

– *Strengths-based* –
?? What Does It Mean ??

Being *strengths-based* means starting with family/child strengths in assessment and then developing a service/treatment plan around using and building on family/child strengths to promote well-being and recovery. Being strengths-based facilitates understanding the *whole child/family*, not just the problems; problems are framed respectfully and non-judgmentally. Being strengths-based also means that service providers recognize and promote the fact that *the family knows the child best*.

Being strengths-based important!

- ✓ It orients the thinking and perspective of service providers toward family/child competencies and resources
- ✓ It motivates, instills hope and pride, and promotes resiliency and a sense of competence and self-reliance for families and children (and service providers!)

A strength is not the absence of a problem! Strengths are...

- ✓ Historical knowledge
- ✓ Likes/preferences
- ✓ Social supports/bonds/interpersonal skills
- ✓ Skills/abilities
- ✓ Resourcefulness/resilience
- ✓ Motivation/confidence/spirituality
- ✓ Past accomplishments
- ✓ Physical resources (primary needs are met/employment)
- ✓ Health – physical and mental health

Strengths-based means not defining a person by his/her problems, and not using judgmental language...

- ✓ The family and youth are...; Mr. Smith and Sally requested...
 - NOT! The patient...; My client/family...; The customer...
- ✓ The treatment plan is not meeting the family/child's needs.
 - NOT! The family is resistant and noncompliant.
- ✓ Mr. and Mrs. Smith are angry and not satisfied with treatment.
 - NOT! Mr. and Mrs. Smith are adversarial, not meeting treatment goals, etc.
- ✓ Mr. and Mrs. Smith have many stresses and challenges.
 - NOT! The family is dysfunctional.
- ✓ Dwain has sex offending behaviors.
 - NOT! The child is a sex offender.
- ✓ Jenny can be challenging and strong spirited.
 - NOT! The child is acting out.
- ✓ Ms. Smith has a history of substance abuse.
 - NOT! Ms. Smith has a history of being a substance abuser.