

Breaking the Ice: Ways to Introduce Strengths to a Group

Many people who are familiar with strengths-based work still wonder about effective ways to bring strengths into a group setting. Below are two tried and true exercises to get your group session off to a great start.

WHAT:

Character strengths are the basic building blocks of a flourishing life. Everyone has a unique profile of strengths that reflect their personal identity. However, many people don't have an active awareness of their strengths and the power they possess by harnessing them. It's your job to make the introduction!



WHY:

Research proves character strengths are the pathways to well-being. The VIA Classification provides you and your peers with a common language for discussing the best qualities in each other. When you weave character strengths into situations you create a positive, uplifting environment that inspires participation and motivation.



HOW: Breaking the Ice with Strengths

1. You, At Your Best

This exercise helps individuals practice strengths spotting and improves strengths fluency.

Invite individuals to get into groups of 2 or 3 with the VIA Classification. Each person will take turns being the storyteller and the other individual(s) will use the Classification to listen for the strengths being expressed and share feedback with the storyteller.

Tell a story about a time when you were at your best. Create a narrative with a beginning, middle and end describing the experience and how you acted in a way that made you feel authentic and proud.

2. Character Strengths 360

This exercise is a great way to help individuals overcome strengths blindness. Individuals should be encouraged to get additional feedback from other friends and family members.

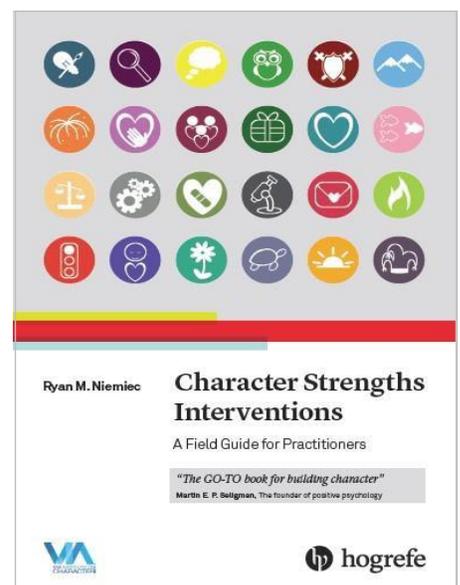
Each person will choose the top 5 strengths they see most strongly in each of the other group members. They will put a checkmark next to the strengths on the individual's VIA Classification and provide a brief rationale or example of how they have seen this person display each strength they checked off.



WANT MORE LIKE THIS?

Character Strengths Interventions

Dive deeper into these exercises and more with *Character Strengths Interventions: A Field Guide for Practitioners*. This groundbreaking new book has over 100 easy, yet effective, research-based activities for teaching and applying character strengths to individuals and groups. The founder of positive psychology, Dr. Martin Seligman, calls it the "GO-TO book for building character."



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