



*Opening Doors for **Everyone**:  
Providing Outstanding Customer Service  
at One-Stop Career Centers*

**Strengths-Based Approaches**

Region 2 Forum – September 14, 2011



# PRESENTERS

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## Presenters

**Anne Adams and Laura Aron** – Social Policy  
Research Associates



# INTRODUCTION

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## ACTIVITY

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- What do you like best about your job at the One-Stop center?

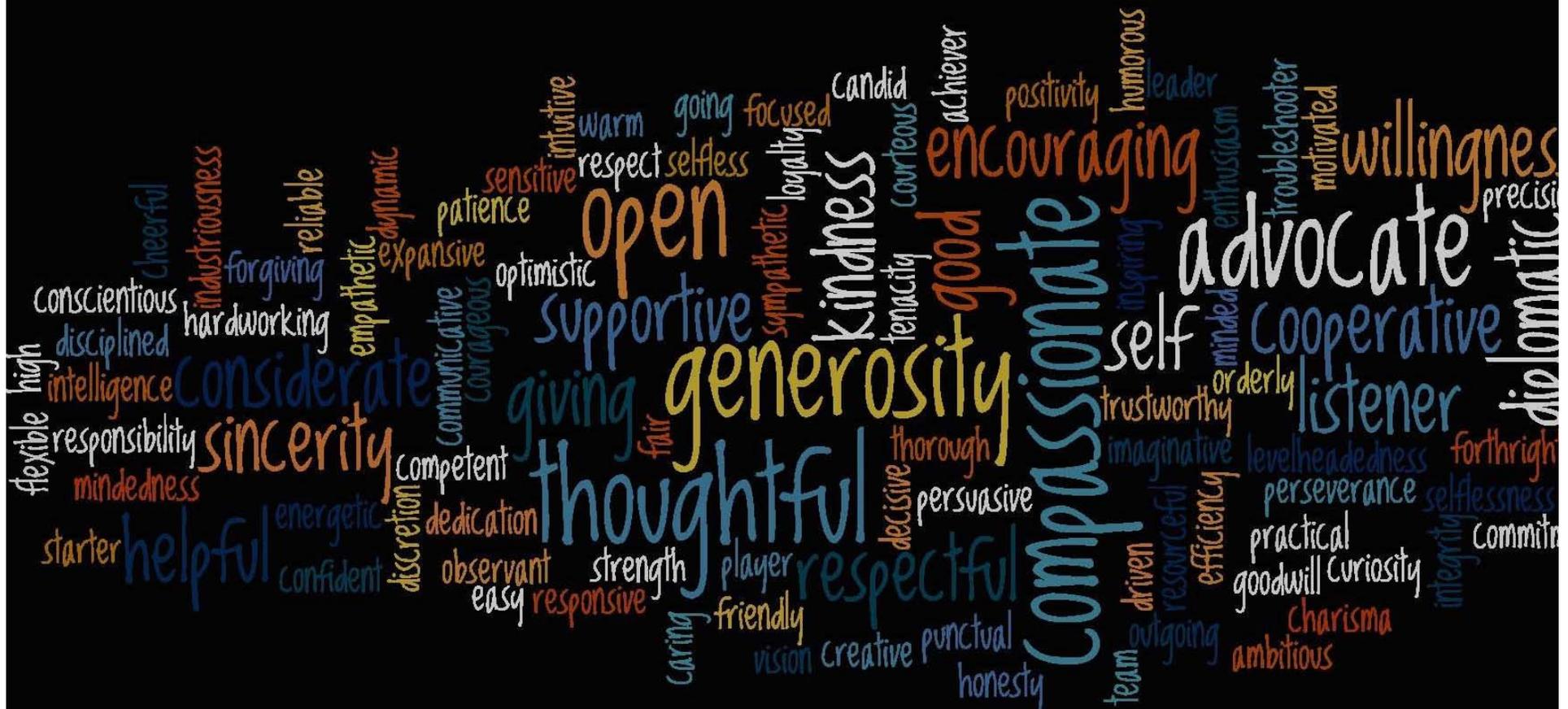




# ACTIVITY

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**What personal qualities do you have that make you good at your job?**





## ACTIVITY continued

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- How do your strengths serve people?





## STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

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***A strengths-based approach operates on the assumption that people have strengths and resources for their own empowerment.***



## STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH continued

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- ❑ Create a partnership with the customer.
- ❑ Integrate program requirements with customer needs.





## GOALS OF THE TRAINING

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- Teach strengths-based approaches to customer service.
- Share strengths-based tools.

# Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## CHANGING OUR MINDSET

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What would happen if we focused on customers' strengths instead of the barriers they face?



## TRADITIONAL APPROACH

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- ❑ Focuses on the problem
- ❑ Reactive
- ❑ Views the person & the problem synonymously
- ❑ Crisis-management approach
- ❑ Competition among service providers
- ❑ Heavy reliance on public funding to provide services
- ❑ Treats and often re-treats entrenched problems



# STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

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- ❑ Focuses on strengths
- ❑ Proactive
- ❑ Views the participant as a resource
- ❑ Vision-building perspective
- ❑ Cooperation among all entities
- ❑ Unleashing the potential of all entities
- ❑ Belief that change is possible





## STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH continued

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□ *A profound belief in the [customer's] potential is intrinsic to any strengths-based assessment. Thinking about strengths begins with understanding what goals and dreams the person has; reflecting on the possibilities and hope in their lives. In the process, they can discover or develop new possibilities for themselves and change toward a better quality of life. (Saleebey)*

success / achievement



## WHAT ARE STRENGTHS?

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- ❑ What people have learned about themselves and others
- ❑ Personal qualities, traits, and virtues
- ❑ What people know about the world around them
- ❑ Talents
- ❑ Cultural and personal stories and lore
- ❑ Pride
- ❑ Community connections
- ❑ Spirituality



*(Saleebey 2006)*



## ACTIVITY

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**Martha, aged 60, entered the One-Stop center to seek employment after her daughter was laid-off from work.**



- ❑ Martha lives with her daughter and looks after her three grandchildren.
- ❑ She worked at the local newspaper as a Sales Assistant, a job she obtained immediately after high school.
- ❑ She volunteers at the local food bank every Wednesday evening with a friend from church.
- ❑ Martha is interested in working with young children.
- ❑ She knits for pleasure.



## Posing Strengths-Based Questions

“You were ambitious to obtain a Sales Assistant position straight out of high school. Did you enjoy it? What types of things did you learn?”



## ACTIVITY continued

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**Based on the information from the scenario, what questions could you ask Martha to find additional strengths she possesses?**





### **Additional Strengths-Based Questions:**

1. Has your enjoyment of motherhood and grandparenting led to your interest in working with young children?
2. Giving of your time and talents to others is admirable. How did you get involved with the Food Bank?
3. Knitting can be very creative and also relaxing. What do you like most about it?
4. Is there a specific religion or any cultural information that I need to understand in order to understand you better?





# STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT TABLE

	CURRENT STATUS	DESIRES, ASPIRATIONS	RESOURCES USED IN THE PAST
<b>Daily Living Situation</b>	Living with daughter and three grandchildren in a rented apartment. Takes care of grandchildren. Tends flower garden. Enjoys cooking for family.	Needs a steady income to contribute to household income. Would like to stay in current apartment, as it is large and has a garden.	Until widowed, lived with partner. Lived for one year with sister before moving in with daughter. The father of the grandchildren is not involved in their lives.
<b>Finances</b>	Daughter, the primary wage earner, was laid off from her job. Provides babysitting for two neighbor children five days a week (in addition to taking care of her grandchildren). Using food bank. Worried about losing apartment if she and daughter do not find jobs.	More stability, fulltime employment.	Daughter has provided for family for the last 10 years. Daughter receives inconsistent child support from her children's father. Prior to that, customer primarily relied on her partner's wages. Has brought in extra money by providing babysitting for 20 years.
<b>Health Insurance</b>	Using COBRA to extend health insurance for the family. Has resources to pay for 3 more months.	Full medical, dental, and vision insurance for her whole family.	Daughter's insurance. Partner's insurance.
<b>Vocational Experience</b>	Unemployed. Provides babysitting for two neighbor children.	Skills to own and operate a day care center in her home.	Babysitting for neighbors. Sales Assistant for now-defunct newspaper. Good with people, humanitarian, volunteer.
<b>Education</b>	Has high school diploma.	Training and license to open day care facility.	Volunteer work with children and adults at the local community center and food bank.



# STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT TABLE continued

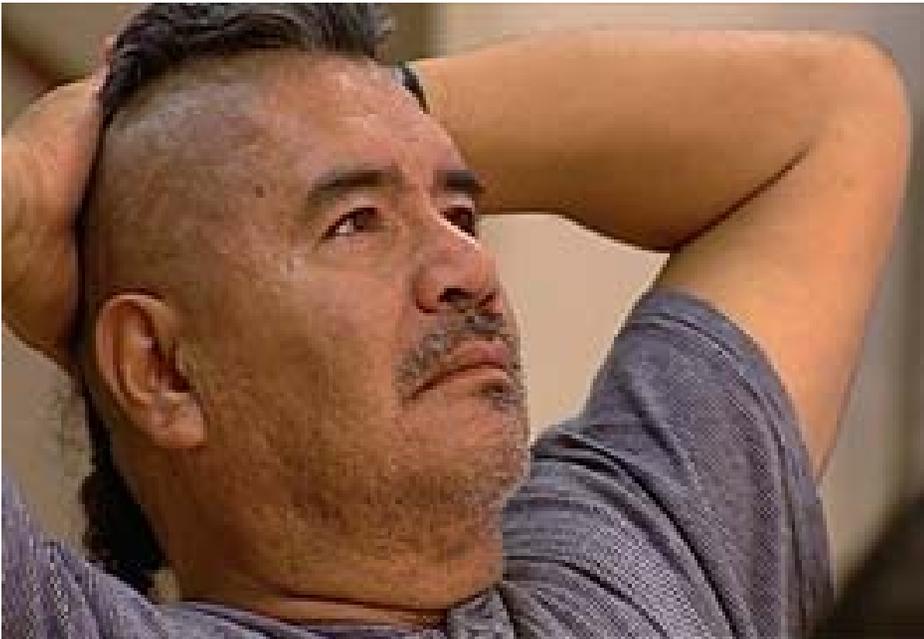
	CURRENT STATUS	DESIRES, ASPIRATIONS	RESOURCES USED IN THE PAST
<b>Social Supports</b>	Family, including two sisters, two nieces, one nephew; friend from church; food bank volunteer coordinator.	Not sure of options at this time.	Women’s support group through church, pastor.
<b>Health</b>	Stress, loss of sleep, weight loss, stomach pains.	Support with stress; explanation of stomach pains; to feel better, to have more rest.	Used to meditate.
<b>Leisure/Recreational Activities</b>	Too tired and upset to socialize beyond volunteer obligation.	To re-engage with friends, build more friendships, read more, participate in a walking group.	Knitting, walking, going to the park with grandchildren.
<b>Spirituality/Culture Factors</b>	Not feeling connected at this time.	Wants stronger family bond with daughter, nightly meals together; want to be healthy physically and mentally.	Community work through church, loves to garden and connect with earth.
<b>Supportive Services, Accommodations</b>	Does not drive, concerned about working outside of the home because of limited vision but needs income and loves working with children	Transportation; access to resources for people with reduced vision	Drove herself, depended on daughter for transportation, stayed home with grandchildren
<b>What are the customer’s priorities?</b> 1. Finding employment    2. Stability    3. Getting licensed to provide day care in her home			



## ACTIVITY

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- Meet Susan and Joseph.





## ACTIVITY

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If you were to employ the strengths approach to your practice, how would your customers' experiences change?



# THE BIG PICTURE: COACHING MODEL

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- Welcome all customers who come through the door and continue to enhance readiness to serve new or different customers.

**Readiness to  
Serve All**

**Strengths-  
Based  
Approaches**

- Assist people with uncovering their own talents and strengths to achieve sustainable results.

- Build career pathways in partnership with the customer.

**Career  
Pathways**





## TOOLKIT, VIDEO, OTHER RESOURCES

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[doors.workforce3one.org](https://doors.workforce3one.org)





# EVALUATION

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