write off your prevention messaging if it doesn't have substance or isn't grounded in reality. Positivity doesn't mean pretending everything is OK. It is an imagination that even when things are hard, we can survive. We can thrive."

**Builds Awareness:** "Targeted messaging also means bringing awareness to the Strengths that we all have. Weaving strength-based language and the Sources Wheel into every campaign and activity builds our shared language around resilience and recovery. But just raising awareness isn't enough to create the kind of positive culture and life change we are hoping to see. "

**Engage, Interact, and Apply:** "If we think about this idea of a target, we want to hit a bullseye with every campaign. That means that the campaign needs to be engaging, interactive, and help people apply it to their own life. Our research points to this being the critical factor of successful campaigns and achieving prevention outcomes with Sources of Strength. At Sources our goal isn't to just spread positivity or raise awareness, we want to create wellness. That happens when people can move from being an audience member to a participant in the campaign. A campaign is like a game of catch. Your Peer Leaders share a Strength story and then you toss it to other students and staff and ask them to apply Strengths to their own lives and then share that out with the school.

"A Sources of Strength campaign should never be one way communication, but always a back and forth conversation, even if it is a wall display, video, or social media challenge. Think about how we engage people in applying this to their own lives. We have been doing this throughout our day today, I haven't just been talking at you, rather you have shared about your Strengths, what you are feeling strong in and want to grow in, and what helps you with your big emotions.

"One of the really important roles of an Adult Advisor is to help the Peer Leader team make their campaigns interactive. Simply put, positivity sounds like 'You are strong!', awareness building says, 'Here are the Strengths that I am strong in or that you could be strong in', and engage/interact/apply asks, 'What Strengths

are you strong in and how do you apply them in your life?’ Targeted messaging campaigns allow students and staff to internalize their Strength stories, and alter the way they see themselves.”

### Layered Messaging

“Have you ever noticed that we learn best when we interact with information in a few different ways? Since we want to reach more than 90% of the student body with our campaigns, we highly recommend that you layer your messaging efforts, using different modalities over the course of 6-8 weeks. A Peer Leader team can focus on just one campaign, or one Strength, in several different ways, rather than several different campaigns.

“For example, if you are running a Thankfulness Challenge you could post a video in week one, put up an interactive wall display the next week, run a social media challenge/campaign for two weeks after that with prizes for folks who engage, and finish with a school-wide assembly focusing on gratitude, creating an opportunity for Peer Leaders to share stories of the powerful positive impact that thankfulness had on their Mental Health.

“Our evidence-base suggests that there is a powerful exposure effect to Sources of Strength, prevention and wellness outcomes are drastically improved if you were able to participate and engage in a Sources campaign, much more so than if you just happen to have Sources in your school. We want to think about how we impact and engage as many people as we can using different strategies and modalities with our campaigns.”

**Transition:** “We have many resources to help you create these messaging campaigns, so let’s talk about the website and the Field Guide.

### Key Summary

- The most powerful messages use personal Strength stories from your community.
- Sources of Strength developed templated campaigns for you to take and make your own.
- Effective campaigns are planned following a cycle, implemented using different modalities, and targeted to invite engagement and personal application on a population level.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: MESSAGING AND CAMPAIGNS

- Introduced messaging campaigns
- Explained the campaign messaging cycle
- Briefly Introduced Sources Templated Campaigns
- Gave an example of a Trusted Adult Campaign (optional)
- Explained how successful prevention messaging is targeted
  - Positive
  - Builds Awareness of Strengths
  - Invites others to Engage, Interact and Apply Strengths
- Highlighted the impacts of layered messaging

# RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Adult Advisor Presentation Slides  
Campaign Materials  
Adult Advisor Field Guide  
Sources Website ([www.sourcesofstrength.org](http://www.sourcesofstrength.org))

## Key Point

Adult Advisors can take the next steps to stay connected with Sources of Strength and become familiar with the tools and resources at their disposal to help them in their work.

## Trainer Overview

It is important an Adult Advisor team is familiar with their next steps and the resources that are available.

### We Want to Support You!

“Building a Community of Strength is an ambitious undertaking, just like building a house might be. If you were building a house, the work would be much easier with some tools and not just your bare hands, right? I want to make sure you are familiar with all of the tools and resources available to support you as you build your Community of Strength. The first resource I want to introduce you to is our website. Go ahead and grab your cell phones or computers, navigate to [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org). If you don't have your phones or computers, that's no problem, just make sure you get signed up ASAP.

### The Website

“Once you are on the website, scroll to the bottom of the page. You will see a ‘Register’ button. Click it and fill in your name and email and create a password. Your role is ‘**Adult Advisor**’ and your invitation code is ‘**Advisor**.’ Please type out the full name of your school. Many schools have the same abbreviations and we don't want to mix you up.”

### Adult Advisor Field Guide

“Now that you are registered as an Adult Advisor, you have access to all of our videos, campaign materials, and resources. One of the most foundational resources and most helpful tools is the Adult Advisor Field Guide. When you are registered for the website, you have access to a searchable PDF copy of the Adult Advisor Field Guide. Your school will receive some hard copies each year, but Adult Advisors can always download it on a computer or tablet.

“We called this a Field Guide on purpose, and designed it to make it as beautiful and accessible as possible;

don't leave it on the shelf! It's broken down into five chapters:

1. Overview and Philosophy,
2. Practicing a Community of Strength,
3. Sharing a Community of Strength,
4. Evaluating Your Efforts and Impact, and
5. Additional Tools and Resources.

“This guide is full of helpful reminders, sharing prompts, activity trackers, a fidelity checklist, FAQs, a games manual, an appendix full of downloadables to use in your Peer Leader meetings, and more! Don't attempt to build a house without a blueprint or a hammer. Don't attempt to run Sources of Strength without reading and using your Field Guide!”

### Sources of Strength Support Team

“We also have a fantastic National support team. You can find their contact information on the Sources website. Please do not hesitate to reach out early and often! One of your next steps as you begin implementation will be to have a call with our support team. Our support does not end when this training ends, we are here to help!”

### Social Media

“Finally, connect with us on social media. Like us on Facebook to learn about upcoming webinars and engage with other educators and Adult Advisors. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram to see what other Peer Leader teams are doing. If you tag us, [@sourcesofstrength](https://twitter.com/sourcesofstrength), or [#SourcesofStrength](https://www.instagram.com/sourcesofstrength) we love to retweet, repost, and reshare your campaigns with teams around the world.

“We are here to support you every step of the way. We believe that your team has everything you need to

create positive change in your school and community, and we're excited to partner with you to empower a well world!"

**Transition:** "Our training is almost over!"

### Key Summary

- There are resources, online and in print, to support Adult Advisors.
- Adult Advisors should register at [www.sourcesofstrength.org](http://www.sourcesofstrength.org) using the Role: **Adult Advisor** and Invitation code: **Advisor**
- Teams have access to support from the National team and Local Trainers.
- Teams can follow Sources of Strength on Social Media for sharing prompts, campaign ideas, encouragement, and inspiration.

**Notes:**

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

- Helped Adult Advisors register on the Sources of Strength website
- Highlighted multiple support resources
- Gave a brief tour of the Adult Advisor Field Guide
- Introduced Sources of Strength social media accounts

# BUILDING BELOW THE WATERLINE AND CLOSING CIRCLE

**Time:**  
10 minutes

**Materials**  
None

**Key Point**  
Facilitate a conversation to discover what the Adult Advisors experienced during this training.

## Trainer Overview

In these last few minutes with the Adult Advisors, invite them to reflect on their highlights and takeaways and express our deep gratitude for all they do in their schools and communities. Close the training with an encouraging and inspiring story to remind them that our vision is to Empower a Well World.

## Takeaways

“Our time together is almost finished. I'd love to hear from you all about a highlight or takeaway from this training. It could be something interesting, inspiring, encouraging, or practical. It's up to you. Who will start?”

Allow each person to briefly share their highlight or takeaway. Perhaps you can draw out some stories of impact from people who have not shared in the large group setting, or go around the circle and hear from everyone in the room, depending on time. You can also invite the participants to turn to their neighbors and share in dyads or small groups so that everyone has a chance to use their voice. Thank them for sharing their thoughts, as well as for the investment of their time and attention in the training. Then consider closing with an encouraging or inspiring story that helps to cast a vision of empowering a well world. The story of the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge is a great option.

## Building Below the Waterline

“At the time of its construction, the Brooklyn Bridge was designed to be one of the largest and most iconic suspension bridges in the world. Enormous sums of money and effort went into the design and construction of the bridge. Years into the construction, residents of Manhattan and Brooklyn began to complain that they always saw construction crews and construction traffic, but there was still no bridge. As these grumblings grew louder, more frequent, and more unified, the architect was forced to call a town hall meeting to try to save his job.

“He said ‘The reason you don't have a bridge is because we have spent three years building below the waterline, and it is only as a result of that work that this bridge will stand the test of time.’ He went on to

explain that he and his team had pioneered innovative and revolutionary techniques to build anchor points in the riverbed.

“Often in this work we can look around and ask ourselves, ‘Where's my bridge?’ We wonder if we are having any impact, if we are making a difference, if we are building anything of substance and value. Something that will last.

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

“We believe Sources of Strength is a great program. But we also know that programs don't change people: relationships change people. Relationships like the ones you foster with your students each and every day. You pour out your lives in order to empower young people in your community. You are our partners in spreading Hope, Help, and Strength, and we are so grateful for all you do. Thank you so much for your time today, we are excited to see what will come from your team.”

## Key Summary

- Facilitate highlights and takeaways from the participants.
- Programs don't change people, relationships change people.

Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: BUILDING BELOW THE WATERLINE AND CLOSING CIRCLE

- Facilitated a conversation about highlights and takeaways
- Closed with the story of the Brooklyn Bridge construction project
- Expressed genuine gratitude to the group for their work and time





## CHAPTER 3

# PEER LEADER TRAINING



The four to six hour Peer Leader training empowers the Sources of Strength team to apply Strengths to their own lives and leverage the power of their social influence to become Agents of Change and Connectors to Help in their schools and communities

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# PREPARING FOR A TRAINING

The training space is an important factor to consider when preparing for a training. The wrong space or room setup can make a Trainer's job much more difficult, while a little prep work will go a long way. Here are a few things to keep in mind to set yourself and your training up for success.

## The Do's and Don'ts of Training Preparation

DON'T	DO
Assume that the group you are training will have a good space ready to go	Communicate with your hosts about the type of space you need ahead of time and show up early to help
Apologize for the space and materials you need	Advocate for what you need to create a training that fosters connection and bravery
Set up chairs in rows	Set up chairs in one large circle
Guess how many participants you will have	Ask your host how many Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors you will be expecting
Choose a space that has pillars or objects inside your training circle	Train in a room with space to move around safely while playing games and sharing in small and large groups
Hold a training in a busy or loud space	Ask to train in a quiet space that will not have much through-traffic
Try to yell all day	Ask your hosts ahead of time to provide a wireless microphone and speaker system, if needed
Assume that your host knows lunch plans	Learn about lunch! When will it arrive, what will it be, and where can we eat?
Forget your posters!	Bring and set up sticky posters and markers ahead of time
Train in the middle of an echoey gymnasium or cafeteria	Move your training circle to the quietest corner of the room to keep noise and echoes down if possible
Forget name tags!	Set out name tags and markers where people will walk in
Make it awkward	Crank some fun tunes and greet people energetically as they walk in!
Be a stranger	Be a friend
Wing it	Prepare and practice in advance

## Materials Checklist

- Flip Chart Posters with sticky side (1-2 pads)
- Colorful markers (enough for 2-3 per person)
- Name tags for all participants
- Sources of Strength campaign materials
- Peer Leader Guides (one for every participant plus a few extra)
- Thank You postcards
- Swag prizes for games
- Bluetooth speaker (if available)
- Fun and uplifting playlist (Sources has curated playlists available on the Sources of Strength Spotify channel)
- Yarn Knots (we recommend every Trainer have about 150 as they tend to break and get lost)

## Room Checklist

- Open space that is quiet and free of cross-traffic
- Chairs (not desks) in one large circle
- Posters up on the wall:
  - Hope, Help, Strength not Sad, Shock, Trauma
  - Connectors to Help and Agents of Change
  - Targeted Messaging
- Table with name tags and markers and a sign modeling and inviting pronoun use or an example name tag, if there is a local Adult Advisor who is willing and able to maintain the practice and field questions.

## Names

- Set out a variety of markers with name tags at the entrance to the space
- Make sure to model and invite pronoun use, if you choose, with a sign and example name tag
- Read more about pronoun use at

[sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns](https://sourcesofstrength.org/pronouns)

- Make sure to write your own name and pronouns on your name tag, if you choose
- Have someone there to greet students, ask them to make a name tag, set their bags off to the side, and find a seat

## Don't Forget...

- To wear your own name tag (consider adding your pronouns to model inclusion)
- To get a microphone and sound set up if needed (for groups larger than 50-60 people or if you have trouble projecting your voice a wireless microphone is preferable)
- To learn where the bathrooms are for breaks
- To ask what the plan for lunch and snacks may be
- To practice and prepare for the parts you will lead - Winging it is for the birds!
- That you've worked hard and are going to do great!

## TRAINER TIP

When deciding on the best location for your training, consider details such as ADA access to building, inclusive bathroom availability, symbolism present in a building, and names of spaces. Ask: Will every individual feel welcome here?

Training Room set up example



# ARRIVAL

## Time

10-15 minutes

## Materials

Name tags, markers, music, chairs

## Key Point

First impressions are important! We want to start the day off strong with chairs in a circle, a fun atmosphere, and friendly interactions.

## Trainer Overview

Participants start learning when they walk through the door. Take advantage of the opportunity to build rapport and connect with people in meaningful ways.

Your circle of chairs is set up. You've set out markers and name tags. People are starting to filter in. Your training is about to start, right? Actually, the training has already begun!

The arrival portion of the training sets a tone for how the entire training will go. We often hear that Adult Advisors or Peer Leaders may feel a little nervous as they enter the room: "What will today entail? Why did I get asked to come to this training? Will I know anyone else? Please don't make us do any trust falls." The space that they enter can tell them a lot: "Today is going to be fun! Today is going to be interactive. The person in charge seems really friendly. I know that I need to put on a name tag and sit in a chair."

### In a World of Thermometers, Be a Thermostat

Before you start the training: wherever it is, we invite you to consider how to make the space comfortable. Some training spaces can feel quite cold, and impersonal. Others are hot and cramped. No matter what is happening in the room, as the host, you can be a thermostat, not a thermometer.

A thermometer reflects the temperature of the room. If your participants are disengaged, then your energy starts to drop. If your students show up buzzing from a long weekend, your anxiety spikes. What if instead of simply reflecting the energy of the room, like a thermometer, you set the temperature, like a thermostat. You set the tone. You keep the pace. When you enter a room with warmth and energy others will match that. You have an opportunity to create the environment you want.

### Setting the Tone

All Sources of Strength trainings should be trauma-informed, keeping the most vulnerable in mind from the beginning. For many of us, this may be a paradigm shift.

Some of our guiding principles as participants enter the room are to invite people in as opposed to calling them out as they play, share, and plan during this training. We want to avoid power struggles as we playfully engage. Non-participation should not be taken as a sign of disrespect, a bad attitude; or rejection; but possibly fear, confusion, or an invitation for further connection. Our work is to coach, companion, connect, and exercise curiosity.

While many students have a lot of fun in a Sources of Strength training, it can be a social or physical challenge for students with different needs and/or abilities. Your Peer Leader team should be socially diverse, as well as cognitively, emotionally, and physically diverse. Different needs and abilities are NOT prohibitive for participation or student success, especially when you prepare. Identify which accommodations need to be made to support every Adult Advisor and Peer Leader.

Have the training space already set up before people walk in. When they enter, greet them enthusiastically. Invite students and adults to create a name tag with their name (large enough to read), and their pronouns if they wish. Direct them to leave their backpacks or purses out of the circle or on the edge of the room, and to grab a chair in the circle. As people are getting settled, have fun music playing in the background. Set people at ease by casually walking around and introducing yourself to participants. Even if you are nervous yourself, try to be as genuinely positive about the day as you can. Once it seems like everyone has settled in a chair, turn off the music and take a deep breath: Let's go!

**Transition:** "Hello everyone! It's great to see you. My name is..."

### Key Summary

- Set the room up well.
- Set the tone and the temperature! Welcome people and help them settle in comfortably
- Invite participants to create a name tag with their name (large enough to read), and their pronouns if they wish.
- Make accommodations to ensure the training is inclusive and engaging for everyone who arrives.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: ARRIVAL

- Trainer set up training space before Peer Leaders arrived
- Trainer greeted participants enthusiastically
- Arrival set the tone of the day as welcoming, fun, inclusive, and interactive.

# INTRODUCTION DISCUSSION

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

Enough chairs for everyone to sit in a circle (refer to room setup on page 124 )

## Key Point

Set the appropriate tone and atmosphere for the training by inviting participants to be a part of a day filled with students and adults partnered together through play, laughter, Strength sharing, and action; Our mission is to empower students to use their voices as part of a national movement to spread messages of Hope, Help, and Strength across their school and community.

## Trainer Overview

Many Peer Leaders may be confused about why they were asked to be a part of a “suicide prevention” training or nervous not knowing others in the room. A Trainer’s job is to set them at ease and build rapport early in the training.

Introduce yourself along with any other local or regional Trainers, and let participants know that you are their Sources of Strength Trainers for the day. “Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ (pronouns), and I am a Trainer with Sources of Strength! I am so grateful that you showed up here today! You may or may not know a lot about why you are here, and that’s okay. By a show of hands, is there anyone here because they heard that they would get out of class, and there would be food? That’s a pretty good reason to be here. But, I hope by the end of the day you have a better sense of why you’re here and that you’re excited about being part of the program.”

Briefly touch on the following points in order:

### Scope of Program

“Sources of Strength has teams all across the U.S and Canada from Florida to Alaska, New York to California, and everywhere in between. Today you’re joining a movement of young people who want to use their voice to create change in their school and community. We know that students are a critically important part of our prevention efforts. That’s why you are here. Your voice is really powerful.”

Make this fit your own community context by highlighting local efforts around the scope of this program. You are all part of a huge movement!

### Power of Peer Leaders

“It is not a mistake or a coincidence that you are

here right now. You were intentionally nominated by someone to be a part of this program. You were selected because you are seen as leaders in this school, as people with influence and sway among your peers. So you can feel pretty good about that.

“Today is only the beginning! You are going to continue to meet as a team, playing games, sharing stories and planning campaigns together.”

### Upbeat and Fun

“Today is hopefully going to be a lot of fun. We will play games, have some conversations and discussions, and together plan a number of creative ways to bring some Hope, Help, and Strength to your school and community. I’m not going to lecture you or show you a bunch of slides today, because we want to hear from you. We want to hear your voice.”

### Be Honest

“Here’s the thing, today doesn’t really work unless you share what you really think, not what you think your teachers want to hear, or what you think I want to hear, or what your friends or parents might want you to say. We want you to tell us what you really think today. Be honest. Could I get a thumbs up if that sounds like something we can agree to?” Put your thumb in the air to demonstrate what you are asking for. “Thanks so much.”

### Respecting the Stories of Others

“We are going to be talking today about ways we can leverage your voice and influence to impact your community and friends. Probably 95% of what we



discuss today we want you to share with others and push it out into the school through different messages and school-wide activities. However, can we all agree that if someone shares parts of their own story, we will let them be the owner of those stories and we won't take those stories out of the room or share them with others? Can I get a thumbs up if you agree we will respect other people's stories? (Give a thumbs up to demonstrate the response you are looking for). Great. Everything else we talk about we encourage you to share with friends, family, and other members of the community."

**Transition:** Launch into a game. "In the spirit of not talking too long, let's play a quick introduction game! Maybe a lot of you know each other, but I'd love to get to know you a little better. Could I please get volunteers to join me in the middle?" (About one fifth of participants should be in the center circle during each round. For example, if you have 40 participants, you would ask for eight volunteers to join you in the middle.)

### Key Summary

- Introduce yourself and the Sources of Strength program
- Note that the day will include group discussions, games, activities, food, and learning about what a Peer Leader team can do in a school
- Introduce the scope of the program nationally and the power of student voices and Peer Leader efforts

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: INTRODUCTION DISCUSSION

- Trainer set a positive, hopeful and playful tone for the day
- Described the scope and impact of Sources of Strength as a movement of Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors all around the world
- Highlighted the power of student voice and celebrated their nomination as leaders, Agents of Change, and 'people with power and/or influence
- Used a soft touch to reinforce respect for everyone's voice and story and not a heavy-handed confidentiality clause

# CHAIR GAME

## Time

10-15 minutes

## Materials

Enough chairs for all participants

## Key Point

We want everyone to participate, so let's have fun as we introduce ourselves.

## Trainer Overview

Invite all participants to introduce themselves in a playful and engaging way. Make sure you set a fun tone with laughter and movement. Use your sense of humor!

From the beginning of the training we want to set the tone for the day; fun, interactive, and unique to the participants in the room. It's important to use this game to learn more about who showed up. It also helps us accomplish our goal of getting everyone to speak at least three times in the first hour of the training. As you facilitate the Chair Game, invite people to share, but never call someone out if they are shy or overwhelmed.

"I am interested to get to know everyone in the room, so can I get a group of \_\_\_\_ (one fifth of the group) of you to come join me in the middle of the circle?"

### TRAINER TIP

The Chair Game sets a fun tone for interaction. Invite people to share, but never force someone if they are shy or overwhelmed.

## Introductions

- Invite about a fifth of the group to come stand in the center of the circle with you (so the game should be complete in about five rounds).
- Invite the small group in the middle to share their name, if they'd like their pronouns, grade (PL) or role (AA) in the school or community, and either their favorite food, or something fun they've done recently (Food or Fun!).
- Facilitate the first round of sharing.
- Close out sharing by asking for a round of applause, but don't let participants return to their seats just yet.

"A big thank you to this group for getting us started. But this isn't just about introductions... this is a competitive Chair Game!"

Prompt people sitting near an empty chair to turn them around the other way.

"If you are sitting next to an empty chair, turn it around so it's facing the other way. I'm about to make a statement. If that statement applies to you, you have to get up out of your chair and move across the circle to find a new chair. If you don't find a chair and get stuck in the middle, you will do what we just did, share your name/pronouns, grade/role, and something fun or favorite food.

"Those of you starting in the middle with me, find a new chair no matter what. If you get stuck in the middle a second time, you don't go again, instead find someone who hasn't shared yet and switch places - you sit down and they come up and share their name/pronouns, grade/role, and either something fun or their favorite food.

"Now there are a few rules:

- "You cannot sit in a chair that is facing backwards: those chairs are out of bounds.
- "You can't just move to the chair right next to you. Move at least five chairs away.
- "Only one person per chair!"

"Let's get a little competitive! This game isn't any fun if you meander across the circle to a chair. You can do a little hip check, or an elbow bump... I'm gonna look the other way, just don't hurt anyone.

"OK, are you ready? Everyone who is wearing shoes, move!"

At this point, the group should get up and scramble for a chair, leaving the same number of participants to share in the next round. If anyone gets stuck in the middle

more than once, they should point to someone who hasn't introduced themselves and exchange their place in the middle.

### Examples of Statements:

- Move if you came to school this morning
- Move if you have ever gone fishing.
- Move if you watched a movie this weekend.
- Move if you know how to ride a bicycle.
- Move if you have pets/siblings/brown hair/etc.

The more people moving around in each round, the more fun the Chair Game can be. Never make a statement that could isolate, alienate, or expose someone in the room.

Throughout each round keep a general sense of how many people haven't shared (you can even ask participants to raise their hand if they haven't been in the middle yet). You don't want to end with a "lone winner" who may be shy or uncomfortable with that level of attention. You can have multiple winners by inviting everyone who hasn't been in the circle to jump up together for the last round.

### Adaptations for Small Groups

With less than 10 participants, this game can be awkward! So eliminate the scramble, but use the same prompt for introductions around the circle. Have each person share their name/pronouns, role, and something fun they've done recently or their favorite food. You can also invite everyone to share one thing they think you should know about their school or community.

### Adaptations for Large Groups

**Groups over 75:** If you have more than 75 participants, this game can take too long! Here are a couple options to save time while still letting people use their voices:

#### *Wheelhouse Connection:*

Ask the group to partner up and then get into two circles facing their partner; an inner circle and an outer circle. Ask the inner circle to walk clockwise, and the outer circle to walk counter-clockwise (in opposite directions) until you tell them to stop. You can play music, similar to musical chairs. When the circles stop, ask them to face their new partner in the other circle and have a one minute discussion (30 seconds per person). When time is up, ask them to thank their partner and start walking again in opposite directions. Do this for five or

six rounds before letting people return to their seats.

### Discussion topics might include but are not limited to:

- What is your name and grade?
- What's your favorite part of your community or school?
- What's the best restaurant in town?
- Who is a Positive Friend for you and why?
- What's the most fun thing you have done recently?
- What is something you are grateful for today?
- Who is a Mentor for you and why?

**Note:** It can sometimes take a while for pairs to form when you call out stop. Instruct participants to either raise their hand if they don't have a partner and then move across the circle to pair up with another participant or simply join another pair creating a group of three.

**Note:** Try to alternate the discussion prompts between fun/silly and strengths-based/storytelling.

### *Human BINGO*

Bring copies of Human BINGO (page 208). Pass them out along with pens or markers. Give the group five minutes to move around, introducing themselves to people and getting them to initial a BINGO square that applies to them. The first three people to get BINGO or Blackout (all of the squares) wins a prize.

### Adaptations for Mobility

Often in trainings there will be participants who have crutches, casts, service animals, or use a wheelchair and you can easily make accommodations in this first game so all participants can play. Simply ask your participants what they need. Introduce yourself and explain that you're going to lead many games today, some of which require movement. You can invite them to share in the first round of introductions, or wait to move into the circle with the final group. Perhaps they'll have an idea we haven't tried yet! Stay flexible, get curious, be creative and you can ensure that everyone is included.

**Transition:** "Congratulations to our winners! Go ahead and find a seat anywhere..." and you'll transition to a Quick Game (Yarn Knot, Shoe Kick or Ball Toss).

### Key Summary

- Invite 1/5th of the group to join you in the middle.
- Invite participants to share their name/ pronouns, grade (Peer Leaders) and role (Adult Advisors), and either their favorite food or something fun they've done recently (Food or Fun!).
- Deliver Chair Game instructions.
- Facilitate game until all participants have introduced themselves.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: CHAIR GAME

- Explained directions clearly
- Divided group so the game was approximately five rounds
- Facilitated flow and pace of game

## QUICK GAME

Choose one of these three games:

- Yarn Knot Game
- Shoe Kick Game
- Speed Toss Game

### YARN KNOT GAME

**Time:**

5-10 minutes

**Size:**

Best for groups between 10-60 (although it can be played with almost any size group, time permitting)

**Materials**

Lengths of yarn with wrist loops, one for each person.

**Key Point**

Sometimes in life we get stuck; today we're talking about what helps us get unstuck.

**Trainer Overview:**

Yarn Knot is a transitional game to introduce key concepts in a fun and engaging way, opens up a conversation about the stressors that can leave people feeling stuck. It introduces coping strategies, Strengths, and skills that people use to get unstuck and overcome adversity. This conversation is simply introduced here and will be unpacked further throughout the training.

**TRAINER TIP**

If you have a group of over 80 people, this game can be time-consuming. Prepare materials in advance to save time. Alternatively, you may want to pick a different game. Regardless of the size, invite some people to help you pass out materials.

Ask for Peer Leader volunteers who can help hand out one string per person to everyone in the room.

**Directions**

“Can I get one person to join me in the middle here to help demonstrate this activity? In a moment, everyone will need to find a partner. One person will put the yarn loops over both wrists, and the other person will put the yarn on one wrist and wrap the free end of yarn around the back of their partners yarn and then onto their second wrist, creating a chain link. Like this.”

Turn slowly in a circle so everybody can see.

“The challenge is for you and your partner to get unlinked and separated from each other. You can't break

the strings, bite them, cut them, burn them, chew them, gnaw them, or slip them off your wrists or your partner's wrists. There is a way to get unlinked. You might have to get creative by doing cartwheels, back flips, dislocate your shoulder; whatever it is, your challenge is to get unlinked from your partner. It may seem impossible but there is a way to do this. OK, everyone jump up, find a partner, get linked up and start trying to get unlinked.” (Repeat the instructions two or three times if necessary).

**Trainer Tips**

1. There will be lots of energy and laughter as people spin in circles, hop over each other, and do a variety of contortions trying to separate the links. Walk around the room observing participants for about a minute or so.
2. Quietly go around to different pairs, asking if they want help or would like you to show them the trick to this challenge. If they simply want a hint, tell them it involves the wrists and they take the yarn through the back of the wrist and over the hand. If they want help, instruct them to pay attention because they'll need to help others once they get unstuck. Once they have completed the challenge and they are unstuck, ask the pair to begin showing others how to do it so that the information spreads around to everyone in the room, not just from you the expert, but from one another.

3. The trick for getting unlinked is simply sliding slack yarn from one partner, through the back of one of the wrist loops on the other partner's wrists, and then up, over, and around the top of their hand and the links should separate. Please see the Yarn Knot video on the Sources website for further instructions.

“If you’re finished, you can find a seat and someone will come around and collect the yarn.” Ask some of the Peer Leaders to collect the yarn.

### Teaching Point

“How many of you have ever had a friend who felt stuck with a problem? Sometimes they might feel like they’re trying everything, but really they’re just trying the same thing over and over again, getting more and more tangled up in their problem.

“Today we will talk about what helps us get unstuck when we or our friends are dealing with a challenge. Whether that's with something bigger like addiction or mental health challenges or just navigating the ups and downs of life. We want everyone around us to know that it is OK to not be OK all the time. It is OK, and even brave, to connect someone else to help or to ask for help for ourselves. Others can help us look at our problem or difficulty in a new light that can help us get unstuck.”

### Alternatives to the Yarn Knot Game:

If for any reason the Yarn Knot Game is not the best option for you, you are welcome to try either of the following interactive games that both contain fairly simple teaching points:

- Ball Toss
- Shoe Kick

**Transition:** “Thanks for playing that with me, next let’s take a look at some of the things that can cause stress in our lives.”

### Key Summary

- Hand out Yarn.
- Give clear instructions.
- Help participants to find the solution or show them how to get unstuck.
- Deliver teaching point: Sometimes in life we get stuck and it can seem like no matter what we do, we end up more tangled. Today we are going to talk about what helps us get unstuck.

**Notes:**

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: YARN KNOT GAME

- Explained challenge instructions clearly
- Helped participants get unstuck
- Delivered simple teaching point clearly
  - Used stuck/unstuck analogy

# SHOE KICK GAME

## Time:

10 minutes

## Group Size

Good for groups of any size

## Materials

No materials needed

## Key Point

There are a number of barriers or reasons why someone may not ask for help. Having someone come alongside and connect that person to help can often help them overcome these barriers. Today we want to talk about how we can create a culture where people can get the help they need and deserve.

## Trainer Overview:

Shoe Kick connects to a teaching point about asking for and connecting to help and introduces a conversation about creating a healthy culture around help-seeking. Don't forget to let them get their shoes back!

### TRAINER TIP

Be cognizant of culture as it can be considered rude to expose your feet in some cultures. Consider whether you should play this game at all or whether you should choose another game. Don't force anyone to take off their shoe if they do not want to.

### TRAINER TIP

Don't overstate this or make it cheesy, keep it quick, and light, poking fun at yourself.

Sit in the circle, kick one shoe in the middle, and say: "Can I get everybody to kick one of their shoes into the middle of the room?"

Most people will laugh and kick their shoe into the middle of the circle quite willingly, but some will hesitate and even refuse. Laugh with the group and watch for individuals that are refusing or carefully carrying their shoes out into the middle of the circle. Don't call out anyone to kick off their shoe if they aren't feeling comfortable or don't want to. It is totally optional, in fact it highlights and adds to the teaching point.

Ask (with some humor and your hand raised): "Who didn't want to kick their shoe off?" You don't need to single out who didn't, or ask them why.

"There are any number of reasons why you might not want to kick a shoe off.

"I'm getting a little odor drifting my way...Maybe you haven't washed your feet in awhile and they smell.

"Maybe your big toe is sticking through a hole in your sock.

"Some of you have really nice shoes and maybe you don't want them getting messed up.

"Or maybe you have new boots or lots of laces and it's just a lot of effort.

"Has anyone ever had a friend go through a hard time and they didn't really want to ask for or accept help? There can be a lot of barriers to getting help, that can feel a lot like the barriers to kicking off your shoe.

"Maybe they think what they've got going on is too messy and don't want anyone to see it or have to deal with it.

"Or they don't want anyone to see the holes in their life.

"Or mess up the good stuff they have going on.

"Or maybe it just feels like it's a lot of work."

## Key Teaching Point:

"When someone is struggling or hurting, it can make a big difference if their friends come alongside them and

introduce them to supports and Strengths to overcome barriers and connect them to the help they need and deserve. Today we will talk about Strengths that help people in all kinds of situations, and how we can ask for and connect to help when needed.”

**Finishing Directions:**

“When I say go, I want you to go and pick up a shoe you don’t recognize and hold it up in the air. Then I want you to find the person that shoe belongs to. To get your shoe back, you have to tell one truth and one lie about yourself. The other person has to guess which one is true. You get your shoe back whether they get it right or not. Once you get your shoe back, you can grab a seat. OK, GO!” Everybody rushes to the middle to pick a shoe up and find the owner.

**Transition:** “Thanks for playing that game with me and for sharing a little bit about yourself with another person. We believe that you as students are the experts on your school and community. You are the leaders who

know your peers much better than I do. Given that, we want to hear about what challenges you think your peers face. If I were to conduct a survey...”

**Key Summary**

- There could be many different barriers or reasons why someone could hesitate to reach out for help.
- Having a friend, family member, or Trusted Adult come alongside you when you are struggling can be a powerful way to break down these barriers and connect.

**Notes:**

**TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SHOE KICK GAME**

- Explained game clearly
- Delivered simple teaching point clearly
  - Used barriers to help-seeking analogy
- Everyone got their shoe back



## SPEED TOSS GAME

### Time

5-10 minutes depending on group size

### Group Size

Best for groups of 10-40 people

### Materials

Wadded up paper ball or other object for passing

### Key Point

When we're going through something difficult we can sometimes get tunnel vision, which makes it hard to see solutions, how things might get better, or how potential supports and strategies might help. It can be incredibly helpful to ask for help. People with a different perspective on the challenge or adversity we are facing can help us see our challenge in a new light.

### Trainer Overview

Speed Toss is a transitional game that introduces key concepts in a fun and engaging way. It opens up a conversation about creative problem solving and the need for a healthy culture of help-seeking. This conversation is introduced simply here and will be unpacked further throughout the training.

Use a soft ball or wadded up piece of paper and have the group stand in a circle about an arm's length apart. The group is instructed to toss the ball around the circle stating their name and the name of the person they are tossing it to. Ask everyone to remember who threw them the ball, and who they threw it to as well. Have the group hold their hands up and then put them down after they have caught and thrown the ball to someone else. Everyone should catch the ball only once, with the last person tossing it back to you since you started with the ball.

After establishing the order state, **"Your goal is to see how fast the ball can move through the group while having everyone touch the ball in the same order."** Have someone time how fast the group can toss the ball through the whole group. Tell the group you know they can do it in half that time. Give the group a few seconds to talk about a strategy, generally moving closer together. Repeat the previous time and comment, **"I think this group can do it in half that time."** Give the group a few seconds to strategize and repeat the goal statement if necessary.

Most groups will problem-solve this activity by moving closer together or trying to throw the ball faster (which usually results in more drops). After the second or third go around, someone will usually suggest physically

moving the positions of the circle so they can just hand it to the person next to them. From that point, a group will continue until the ball touches everyone in order in a matter of seconds.

### TRAINER TIP

This game can be time consuming and difficult to manage with a group over 40, so consider the group size before playing. Make sure to do one pass with everyone in the group catching and tossing the ball to establish the order, before speeding up the game or asking for solutions.

### Key Teaching Point

**"Have you ever felt like there was a lot coming at you in life? Or maybe you have a friend who is dealing with an issue who says, 'I've tried everything,' when really they've just been trying the same thing over and over? Sometimes in life we get blinders on and we have a hard time seeing solutions to our problems. Another way of describing**

**this is tunnel vision. Having someone come alongside us with a different perspective, or someone who has gone through it before, can be incredibly helpful.**

**"So, today we are going to be talking about how we can ask for help and connect others to help when they need it."**

**Transition: "Thanks for that. You are the experts on your school. You know your community and school better than I do. So I want to hear from you about some things that may be stressful for students in your school."**

### Key Summary

- Give instructions.
- Develop passing pattern.
- Speed up process and invite creative solutions.
- Deliver teaching point: Sometimes in life we can get tunnel vision and not see a way out of a problem. It can be incredibly helpful to ask for or accept help from someone who can see things from a different perspective.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SPEED TOSS GAME

- Explained game clearly
- Delivered simple teaching point clearly
  - Used blinders/tunnel vision analogy

# STRESSORS QUESTION AND BIOSPHERE STORY

## Time

10 minutes

## Materials

No materials needed

## Key Point

Stress is a normal part of life, and how we choose to view and deal with stress can help us not only cope, but grow stronger and more resilient.

## What to Avoid

A conversation that feels heavy or turns into intense personal stories of trauma or toxic stress.

## Trainer Overview

This module offers another opportunity for students to share their insights and knowledge. Remember our goal is to give everyone at least three chances to speak or share in the first hour of training. This module is a low-risk, low-intensity conversation about real-life stressors that students are facing; it invites students to reflect from a safe distance on the stressors others might be facing. The conversation seeks to invite their reflection on stressors and help them reframe stressors in light of Strengths and resilience, both of which are protective and reactive practices to prepare for and respond to stress in our lives. One of the key goals of this module is to get several participants sharing and having their voices heard. The stressors conversation is an accessible way to get the group talking and engaged.

## Trainer Tip

You want this section to feel like a very comfortable back and forth conversation between the Trainer and participants. Remember to ask the question about others' stressors rather than personal stressors. Facilitate responses by asking for additional insights and thanking participants for sharing.

Remember that while you want to keep a playful tone and not let things get too deep or heavy, you also should take care to honor the stressors many students face and not down play or belittle sharing. If someone shares a stressor that feels heavy or intense, it is important to address that stressor head on and thank the participant for being honest before moving on to the next answer.

Don't be afraid to restate the question if no one responds. "What do you think your peers would say are the top four or five stressors that they are facing these days?"

With participants sitting in a circle, ask:

"If you were to go out into your school and do a survey of your friends and classmates and ask them, "What are the top four or five stressors students face?" What do you think they would put on that list? This could apply to school, home, personal life, or whatever comes to

mind. Feel free to raise your hand and I'll try to call on you."

## Facilitating the Stressors Conversation

Facilitate a back-and-forth discussion with students as they share different stressors. They may say things like homework, testing, grades, tough teachers, family life, trying to figure out what they want to do after high school, balancing work and school and friendships, relationship drama, etc. Or they may (not always, but you want to be ready if it happens) share more challenging stressors related to suicide, dating violence, racism, poverty, harassment, current events, etc. Our hope is to keep this section feeling light, conversational, and a space for students to share briefly, regardless of the stressor they share. If a share is fairly long, you may simply validate their response and thank them for sharing. If a student shares one word, like 'homework' you might ask them to explain further or prompt them with a 'tell me more.' If a share pertains to a heavier situation, like violence or suicide, thank the person for sharing and briefly affirm that topic as stressful or difficult. This gives you the ability to engage in a more difficult topic with a level of control and safety. Remember, whatever the particular stressors are, we want to keep the overall mood light, matter of fact, and empowering to the group and what they share.

Empower their voices by saying things like:

- “Sure, that makes sense.”
- “Yeah, home life can be stressful.”
- “Thanks for sharing that.”
- “Could you help us understand more?”
- “Do the rest of you agree that fitting in can be stressful for many students?”
- “Who agrees that applying to colleges or thinking about what you are going to do after you graduate is a stressor?”
- “Absolutely.”

After a few minutes, bring the discussion to a close by saying: “Thank you, that’s a very thorough list. I ask that question not to stress you out more, but rather to highlight that stress is a normal part of life. Today we’ll be talking about how we can help ourselves and those around us have the necessary tools, supports, and connections to meet those with Strength. We know we won’t go through life without dealing with stress on a pretty regular basis. In fact, some stress is actually helpful in life. It tells us that we need to study to pass a test, or work hard in order to memorize our lines for an audition.”

### Biosphere Example

“Did you know that scientists created a biosphere to study how all different parts of nature work? They had planted trees in the biosphere, but these trees kept falling over. After research, the scientists realized what was happening: there was no wind in their environment. While a strong wind can push a tree over, some level of wind is needed to help trees grow deep roots that will be strong when wind, rain, or floods come their way. Trees need some resistance to develop the necessary Strength to help them stand strong in future storms.

“Stress can act in a very similar way with humans. We don’t live healthy lives by completely avoiding stress altogether. Some stress can actually make us stronger. However, we’re also worried about what happens when stress becomes overwhelming. What we want

to explore today is how we can reframe stress to cope with it in healthy ways. I want to know what gives you Strength and what helps you with the stressors you face.”

**Transition:** “Thanks for sharing about some of those stressors. Lets shift our focus now towards Strength.”

### Key Summary

- Ask students to share what they think are the top five stressors for their peers.
- Facilitate a back and forth conversation about stressors students are facing.
- Normalize that everyone faces stress in different ways and in different areas of their lives.
- Suggest that we shift the way we view stress, not as an obstacle but as a challenge that has the capacity to make us stronger and more resilient.

**Notes:**

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: STRESSORS QUESTION AND BIOSPHERE STORY

- Asked top five stressors question
  - Posed question about Peers rather than self-disclosure
- Used conversational style
- Kept it light - never got heavy
- Transitioned to Poster Activity

# STRENGTHS POSTER ACTIVITY

## Time

10-20 minutes

## Materials

Large sticky posters (one for every 4-5 participants),  
Colorful markers (enough for 2-3 per person)

## Key Point

We all have people, places, and things that give us strength.

## Trainer Overview

Having engaged in a conversation about the stressors that students face, we now want students to think about and then write or draw the things that give them Strength and help them navigate those stressors or help them overcome them. We intentionally do this before ever showing the Sources of Strength wheel to students. Students are able to name and model Strengths they use to navigate stress before we introduce them to the Strengths that are a part of this program and that research says are protective.

## Instructions for Strength Poster Activity

“We’ve all agreed that stressors are a part of our lives. But now I want us to look at what helps with that stress.

“In a moment, I am going to pass out poster papers and markers, and:

- “I want you to get into groups of around four or five people and take a few minutes to draw out what gives you Strength.
- “Think of the people, the places, and the things that help you when you’re having a tough day or are in a stressful season.
- “Think physically, mentally, relationally, and spiritually about what gives you Strength.
- “Use words and pictures - extra bonus points for pictures/drawings.
- “You don’t have to be an artist, stick figures are perfectly fine!
- “Not just a list of words or ideas, I want it to be more like a collage with everyone grabbing their own corner of the paper and writing or drawing their Strengths.

“OK, ready? As soon as you have a poster paper I want you to jump into your groups, and write and draw everything that gives you Strength!”

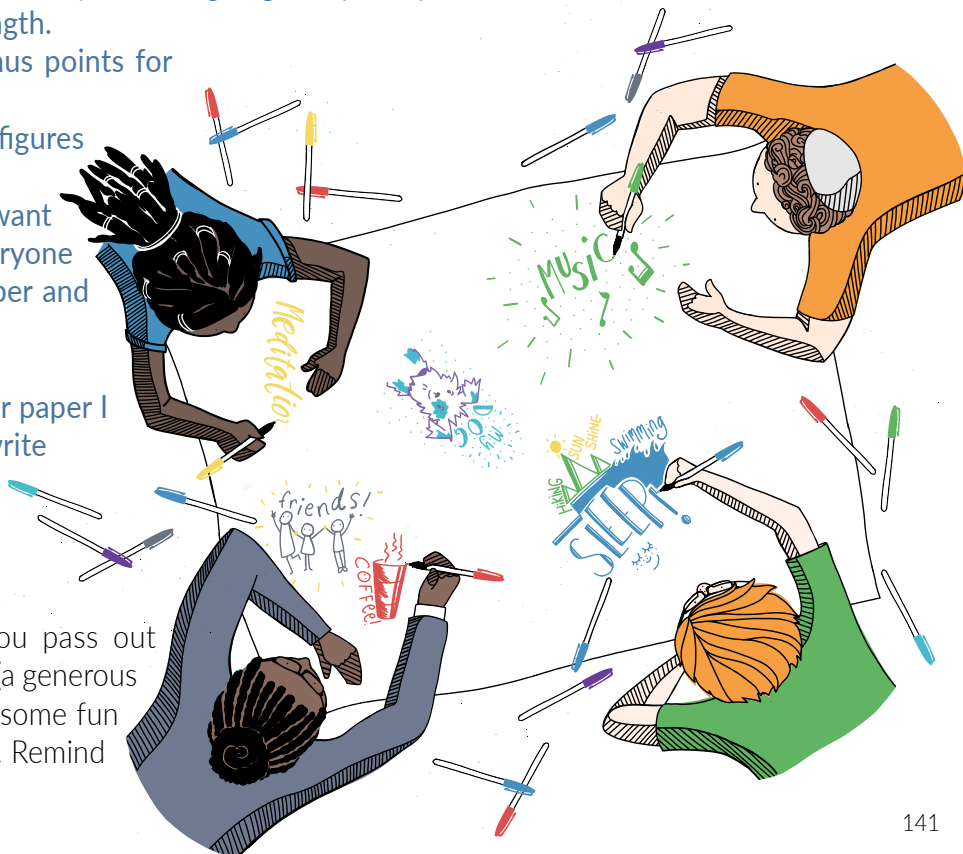
## Logistics

Ask a couple Adult Advisors to help you pass out poster paper (one per group) and markers (a generous handful per group) to the groups. Put on some fun music as groups spread around the space. Remind

Adult Advisors to spread out and join in various groups. As you walk around, you should continue to prompt your directions as well as call out great things you see on posters:

“I am seeing lots of pets, music, pizza, ice cream, football, and yoga. I also see some faith symbols as well as family and friends. I see YouTube and books, dancing and nature...”

After a few minutes, hold up a poster and call people’s attention to it, saying: “This group gets 4,928,387 points for all their pictures! Looking really good. Keep going everyone, you have about five minutes left!”



### Come Back Together and Share Posters

"In a moment, I want you to move back to the large circle, bring your posters with you, collect the markers, drop them off right here, and sit with your poster groups."

When facilitating sharing, call on groups all around the room as opposed to going group by group around the circle in order; this will help keep energy levels up and keep participants interested and engaged.

At this time, you have a few options for sharing:

#### Option 1 - Typical Group share

"Okay, we're going to share some of the things we put on our posters. When it is your group's turn, I want your whole group to stand up and every person should share a couple things that give them Strength. When your group is done, one person should take your poster and stick it to a wall. Who would like to go first?"

#### Option 2 - Creative Group Share

If the group is highly engaged and comfortable with each other and is not bigger than 60 people, you may want to prompt them to share creatively:

"I am going to give you all about four minutes to come up with a creative way to share what you put on your posters. You might want to create a skit, make up a dance, write a poem, lead a game show, or something else entirely. Once your group has shared, one person can take your poster and stick it to the wall."

Do not use the Creative Group Share prompt for a group that is still reluctant about the training.

#### Option 3 - Large Group Share

If you have a large group (60-100) and are using a microphone, you can invite groups to stand in a line one at a time. Then, holding the mic, walk down the line inviting each member of the group to share two things they listed as Strengths on their poster. Once everyone in the group has shared, give them a round of applause and ask which group wants to go next.

#### Option 4 - Very Large Group or Short on Time Share

If you have a very large group (100+) or are short on time, prompt the groups to form a circle with one other group and everyone can share a couple things that they identified as giving them Strength. Give groups about five minutes to share together before you prompt them to hang up posters and for everyone to return to their seats.

#### Sharing Facilitation Pattern

After each group has finished sharing, follow this (or similar) facilitation pattern:

- "Can we give this group a round of applause for sharing their Strengths?"
- "Hang your poster up on the wall somewhere."
- "Who wants to go next?"
- "Everyone stand up with your group."
- "You all have the floor and our attention."
- "Tell us what gives you Strength!"
- "Thank you for the sharing."
- "Who will go next?"
- Keep the sharing moving fairly quickly so that it does not run too long.

Once all the groups have shared, thank the group and help them reflect for a moment:

"Thank you for sharing your different Strengths. In looking at these, we have a lot of Strengths in common and many that are unique and specific to you. I see that a lot of us put different people like family, friends, or teachers and coaches. We also have a lot of things like music, books, sports, nature. We'll get more into these later, but for now I think we should take a break."

At this point, it is important to either take a break or play a game with the group. If you choose to take a break, come back to the training with a game to start. This will help them to take a break from sharing and prepare them for more reflection in the next portion of the training.

**Transition:** "Thanks for sharing your Strengths with me. Now I think it's time we play a game!"

### Key Summary

- While stress is something we deal with on a regular basis, we have many things that give us Strength to cope well with the ups and downs of life.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: STRENGTHS POSTER ACTIVITY

- Introduced Strengths Poster clearly
- Said: "People, places, things that give you Strength"
- Said: "Think physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and relationally"
- Asked for pictures and drawings - not just words
- Gave specific examples
- Led group sharing well
  - Bounced around the room to different groups
  - Struck a gracious or playful tone
  - Had good pacing
  - Used the prompt: "Tell us what gives you Strength"
  - Had groups hang up their posters
- Reflected gratitude and summarized Strength share in the room

# GAME BREAK: WALK AROUND COOL

## Time

10-15 minutes

## Group Size:

At least 10

## Key Point

Walk Around Cool is a high-energy crowd pleaser. In addition to being silly, the game encourages movement, playfulness, connection, and helps to break down social barriers as participants scramble each round to find new partners.

## Trainer Overview

Walk Around Cool is a fun game to shift focus, build energy, and break down social barriers! This Sources classic invites students and adults to partner for a moment with another participant (or four!) in order to win a competitive, fast paced, and silly game. This game is typically sequenced after the Strengths Poster Activity and before the Strengths storytelling, but it can be used anytime you want to build energy and warm up the room.

## Directions:

1. Ask for five volunteers to join you in the middle of the circle to help demonstrate and model the game before inviting all participants to play.
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.**” Mention or demonstrate different silly ways to walk around cool, and then encourage other participants in the middle with you to also walk around cool.
3. Next say, “**While you’re walking around cool, I might say any one of five different words. Based on what I say, you will need to find a group and act out the prompt.**”
4. Here are the five words and actions 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:** Four people group together, linking arms in a closed circle.
  - **Triangle:** 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.
5. Start by running through a simulation of the whole game, with your volunteers, calling out the prompts (Bicycle, Huddle, Triangle, Knuckles, Selfie), and then illustrating how the five players in the middle of the circle can quickly form the various group moves.
6. Finally, “**The last groups to form, or form wrongly, as in their move is wrong or they have the wrong**

**number of people in their group, or individuals who do not find a group at all, are out and return to their chairs to cheer on others. We’ll play until two individuals are left winning the following prize...**”

7. Have a few practice rounds before you start eliminating participants.
8. When finished with instructions, have everyone join you in the middle and start finding their walks. Start each round with shouting “**Walk Around Cool!!!**”
9. Each round a handful of people should get out (being the last to form, having the wrong number of people or the wrong shape, or not finding a group to join). Keep an eye on pacing for this game, if you have a large group you can eliminate big groups of people at a time for being too late or having too many people (i.e. if a group has six for bicycle, you can eliminate all six rather than just the sixth person).

## TRAINER TIP

Walk Around Cool can be played in many other variations we have created or learned from our friends! Feel free to create your own editions or see page 206 for other options we’ve provided.

**Transition:** “Thanks for playing Walk Around Cool. Let’s go back to our seats in the big circle while I pass out Peer Leader Guides.” OR “What a fun round of Walk Around Cool, let’s take a break and then come back to the circle in five minutes.”



### Key Summary

- Everyone should walk around in a group demonstrating a silly walk.
- When the Trainer calls out an action, participants should jump into numbered groups according to that word.
- The last two individuals win prizes.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: GAME BREAK: WALK AROUND COOL

- Trainer clearly explained the directions
- Had the right pacing - the game didn't drag out or end too soon
- Facilitated game with volume and enthusiasm
- Trainer demonstrated humility, kindness, and humor

# STRENGTHS WHEEL: INTRO STRENGTHS AND STORIES

## Time

15-25 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

As we navigate life's ups and downs, tapping into these eight Strengths on the Sources of Strength wheel can help us build resilience, experience recovery and practice emotional regulation.

## Trainer Overview

Primed by the Strength Posters, we now want to help the group connect their Strengths back to the Sources of Strength wheel through an interactive storytelling process. We want this storytelling process to be authentic and powerful without encouraging the sharing of heavy or traumatic stories. The Trainer's facilitation approach should create an environment that is safe enough for participants to share their stories of Strength, without it feeling like a group therapy session. The Trainer should introduce a Strength, deliver a clear and concise question, and then facilitate the sharing of 2-4 stories of that Strength from a diverse group of students and sometimes adults. There will be more opportunity for students to share on each Strength during the small group sharing time.

## Important Note

The pacing of this module is important. Watch the group and slow down or speed up the number of participants sharing or the space between Strengths depending on engagement level. It is important to get as many students sharing as possible from diverse social groups. Whenever possible, use participant's names when you call on them. If a traumatic story is shared remember to acknowledge, honor, and direct the participant to think about the Strengths they have used to overcome or get through (see Trainer Tip on following page).

Context matters, so consider where you are training when you choose which Strength to start this storytelling process with. If you are in a residential setting perhaps you begin with Healthy Activities. Remember, not all members of a group will have the same experience, perspective, or emotional response. The task of a Trainer is not to tell a group what their Strengths are, but rather to provide an expansive definition of Strength wherein groups and individuals can find themselves included and reflected in the Wheel.

## Module Setup and Practical Information

To change up the rhythm and physical space of the training, invite the group to move their chairs closer to the center in a semi-circle. As the Trainer, locate your chair at the front of this semi-circle or cluster and make sure that all participants are in front of you. This change of space makes it easier for everyone in the group to hear each other without having to shout across the circle. If you have more than 60 participants it is critical that you have a speaker system with two or three

wireless microphones to walk around to students and adults that volunteer to share their stories of Strength.

## TRAINER TIP

It is critically important that all participants can hear each other speak during this portion of the training. The power of this section is not what the Trainer is sharing but the stories that participants share. Students are modeling Strength and teaching each other what Strength looks like in good and hard times in their own context.

## Introduction to Sources of Strength Wheel and Strength Sharing

Direct the group's attention to the Sources of Strength Wheel on the front page of their Peer Leader Guides. Point out the similarities between their Strengths poster examples and the Sources of Strength Wheel. Explain that:

**"When we talked to people who had gone through difficult things and asked them, 'How did you get through that?' The things on this Wheel were what they described. This is what resiliency looks like."**

Lead a process of going around the Wheel drawing out Peer Leader stories around each Strength.

First, you will give a short summary about the particular

area of Strength, helping the group to understand how each Strength corresponds in a practical way to their own lives. Then, open up the floor with a prompting question for Peer Leaders to share their stories of how they have experienced a particular Strength in their own lives. This is a storytelling process, so we want to draw out stories from the students and allow the group to share a few short examples for each Source of Strength. This process enables students to teach each other about coping skills in an honest and natural way. Make sure to draw out stories from every corner and culture in the room. Phrase questions in ways that allow you to safely engage quiet or introverted students, who might not jump in as easily and share their stories.

Also remember to affirm peer stories with phrases like, “Thanks for sharing that,” “Great example,” or “Sounds like \_\_\_\_\_ (insert Strength) was incredibly helpful in getting through that challenging time” etc.

**Transition:** “Let’s spend some time talking about the Strengths on this Wheel together. I’d love to hear what these Strengths look like in your lives.”

### Key Summary

- Each one of the 8 Strengths can be defined based on your experience, identities, history and personal story. Each Strength can look a lot of different ways.
- The Wheel is a framework, helping everyone to find their Strength, and share the story of how each part of the Wheel has helped.

### Notes:

### TRAINER TIP

If a student shares a heavy or traumatic story, or shares a tough experience but never arrives at the Strength portion of their story, we want Trainers to use the *Acknowledge, Honor, and Direct Back to Strength* facilitation method.

**For example:** “That sounds like it has been really difficult (*Acknowledge*). I am grateful for your bravery and courage in sharing your story (*Honor*). Taking a look at this Wheel, what Strengths have been helping you get through that? (*Direct Back to Strength*)”

Helping students shift the focus of stories of personal trauma back to the Strengths they use to manage them can be empowering and help them internalize stories of Strength as ways of coping with adversity, challenges, or trauma.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: STRENGTHS WHEEL: INTRO STRENGTHS AND STORIES

- Facilitated storytelling and conversation using different facilitation techniques
- Encouraged many different voices to share
- Engaged participation in the chat
- Used facilitation techniques to prompt engagement “Raise your hand if you have a...Keep your hand up, if you’re willing to share”, “Tell me more!”, “Who agrees?”, “Who else shares that experience?”
- Used a gracious and playful tone
- Demonstrated good pacing
- Used names
- Listened well, utilizing tools to reflect, reframe, rephrase
- Trainer honored and acknowledged curve balls by pivoting towards Strength when appropriate
- Expressed gratitude to individuals and the group at end of discussion

# FAMILY SUPPORT

## Introduction to Strength

Bring their attention to the Wheel in the Peer Leader Guide. “Let's start with the Family Support piece of the Wheel. If we went around the room, some of us would say that we have great Family Support while others might have tougher family. Family can look a lot of different ways. It might look like our immediate family, or extended family, or even our family of choice, those people that aren't technically related to us but feel like family.”

## Initial Question

- “Who would be willing to share a simple example of when you felt supported by your family?”

Or

- “Does anyone have an example of what Family Support looks like for you or a time that Family Support has been a Strength for you?”

## Secondary or Follow Up Questions

- “Does anyone have a grandparent that they are close to?”
- “Is anyone close with a sibling? How does that person show up as Family Support for you?”

**Note:** The first Strength is sometimes more difficult to get participants sharing, so be comfortable with a little silence before the first person speaks. If the group pauses in silence move on to an optional secondary question that is more specific, i.e., “Who is close to a grandparent?” Or, inform students that this can be something simple like your parents coming to your activities. It could also be more serious like depending on each other after a loss or going to your friends' house when things get tough at home.

“We may be close to a parent, siblings, or extended family like cousins, grandparents, or other relatives. We could also have Chosen Family: People that we are not

related to by blood, but who have earned the right to be called family.”

- “Does anyone have a friend's parent(s) or Chosen Family that feels like family to you?”

## TRAINER TIP

Context matters. You don't have to start with Family Support: If you have a quiet group who are not sharing willingly, skip to Healthy Activities and come back once they are sharing more readily. Or if you know your group has difficult family relationships you can start on another area of the Wheel.

## Conclusion

“For many of us, Family Support is incredibly protective and helps us get through tough times when we're facing adversity or challenges. Whether its our immediate family, extended family, or our chosen family - those friends who have become our family.”

**Transition:** “I love talking about Chosen Family because that role is often played by the Positive Friends in our lives, which is the next section on this Wheel.”

## Key Summary

- Family Support, whether related to us by blood, or by choice, are the people who support, nurture, and care for us.

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: FAMILY SUPPORT

- Explained the many ways Family Support can look (immediate, extended, and/or chosen family)
- Phrased Family Support question
- Facilitated storytelling, using conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Transitioned to Positive Friends well

# POSITIVE FRIENDS

## Introduction to Strength

“Many of us have had friends who tend to get us into trouble, who aren’t very encouraging or make us feel down. If you’ve ever had a negative friend in your life, then you know how important it is to have Positive Friends. Having Positive Friends who encourage us, support us, and help us make healthy decisions is incredibly protective in helping us live healthy and full lives.”

There are various options for this Strength. These options can be used independently or in sequence if a change or rephrasing is needed to get the group sharing.

## Initial Question

- “What qualities or characteristics make a person a Positive Friend? What is it that we appreciate about Positive Friends?”

**Facilitation Tip:** Responses might be one word answers or a longer sentence or two.

As with all of the Strengths Wheel modules, we want this to feel like a conversation, so try to create a little back and forth. For example, “Tell me more / How do you tell if a friend is a good listener? / Who agrees that loyalty is an incredibly important quality?”

**Note:** If a student names loyalty or trust as a characteristic of a Positive Friend, it can be important to highlight how Positive Friends are able to maintain trust while also being willing to connect friends to help if they are worried about them. Friends don’t let friends suffer in silence.

## Secondary Question

- “Who feels like they have a Positive Friend in their

life?” (Raise your hand to invite a show of hands).

**Tip:** Call on someone with their hand up. This will give you the opportunity to call on participants that have not yet shared with the group. While you are calling on that person, add the following level of detail for their response: “Who would that be for you? And what is it that you appreciate about them as a Positive Friend?” (Call on someone with their hand up and try to use their name).

## Conclusion

“Thank you for sharing those powerful stories of Positive Friends. We know those people and relationships are

an important Strength and protective factor in our lives. You deserve to have Positive Friends in your life who lift you up and encourage you. It’s also good to examine ourselves at times and ask whether we are embodying the Positive Friend characteristics

that we named: Are we being a Positive Friend to our friends?”

**Transition:** “Even though our Positive Friends can be really helpful in supporting us through the good and the tough times in life, sometimes it can also be helpful to have someone older than us to guide us. Next, Let’s look at the role a Mentor can play in our life.”

It’s important to emphasize that the world is not divided into neat categories of positive and negative friends. People can change and grow: a friend that might be a negative friend today can develop into a more Positive Friend.

## Key Summary

- Positive Friends lift us up, make us laugh, are honest with us, and are there for us when we need them

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: POSITIVE FRIENDS

- Phrased Positive Friends questions well
- Asked for characteristics of Positive Friends
- Facilitated storytelling using conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Transitioned to Mentors well

# MENTORS

## Introduction to Strength

“Having a Mentor, role model, or someone older who you trust and can talk to is extremely protective. Mentors are usually people that are older than us or have a bit more experience in some areas than we do. This could be a teacher, someone at the school, a caring relative, parent, youth leader or community member, or it could even be a sibling or older friend.”

## Initial Question

- “How would you describe what a Mentor is or what they do for us?”

Invite Peer Leaders to raise their hands and describe what a Mentor is to them. After a few shares thank the group for their responses and ask one of the following secondary question.

## Secondary Question

- “Who in here feels like they have a Mentor in their lives?”
- Who has a Mentor at school?
- Who has a Mentor in your family?
- Who has a Mentor in the community, like a coach, neighbor, or boss?”

**Tip:** Have Peer Leaders raise their hands. Use this as an opportunity to call on students who have not shared yet. While you are calling on that person, add the following level of detail to prompt their response: “Who would that be for you? And what is it that you appreciate about them?” (Point at someone with their hand up and try to use their name).

## Optional Question

“Raise your hand if you have a Mentor you want to give a shout out to. Who are they and what do you appreciate about them as a Mentor?”

Thank the group for sharing and add that: “One study looked at people who are at the top of the game in

their field. That is, the best doctors, mechanics, tattoo artists, and lawyers (etc.) One commonality they found was that all these people had found, developed, and maintained relationships with Mentors throughout their lifetimes. There is something about having a Mentor that helps us operate at our highest potential; it helps us be ourselves at our best.

## Conclusion

“Having a Mentor, whether formal or informal can be an important Strength in our lives. Especially during transitions like moving from elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, or high school to college; finding new Mentors or checking in with old ones can be incredibly helpful for navigating these transitions.

**Transition:** “Sometimes we connect with a Mentor because we connect over something we both enjoy doing, like a Healthy Activity.”

### Key Summary

- A Mentor is an experienced person who shares their insight to guide us, and help us draw on our own Strengths to be the best version of ourselves.

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: MENTORS

- Described or asked for definition of a Mentor
- Phrased Mentors question well
- Facilitated storytelling using conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Transitioned to Healthy Activities well

# HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

## Introduction to Strength

“Moving on to the next piece of the Wheel, you all drew lots of Healthy Activities on your Strength Posters today”

Point out and name a few activities that were listed on the group’s poster papers. Then transition to asking the group about a wide range of Healthy Activities.

**Tip:** The wider the range of examples, the more included Peer Leaders will feel. Be intentional about phrasing questions in ways that allow you to engage diverse groups of students, and draw out examples from quieter students. It is also important to try and use local examples or activities if you are aware of cultural practices or geographically specific activities (i.e. rodeo might not be as common in urban areas as it is in rural areas, while other activities might not even be present in rural areas). It is good to raise your hand as you ask a question, so that you are modeling the kind of participation that you want. You might alternate between getting a show of hands, to asking for a response from everyone all at once, or engaging individual participants to share their Healthy Activity in a short sentence or story.

### TRAINER TIP

Try helping everyone feel welcomed and included by using non-dominant cultural examples. For example, list a wide range of music tastes, foods, or hobbies.

**Pace:** The Trainer should keep their facilitation and sharing fairly short and fast paced. There is an intentional shift in the pace of this Strength from the previous Strengths. Ask a question, get a show of hands, maybe a response or two, and then move onto the next question.

## Initial Questions

- “What are the Healthy Activities that give you Strength and help you overcome stress or challenges? Let me break it down for you in categories.”
- “Who are our sporty people in the room? Raise your hands. On the count of three I want you to all shout out your favorite sport, 1, 2, 3!”

If it is a smaller group have them shout out or list them off.

“Who plays an instrument?” You can go around quickly and have students say what they play. Or, “On the count of three I want you to make the sound of your instrument!”

The following questions are not exhaustive, nor is it necessary to ask all of them. Just get a show of hands.

- “Who likes to listen to music or go to concerts?”
- “Who are our artists? People who like to draw, paint, or sculpt?”
- “Who are our writers? You like to journal, write poetry, or short stories?”
- “Who are my outdoors folks? You enjoy hiking, camping, and outdoor activities?”
- “Who are my indoors folks? You would prefer to curl up on the couch and watch a show or read a book?”
- “Who likes to sing? Even if it’s just in the shower by yourself?”
- “Who likes to dance? Especially when no one is watching?”
- “Who are my cooks or bakers? Okay, you all can prove it by bringing in something delicious for us next time you meet!”
- “Who loves hanging out with pets or animals?”
- “Who participates in 4H, FFA, or Rodeo?”
- “Who’s into Comic Con or Anime?”
- “Who’s into drama or theater?”
- “Who likes to read?”
- “Any extreme sports folks, like skiing, snowboarding, skateboarding, skydiving?”
- “Anyone like to tinker with cars or machines? Or do woodworking or metal work?”
- “Any underwater basket weavers?”
- “What about crafters?”
- “Who likes to watch a good series or show?”
- “Anyone like to code or program?”
- “How about fashion, clothes or makeup?”

## Secondary Question:

“There are so many different kinds of Healthy Activities. Thinking about your specific Healthy Activities, what is it that you love about them, or what do you think it is about these activities that help you cope with stress, anxiety, anger, etc.?”



Call on people who raise their hand, so they can share how these activities help keep them strong. They might say something about how they forget about everything else and just focus on the game, they enjoy the team spirit and doing something together, or that they're good at something and it feels great to do something they enjoy.

### Conclusion

If there is time wrap up by asking everyone to “Turn to one or two neighbors and share what you consider to be a Healthy Activity for you right now and how it is helping you.

“Healthy Activities can help us connect to others, give us a way to work through or cope with difficult emotions, or grow in confidence and sense of self. They are also an easy way to engage a friend when they are having a bad day.”

At this point, you may choose to take a quick break to play a short game such as Gotcha, Heads or Tails, Hog Call, or 1,2,3 Look (see Games Appendix). If your group seems very engaged in the conversation, you may choose to continue straight into sharing around Generosity.

**Transition:** “One reason why I like Healthy Activities is that they can be a good opportunity to be generous with others.”

### Key Summary

- Healthy Activities can include a wide variety of activities
- When we feel stressed, Healthy Activities, whether they are social, physical, or emotional - help us unwind, lift our mood, and gain clarity

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

- Asked for a show of hands for various Healthy Activities
- Highlighted a diverse set of Healthy Activities
- Asked what these Healthy Activities do for us
- Facilitated storytelling using conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Transitioned to Generosity well

# GENEROSITY

## Introduction to Strength

“Generosity is the practice of helping others, maybe sharing a bit of yourself, either by volunteering, or donating, or even a conscious or random act of kindness. But very often when you engage in an act of Generosity, you walk away feeling like you got more out of it than you gave in the first place. Has anyone ever helped someone out and walked away feeling like you got more out of it than you gave?” Get a show of hands. “That’s because when you engage in practices of Generosity and giving towards others, you actually activate parts of the brain that are key to fostering wellbeing and resilience.”

## Initial Question

- “Does anyone have an example of a time you practiced or received Generosity and felt like you got a lot out of it?”

Allow a couple participants to share examples of Generosity they have practiced or received. Make sure to thank individuals for sharing and comment on the power of Generosity as individuals and as a group. Generosity is contagious and can spread, when you are generous, others are inspired to be generous as well.

## Optional Question(s):

- “Who is someone in the room that you feel is generous? Point to them.”

Call on a couple people who are pointing at someone and ask them “Why are you pointing at this specific person and what is it about them that makes them generous?” Try to always use their names if you can.

If it is difficult for participants to answer the above question, you can open the question up more broadly to include people who might not be in the room.

- “Who is someone else in life who is generous towards you?”

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: GENEROSITY

- Explained various kinds of Generosity
- Said we often get more out of Generosity than we give in the first place
- Phrased Generosity question well
- Facilitated storytelling using conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Transitioned to Spirituality well

## Conclusion

“Generosity is about more than just being nice people. This actually can be one of the most powerful pieces of the Wheel when we are struggling. Generosity helps people feel a sense of purpose, connection, agency, wholeness, and healing. It helps people to feel less burdensome or ashamed. It’s healing for people who are suffering - this is really powerful. Practicing Generosity is like pumping weights for your soul. It can heal the heart and lift the spirit. If you can think of a way to grow in Generosity, give it a try and invite someone else to join you.”

**Transition:** “When I am generous with others, I find it lifts my spirit, which is a great transition right into Spirituality.”

## Key Summary

- When individuals engage in practices of Generosity and giving towards others, they activate parts of the brain that are key to fostering wellbeing and resilience
- Generosity can look a lot of different ways, from donating money or time, to being intentionally kind to other people. These acts of kindness towards others, big or small, can make an impact on how we feel about ourselves

## Notes:

# SPIRITUALITY

## Introduction to Strength

Point to and name any of the examples of faith, Spirituality, nature, yoga, or traditional culture listed during the poster activity, highlighting the many ways that Spirituality is expressed.

### SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality can include the people, places, and practices that lift our spirits and help us feel connected to something bigger than ourselves.

“Spirituality can look a lot of different ways. The root of the word is spirit, so think about the people, places, and practices that lift your spirit and help you feel connected to something bigger than yourself.

“Spirituality can look a lot of different ways.

“It can include places like a Synagogue, Mosque, Church, or even a meaningful location in nature, like a forest or beside a river.

“It can include people. Like a Mentor, a poet’s words, an ancestor, faith leader, or other people

“It can be expressed as rituals, like lighting candles or incense, marking a significant event or season in a community, playing specific music, praying, or practicing mindfulness.

“It can be practices like yoga, meditation, watching a sunset, sitting near water, or writing in a gratitude journal.”

## Initial Question

“Does anyone have a story they can share of when Spirituality really helped give you Strength or was a Strength for you?”

Allow a few participants to share examples of how Spirituality has been a Strength for them. Remember to thank and encourage participants who share their Strengths with the group. Try to call on a diverse set of voices if possible. It is also important not to be thrown off by Spirituality practices or traditions that are not

your own or are new to you. The Trainer’s role is not to judge or evaluate the story shared but rather to highlight how Spirituality was a Strength for the participant who shared.

“One way to engage the Strength of Spirituality is to practice thankfulness. Simply practicing gratitude and writing down what you are thankful for can actually change the chemical makeup of your brain. Thankfulness trains our brains to look for the good things going on around us and has a profound beneficial impact on our mental and emotional health.”

## Options for Secondary Question

At this point, depending on time, you have various options to facilitate a time for participants to share what they are thankful for.

### Option 1:

Ask the group: “Could I have 5-10 people stand up right where they are and share one thing that you are thankful for right now? Once you share take your seat and I will call on folks until we have heard from all those who are standing.”

### Option 2:

“Would anyone like to name one or two things they are grateful for at the moment? The more specific the better.” Call on participants with their hands raised.

### Option 3:

If you have a smaller group or enough time you can go all the way around the circle and have each participant share one thing that they are thankful for right now, encouraging them to be specific.

## Conclusion

“Thank you for sharing what you are thankful for. I don’t know if you all felt that, but there is something very powerful about practicing gratitude. A few people sharing what they are thankful for can raise the spirit of a room. We have a 21 Day Thankfulness Challenge you can run as a Sources Peer Leader campaign and see what happens when you encourage the rest of the school to practice thankfulness.”

**Transition:** “Again, thanks for sharing about different

things that you are grateful for, it's really powerful to hear. The last two Strengths are Physical Health and Mental Health.”

### Key Summary

- Spirituality is practiced in many ways, the people, places, and practices that lift our spirit or help us feel connected to something bigger than ourselves can be parts of our Spirituality.
- Thankfulness and/or gratitude is a common and powerful spiritual practice across many traditions and cultures. Practicing thankfulness for 21 days can have a powerful neurological impact on one's outlook on life and one's attention to good in the world.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SPIRITUALITY

- Explained that Spirituality can look a lot of different ways in different traditions, cultures, and practices
- Described Spirituality as things that lift or fill our spirit
- Described Spirituality as a sense of being a part of something bigger than yourself
- Phrased Spirituality question well
- Facilitated storytelling using conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Highlighted research around practicing gratitude or thankfulness
- Facilitated Thankfulness sharing well
- Introduced the Thankfulness challenge campaign
- Transitioned to Physical Health well

# PHYSICAL HEALTH

## Introduction to Strength

“The last two Strengths on the Wheel are extremely important to our overall health and wellbeing, and they are two sides of the same coin.

“Physical Health involves all the different ways we can care for our bodies, whether that’s through eating healthy, getting enough sleep, drinking enough water, exercising, or having medical care when we are sick or hurt. Let’s get a quick show of hands regarding some of the aspects of Physical Health.”

## Initial Question(s):

Ask participants to respond to the following set of questions by raising their hands if they agree with you. You can move quickly through this section as no verbal or personal responses are needed to make the point. It’s more of a quick visual positive social norming process, highlighting that most participants practice regular Physical Health and tap into Physical Health when needed and that we can all continue to grow in our Physical Health as well. You don’t have to ask all of these questions, but there is an intentional progression laid out here, so if you add or change questions, please make sure they are safe and well thought through ahead of time and not thrown out on the spot.

- “Who feels like they regularly sleep as much as they should?”
- “Who feels like it might be helpful if they were able to get more sleep?”
- “Studies have shown that teenagers actually need more sleep than children or adults, because there is so much development and growth happening in their brains and bodies.”
- “Getting enough sleep is actually one of the most important things we can do for our Physical Health; it connects to so many other areas of our health including improving our immune system so we get sick less often, reducing stress, helping us think more clearly and do better in school or work, improving our mood and our ability to get along with other people.”
- “Who feels like they drink enough water throughout the day? Who feels like it might be helpful for them to drink more water?”
- “We are supposed to drink at least eight cups of water a day, and ideally more. Just like sleep, the impact of hydration on the rest of our health is

enormous. Being properly hydrated improves our energy levels, brain function, physical performance, and the proper functioning of pretty much every body system we have!

- “Another aspect of Physical Health can include our hygiene, brushing teeth, taking showers etc.”
- “Who engaged in a physical activity this week, walking, running, exercising, going to the gym?”
- “Anybody ever choose the salad over the burger?”
- “Anybody in here need glasses or contacts to see clearly?”
- “Anybody ever need braces or to get dental work done?”
- “Anybody ever needed to take medication?”
- “How many people have had a friend, family member, or yourself need to access medical care for something like an injury or illness?”

“So I think pretty much everyone’s hand went up for something in that list. We all practice Physical Health all the time, and I think we can all agree there are areas we can continue to grow in to be healthier as well. I’d love for you to think about one way you might Strengthen your Physical Health in your life. Whether that’s working on getting enough sleep, eating healthy, drinking more water, or getting the medical care you need.

“Physical Health matters and that is why we try as best we can to take care of our bodies. When we feel well and comfortable in our bodies, we live happier and healthier lives.”

## Secondary Questions/Discussion:

“The same should really be true of how we approach Mental Health, but we don’t always think about it in the same way. Let me explain.

“Take, for example, recovering from a broken leg. That is no small thing, but if we seek medical attention it can be a ten-week setback, whereas if we don’t seek medical attention it can get worse and become an ongoing challenge.

“If you broke your leg and didn’t go to the doctor you would be walking around in your pain and hurt for longer than necessary, because there are people who know how to help. We would think about it the same

way for a friend as well. Imagine you had a friend that had a broken leg, and they tell you 'It's fine, I'll walk it off, it'll get better on it's own,' I imagine you would be pretty persistent in getting them help. Why?

- We know that they are in pain.
- We know that they don't deserve to stay in pain.
- We know that they can get better.
- We know that they need help, beyond what we can give them on our own.

"I would argue we should have that same level of persistence if we saw that a friend was struggling with a mental health crisis, like feeling suicidal. Those same things are true.

- "We know that our friend is in pain.
- "We know that they don't deserve to stay in pain.
- "We know that they can get better.
- "We know that they need help, beyond what we can give them on our own.

**Transition:** "Just like we would be persistent to connect a person or friend in physical pain to medical attention and health, we want to be just as persistent in connecting people in emotional or mental pain to Mental Health supports and care."

Flow seamlessly into Mental Health.

### Key Summary

- Physical Health includes the way we care for our bodies, our hygiene, and our Physical Health on a regular basis, as well as when we are hurt or in crisis and need to seek medical care.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Explained that Physical Health involves the ways we take care of our bodies on an ongoing basis, as well as in case of emergencies
- Highlighted a diverse set of ways to strengthen Physical Health
- Facilitated storytelling using a conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Transitioned to Mental Health

# MENTAL HEALTH

## Introduction to Strength

“Mental Health is really similar to Physical Health. Sometimes in life we can get knocked down, through no fault of our own. And we might be wrestling with some big emotions. We might think, 'I feel so angry all the time, and I don't know why. Or I'm always stressed out, and worried, and I don't know what to do. Or I just feel sad, or numb and I don't know what's going on.' Just like if we broke our leg and didn't go to the doctor, we would be staying in our pain longer than was necessary, there are people who know how to help when we are wrestling with our Mental Health as well. And if we never access that help, we can sometimes be staying in our hurt and pain longer than is truly necessary.”

## Initial Discussion

“So it is incredibly important to seek help for a friend in physical or mental pain. The absence of disease does not equal Physical Health. For example, just because you don't have the flu, doesn't necessarily mean that you are healthy. In the same way, the absence of a mental illness does not equal Mental Health. Just because you don't have a mental illness, doesn't mean you are mentally healthy. And just like you can practice Physical Health even if you do have an injury or illness, you can practice Mental Health even when wrestling with a Mental Health issue. We have to practice health, in order to truly be well. We can practice health proactively in ways that can make us more resilient and prepared for future adversity or challenges.

“So in just a second, I want you to think about one way that you practice and promote Physical Health in your life on a regular basis and one way that you practice and promote Mental Health in your life on a regular basis. Then I want everyone to turn to a neighbor and share one Physical Health practice and one Mental Health practice with your partner. Take two minutes to each share ways you practice and promote health on a regular basis.”

## Secondary Question and Partner Share, if time

“Coming back together, are there two or three people who would be willing to share one Physical Health practice either you or your partner shared, with the rest of the group?” Facilitate two to three Physical Health stories and then thank the group for sharing. Then ask:

“Are there two or three people who would be willing to share one Mental Health practice either you or your partner shared with the rest of the group?”

Facilitate two or three Mental Health stories and then thank the group for sharing.

## Conclusion:

“I ask those questions because it is important not to just think of Physical or Mental Health in terms of illness, disease, crisis, or treatment. Those elements are important and we need to improve our systems and ways of thinking about and connecting people to help. We need to boldly and bravely speak up and speak out when we are not doing well, or courageously connect friends to help when they are struggling. But the absence of physical or mental illness is not health. We need to actually practice and promote good Physical and Mental Health in our lives if we are going to change the culture of our school, community, and our own lives. Sources of Strength isn't only about helping people when they are in crisis, it's about making sure fewer people end up in crisis in the first place, and that they have the skills and resilience to weather a storm better and bounce back more quickly when they do face adversity or challenge. Our vision is to empower a well world and to do that we have to promote Physical and Mental Health.”

## TRAINER TIP

**Read the room:** depending on how long this lap has taken it may be a good idea to play a quick game and/or take a short break. A good game for this time is something like Partner Search, Hog Call, 123 Look, or Head, Toes, Cup. See the games section for instructions.

**Transition:** Thank the group for sharing their powerful stories of Strength and transition to a game, a break, or into the next module by saying “Would you all agree - the more of these Strengths we have, the better off we'll be? OK, we've been sitting for a while, lets play a game!”

## Notes:

### Key Summary

- Mental Health is just as important as Physical Health.
- The absence of mental illness is not Mental Health, we have to actively practice good Mental Health

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: MENTAL HEALTH

- Explained that Mental Health involves the ways we take care of our brains and emotions on an ongoing basis, as well as in case of emergencies
- Highlighted a diverse set of ways to strengthen Mental Health
- Facilitated storytelling using a conversational style
- Had and/or used secondary questions
- Transitioned to a game and/or into the next module



# MULTIPLE SUPPORTS

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

No one Strength is enough to keep a suicidal person safe. A person should not try to help someone in crisis by themselves, but should mobilize as many supports and Strengths as they can.

## Trainer Overview

We've just finished introducing and hearing stories of the eight Strengths. This section highlights the importance of not trying to be the only source of Strength in somebody's life as well as the value of tapping into more than one Strength and connecting to help.

### 2nd Lap - Many Strengths Rather Than One

**Positive Statement:** "Would you all agree that the more Strengths we have, the better off we will be?"

**Safety Statement:** "Would you all also agree that no one piece of this Wheel would be enough to keep a suicidal person safe? Let me explain what I mean by that."

Explain the above statements by highlighting examples from the following four Strengths in order: Physical Health, Family Support, Healthy Activities, and Positive Friends. Highlight how these Strengths can be helpful and have a positive impact, but on their own don't ensure proper safety for a suicidal person. Each example is structured around a positive affirmation of the Strength and why more Strengths brings safety.

#### Physical Health

**Positive Statement:** "Say a suicidal person goes to a doctor for help and the doctor prescribes medication as a treatment. We know that medication can be very effective and beneficial in many cases."

**Safety Statement:** "But if all they did was prescribe medication and send them out the door, we would say that that is a potentially unsafe way to practice medicine. Medication can be very helpful but it needs to be connected to or supported by other Strengths. We would recommend that the doctor connect the suicidal person to a counselor or mental health provider, or maybe work with their parents to ensure they have additional support while recovering from a suicidal crisis."

#### Family Support

**Positive Statement:** "Or, imagine a parent who is worried about their child and thinks, 'I'm going to take care of them on my own. My love and support are enough.' We know that the love and support of a parent can be incredibly powerful and helpful."

**Safety Statement:** "But on its own this could be a potentially unsafe way to parent. Family Support is obviously very important, but it needs to be supported by other Strengths. We would recommend they try to connect their child to Mental Health support or encourage them to tap into and practice other Strengths like Generosity, Positive Friends, or Healthy Activities."

#### Healthy Activities

**Positive Statement:** "Or imagine you have a friend that loves basketball. It's their main Healthy Activity and coping strategy in life. Basketball can definitely be a Strength for that friend."

**Safety Statement:** "But what if something really significant happens to that friend, maybe they get injured and can't play, or they are dealing with something really heavy like the death of a family member. Basketball might be a helpful coping strategy to move through that, but it's unlikely that basketball alone would be enough to help them move through that in a healthy way. Having other Strengths in their life would be incredibly helpful and protective right?"

## TRAINER TIP

Often, it is common that young people adhere to codes of secrecy and silence in order to keep a friendship intact. We want to be very clear that while a Positive Friend's care is important, a friendship is not enough to keep a suicidal person safe.

## Conclusion

"We always want to make sure we are mobilizing as many Strengths in a person's life as possible. Think of the Wheel as a net. If it is only tethered in one place it has less ability to catch us when we fall. But if it is tethered in many spots, it is going to be much more effective in catching us when we fall and help us bounce back and move through the hard times in life."

**Transition:** "So, do we all agree that no one goes through life without dealing with at least some stress on a regular basis?"

## Positive Friends

**Positive Statement:** "You all are Positive Friends to a lot of people. If you had a friend that was feeling suicidal you might think "I'm going to take care of my friend with my love, care, and support." That love, care, and support of a Positive Friend can be incredibly helpful."

**Safety Statement:** "But in the same way if a friend is trying to help all on their own, without tapping into the other Strengths, especially connecting someone to help through medical access and Mental Health, we would say that's a pretty dangerous way to be a friend. And we've seen that end very badly."

"We would give that same message to doctors, parents, teachers, friends. We don't want try to be someone's only Strength in their life. If someone is struggling we want to engage many Strengths on the Wheel, invite others in, and get them connected to the help they need and deserve."

## Key Summary

- While each of the Strengths are important, no one Strength is enough to completely keep a suicidal person safe.
- No one should try to help someone with suicidal feelings on their own.
- Like tethers on a net, the more Strengths we mobilize in our lives the stronger and more resilient we become.

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: MULTIPLE SUPPORTS

- Highlighted that the more Strengths the better/no one Strength is enough to keep a suicidal person safe
- Used a metaphor to illustrate point (parachute, trampoline, net)

# WHAT HELPS ME

## Time

5 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

Everyone deals with anger, anxiety, or sadness at some point in their lives. The Strengths on the Wheel can help us find balance and cope with these emotions when they get too big.

### Trainer Overview

In the Strengths Wheel section of the training, we are continuing to explore different ways of using the Wheel. We started with storytelling, sharing what each part of the Wheel looks like in our lives, and then focused our conversation on mobilizing multiple Strengths around people, and now we will explore the Wheel as a tool to find balance and emotional regulation.

### Introduction to the Big 3 Emotions

The previous section ended with highlighting the role of Positive Friends as Connectors to Help, and the importance of never trying to help all on our own, but instead mobilizing multiple strengths and supports around people who might be suicidal, struggling, or at risk. The transition into this module seeks to further develop Peer Leaders' role as Positive Friends, the importance of personalizing their Strengths, and of having authenticity when talking about Strengths with peers

“Would you all agree that nobody gets through life without experiencing some ups and downs or wrestling with some stress on a pretty regular basis?” (This is a rhetorical question, so no responses needed, but you can nod your head up and down to invite agreement.)

“When we go through something hard, we often experience emotions that feel big or overwhelming. Of course there are a wide range of emotions we experience, but we like to talk about these Big 3 Emotions, which can be difficult to manage, yet are very common when stressed or facing a challenge: anger, anxiety, and sadness.”

#### TRAINER TIP

Keep this conversation upbeat, matter-of-fact, and relatively quick paced. This is not a heavy discussion about emotions or emotional disorders. Normalize that we all wrestle with big emotions and we can use the Strengths wheel to bring these emotions back down to size.

Then ask the group (raising your hand every time you ask a question to indicate a desired show of hands – remember to keep this light and upbeat in tone and pace): “How many of you, when you’re wrestling with stress or some kind of difficulty, commonly experience anger; frustration, a quick temper, and/or irritability; maybe your jaw gets tight or your fists clench?” (Wait for a show of hands and follow with the next question)

“And how many of you, when you’re wrestling with something hard, find that it comes out more as anxiety; feeling worried, maybe you get an upset stomach, or can’t fall asleep at night as your brain can’t seem to turn off?” (Wait for a show of hands.)

“And how many of you, when wrestling with something hard, tend to feel sadness; you feel really tired and run down, or even depressed?” (Wait for a show of hands.)

“And how many of you feel like you have a nice little smoothie mix of all three?” (This comment should be lighthearted and empathetic in tone.)

#### TRAINER TIP

These Big 3 Emotions are sequenced purposefully. Anger can often be more socially acceptable so it can help to start with anger, then touch on anxiety, and finish with sadness.

To illustrate this point, turn to the students next to you and in a very comfortable and non-threatening manner, say:

## Normalizing the Big Three Emotions

“These aren’t negative emotions, they are human emotions and no one gets through life without wrestling with at least one of these emotions on a fairly regular basis. We may go through a similar situation, but you (point to your neighbor) might get more angry, and you (gesture towards someone else) may feel more anxious, and I (point to yourself) will get down or depressed. Everyone is different.

### TRAINER TIP

Avoid: “Who is depressed? Who is anxious?” Or soliciting stories of overwhelming emotions.

“When these emotions feel overwhelming, it’s important to pay attention to them, and the Strengths on the Wheel can be a helpful tool in bringing the big emotions back down to a manageable size.

This is a good time to share from your own experience. For example, when you are stressed or knocked down in life, you might tend to feel some big anxiety, and getting outside to walk your dogs with friends or family might bring that anxiety back down to size. Tapping into Healthy Activities, Physical Health and either Positive Friends or Family Support is what helps when you feel anxious.

“We will split into breakout groups in just a moment, and when we check in on Mental Health, this red section on the Strengths Wheel, I want you to share which of these Big 3 Emotions, anger, anxiety or sadness, comes up most often for you, and what helps you bring that big emotion back down to size.”

### TRAINER TIP

If there is time, you can have Peer Leaders turn to a neighbor and share which of the Big 3 Emotions shows up most commonly for them and what helps them navigate that big emotion in a healthy way?

**Transition:** “We can use Strengths to find balance and to navigate big emotions in healthy ways. Our Wheel isn’t static. It’s always changing.”

### Key Summary

- All of us deal with at least one of the Big 3 Emotions of anger, anxiety, or sadness on a regular basis.
- We can be in similar situations and experience different emotions than each other.
- While these emotions are normal, the Wheel can help us find balance and cope with them when they get too big.

**Notes:**

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: WHAT HELPS ME

- Defined and described the Big 3 Emotions as anger, anxiety, and sadness
- Identified Strengths Wheel as a resource for coping with big emotions
- Normalized big emotions and explained the need for healthy coping strategies

# I AM STRONGER

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

We can grow stronger in the Strengths on the Wheel.

## Trainer Overview

The final element of the Strengths Wheel discussion in the training is to explore how the Wheel is dynamic and always changing. We can evaluate where we are currently strong, where we would like to grow stronger, and reflect on how we have already grown stronger.

When sharing on Strengths around the Wheel, participants may reflect they are not equally strong in every area. The truth is, we are probably never going to have all eight Strengths be really strong for us all at one time. However, just because we are not strong in one area right now does not mean we cannot grow in the future. We are not stuck. The Strengths Wheel is not static, it's fluid and dynamic. It can change and grow.

### TRAINER TIP

When training Year 2+ teams, consider asking returning Peer Leaders to share how Sources of Strength has helped them and the areas where they feel like they have grown stronger. Work with the Adult Advisors to identify these students ahead of time so they can share briefly and successfully.

"We can use this Wheel to find balance. We may not be strong in every area of the Wheel at the same time, and that is OK. This Wheel isn't a fixed thing, if you are looking at this and seeing some areas you would like to grow in, good news! We can strengthen our Strengths.

"I want you to turn to your neighbor and share two areas on the Strengths Wheel that are strong for you right now, and one area that you would like to strengthen over the next few months. We will take two minutes to share."

Model this by sharing your answer to this question, pick an example that is true for you, but you might say something like:

"For example, I feel really strong in Generosity right now, because this year I was a part of raising money and awareness for a cause I believe in and I know I'm having an impact. I also feel strong in Positive Friends. My best friend is hilarious, and I can also rely on them for support when I'm feeling overwhelmed. I want to strengthen my Mentors piece and find a Mentor who can help support me in my new role at work."

Then instruct the group to turn to their neighbor and share two of their strongest areas and one area they would like to strengthen. Encourage the participants to share in dyads, knowing that some groups may include three people. Ensure everyone has someone to share with. You may need to encourage Adult Advisors to pair up with Peer Leaders who are sitting alone or even pair up with a student or adult yourself. Allow the group to talk for a few minutes before getting their attention again.

After dyad sharing, bring the group back together by asking: "In looking at this Wheel, is there anyone who feels like they have grown stronger in one of these areas?"

If needed you could provide a few examples: "Maybe you started a gratitude practice this semester and your mindset has shifted. Perhaps you moved to a new school and your classmates have become your Positive Friends." Allow a few students to briefly share their stories of growth and thank them for their willingness to share.

**Transition:** "We have heard some powerful stories so far, and I want to make sure we create an opportunity for everyone's voice to be heard, so let's break into Small Groups!"

## Notes:

### Key Summary

- It is important to check in with our Strengths Wheel.
- We won't always feel strong in every area of the Strengths Wheel, and our Wheel is always changing.
- We can use the Wheel to identify the Strengths we have today, the Strengths we would like to strengthen, as well as to reflect on the ways we have already gotten stronger.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: I AM STRONGER

- Explained that it is OK to not be strong in each Strength
- Explained that the Wheel can always change as we work to grow stronger
- Asked for stories about how people feel they have grown stronger in one of the Strengths

# SMALL GROUP SHARING

## Time

20-45 minutes depending on time  
(See Trainer Tip for alternative options)

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides  
Make copies of Tips for Leading Small Groups and Prompts for Leading Small Groups available (page 171)

## Key Point

It is helpful to periodically reflect on how these different Strengths are going in our own lives.

## Trainer Overview

We often hear that Small Groups are one of Peer Leader's favorite piece in the training, giving an opportunity for individuals to check in on how strength shows up in their own lives.

## Trainer

Adult Advisors should have been prepped for this activity in the Adult Advisor training. If they were not, pull them aside during a break and give them a heads up regarding their facilitation of this small group activity. See Adult Advisor training for details.

Small groups should start with Positive Friends or Healthy Activities and eventually check in on Family Support when groups have grown more comfortable.

### TRAINER TIP

We do not start with Family Support as it may start the time off with painful stories for some students.

## Small Group Sharing

In a minute, you are going to break the group up into small groups to share what the Strengths look like in each person's life. Prior to breaking into groups, explain the process. It should sound something like this: "We're going to break up into groups now and talk around the Strengths Wheel in small groups, sharing what this Wheel looks like in each of our lives personally. Take your Peer Leader Guide with you (hold up the Peer Leader Guide), and you open it up to the center foldout."

## Checking In With Our Strengths

"What I want you to do when you're in your small group is to go around the circle, giving everyone a chance to share what each Strength looks like for them. You might start with Positive Friends. Each person in the circle should get a chance to share

what that looks like for them. You might say, 'Positive Friends is strong for me because \_\_\_\_\_, or, It's not so strong for me because \_\_\_\_\_.'

"Once everyone gets a chance to share on that Strength, the group can move on to the next Strength. It's best to just go in order around the circle so that no one gets skipped. Then you'll do the same as you go around the Wheel. Everyone can be honest. If you don't feel like you're strong in an area that's OK, just say that one's not so good for you right now. If you don't want to share on a particular Strength, that's fine too, you can pass. But don't pass on all of them because I know you have some of these Strengths in your lives, sometimes we just have to be intentional to see what those Strengths are."

## Spirituality and Mental Health

"A few quick notes: If you get to Spirituality and can't think of anything, just mention one or two things you're grateful for today or this week. When you get to Mental Health, I want you to do two things:

1. "Share which of the Big 3 Emotions you wrestle with most commonly when you're going through a hard time - Anger, Anxiety, or Sadness, or a combination of two or three.
2. "Share what helps you in navigating that emotion or emotions in a healthy way."

Give your own brief example of what this looks like to demonstrate: i.e "I tend to feel anxious sometimes. When my anxiety grows too big, it is really helpful for me to go for a run, do some art, or call a friend to talk through things."



“We may not have time to get to every Strength, but I’ll keep my eye on the clock and let you know how we’re doing with time. The last Strength you share about should be Mental Health.”

### TRAINER TIP

If you find yourself running short on time, consider:

- Prompting the group to check in on Positive Friends, Healthy Activities, Spirituality, and Mental Health.
- Giving clear directions to Adult Advisors for how to run small groups in their first meeting back together with their Peer Leaders.

### Moving Into Groups

“Once I number you off into groups, you’re going to take your chairs with you or sit on the floor and form a circle with your group so everyone can see and hear each other. I’ll also give you all markers in case you want to write or draw your Strengths as you go around the circle.”

Number off the Adult Advisors before numbering off the Peer Leaders and getting them to break up into their groups.

“I would like all the Adult Advisors to stand up.”

Quickly number the Adult Advisors off from one through eight or so, depending on size and adult availability. Try and get no more than seven to eight people in a group. If you are short on Adult Advisors, you may need to lead one of the groups yourself.

“Now I’ll number off the Peer Leaders. Remember your number and don’t move until I say go!”

Quickly move around the circle, numbering the students off. Afterwards, direct them to find their corresponding group and form a circle.

### Hand Outs and Supporting Small Group Leaders

Make sure all of the Adult Advisors have a Peer Leader Guide with them in the group. At times, Adult Advisors may be nervous about running a small group. If there

is someone who is especially nervous, you may choose to sit with them to help listen and facilitate. You can also make copies of the Tips for Leading Small Groups document on page 171 to help Adult Advisors.

Once small group sharing starts, cycle around the room to multiple groups and assist any Adult Advisors who may be having difficulty leading this discussion. Pay attention to timing. If you have a lot of time left and groups are sharing well you can give more time. When there are five minutes remaining, ask the groups to move on to the Mental Health sharing portion if they have not done so already. When ending, ask the group to let everyone finish sharing about the Strength they are on, so no one gets cut off.

**Transition:** “I hope you really enjoyed sharing and learning about each other in your small groups. It’s time to play a game.”

### Key Summary

- From time to time we need to take stock of how we’re doing with various strengths on the Wheel
- While it is okay to pass on a Strength, participants should try not to pass on everything
- If someone does not know what Spirituality looks like for them right now, they should feel free to share one or two things they are grateful for
- When checking in on Mental Health, participants should share which of The Big 3 Emotions is most common for them as well as what helps them find balance

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: SMALL GROUP SHARING

- Explained the process for small group sharing clearly
- Instructed groups to pick a Strength to start with and go around the circle
- Asked participants to share honestly - "it's strong for me and this is why..." Or, "It's not so strong for me right now"
- Explained that sharing is voluntary and participants can pass if it is harder for them to share on a particular Strength. Instructed not to pass on everything, because everyone has Strength
- Highlighted that if students can't think of anything for Spirituality they can share something they are grateful or thankful for
- Instructed them to share (on Mental Health) which of The Big 3 Emotions is more common for you and what helps
- Numbered off the Adult Advisors
- Numbered off the Peer Leaders
- Asked participants to take their Peer Leader guides with them
- Instructed groups to find a place and sit in a circle

# TIPS FOR LEADING SMALL GROUPS

## Write or Draw

- If your group goes quiet or struggles to share, first pause and get your group to write or draw their Strength on their Peer Leader Guide Poster before discussing what they wrote or drew.

## Adults Share but Don't Over Share

- Share honestly but appropriately. If a student has to start worrying about you then you may have over shared.

## Avoid 20 Questions

- It's not a group therapy session or an interrogation, so avoid asking too many probing questions.

## Honor, Acknowledge, and Pivot Back to Strength

- If a student shares something hard and it never arrives back to a story of Strength, respond by Honoring and Acknowledging (what they have shared), and then pivot back towards Strength by asking them what Strengths they used to help them through tough times.

## Support Emotional Students

- Support students if they leave the circle or the room due to feeling emotional. You or another adult should go with them, check in, offer support, and invite them back in when they are ready. The Trainer may be able to help you facilitate your group should you need to leave.

## Issues of Confidentiality & Mandatory Reporting

- If something comes up that needs to be reported, please invite a Trusted Adult like a counselor or administrator immediately during or after the training.
- Keep confidential issues confidential.

## Debrief After the Training

- After the training we will debrief. Please remember any concerns that you observe during the training to share during this time. We will make a plan to offer support where needed.



# PROMPTS FOR SMALL GROUP SHARING

## Family Support

- Share an example of what Family Support looks like for you, a person in your family that supports you (immediate family, extended family, chosen family, foster family), or a way that your family supports you.

## Positive Friends

- Who is a Positive Friend for you and what do you appreciate about them?

## Mentors

- Who is a Mentor for you and what do you appreciate about them, what do they do for you as a support? (Teacher, Coach, Parent, Counselor, Youth Leader, Sibling, etc.)

## Healthy Activities

- Name a few of your favorite Healthy Activities and what they do for you in terms of coping and managing stress.

## Generosity

- Share a time that you experienced Generosity from someone else or a time when you were generous towards others.

## Spirituality

- Share an example of how Spirituality has been a Strength for you. If you can't think of anything, then share something you are grateful for.

## Physical Health

- Share about a time that Physical Health was a Strength for you or your family or friends, whether proactively caring for your health or getting help when you need it.

## Mental Health

- Which of the Big 3 Emotions is more common for you when you are having a hard time or wrestling with stress (anger, anxiety, or sadness)? Or which combination is more common? What helps with that? Which areas of the Wheel or Healthy Activities are your go to?

# QUICK CHANGE AND CONVERSATION

## Time

15 minutes

## Materials

None

## Key Point

Each person has the capacity to improve the climate of a school by focusing on positive changes in others, reducing isolation, increasing connection and belonging in creative ways, and noticing the warning signs for suicide and connecting people to help.

## Trainer Overview

This is a quick activity used to get participants moving, and creates a natural segue from noticing changes in the people around us into a conversation about the risk factors and warning signs for suicide.

## Directions

- Ask everyone to find a partner and form two parallel lines facing each other.
- Once the lines are formed, ask everyone to take a quick look at their partner, noticing their shoes, hair, if they have jewelry on, if they're wearing a name tag etc., keep this very brief to avoid feeling awkward.
- Ask all participants to turn around.
- Prompt one line to change three things about their physical appearance.
- After a moment, ask players to turn and face their partners, calling out which three changes they made.
- Repeat this process again, but switch it up, and ask the other line to change three things about their physical appearance, turn back around, and challenge their partners to notice the changes.

### TRAINER TIP

Depending on the size of your training space, have the group form multiple sets of parallel lines, or an inside circle and an outside circle, with partners facing each other. The most important elements of this game are that partners can turn away from each other (back to back), and everyone can hear you give directions.

"In a moment I am going to ask you all to find a partner, maybe someone you have not partnered with yet today. I want you to all form two long lines, facing your partner, about an arm's length away from each other. Our goal is to form a long tunnel where I could run under your hands. Ready? Go!"

Once everyone has a partner and the tunnel has formed:

"Alright, take a quick look at your partner. Are they wearing any shoes? What hairstyle are they sporting today? Are they still wearing their name tag? Smile and wave at them! Okay, now I want everyone to turn around with their back towards their partner."

### TRAINER TIP

Keep these directions moving quickly to cut down on any potential embarrassment or awkwardness.

"This line (point to one of the lines): You have one minute to change three things about your physical appearance. It could be big or small, just make sure it's visible to your partner. Please keep your pants on people!"

Most people will pull pockets out, untie shoes, take off an earring, or change the position of their name tags, lanyards, or badges, etc. Wait for people to make their changes.

"When I say go, I want everyone to turn around, face your partner, and point out the three changes they made. When partners are finished, give each other an air high-five or a fist-bump and stay where you are. Ready? Go!"

The group will turn and chatter about the changes they notice. Give the group about a minute to point out the changes as you walk up and down the lines. Gather their attention again, and ask everyone to turn around and swap roles.

### TRAINER TIP

Casually walking back and forth can help keep the students' attention and cut down on side conversations.

"Now it's the other line's turn! You all have one minute to change three things about your physical appearance. It could be big or small, and maybe a little bit sneakier or more subtle than your partner. You'll have thirty more seconds to make your changes, and when I say go, turn around and face your partner. Call out the three changes made by your partner. When partners are finished, I want you to give each other an air high-five or a fist-bump and stay where you are. Ready? Go!"

### TRAINER TIP

Keep this game quick and playful. If you are short on time, invite both lines to turn around at the same time to spot the quick changes!

The group will turn and chatter about the changes they notice, and after a minute or so, you can informally poll the room to see who was the most observant, and who had a hard time spotting the quick changes.

"How many of you got at least one thing? Who noticed two? Did anyone in the room spot all three things?"

### Increasing Connection, Reducing Isolation, and Noticing Changes in our Friends

"I have a question about noticing changes: Do you think we are more likely to notice positive changes, or negative changes in the world around us?"

Most people will say, "Negative!" Continue on, "Right. We are often more likely to notice the negative. Which makes sense, because our brains are wired to pay attention to negative changes in our environment, like a lion walking into the room! We notice the negative because evolutionarily that kept our ancestors alive. But there aren't that many lions walking free anymore, so we need to rewire our brains.

"The good news is that our brains are highly adaptable. We can actually train our brains to see the positive things happening around us, making us stronger and

more optimistic. Like we had discussed earlier in relation to the practice of thankfulness.

"Can you imagine how your school might change if every person in this room were committed to noticing and naming the good things around them? What if you began to notice and name the good things in your own life, in your friends lives, and positive changes you see in the school in general? I think it could really change the whole culture for the better. So part of your mission as a Peer Leader is to be an Agent of Change, spreading hope and positivity to your friends, and together as a team we can change the culture of our whole school. And if we're honest, some things about our school culture have to change, so that everyone feels like they belong.

"Is there anyone here who has ever felt like they didn't belong?" (Raise your hand to signal that you'd like people to raise their own hands.) "Maybe you were new in town or new to school. Has anyone ever joined a team where they didn't know anyone, or arrived at a party and didn't know who to talk to? Or arrived at a training and didn't know where to sit in the circle? Yeah, almost all of us have felt that way at one time. There was a study conducted looking at social connections in an average sized public school<sup>1</sup>. It found that about 2-3% of students would say they don't feel they had a friend at the school and that no one would name them as a friend. They don't feel connected.

"Another one of your missions as a Peer Leader team is to help others feel like they belong here at school, so that no one ever gets to the point where they are feeling so overwhelmed or hopeless that they want to give up. You have the power to make this school a place where everyone feels connected and everyone belongs.

"So let's brainstorm! What are the specific things that you can do as an individual, or that we can do as a team, to help others feel like they belong? How can we reduce social isolation by increasing connection and belonging? I'll give you about two minutes to talk with your partner. Go!"

After a few moments quiet the group and get their attention to ask: **Whose partner had a great idea?**"

1. Wyman, Peter A. et al. (2019). "Peer-adult network structure and suicide attempts in 38 high schools: implications for network-informed suicide prevention." *Journal of Mental Health*

## TRAINER TIP

Asking “Whose partner had a great idea?” allows the more talkative students to share while simultaneously allowing quieter students to have their great ideas highlighted.

Invite three to five students from different social groups to share about their partner’s ideas. Thank people for sharing their brilliant and impactful ideas.

“Thank you for sharing those great ideas. A part of your mission as a Peer Leader team is to think of creative ways to reduce social isolation by fostering connection and belonging for students and staff across your school community.

“In addition to calling out those good things you see happening and making sure everyone feels like they belong, a core part of your mission is to connect others to help. This means inviting someone else in if a person needs more support than we can offer. Like we talked about when we were looking at the Wheel, we don’t want to be someone’s only connection to Strength.

“We just played that game about noticing the changes in other people. What might be some changes we would see in a friend who was feeling depressed, or even suicidal?”

Get several suggestions from the group. Often participants will say things like “changes in appearance and behavior” or “posting about death or suicide on social media” or “giving away their valuables” or “losing interest in grades, sports, relationships or school in general.” Many students have heard about the risk factors and warning signs for suicide in their Health classes or in various gatekeeper trainings or assemblies. Encourage the group by recognizing their knowledge and awareness, and thank them for brainstorming this thorough list (be sure to avoid saying it was a good or great list).

**Note:** This brief brainstorm highlights the fact that students already have information and awareness about suicide risk. While the majority of sharing will be on point or close to it, this doesn’t mean that every

share will be accurate or helpful. Affirm responses that are risk factors or warning signs for suicidal thoughts or behaviors, while also gently and kindly correcting responses that are misleading, inaccurate, or reinforce myths or stereotypes.

**Transition:** “You identified some of the things we might notice in a friend who is thinking about suicide, and there are a few more risk factors I want to highlight. Let’s head back to our seats and grab our Peer Leader Guides.”

## Key Summary

- Although our brains tend to notice the negative changes around us, we all have the power to notice and name the positive changes.
- One of the missions of a Sources of Strength Peer Leader team is to reduce social isolation and increase connection and belonging.
- Peer Leaders are Agents of Change and Connectors to Help.
- Noticing the warning signs that someone might be feeling suicidal is an important step in getting people connected to help.

## Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: QUICK CHANGE AND CONVERSATION

- Asked participants in the room to find partners
- Explained directions clearly
- Offered accommodations if necessary
- Facilitated game playfully and didn't make it awkward
- Delivered Teaching Points
  - Noticing Positive and Negative Changes
  - Peer Leader's role to creatively reduce isolation and increase connection and belonging
    - Facilitated brainstorm and sharing
    - Called on a diverse set of voices and ideas
  - Facilitated a safe conversation about risk factors and warning signs
    - Corrected or redirected inaccurate or misleading sharing
  - Thanked the team for their thorough list

# RISK FACTORS AND WARNING SIGNS

## Time

10-12 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

In addition to the warning signs already named, a suicidal person may be impacted by trauma, substance abuse, aggressive/impulsive behaviors, and/or depression. We need to pay attention to the risk factors and warning signs for suicide.

## Trainer Overview

Although students may be aware of many of the warning signs for suicide, we want to highlight some of the most common risk factors to be aware of before shifting into a conversation of how to connect to help in the next module. While Sources of Strength spends about 90% of our time focusing on upstream prevention, this module and the following is where we focus about 10% of our time on risk factors, warning signs, and intervention.

## Core Risk Factors

Have the group open the Peer Leader Guide to the page titled: Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs for Youth and Young Adults. Use a calm and matter-of-fact tone as you continue the conversation about the risk factors and warning signs for suicide. In addition to many of the warning signs that were named in the initial brainstorm, highlight the four risk factors listed in the concentric circles on the Peer Leader Guide.

### TRAINER TIP

You can ask the Adult Advisors in advance if the Peer Leaders have already been made aware of the risk factors and warning signs around suicide that year. If so, the trainer can shorten and simplify this module.

“Open up your Peer Leader Guides to the middle where it says ‘Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs for Youth and Young Adults’. You can see there is a bulleted list here of some of the potential warning signs of suicide. You all just listed many of these and I would encourage you to read through this list and discuss it in more detail in a follow up meeting with your team. Right now, I want to take a few minutes to highlight the four circles at the top of that page. These are all considered risk factors for suicide. Experiencing these things doesn’t necessarily mean someone will become suicidal, but they can be associated with higher risk and are things we want to pay attention to.”

## Substance Abuse

“That first one is substance abuse. Research shows that approximately 60-65% of suicide attempts amongst teens and young adults happen when they are using drugs or alcohol. Sometimes people will make jokes or comments about suicide when they are drunk or high, and their friends might not take them as seriously. They might think ‘they are just drunk, they don’t really mean that.’ However, typically when someone makes those jokes or comments, they have been feeling that way for some time and because they are drunk or high they are finally giving voice to it. We know that when people are under the influence of drugs or alcohol their inhibitions are lowered and their impulsivity is raised. Coupling that with suicidal thinking can be a really dangerous combination, and we want to take that situation really seriously. We want to stay with them to make sure they are safe and we want to invite someone else into that situation, getting a Trusted Adult involved, calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, or calling 911.”

## Trauma

“Trauma is another significant risk factor. A trauma could be an accident or loss, or it could be exposure to harassment, violence, or abuse. It could sometimes look like a traumatic brain injury, a concussion that leads to serious mood swings and erratic behavior. A trauma might be something that doesn’t go away very easily and has a sustained impact on a person’s life.”

“When we have a friend that we know has experienced trauma, whether that was a loss of a loved one, harassment, an injury, or something else, we want to make sure we are checking in on them and how they are doing. It often takes time to heal from traumatic



events, so it is important to keep checking in and making sure that our friend is getting the help they need and deserve to move through and heal from that traumatic experience.

“It can also be traumatic if you come to school feeling like you are walking into enemy territory. It can be particularly traumatizing if people are being harassed for their gender, sexuality, race, or culture. Part of your mission is to help students feel accepted and safe, no matter who they are. Research shows that members of the LGBTQ+ community are put at particularly high risk for suicide. Notice I said ‘put’ at risk, there is nothing about being trans or gay that makes someone at higher risk for suicide, rather they are put at greater risk by the way our society treats them. You can use your power as Peer Leaders to create the kind of culture in your school and community where everyone is safe, and where everyone belongs.”

### **Aggressive or Impulsive Behavior**

“One risk factor that is often overlooked is aggressive or impulsive behavior. We often understand the isolating and withdrawing warning signs and see that someone might be struggling. However, aggressive and impulsive behavior prior to a suicide death is often even more common, and something we might be more likely to miss. Getting into fights, risky driving, punching holes in a wall, bringing a weapon to a party, dating violence, and other angry or aggressive behavior are all signs that someone might be struggling and could potentially be feeling suicidal. We want to make sure we are checking in on friends that we are seeing these behaviors in and connecting them to the help they need and deserve.”

### **Different Forms of Depression**

Give quick examples of how people experience depression in different ways (loss, physical illness, Persistent Depressive Disorder, etc.). “The last circle is depression. It’s important to note that people might experience depression in a variety of ways. We are all likely to find ourselves feeling pretty sad or depressed at some point in our lives, but we often can put our finger on a cause. Maybe we have experienced a loss of some kind. A loss might be small and we might feel down for a bit, but quickly recover. Or it might be something big, like losing a family member or friend, and take some time to heal.

“Sometimes people can experience depression not because of something that happened in their life, but because of something that is happening in their body. Sometimes there is a chemical issue at play. There are various types of depression.”

It can be good to share an example here: “We once worked with a 16 year old with suicidal thoughts. He had several symptoms of depression but one of our Sources staff encouraged him to get a physical exam at the doctor. Some blood tests revealed that they had a thyroid condition. With thyroid medication, this teen’s suicidal thoughts disappeared within a month.

“One really common form of depression amongst teens and young adults is something called Persistent Depressive Disorder (previously known as Dysthymia).”

Ask the question (rhetorical):

“Have you ever been chest deep in a pool of water and tried to walk or run to the other side of the pool? That’s kind of what Persistent Depressive Disorder feels like; you can do it but it just takes a lot of work and energy. PDD might go on for months, but you can’t really put your finger on what’s wrong, like you might be able to with a specific loss. The problem with this is that most teens will self-diagnose, but they don’t diagnose themselves as having Persistent Depressive Disorder. Rather they think, ‘I’m lazy, stupid, just not good enough,’ and not that they have a form of depression that can be treated.

“Here’s the good news: nothing is wrong with you just because you may struggle with depression. It’s not a character problem, it’s a chemical issue. Just like having asthma doesn’t mean we are lazy or not athletic, some of the best athletes in the world have asthma, and they live healthy lives by getting the proper care and using an inhaler. In the same way, many people with depression live full and healthy lives with proper care and treatment. Depression is very often treatable, but we have to be willing to try different approaches. Possible treatments might include strengthening your Physical Health and Mental Health; taking medications, changing sleep habits, diet, exercise, talking to a therapist, joining a support group, and more.

“Sometimes we hear from people who say that they saw a therapist once and they didn’t hit it off with them, so they stopped therapy. That’s like going on one bad date

and never dating again. While it can be hard to find a good fit, it's important to continue to advocate for yourself or a person you care about to find a treatment that works. Sometimes you have to try a few different things to find what helps."

### Relationship Breakups and Previous Attempts

If time allows, mention two more risk factors.

"Speaking of dating, another risk factor on the list I would like to mention is a breakup. I want to make it clear that we would never say that a break up causes someone to be suicidal. However, it can be a triggering event for someone. Almost all of us are going to experience a breakup at some point. A breakup can be so painful, but it's almost inevitable, so it's important for us to talk about healthy ways to deal and heal from these kinds of losses, so that no one is put at a higher risk for suicide. And if we have a friend that we know has just gone through a breakup, it can be really important and helpful to continue to check in with them to see how they are handling that experience.

"The final risk factor I want to highlight today is previous attempts. A previous suicide attempt can put someone at higher risk of another attempt. If you or someone you know has previously attempted suicide, even if there was not a hospitalization or no one else knew, it's important to make sure that person has support from an adult that they trust who can continue to check in and support them."

**Transition:** "Let's talk about what we can do to connect someone to help if we see any of these risk factors or warning signs."

### Key Summary

- When someone is thinking about suicide they may demonstrate warning signs that we want to notice and pay attention to.
- Someone considering suicide may have been impacted by these risk factors: trauma, substance use, aggressive/impulsive behaviors, and/or depression.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: RISK FACTORS AND WARNING SIGNS

- Highlighted the four core risk factors listed in the Peer Leader Guide
  - Described substance abuse as a risk factor for youth and young adults
  - Described exposure to physical or emotional trauma and/or harassment motivated by sexual orientation, ethnicity, or race as a risk factor.
  - Described aggressive/impulsive behavior as an often overlooked risk factor
  - Described different reasons someone might experience depression
    - Loss
    - Chemical or hormonal imbalance in our body
    - Persistent Depressive Disorder
  - Reminded the room that depression is treatable, people can get better, and go on to live healthy lives
- Highlighted a few risk factors and warning signs listed in the Peer Leader Guide including:
  - Harassment of sexual orientation or gender identity
  - Break ups as a trigger event
  - Previous suicide attempts

# INVITING SOMEONE ELSE IN: BREAK THE SILENCE AND CONNECT TO HELP

## Time

5-10 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

It can be intimidating to ask someone if they are struggling with a crisis (such as addiction, suicidal thoughts, or violence) but one of the most powerful ways to support a friend is by connecting them to the help they need and deserve.

## Trainer Overview

It is not uncommon for young people to know many of the risk factors and warning signs of suicide. However, they often report feeling intimidated about reaching out for support due to fear of doing further harm. Here the Trainer clearly addresses codes of secrecy and silence and invites Peer Leaders into breaking the silence and connecting people to help.

The Peer Leaders have just brainstormed a thorough list of the warning signs they expect to notice in a friend who may be contemplating suicide, and you supplemented the conversation by discussing how Substance Abuse, Trauma, Aggressive/Impulsive Behavior and Depression can be risk factors for suicidality. It's important to take some time to dispel some of the myths around help-seeking, and encourage the Peer Leaders to break the silence and get help for friends who may be demonstrating some of these risk factors and warning signs.

Remember, these Peer Leaders are powerful partners in prevention, and they will often know when their friends are struggling, so let's equip them with some tools to talk to their friends, and live out their mission as Agents of Change and Connectors to Help. This topic is serious, but it doesn't have to be scary, especially when we reinforce the fact that no one (Peer Leaders, Adult Advisors, Counselors) is expected to help a suicidal person alone.

## Ask the Question

"All of these are what we would consider either risk factors or warning signs. They don't necessarily mean someone is definitely suicidal, but they are enough to raise a flag for us to check in with someone and ask them how they are doing. If you are concerned, it is OK to ask about suicide directly by saying something like, 'Hey, I've noticed you've seemed really down lately and you've said some worrying things. Are you feeling suicidal or have you been thinking about killing yourself?'

"Sometimes people might be afraid to ask that question because they don't want to plant that idea in someone's head. There has been a ton of research done to show that this doesn't happen. In fact, that question is often met with relief by someone who is feeling suicidal. Someone has finally noticed that they are struggling."

## Encourage Help-Seeking

"If they say no, then we can have a conversation about what IS going on, and how we can support them. The truth is, connecting to help is always helpful! Whether someone is suicidal, involved in a toxic dating relationship, wrestling with addiction, experiencing harassment or violence, or something else. Having the courage to start an honest conversation can be the first step towards recovery and healing.

"If they say yes, that they have been contemplating suicide, we can still have a caring conversation and support them. We can listen empathetically, without trying to 'fix' everything. But it is really important that we invite someone else into the situation so we are not the only ones who know. We should never have to help a suicidal friend alone. We need to connect them to the help they need and deserve, and like we talked about earlier, we never want to try to be someone's only source of Strength. If we know someone is feeling suicidal, or if they are thinking about hurting others, or are being harmed themselves, they deserve for us to connect them to help.

"You can involve the person you are worried about in the process. Ask them who they trust and want to talk to. There is a big difference between connecting someone to help and 'telling on them.'"

### Breaking Codes of Secrecy or Silence

“Believe me, I get that this is a big ask. I get how hard it is if you have a friend who is telling you they’re suicidal and you are the only one who knows, and maybe they asked you to keep it a secret. That is an incredibly tough position to be in. And I get that this is not hypothetical for a lot of us. These are real people and real friends and real situations we’ve been in or are in. There can be a fear around our friend getting mad at us and losing that trust, or of potentially making things worse.

“But Sources of Strength has been around for over 20 years and we have heard this story hundreds of times, and it almost always sounds like: “Yeah, I was mad at first. But I’m doing better now. Now I’m not mad, I’m grateful to have friends looking out for me.

“Ultimately, if anyone is requesting secrecy, we encourage you to think about it like the broken leg metaphor. We know our friend is in pain, we know they don’t deserve to stay in pain, we know they can get better, and we know they need help beyond what we alone can give. Getting help for a friend who is hurting is just being a good friend.”

### Being a Connector to Help

“That’s what this is about. Sometimes when people are struggling, they can feel stuck. Sometimes they can feel hopeless, like they will never be able to get unstuck, or that that things can’t be different, or won’t get better. Sometimes our job as friends is to be their eyes for a little while. To have a bigger vision for our friend’s life than the immediate circumstance. To believe that things can get better. That they can get unstuck. To advocate for them when they can’t advocate for themselves.

“Take a look at your Peer Leader Guide where it says:

## INVOLVE OTHERS

### DON’T TRY TO HELP ALL BY YOURSELF

“I do suicide prevention trainings as a part of my job, but I don’t counsel suicidal people. I am a part of the process but only a part. One of the ways I help is by connecting them to help, and there are several ways you can do this too.”

### Examples of Connecting to Help

“You see here in the guide is the number for the National Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK (8255). You can call that number 24/7, 365 days a year, and get help for yourself, or a friend. A trained person will be able to talk with you and help you figure out what to do. If you prefer, you can also text HOME to 741-741 and someone will text you back. If the concern is not about suicide risk specifically, they will still be able to connect you to the best resources for your situation.

“Getting help is important, getting competent help is equally important, so I want to highlight The Trevor Project which offers culturally competent support services and crisis care for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults. Calling this number **1.866.488.7386** or texting **START** to **678-678** can connect people in our LGBTQ+ community with competent care.”

If you haven’t already mentioned that people in this community are often put at greater risk for suicide, not because of who they are, but because of the harm placed on them by society, mention it here.

“I also want to highlight The Steve Fund, which is dedicated to promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing for young people of color. You can text STEVE to 741-741 to get support.

“You can also connect to a Trusted Adult in your school and community. This could be one of your Adult Advisors here today, or the administration or school counselors, or another Trusted Adult in your life. You can either go with your friend to talk to someone, or you can reach out anonymously: ‘I’m worried about so-and-so, but I don’t want them to know it is me who told you. Will you check on them?’”

### TRAINER TIP

If you have a school counselor or mental health staff in the training, consider having them introduce themselves and explain the process of connecting to help at their school.

“Many schools and states also have text lines, tip lines, and apps that you can use to invite others in to get someone you are worried about connected to help.”

### TRAINER TIP

If the school, community, or state you are training has specific crisis support resources, you can share them here.

“As we close this section, I just wanted to say thank you. You have the power to help the people you care about get connected to the help they need and deserve- friends, family members, classmates, teachers... Breaking the silence takes courage and hope and I appreciate the ways you are showing up for your friends and for the world.”

### TRAINER TIP

The previous two modules can at times feel heavy, and include a lot of trainer talking. This can be a great place to insert a game and pick the energy level back up before moving on to the Peer Leader Mission!

**Transition:** “I’ve been talking for a while so I think it’s time to hear your voices! Turn your Peer Leader Guide to the back where it says Peer Leader Mission.”

### Key Summary

- It can be intimidating to offer support to a friend who we are worried about and it takes courage to connect a friend to help.
- It is important that we don’t try to help on our own, but connect people to multiple supports.
- There are several ways to be a Connector to Help: involving Trusted Adults, medical access, or support services like the National Lifeline, The Trevor Project Lifeline and The Steve Fund are all options.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: INVITING SOMEONE ELSE IN: BREAK THE SILENCE AND CONNECT TO HELP

- Mentioned that It is OK to ask if a friend is thinking about suicide.
- Acknowledged that it takes courage to break down codes of secrecy and silence to get help for a friend
- Reminded everyone that it’s important to connect people to multiple supports and Strengths
- Outlined options for how to get someone else involved when concerned about a friend

# PEER LEADER MISSION

## Time

10 minutes

## Materials

Peer Leader Guides

## Key Point

Peer Leaders are Connectors to Help and Agents of Change in their schools and communities.

### Trainer Overview

At this point in the training, you have played games, shared stories of strength, usually eaten a few slices of pizza, and built relationships. Now it's time to focus on what comes next. The power of this program isn't what happens in the training, but in the ways the Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors use their music, their art, their activities, their culture, and their voice to positively impact their school and community. Here, invite students and staff to hear the Mission Statement of Sources of Strength using their voices!

### Peer Leader Mission Statement

Read the Peer Leader Mission Statement from the Peer Leader Guide out loud with the group. For a typical training, identify a participant willing to start reading a short phrase "We are a group..." Then, have everyone in the circle read a few words of the Mission Statement, allowing the group to hear the mission in their own voice. It can be fun to see if you can pass the Mission Statement around the circle, to hear everyone's voice. For large groups using a sound system, invite 10 participants to join you in the middle of the circle and have each person read a sentence out loud.

#### TRAINER TIP

Don't force anyone to read aloud. People are always free to pass as we playfully engage. Remember: invite people in, never call people out.

"Are you all familiar with a mission statement? It's a guide to let us know who we are, what we're about, and what we're trying to do. If you turn over your Peer Leader Guide on the back, you'll see the Peer Leader Mission Statement. Today is an invitation to be a part of this team, to build this Community of Strength, and this is what it means to be a Peer Leader.

"I'd love to hear this in your voice, so here's how this will go. Let's have one person start by reading the words 'We are a group...' and then the person to their right/left can continue the phrase, and we will pass the Mission Statement all around the circle each reading a short phrase until we get to that bold sentence 'We

are Sources of Strength' - let's say that all together with some energy, and excitement in a nice cheesy fashion!

"If you don't feel comfortable reading out loud, that's totally fine. Just let the person next to you know you won't be reading. Let's see if we can get around the circle, with everyone saying a few words. Alright, who will start us off?"

Let the group read through the Mission Statement, then facilitate some sharing and reflection about the Mission Statement.

"Thanks for reading that with me, I appreciate it. Was there anything that stood out to you? Did any words or phrases connect with you?"

Allow a handful of participants to speak and remember to thank people for sharing. Actively listen by reflecting or amplifying what is said, and feel free to rephrase or reframe anything that needs clarification.

### Peer Leader Mission Posters

After hearing a few answers for what stood out to people, draw the group's attention to the poster(s) you have on the wall.

HOPE, HELP, STRENGTH  
NOT  
SAD, SHOCK, TRAUMA

CONNECTORS TO HELP  
&  
AGENTS OF CHANGE

Explain the poster(s) to the group by saying:

“We have been having a lot of fun today, but the real power of Sources of Strength is what happens after the training is done. This team is going to continue to meet together over the course of the year and work on campaigns to reach the rest of the school. You will use your voice and leverage your power to make a positive difference in your school and community.”

### **Hope, Help, Strength - Not Sad, Shock, Trauma**

“In a minute, we are going to give you some time to brainstorm some potential ideas and activities to carry out this mission. With all of your ideas, we want you to run them through the filter: Is it based in Hope, Help, and Strength, and not Sad, Shock, or Trauma?”

“It can be tempting to create messages that are sad or shocking or to share traumatic stories to catch people's attention, but we have found that approach can actually make some people feel worse, especially people who are struggling. Obviously, we don't want to cause harm, we want to help people. We have found the best way to do that is to make sure we are spreading messages of Hope, Help, and Strength. Let's break that down.”

**Hope:** “Hope is a really powerful thing. Many people who are struggling with something like addiction or feeling suicidal can feel hopeless, like things can't or won't ever get better. The truth is though the vast majority of people who struggle with things like this do get better. They get connected to help, they lean into their Strengths, they are resilient, and they recover. When someone is struggling it can be so helpful for them to hear hopeful stories of how people get through hard things.”

**Help:** “We also want to normalize asking for help. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it is actually an incredible sign of strength. Connecting someone to help isn't being a snitch, it's being a good friend. Research has shown that secrecy requests and codes of silence are pretty common in middle and high schools. We have talked today about how we don't want people to have to stay in their hurt and pain longer than is necessary. By creating a culture where it is OK to ask for help for yourself or for someone else, we are able to support a lot of people as they move through the hard things they are experiencing and get better.”

**Strength:** “We also know that the Strengths on the Wheel are really protective in people's lives. They can not only help us get through difficult times, but they can even keep us from getting to that hard place to begin with. For example, if someone feels strong in several of the Strengths on the Wheel and something difficult happens, they can more easily cope in a healthy way. When people lean into their Strengths, it can prevent hard things from getting even harder. It can even help keep someone from feeling suicidal, or becoming addicted, or dropping out of school.”

“We want to make sure any message or campaign we deliver is not Sad, Shocking, or Traumatic but is focused on Hope, Help, and Strength.”

### **Connectors to Help & Agents of Change**

“Next, you see that the poster says you all are Connectors to Help and Agents of Change. We aren't asking you to be junior psychologists or peer counselors. You don't need to pull a couch up outside your locker and start admitting patients. If you are worried about someone, we want you to connect them to help, we don't have to help all on our own.”

“What we mean by Agents of Change is that you all were selected because your voices have power, and you can use your influence to help people, and to positively impact your school. All kinds of things can spread through a social network. We understand this if we think about how a contagious disease might spread through a group of people. But attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors can spread through a social network in really similar ways.”

We've seen this with many negative things like smoking or binge drinking, but we also have learned that positive things can spread through a network too. Things like hope, resiliency, connection, trust, healthy coping, and strength can spread through a network. But here's the thing: You are the ones with the influence and power to make that happen. **You can be the patient zero in an epidemic of Strength, of a contagion of health in your school and community, and we really can't do it without you.**”

**Transition:** “Now that we understand our mission, let’s brainstorm all the creative ways to spread Hope, Help, and Strength using our art, our writing, our activities, our social media, our culture, and our voice to those around us. Let’s build a campaign!”

**Notes:**

### Key Summary

- Sources of Strength’s mission is to spread Hope, Help, and Strength.
- A Peer Leader’s most powerful impact comes from their personal actions and conversations.
- Peer Leaders are not junior psychologists but Connectors to Help.
- Peer Leaders are powerful in their roles as Agents of Change. They engage the school or community in creating healthy culture change.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: PEER LEADER MISSION

- Invited participants to read the Peer Leader Mission Statement
- Facilitated reflection of the Mission Statement
- Highlighted the following points:
  - We focus on Hope, Help, and Strength, not Sad, Shock, Trauma messaging
  - Peer Leaders are Connectors to Help and Agents of Change, not junior psychologists or peer counselors



# BRAINSTORMING AND CAMPAIGN PLANNING

## Time

20 - 45 minutes, depending on group size and time available

## Materials

Posters  
Markers

## Key Point

The most impactful campaigns come from student actions, conversations, and messages that use their music, their art, their writing, their activities, their social media, their culture, and their voice. This gives life to the efforts of Sources of Strength.

## Trainer Overview

Peer Leaders have read and accepted their mission and now it's time to brainstorm ideas for a strategic messaging campaign. A first year team can brainstorm a Get the Word Out campaign, introducing the Peer Leaders and the Strengths Wheel to the school and community. For teams in year two or more, discuss which campaign to focus on with the Adult Advisors and use this time to generate ideas that can be followed up on in their next team meeting.

## Campaign Planning

### Explain to the group:

"Today's training has been a lot of fun. It was also an invitation for you to learn what this Sources of Strength team is all about, and decide if you want to use your influence to impact your school in positive ways. The real power of the program is what comes next! You are going to continue to meet together, to play games, to share your stories of Strength, and to make plans to engage others in your school and community in applying the Strengths to their own lives and telling their own stories of Strength!"

"Just like the Mission Statement says, 'We know your most powerful impact comes from your personal actions, conversations, and messages, that use your music, your art, your writing, your activities, your social media, your culture, and your VOICE!'"

"We are about to break into small groups and brainstorm some of the ways that you can creatively spread messages of Hope, Help, and Strength."

Explain that we have a handful of campaigns that the team can build off of and roll out during the year. If time allows, it is helpful to briefly highlight examples of the Sources of Strength templated campaigns, and campaigns that other Peer Leader teams have created (depending on time introduce one campaign and/or reference the following four campaigns).

- **Get the Word Out:** An activity to get the word out about the Strengths Wheel and your Sources of Strength team, and engaging people to apply the

Wheel to their own lives.

- **Trusted Adults:** Get 80-90% of the students in your school to name a Trusted Adults in small groups or classroom activities, and then create a mural or hallway display celebrating these relationships and connections.
- **What Helps Me:** Engages students and staff in a conversation about the Big 3 Emotions we all experience: anger, anxiety, and sadness. Which emotion or emotions do people experience more commonly and what helps them calm and cope when they are experiencing one of these big emotions.
- **I Am Stronger:** Invites students and staff to share stories about the ways in which they have grown strong in particular areas of the Strengths Wheel while overcoming challenges, facing adversities, engaging in new practices or groups, and/or intentionally developing a new area of Strength.

You can also highlight any of these additional templated campaigns.

- **Sources of Strength Week:** Think of a traditional spirit week, but incorporate celebration of the Strengths in our school and community. This could include Mentor Monday, Thankful Thursday, and more!
- **We Belong:** When we gather a diverse group of students and adults we have to make sure everyone feels like they belong, so let's recognize our diversity

and celebrate what makes us different and what we have in common and work to create belonging for all people in our school.

- **Connect Campaign:** Give a clear message to your school about help-seeking, breaking codes of secrecy and silence, and having the courage to speak out and connect our friends to the help that they need and deserve and to ask for help when we need it.
- **Thankfulness Challenge:** Let's issue a challenge, asking everyone to name three new things they are thankful for, every day, for 21 days in a row, and see if we can all become more optimistic and resilient as individuals and as a community.

"We aren't coming in here with posters of celebrities talking about mental health. The most effective prevention messaging shows your faces and tells your stories. We created some templates to get you started, but every campaign needs to grow from your ideas! Every year you can start with a campaign to **Get the Word Out!**, or you might say, **Get the Wheel Out!**, introducing the Strengths Wheel, and your mission as Agents of Change and Connectors to Help. Then you could run a **Thankfulness Challenge**, where everyone in the school shares three new things they are thankful for daily for 21 days. Then, help others reflect on the powerful positive impact that gratitude had on their Mental Health. Or, you could run a **Trusted Adult** campaign, and figure out how to get everyone in the school to identify an adult they trust with the important stuff, and then share that using announcements, social media, wall displays, assemblies, or class presentations.

"Each campaign might run four to eight weeks. Remember, it's not about the quantity of activities but rather the quality of relationships, stories, and engagement with others. So let's start brainstorming."

### **Brainstorming**

The team will split into groups based on modality and brainstorm ideas. You can facilitate this process in a few ways. We recommend putting posters with the specific modalities written on them around the room and encouraging Peer Leaders to form groups to brainstorm around the modalities that interest them the most, or hand out poster paper to students who are willing to be the brainstorm team captain (they volunteer with lots of

ideas or are willing to write down ideas) and have others interested in brainstorming around that modality to join them. Remember, everything in Sources of Strength is a practice, so use this brainstorming activity to empower student leadership and invite Adult Advisors to Participate Fully, Playfully Engage, and Strategically Connect.

Adult Advisors should brainstorm, guide the ideas towards Hope, Help, and Strength, and help the Peer Leaders keep their ideas realistic from a financial and logistics perspective. Encourage the Adult Advisors to creatively involve all students in this process. If anyone is expressing disinterest or starting to get disruptive, it is a perfect opportunity for the Adult Advisors to connect and invest in relationships.

"Every campaign starts with personal reflection where we engage in the campaign in our own lives and then it expands to a conversation among your social network and spreads out to the entire school. It can be as simple as creating Strengths Posters in your homeroom, or launching a social media challenge to increase connections and trust with adults. You can bring a campaign to life using:

- **"Art** (murals, posters, hallway displays, sidewalk chalk, art shows, etc.)
- **"Presentations** (classrooms, staff meetings, school board events. etc.)
- **"All School Activities** (assemblies, Field Days, orientation, etc.)
- **"Audio** (music and playlists, announcements, podcasts, etc.)
- **"Videos** (documentaries, lip-dubs, movie trailers, etc.) and
- **"Social Media** (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.)

"As we break into brainstorming groups, you will get some poster paper and markers and you can come up with ideas to help us launch your first campaign: **Get the Word Out!** Let's focus on how we are going to introduce the eight Strengths on the Wheel and our team to everyone in our school, and invite everyone to share what these Strengths look like for them."

At this point, grab your poster papers with the following categories written on the top and allow the participants to select which small group they want to be a part of based upon interest. The pattern to this section

is naming the category, inviting participants to take the poster (while still seated) and then adding more details to the specific brainstorming work of all who join this group. Make sure that you introduce and give texture to each group before you release them to start brainstorming.

### **Art/Posters/Displays**

“OK, Who are our artists? Who likes to draw, paint, or do graphic design?”

“You all will be thinking about ways to get the Wheel out in our school using posters, banners, murals, art installations etc. Can I get a Peer Leader or an Adult Advisor to take the paper on behalf of the Art group?”

### **Presentations**

“Who loves to get up in front of people and talk or present? Who are our drama/theater people?”

Again, hand the poster off to an interested Peer Leader or Adult Advisor.

“You all will be thinking about creative ways to do presentations about Sources of Strength. You can present in classes, or in faculty meetings and to your PTA. You can even make presentations to community groups and really spread the word outside the walls of your school. Come up with a list of the places you want to present, and then begin to draft an agenda. Remember, this isn't about making a PowerPoint. Can you imagine if all I did was share a Sources of Strength slideshow today? Don't just talk at people, make your presentations engaging and inspiring, and maybe throw in a game or two! Invite them to explore and share what the Strengths look like in their lives. You can draw upon any of the games, activities, discussions, or sharing techniques that we experienced today.”

### **All School Events & Activities**

“Now where are the party planners? Who loves big events and likes to organize details and build partnerships?”

“You all will be thinking about larger school-wide activities and events, like a field day focused on our Strengths. Or how about a color run with different zones and colors of chalk based on the different parts of the Wheel? How can you incorporate Sources of Strength into orientation and graduation? What

existing school or community events could you weave Sources of Strength into, and what ideas do you have for new school-wide events or activities? Who wants to be a part of this brainstorming group?”

### **Audio/Video/Announcements**

“Who likes to make movies and videos? Who wants to take over the announcements, or create a podcast focusing on the stories of Strength in your school? Remember that the power of today was grounded in your stories of Strength. When you make a movie, video, announcement, or podcast, don't forget to highlight and lift up individual and groups stories of Strength.”

You can also break this modality down into three separate groups, depending on how many Peer Leaders are participating, and hand out a poster paper to each group.

### **Social Media**

“Finally, Who are our social media influencers? Who knows how to generate engagement on Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat? We want to use social media to spread messages of Hope, Help and Strength across our social networks. Let's try to get #SourcesofStrength trending at our school.”

Hand the poster to someone who raises their hand and ask other students with their hands up to move into this group when we break up in just a minute.

“So you all can identify the social media platforms you want to use, but also brainstorm the kinds of challenges you can start to get your friends to share their Strengths. Maybe you can start #MentorMonday where people post photos of their Mentors or Trusted Adults, and what they appreciate about that relationship.”

After you explain the modalities, have everyone (including Adult Advisors) break into groups based on their interests. Give the small groups about 10 to 15 minutes to brainstorm (depending on the remaining available time for the training) as many of the ideas that they can think of. You can walk around the room, and share additional campaign ideas that you have seen on the website or the Sources of Strength social media channels, or the campaigns that previous teams have run.

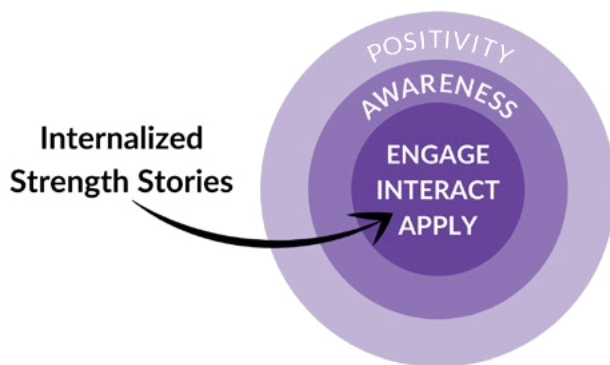
## TRAINER TIP

It can be very helpful to note a few of your favorite campaign ideas to help jump start the brainstorming process before stepping out of the way to watch the magic happen.

### Targeted Messaging

When you are about two thirds of the way through your allotted brainstorming time, get everyone's attention again to explain how to move to the next step of the campaign cycle; from Brainstorming to Prioritizing. Refer to your posters and remind them to filter all of their ideas through the lens of Hope, Help, and Strength. Then direct their attention to your Targeted Messaging poster, which should look something like this.

#### SUCCESSFUL PREVENTION MESSAGING



“It looks like you all have come up with some powerful ideas thus far. Now let's make sure they are as effective as possible in creating change. To do this, it's not enough to simply put posters up around your school. As you build your campaigns, in order to make them effective, keep this target in mind. Successful prevention messaging is targeted, which means that it's positive, it builds awareness of the Strengths, and it invites people to engage, interact, and apply Strengths to their own lives.

- **“Positive:** All of our campaigns need to be positive. But our goal is not to simply make people smile. We want everyone to know that they are strong. We want to encourage everyone in the midst of the stressors we mentioned in the beginning of our training.

“But don't get stuck in positivity, or toxic positivity. There is a kind of inauthentic or surface level

positivity that gets pushback, and rightly so, because it isn't rooted in reality. Positivity doesn't mean pretending everything is OK all the time. It is the powerful perspective, that even when things aren't OK, we know they can change and get better.

- **“Builds Awareness:** It can be helpful to build awareness about our Strengths. We always come back to the Wheel, talking about these eight Strengths that help us get through the ups and downs of life. But if all we do is increase awareness, that doesn't really change anyone's life. What changes things is when we go from just learning about the Strengths to applying and using and growing them in our lives. Which brings us to the bullseye of that target.
- **“Engage, Interact, and Apply:** Our research shows that the most effective campaigns that really make a difference are the ones where people are interacting and engaging with the campaign and Strengths. Invite people to engage with the campaign, to interact with the Strengths Wheel, with your team, and with each other, and to apply the Strengths to their own lives in authentic ways. If we see this as a target we want to make sure we hit a bullseye with each campaign. Don't get stuck in positivity and awareness and miss out on making your campaigns interactive. Move people from being an audience member to a participant!

“Simply put:

- **“Positivity sounds like** ‘You are strong!’ which can bounce right off a student that doesn't believe that to be true of themselves or doesn't trust or believe you as a Peer Leader;
- **“Awareness building says,** ‘Here are the Strengths that I am strong in or that you could be strong in too’; and
- **“Engage, Interact, and Apply asks,** ‘What Strengths are you strong in, how have you grown them, and how do you apply them in your life?’

“Each campaign should be like a game of catch. You share a Strength story and then you toss it to other students and staff and ask them to apply the Strengths to their own lives and then share with others. A Sources campaign should never be one way communication, but always a back and forth conversation.

“If we can get people talking about their Strengths and

what helps them with anger, anxiety or sadness, how they have gotten stronger, or who their Trusted Adults are, we will see an impact. When we create targeted messaging we can help make sure that during the rough times no one gets so overwhelmed or hopeless that they want to give up. Our campaigns can help people internalize their Strength stories and can actually change the way people feel about themselves and their lives. Spreading Hope, Help, and Strength across our school and community.”

### **Prioritize**

“In just a moment I’ll have you dive back into your brainstorm groups for a few more minutes to do a few things. First, make sure all of your ideas are using Hope, Help and Strength-based messaging tactics. Next, double check that all of your ideas are engaging, interactive, and invite people to apply Strengths to their own lives. Finally, circle two or three of your best ideas that do this, and select a representative who can share them with the whole group.”

Direct participants back to their groups and give them a final few moments to run their ideas through the Hope, Help, Strength messaging lens and targeted messaging, before prioritizing their two or three best ideas and a presenter for their group. Once finished, bring the team back together and ask each group’s representative to present their ideas. You may need to gently speed this sharing process along if you are short on time. Empower their voices by saying things like:

- “What a great idea...”
- “Did you all hear that plan for presentations?”
- “Let’s all follow our new Sources Instagram account here at \_\_\_\_\_.”

Encourage the group by celebrating that they came up with so many great ideas in such a short amount of time. Remind them that they will continue to meet and work on some of these ideas as a team in their ongoing meetings throughout the year.

**Transition:** “I’m impressed by your ideas and I’m excited for you to start building a campaign. Before you leave today, I want to share some of the ways Sources can support you and your team. Head back to your chairs and grab those Peer Leader Guides one more time.”

### **Key Summary**

- There are many creative ways to connect people to the Wheel and to Strengths.
- Safe campaigns focus on Hope, Help, and Strength, not Sad, Shock, and Trauma.
- Effective campaigns will help people engage, interact, and apply Strengths to their own lives.

### **Notes:**

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: BRAINSTORMING AND CAMPAIGN PLANNING

- Introduced participants to messaging campaigns
  - Highlighted Sources templated campaigns
- Pitched a specific campaign
- Explained the brainstorming process and gave examples of each modality
  - Art/Posters/Displays
  - Presentations
  - All School Events and Activities
  - Audio/Video/Announcements
  - Social Media
- Explained Targeted Messaging
  - Described messaging that focuses on positivity and encouraged the team to go further
  - Described messaging that brings awareness to the eight Strengths and encouraged them to go further
  - Described the need for interactive and engaging messaging that invites students and staff to apply Strengths to their own lives
  - Emphasized that engagement and participation with campaigns and messaging are essential to Sources of Strength impact
- Invited each brainstorm group to share their two or three best ideas
- Thanked the group for sharing their creative ideas

# RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

**Time**  
5 minutes

**Materials**  
Peer Leader Guides

**Key Point**  
There are many different ways for a Peer Leader to stay connected.

## Trainer Overview

As the training is coming to a close, we want to make sure each participant hears about support they can access through Sources of Strength and ways to connect individuals they may be concerned about to help.

“Our time together is almost done, but I want to make sure that you can stay connected and that you have some really practical action steps when you leave this room.

“I want you to create a new contact for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. You can just name the contact Lifeline. Once you’ve done that, I’ll give you the number. Are you ready?”

## Resources

“If you have them with you, feel free to take out your phones.”

“The number is 1-800-273-TALK.  
“Again it is 1-800-273-8255.

“It’s there on the inside of your Peer Leader Guides as well. You can use this number if you have someone you are worried about, or if you would like to talk with someone yourself. This is a helpful number to have in your phone in case you need it.”

You can also use this time to highlight any local or regional crisis support services, and pass out any magnets, buttons or business cards with the contact information.

“Now that you have your phone out, you can also connect with Sources of Strength on social media. We love when you follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Not because we need likes, we actually love sharing the amazing things that Peer Leader teams come up with with the rest of the world. We use these platforms to share ideas, campaigns, challenges, and giveaways on our accounts. Follow to see what others are doing and don’t forget to tag us so we can share the great work you are doing with other teams around the world.

## Next Steps

“I’m not giving you homework, but I am challenging you to take action. First, a Thankfulness Challenge. I challenge you to take time every day for the next 21 days and write down three new things you are thankful for. Gratitude is a powerful way to strengthen our Mental Health.

### TRAINER TIP

It is helpful to write out this information on poster paper in advance so that you can hang it on the wall or hold it in your hands when you are talking. It should look something like this:

#### **CONNECT:**

##### **Lifeline**

1-800-273-8255

#### **The Trevor Project: Support for LGBTQ+ Youth**

1-866-488-7386

#### **The Steve Fund: Promoting Mental Health Well-Being to Students in Communities of Color**

Text STEVE to 741 741

#### **Sources of Strength**

Facebook - /SourcesOfStrength

Instagram - @SourcesOfStrength

Twitter - @SourcesStrength

“Next, I challenge you to tell three to five different people about Sources of Strength and what you learned today. Tell a Positive Friend who isn’t in the room, a family member, and a Trusted Adult. Explain the Strengths Wheel, and ask them to share where they are feeling strong and where they want to grow.

“Finally, celebrate! You were nominated to be here, and you showed up! You played games, shared in small groups, and you just brainstormed amazing ideas to launch a campaign here at school. This is not just a club, it’s a Community of Strength. You are powerful. Your participation here is powerful, and deserves to be recognized.

“Everything we do at Sources of Strength is to support YOU! We really value your opinions, and here’s a cool way to make your voice heard. There is a QR code on the back of your Peer Leader Guide. This QR code takes you to a quick survey. We’d love to hear what you liked and didn’t like today, and where we could improve, because we know we can always grow stronger.

“It’s been a great day with you, and we can’t wait to see what you come up with to make your community stronger. Please stay in touch with us, reach out with questions, and show us what you’re up to.

“Connect with Sources Online. Connect with yourself through gratitude. Connect with your Strengths and with your world as you step into your mission as an Agent of Change and a Connector to Help.”

**Transition:** “Our time is almost done, so I want to hear from everyone, one last time.”

### Key Summary

- The National Lifeline is an important resource and can be accessed in many ways.
- Follow the Sources of Strength social media accounts for encouragement and inspiration.
- Start to Get the Word Out! today by telling a Positive Friend, a family member, and a Trusted Adult about Sources of Strength.
- A Gratitude practice is a powerful way to connect with yourself and grow your Strengths of Spirituality and Mental Health.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

- Highlighted the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and local crisis resources
- Encouraged people to follow Sources of Strength on social media
- Challenged Peer Leaders to take action by:
  - Starting a 21 day Thankfulness Challenge
  - Telling three to five people about Sources of Strength
  - Celebrating their participation in the training today, and in the team moving forward.



## TAKEAWAYS AND CLOSING CIRCLE

### Time

10-30 minutes, depending on size of group

### Materials

Sources of Strength Thank You postcards

Markers or pens

### Key Point

When a student names and thanks a Trusted Adult in a public way, it increases the likelihood they will reach out and connect when they need help or are worried about themselves or a peer. Pairing this activity with Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors sharing their highlights and takeaways can be a powerful closing exercise.

### Trainer Overview

Let's end the training where we began, back in the large circle. Create an opportunity for everyone to use their voice one last time; naming Trusted Adults, sharing highlights and takeaways, and shouting out "We Are Sources of Strength!" as everyone poses for a group photo. Use this closing circle to commission the Peer Leaders as Connectors to Help and Agents of Change.

### Trusted Adults

Everything we did today created opportunities for the Peer Leaders to build relationships with each other and with their Adult Advisors. Research has shown how protective it is for youth and young adults to have an adult in their lives that they trust. Student isolation from adults increases vulnerability to suicide, but students with a Trusted Adult at school are more likely to seek help when they or a friend are struggling. Young people will often go to a teacher, counselor, coach, or doctor, based primarily on relationships. Naming and thanking a Trusted Adult in our closing circle invites students and adults to practice a help-seeking pathway when not in crisis, increasing the likelihood that they will connect to help when they need it.

Select a few Peer Leaders or Adult Advisors to help pass out Thank You postcards and markers; place them on every chair in the circle during the brainstorming session; or set piles of cards and markers somewhere easily accessible and invite participants to come grab one of each and return to their chairs.

"Everyone should be holding a Thank You postcard. You can see it says 'Thank You For Being a Source of Strength In My Life!' Before you write anything down, think of an adult that you trust and that you could go to if you or a friend needed help. First, think of an adult here in the school that you could go to, a teacher, staff member, or counselor. Who is a Trusted Adult for you here at the school?"

"If you can't think of anyone here in the school, then think of someone at home. Maybe a parent, grandparent, or auntie. Maybe your Trusted Adult is out in the community like a coach, a mentor, or a youth leader. I know you may have a lot of Positive Friends but try to think of an adult you could go to."

**Follow this sequence:** Who is a Trusted Adult at school? At home? In the community? While all Trusted Adults are important, the relationship is most protective for students if they have a Trusted Adult located at school or in their family, where a student is more likely to interact with them on a consistent basis.

"Once you've thought of a Trusted Adult, write a quick thank you note to them, thanking them for being a Source of Strength in your life. If you want to write more than one card let me know and I will bring more cards around."

Give the room a few moments to write their cards. You may have to repeat directions a few times, or pass out extra cards and markers. Keep track of how far along the group is, and when the majority of participants have finished writing their cards you can begin to facilitate the closing circle.

## Trusted Adults and Takeaways

“It looks like most of us are wrapping up, so here’s what I want you to do with those Thank You cards. In the next few days, deliver this card to your Trusted Adults! Don’t just throw it on their desk, tell them about Sources of Strength, your mission to be a Connector to Help and an Agent of Change, and that you named them as someone you trust and would go to for help.

“Hold on to your cards for now, but before we leave I would like to hear everyone’s voice at least one more time. Let’s go around the circle and everyone can say their Trusted Adult’s name out loud. So you can either say, ‘My Trusted Adult is...’ or you can just say their name.

“The other thing I want to hear from each person is a highlight or a takeaway from our training today. It could be something you learned, enjoyed, or something that inspired you. When it is your turn, share who your Trusted Adult is and a highlight or a takeaway from the day. Is there anyone who would be willing to start us off?”

Go around the circle and have everyone share. As per usual, don’t force anyone to share, and let people pass if they want. It can be useful to start this naming process with a couple of Peer Leaders that you think can easily name specific adults or share a powerful takeaway. This can help to set the right tone or prime the group for sharing.

### TRAINER TIP

Be aware of the bell and the bus schedule. If you’re short on time, facilitate the pace of this module accordingly. Have participants share in dyads or small groups, or ask everyone to simply name their Trusted Adult without sharing any takeaways.

As participants around the circle share, it typically becomes obvious that the vast majority of the students are able to name at least one or two adults. This is a powerful experience that highlights the positive social norm of connecting with adults and counteracts the codes of secrecy or silence that often prevent teens from trusting adults or going to them for help. The simple act of writing down names and saying them out loud greatly

increases the likelihood a student will actually reach out to an adult in a crisis. One of the Adult Advisors should make a list of the adults named by Peer Leaders. Pay attention to the people that are frequently named. They ought to receive some additional suicide prevention or gatekeeper training. It might also be a good idea to recruit those adults if they aren’t already on the Adult Advisor team and get them engaged in some way.

If a student has no adults in the school, ask them, “How about outside of school?” If they don’t have any adults they can name, say, “OK, that’s alright, you can have some time to think about it and if you’d like, we can come back to you.” You don’t have to come back to them, but it gives them a chance to think and not feel pressured.

## Closure

After they finish sharing their Trusted Adults and takeaways, remind participants to hand deliver their Thank You cards to their Trusted Adults in the next few days. You can also remind them to take action and stay connected to Sources of Strength on social media, to stay connected to themselves through gratitude, and to connect to their friends and family and to Get the Word Out about Sources! End the training on a high note and gather the team together for a group photo, and on the count of three shout, “We Are Sources of Strength!” Thank the group for their sense of humor, the stories they shared, and their willingness to participate. Thank them for giving you the chance to hang out with them and let them know you are excited to see what happens when they take action and change their school for the better.

“Thank you all for sharing your Trusted Adults and your highlights and takeaways. I have really enjoyed being with you all today. I want to say thank you, thank you for the ways you have shown up to each other, to this training, and thank you for the ways you are showing up to use your voice and power to make the world a better place. The truth is, we cannot do it without you, so thank you for being here, please continue to be involved and use your voice to spread Hope, Help, and Strength to our world. I can’t wait to see what you all accomplish!”

**Transition:** “Let’s take a quick group photo! Adult Advisors don’t forget to stay here for the debrief!”

## Notes:

### Key Summary

- Naming and thanking a Trusted Adult invites students and adults to practice a help-seeking pathway while not in crisis.
- A closing circle allows everyone to share a highlight or a takeaway.
- End the training with a group photo, a closing story, or some empowering words to encourage and inspire this Community of Strength.
- Cast a vision for the ways this team will spread Hope, Help, and Strength around their school and community.

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: TAKEAWAYS AND CLOSING CIRCLE

- Gave clear instructions for Trusted Adult postcards
- Facilitated sharing about Trusted Adults and highlights or takeaways from the training
- Authentically thanked group in encouraging and hopeful manner
- Transitioned from Peer Leader training to Adult Advisor debrief

# ADULT ADVISOR DEBRIEF

## Time

30 minutes

## Materials

Adult Advisor Field Guides (for reference)

## Key Point

Reflection and celebration are in order after the Peer Leader training, but let's also connect anyone to help who may need it.

## Trainer Overview

Once the last Peer Leader has left the room, it's time to debrief. Focus the conversation on

1. A general sense of how the training went,
2. Vulnerable students we need to connect to help,
3. Questions, next steps, and resources.

The debrief is less scripted than many modules, so use these prompts to check in, gather information, and remind the team of the resources and tools at their disposal. If you don't know how to answer a question, reach out to the National team and invite us into the conversation.

## Debrief

Once the Peer Leaders have all left the room, it's time to debrief the day. Some Adult Advisors may be feeling tired and overwhelmed while others may feel encouraged and exhilarated. As always, set the tone and be a thermostat instead of a thermometer. It is important that you provide a strong space to debrief the training. Use this time to celebrate what you accomplished together, to mobilize support around any vulnerable students, and to remind them of all of the available resources they have access to moving forward.

**"Thank you so much for sticking around. This conversation shouldn't take more than 30 minutes, so let's jump right in. I want to focus the conversation on these topics:**

- **"Feedback and open conversation about the Peer Leader training. How do you feel it went today?"**
- **"Any students you might be worried about or think could use additional support. Did anything concerning come up in the small group share? Are there Peer Leaders who need to be connected to help?"**
- **"Any questions or concerns. What questions are you holding regarding the training or next steps?"**
- **"Next steps. When is the next meeting scheduled? What is the plan? What support do you need?"**
- **"The resources you can rely on from myself and Sources of Strength."**

As a Trainer, you may think the training was a rousing success or a false start, but the Adult Advisors may have a different impression. Starting this conversation with

an open-ended question allows the Adult Advisors to shape the conversation about the impact of the training. Listen with an open mind. Demonstrate humility. Invite questions and hear how the training landed in their own words. Eventually, you can shift the conversation to what's next.

**"I want to shift the conversation. Reflecting on the day, whether in small groups or side conversations, are there any interactions that concerned you? Are there students we need to give additional support to?"**

If an adult seems uneasy about revealing information about a student, ensure that they know who to speak to about a concern. Make it clear that you are not asking for gossip, but want to mobilize multiple supports around any individual in pain, at risk, or in danger of hurting others. It can also be beneficial to have a group conversation about any Peer Leaders who were unable to name a Trusted Adult. Strategize as a group about how to pursue those Peer Leaders, keep them involved, and build intentional relationships.

Once the Adult Advisors have had time to discuss these thoughts and concerns, move on to speaking about next steps. Hand out your contact information and contact information for the Sources of Strength National Team and remind them that they are not on their own and we are here to help. They can stay in contact with their Trainer and need to schedule their support call in the first few weeks after their training. Remind the Adult Advisors about the Sources of Strength website as well the Adult Advisor Field Guide.

“By a show of hands, who got registered as an Adult Advisor on the Sources of Strength website? As a reminder, click the Register button and indicate your role: **Adult Advisor**, and use the invitation code: **Advisor** to access campaign templates, meeting agendas, sharing prompts, and our games manual to help you use our meeting formula Fun + Sharing + Planning when you get back together with the Peer Leaders at your first meeting after this training.”

Once all the questions about resources and support have been answered, express your sincere gratitude for their time, work, and attention in and out of the training.

“You have access to the team at Sources of Strength and all of its resources to support you as you build below the waterline, and share this Community of Strength across your school and community.

“Thank you again for your participation. For sharing your students with us today. And for investing in relationships with young people. We can’t do it without them, but we can’t do this without you either.”

### Key Summary

- Reflect on how training went.
- Identify any Peer Leaders who might need immediate or additional support.
- Ensure that Adult Advisors have the resources they need from their Trainer and from Sources of Strength.

### Notes:

## TRAINER FEEDBACK TOOL: ADULT ADVISOR DEBRIEF

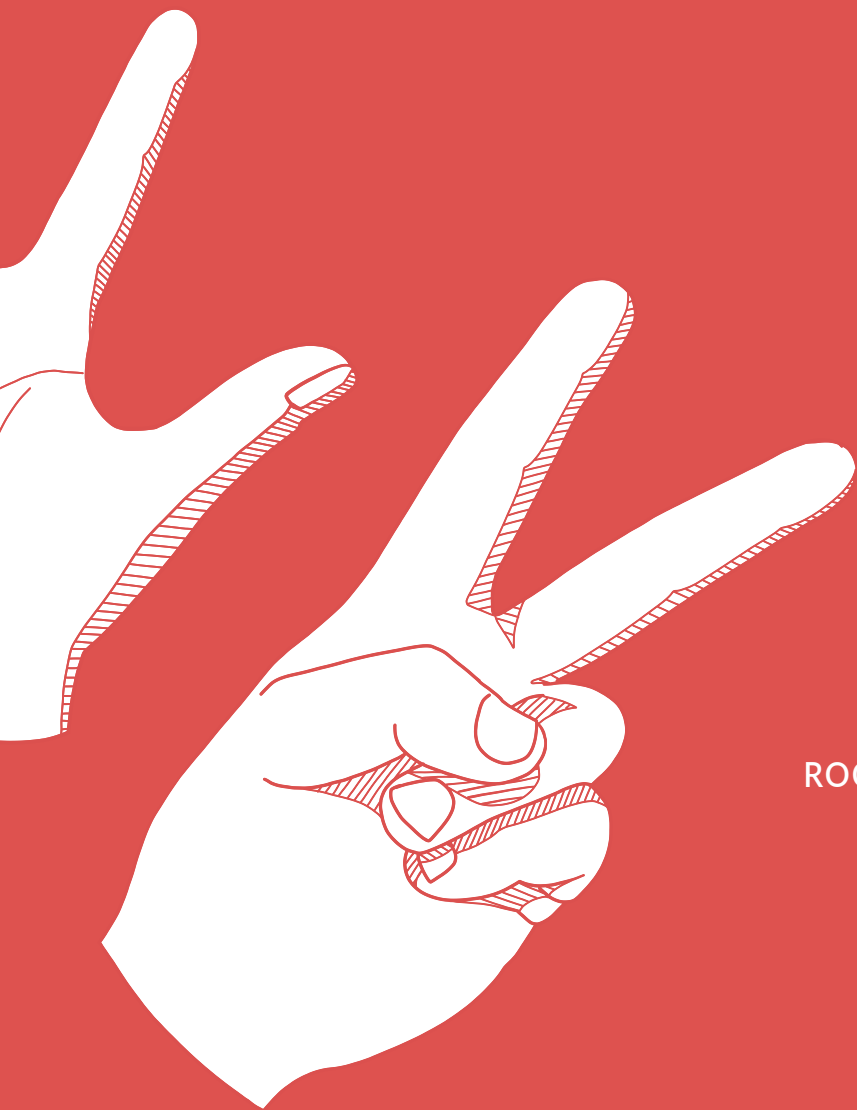
- Discussed the Peer Leader training
  - Facilitated an open conversation about how things went
  - Identified students that need immediate follow-up, or additional support
- Identified the Peer Leaders who were unable to name a Trusted Adult
- Fielded questions about ongoing meetings, messaging campaigns, and general questions about program implementation
- Reminded Adult Advisors about Sources of Strength resources
- Thanked and encouraged the Adult Advisor team

# CHAPTER 4

# GAMES APPENDIX



This Games Resource was created for the use of Sources of Strength Trainers, Coordinators, Adult Advisors, and Peer Leaders. Many of the games listed are traditionally a part of the primary Sources of Strength training, however, many can be useful in conducting follow up Peer Leader meetings, Peer Leader presentations with younger students, additional trainings and more.



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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](http://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.
- 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

- Everyone gets a wadded up a piece of paper or small soft item and stands in a circle.
- Stand in the middle of the circle and ask everyone to "make it snow" by throwing their item up in the air and it landing on/near you.
- Try to catch one or two items.
- Ask everyone to collect their item and ask if anyone wants to trade places with you and beat your record.
- 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.
- 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 dodge ball.

## 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

- 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).
- Have everyone in the middle introduce themselves with their name/pronouns, their grade, and something fun they've done recently (or if nothing fun comes to mind, their favorite food).
- 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.
- 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 in the Field Guide.

## 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 DETECTIVE

---

**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 Detective.
2. Explain that the Detective will step out of the room while you assign a Dancer.
3. Play some fun music; the Dancer will then start dancing and it’s everyone else’s job to copy their movements exactly (but be sneaky!). The Dancer can change their sweet moves any time they want to.
4. The Detective will return to the center of the circle and try to guess who the Dancer is. The goal for the Detective is to figure out who the Dancer is; the goal for everyone else is to keep that information a secret! The Detective will get three guesses or 90 seconds - whichever happens first.
5. When the Detective in the middle guesses the Dancer or runs out of time, the Dancer becomes the next Detective.
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.
- Then have them make a pointer with their left hand, and put that pointer in the palm of the person on their left.
  - 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.
  - 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**

- Set up three chairs side-by-side on one side of the room.
- Have the group divide into two teams, and give them time to come up with a team name and a team chant.
- 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.
- 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.
- The two seated players will be the guessers.
- You will stand on the middle chair and hold up prompts.
- Tell teams to cheer when they guess the prompt, so you know who got it first.
- 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**

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

## SHOE KICK GAME

---

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Group Size:** above 20

**Buy-In:** Low

**Optional Teaching Point:** There can be all kinds of barriers to someone reaching out and asking for help. When someone is struggling or hurting, it can make a big difference if their friends come alongside them and introduce them to supports and Strengths to overcome barriers and connect them to the help they need and deserve.

**Materials Needed:** Chairs in a circle

### Directions:

1. Ask, “Can I get everybody to kick off one of your shoes and throw it into the middle of the room?”.
2. Acknowledge playfully that it may feel pretty awkward to take off your shoe in front of your peers.
3. Tell the group, “When I say go, I want you to go and pick up a shoe you don’t recognize and hold it up in the air. Then I want you to find the person that shoe belongs to. To get your shoe back, you have to tell one truth and one lie about yourself. The other person has to guess which is true. Give them their shoe back whether or not they guess correctly. When you have your shoe back and you’ve given a show away, go back to your seat. Ready? Go!

### Rules:

- Participants should grab a shoe they do not recognize.

## 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.

**Triangle:** 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

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**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.

# HUMAN BINGO

TEXTED OR CALLED THEIR GRANDPARENTS OR KIDS THIS WEEK.	LOVES SPICY FOOD	PLAYS AN INSTRUMENT	HAS BEEN HUNTING OR FISHING IN THE LAST YEAR.	DOES NOT HAVE A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT.
HAS LISTENED TO SOMEONE WHO NEEDED TO TALK RECENTLY	LIKES TO PAINT OR DRAW	HAS BINGE-WATCHED A FAVORITE SHOW	HAS THREE OR MORE SIBLINGS	HAS A PET DOG OR LIZARD.
HAS SKATEBOARDED OR LONGBOARDED	HAS HAD SURGERY IN THE LAST TWO YEARS	HAS CANOED OR KAYAKED	HAS DANCED ALONE IN FRONT OF A MIRROR RECENTLY	SOMEONE YOU THINK IS KIND
HAS THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE THANKFUL FOR TODAY	SPEAKS A SECOND LANGUAGE	IS SOMEONE YOU CONSIDER TO BE GENEROUS	HAS COOKED OR BAKED SOMEONE ELSE	HAS THROWN OR KICKED A BALL IN THE LAST WEEK
HAS DRANK WATER TODAY	HAS PET AN ANIMAL THIS WEEK	FEELS AT PEACE WHEN IN NATURE	ENJOYS WORKING OUT	HAS HELPED A FRIEND WITH SOMETHING IMPORTANT





