Therapeutic Recreation
A Strengths Approach

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Therapeutic Recreation Practice: 
A Strengths Approach

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Acknowledgements

Dr. Cynthia Carruthers, CTRS
Dr. Colleen Hood, CTRS

Anderson & Heyne 2018
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:30</td>
<td>Welcome; Foundations of the Strengths Approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-9:45</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<td>9:45-10:45</td>
<td>Flourishing through Leisure Model</td>
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<td>10:45-11:00</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-12:00</td>
<td>Strengths-Based Assessment and Planning</td>
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<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>Strengths-Based Planning: PATH</td>
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<td>2:00-2:15</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-3:15</td>
<td>Strengths-Based Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15-3:30</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-4:30</td>
<td>Being a Strength-Based Professional; Discussion and Questions</td>
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• Define the strengths approach and its theoretical underpinnings
• Compare and contrast the strengths versus deficits approach
• Describe the relationship between leisure and well-being as foundational to the strengths approach
• Define the components of the Flourishing through Leisure Model

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• Identify tools that can be used to assess internal and external strengths
• Identify principles that underlie strengths-based planning
• Learn strengths-based implementation and facilitation strategies
• Identify ways to build your own strengths as a therapeutic recreation professional

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"Deep in their roots all flowers keep the light."

Theodore Roethke, American poet

The Black-Eyed Susan signifies strength, positivity, and happiness
Strengths versus Deficits Approach in Health and Human Services

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Self-reflection!
Meet.....

Jenny

Sara

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A little about each girl:

Jenny –
1. I fixate on animals and lights/motion
2. I displays attention-seeking behaviors around peers
3. I displays off-task behaviors when fatigued at school
4. I am at times non-compliant
5. I display self-stimulating behaviors
6. I display poor socialization skills
7. I have dependencies on others
8. I run away
9. I have tantrums
10. I am disoriented and have a short attention span
11. I have splinter skills

Sara –
1. I like cats and playing computer games
2. I like to make friends
3. I work hard at school, but like to take breaks
4. I stand up for myself when picked on
5. I have many hobbies that interest and absorb me
6. I choose my friends wisely
7. I love people
8. I go for walks
9. I insist on having my way
10. I change my mind about things at times
11. I am talented in some areas

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A new way of thinking is needed in helping others...

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ASSUMPTIONS
in Deficit-Based Approach

The participant is the pathology or problem

The participant needs to be fixed

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ASSUMPTIONS
in Deficit-Based Approach

Relationship marked by distance, power inequality, control, and manipulation

Context is stripped away

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ASSUMPTIONS in Deficit-Based Approach

Since disease or pathology assumes the cause of the problem, it also becomes the solution

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Principles of the Strengths Approach

Every individual, group, family, and community has strengths

We do not know the upper limits of a participant’s capacity to grow, change, and achieve – never assume we do!

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Principles of the Strengths Approach

Difficulties (illness, disability, addiction, etc.) are also sources of opportunity and challenge.
Principles of the Strengths Approach

Collaboration (not expert domination) with participants

Every environment is full of resources

Context matters

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Principles of the Strengths Approach

Hopefulness matters

Strengths can be nurtured (thus, must be assessed, planned, focused on, and evaluated)

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We are Seeing a “Sea Change”
in Health and Human Services

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths Approach</th>
<th>Deficit Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Focus is on internal and external strengths as avenues to a high quality of life</td>
<td>• Focus is on problems and weaknesses; strengths are just tools to help fix the person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participant is viewed as potential waiting to be developed</td>
<td>• Participant is viewed as a problem needing to be fixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A framework and vocabulary is developed to describe strengths</td>
<td>• A framework and vocabulary is developed to describe problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding strengths leads to understanding solutions and creative ways to improve a person’s life</td>
<td>• Understanding problems may or may not lead to solutions for a person, but will lead to greater understanding of the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus is on the whole person in the context of his or her life</td>
<td>• Focus is narrower, and mostly on remediation of deficits in the person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Create a new way of thinking
Theories

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Many Theories Support the Strengths Approach

- Normalization
- Social role valorization
- Self-determination
- Social support
- Community-building
- Ecological approach

- Health and disability theories
- Flow
- Learned optimism
- Authentic happiness
- Well-being

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Theories that Support the Strengths Approach

• Brain-based research

“What we focus on increases”
How does new research on brain functioning inform strengths-based practice?

Integration of psychology and neurology (fMRI, PET, QEEG.....)

Focus is power
• The act of paying attention creates chemical and physical changes in the brain.

Expectation shapes reality
• People’s preconceptions have a significant impact on what they perceive.

Attention density shapes identity
• Repeated, purposeful, and focused attention can lead to long-lasting personal evolution.

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Broaden and Build Theory
(Fredrickson, 2018)

Serenity! Joy! Interest!
Hope! Love! Awe!
Inspiration! Amused!
Pride! Gratitude!

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“Broadens”

Positive Emotions
Joy, Love, Contentment, Interest, Happiness

BROADEN
Expands Inventory of Thoughts and Action

BUILD
Develops Physical, Mental and Social Resources

TRANSFORM
Advances Personal Growth and Creates More Positive Emotions

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“Builds”

Intellectual resources
• Develop problem solving skills
• Learn new information

Physical resources
• Develop coordination
• Develop strength & cardiovascular health

Social resources
• Solidify bonds
• Make new bonds

Physical resources
• Develop resilience & optimism
• Develop sense of identity & goal orientation

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Upward Spiral Theory of Lifestyle Change

Passion Pops!

The Overarching Hypothesis:
- Positive Emotions Create Nonconscious and Increasing Motives for Wellness Behaviors

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Enjoyment Motivates

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At the heart of TR practice...

**Strengths**
Well-being
Leisure

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In the strengths approach ..... 

Strengths can be nurtured and thus, must be assessed, planned, focused on, and evaluated 

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Strengths – The Heart of Practice

• A definition of strength:
  – The quality or state of being strong; vigor; power of resistance; vigor of action; a strong or valuable attribute; a source of power or encouragement; sustenance.
  
  (Webster’s Dictionary)

• Internal Strengths
• External Strengths

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Internal and External Strengths

THE ENVIRONMENT

External Strengths and Resources

THE PERSON

Internal Strengths
- Interests and preferences
- Talents and abilities
- Skills and competencies
- Knowledge
- Aspirations and goals
- Character strengths/virtues
- Physical strengths

Recreation as a strength

Recreation as a context to build strengths

- Home resources
- Community and environmental resources
- Opportunities for participation and contribution (inclusive communities)
- Family support and involvement
- Friendships and social support
- High expectations and positive attitudes

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• Internal Strengths
  – Interests and preferences
  – Talents
  – Skills and competencies
  – Knowledge
  – Aspirations and goals
  – Character strengths and virtues
• Character strengths are the psychological ingredients that define virtues

• Character strengths are the routes to displaying virtue

• 24 strengths in Peterson and Seligman’s classification, each clustered within core virtues
Anti DSM

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Values in Action
Signature Strengths Questionnaire

• Measures character strengths and virtues

• 48-item short form

• Long form online
Please choose one option in response to each statement. All of the questions reflect statements that many people would find desirable, but we want you to answer only in terms of whether the statement describes what you are like. Please be honest and accurate! We cannot rank your strengths until you answer all of the 120 questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very Much Like Me</th>
<th>Like Me</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unlike Me</th>
<th>Very Much Unlike Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being able to come up with new and different ideas is one of my strong points.</td>
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<td>I have taken frequent stands in the face of strong opposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>I never quit a task before it is done.</td>
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<td>I always keep my promises.</td>
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<td>I have no trouble eating healthy foods.</td>
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<td>I always look on the bright side.</td>
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<td>I am a spiritual person.</td>
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<td>I know how to handle myself in different social situations</td>
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<td>I always finish what I start.</td>
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<td>I really enjoy doing small favors for friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are people in my life who care as much about my feelings and well-being as they do about their own.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Virtues
Valued Core Characteristics

- wisdom
- courage
- humanity
- transcendence
- justice
- moderation

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24 Character Strengths

Creativity  Curiosity  Judgement  Perspective  Bravery  Perseverance
Zest  Honesty  Social Intelligence  Kindness  Love  Leadership
Fairness  Teamwork  Forgiveness  Love of Learning  Gratitude  Spirituality
Self-Regulation  Humility  Appreciation of Beauty  Prudence  Hope  Humor

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Let’s assess your strengths and virtues!
The VIA Scoring

Enter your score from the first two pages in each blank on the scoring section

Add the scores for each strength and each cluster in the "Totals" columns

To obtain the average score for each cluster, divide the cluster’s total by the number of strengths in that cluster.
Let’s discuss your strengths and virtues!

The VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Wisdom (Head Strengths)</th>
<th>2. Courage (Heart Strengths)</th>
<th>3. Humanity (Strength of Others)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Valor</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
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<td>Perseverance</td>
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<td>Fairness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
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VIRTUE 1: WISDOM

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Virtue: Wisdom

Strength: Curiosity

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Virtue: Wisdom

Strength:
Love of Learning

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Virtue: Wisdom

Strength: Judgment

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Virtue: Wisdom

Strength:
Creativity or Ingenuity

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Virtue: Wisdom

Strength: Perspective

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VIRTUE 2: COURAGE

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Virtue: Courage

Strength:
Valor or Bravery
Virtue: Courage

Strength: Perseverance

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Virtue: Courage

Strength:
Honesty or Integrity

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Virtue: Courage

Strength:
Zest or Vitality

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VIRTUE 3: HUMANITY

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Virtue: Humanity

Strength: Kindness

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Virtue: Humanity

Strength: Loving

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Virtue: Humanity

Strength: Social Intelligence

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VIRTUE 4: JUSTICE
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Virtue: Justice

Strength: Citizenship or Teamwork

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Virtue: Justice

Strength:
Fairness

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Virtue: Justice

Strength: Leadership

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VIRTUE 5: TEMPERANCE OR MODERATION

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Virtue: Temperance

Strength:
Self-Control or Self-Regulation

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Virtue: Temperance

Strength: Prudence

Andersen & Heyne 2018
Virtue: Temperance

Strength:
Humility

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Virtue: Temperance

Strength:
Forgiveness
VIRTUE 6: TRANSCENDENCE

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Virtue: Transcendence

Strength: Appreciation of Beauty

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Virtue: Transcendence

Strength:
Gratitude

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Virtue: Transcendence

Strength:
Hope

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Virtue: Transcendence

Strength:
Spirituality
Virtue: Transcendence

Strength:
Humor

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<tr>
<td>(Community Strengths)</td>
<td>(Strength of Self)</td>
<td>(Strengths of Spirit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</table>
External Strengths

• Family support
• Social support, friends
• Community resources
• Home resources
• Opportunities for participation and contribution (inclusive communities)
• High expectations

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At the heart of TR practice...

Strengths
Well-being
Leisure

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Well-Being

Aristotle

- Well-being - excellent or virtuous activity, contemplation, and justice

- Well-being - integrated with the good of others

- The “good life”

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Well-Being

Dr. Ed Diener

• All the various types of evaluations, both positive and negative, that people make of their lives.
Nussbaum’s Core Capabilities for Well-Being

1. Life
2. Bodily health
3. Bodily integrity
4. Senses, imagination, and thought
5. Emotions
6. Practical reason
7. Affiliation
8. Other species
9. Play
10. Control over one’s environment

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Lyubomirsky’s Pie of Happiness

What determines well-being or happiness?

- 50% Happiness Set Point
- 40% Happiness That’s Within Our Power to Change
- 10% Life Circumstances

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PERMA - Elements of Well-Being

- P - Positive Emotion
- E – Engagement
- R - Relationships
- M – Meaning
- A - Achievement

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Well-Being

Carruthers & Hood

Experiencing a state of successful, satisfying, and productive engagement with one’s life

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Well-Being

- LEISURE WELL-BEING
- COGNITIVE WELL-BEING
- PHYSICAL WELL-BEING
- PSYCHOLOGICAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
- SOCIAL WELL-BEING
- SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

Anderson & Heyne (2012)
Well-Being

LEISURE WELL-BEING
I find enjoyment in my leisure experiences and they positively impact other aspects of my life.

COGNITIVE WELL-BEING
I think in a focused way and learn eagerly.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING
I do and act in my daily life with vitality and no barriers.

PSYCHOLOGICAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
I feel happy and perceive I am in control of my life.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING
I relate well to others and belong to valued social groups.

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING
I live my life hopefully, in harmony with my values and beliefs.
At the heart of TR practice...

Strengths
Well-being
Leisure

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THE ENVIRONMENT

External Strengths and Resources

THE PERSON

Internal Strengths
- Interests and preferences
- Talents and abilities
- Skills and competencies
- Knowledge
- Aspirations and goals
- Character strengths/virtues
- Physical strengths

Recreation as a strength

Recreation as a context to build strengths

- Home resources
- Community and environmental resources
- Opportunities for participation and contribution (inclusive communities)
- Family support and involvement
- Friendships and social support
- High expectations and positive attitudes
Leisure is the heart of therapeutic recreation

Leisure has the power to help people feel good about their lives

Leisure provides the context to help people make the positive change they wish to see in their lives

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Leisure is the heart of therapeutic recreation

When people have interests, preferences, talents, and passions that they pursue in life, they feel alive, vibrant, strong, and complex as human beings

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Leisure is necessary for well-being

Leisure provides a context for experiencing positive emotions, which are directly linked to health and well-being.

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Leisure is necessary for well-being

Leisure contributes to the development of psychological, physical, social, cognitive, and spiritual environmental resources to support well-being.

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Leisure is necessary for well-being

Leisure directly impacts self-development and self-determination, essential to well-being.

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Leisure is necessary for well-being

Leisure provides opportunities to fully engage in activity and acts as a stimulus to health.

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Leisure is necessary for well-being

Leisure directly meets one’s creative-expressive needs, and the drive to find meaning and purpose in one’s life.
Leisure builds community

Leisure provides a natural vehicle to promote inclusion and friendship circles in the community – essential to well-being.

Leisure can change communities, making them stronger and more welcoming of differences, including varying abilities and illness.

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Everyone has the right to leisure

Leisure can be pursued by everyone, everyday, everywhere – regardless of how ill or “impaired” they may be.

People, all people, have a fundamental right to leisure!

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The Role of Leisure in a Strengths versus a Deficits Approach

Anderson & Heyne 2018
**Compare/Contrast:**

**The Role of Leisure in the Strengths versus the Deficits Approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficits approach - the medical model perspective</th>
<th>Strengths approach - a capabilities perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and functional outcomes are a key focus. Because it is not controlled by the “therapist,” leisure is diversional and outside the treatment process. The therapist must control and prescribe the intervention for predicted health and functional outcomes to occur. The freedom associated with leisure makes it a difficult tool to use to make prescribed change.</td>
<td>Leisure is a key component of life quality and well-being as it is controlled by the participant, providing important sources for self-determination and utilization of strengths. In the process of building meaningful leisure, well-being is improved across multiple domains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant problems and deficits drive the helping relationship – leisure is reduced to an activity to be used as a tool to fix the deficits in a prescribed manner.</td>
<td>Participant aspirations and dreams drive the helping relationship – leisure is often a key part of a participant’s personal goals for a meaningful life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant strengths are used as a tool to fix deficits. Strengths are only important in that they can be directed at remediation of weaknesses, which, in the medical model, is the focus of the helping process.</td>
<td>Participant strengths are nurtured and developed to a higher level. Leisure, freely chosen, is an arena and context to build strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of the leisure experience is only useful if it leads to a remediation of deficits on which the helping process is focused. Leisure is a means to an end.</td>
<td>Enhancement of the leisure experience is an important outcome of therapeutic recreation services. It also contributes to improved well-being. Leisure is an end in and of itself, and is also a means to a higher quality of life.</td>
</tr>
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<td>According to Mobily (1999), “The ‘angst’ created is evident in the tortuous fit between recreation/leisure (demanded by leisure theory and research) and the health/functional outcomes (necessary for reimbursement of services) evident in most of the models [using a deficits approach]. The difficulties reflect the difference between what has been learned theoretically (about leisure behavior) and the expectations and standards of the audiences the TR profession must play to in reality. Trying to wed therapeutic outcomes to leisure without losing the essence of the leisure experience is ‘the struggle’.”</td>
<td>There is a harmonious fit between leisure and the outcomes expected by the audiences the TR profession plays to in a strengths approach. Leisure is closely tied to therapeutic outcomes that build strengths and a life of meaning and well-being. Agencies and professionals using the strengths approach clearly see the need for high quality leisure experiences as a part of the helping process.</td>
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The Heart of the Therapeutic Recreation

- The participant is at the center of TR services
- The participant’s goals, dreams, passions, interests, and aspirations drive the TR process
- The CTRS considers all aspects of the participant holistically – psychological, emotional, cognitive, social, physical, social, as well as leisure
- The participant is seen with the rich contexts of his or her environments
- The participant’s individual strengths AND environmental strengths and resources are taken into account during assessment and planning
- The participant’s strengths and the environmental resources are like the fertilizer that nourishes the soul, from which a flourishing life grows
- TR services are outcomes-based and reflect the multidimensionality of human well-being and quality of life

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Flourishing through Leisure: An Ecological Extension of the Leisure and Well-Being Model (Anderson & Heyne, 2018)

Enhancing the Leisure Experience
- Facilitation of leisure skills and knowledge:
  - Leisure identity
  - Leisure literacy
  - Leisure knowledge
  - Leisure research

Facilitation of leisure environments:
- Facilitation of leisure:
  - Types of leisure activities
  - Social support
- Leisure knowledge:
  - Leisure research
  - Leisure strategy

Developing Strengths and Resources
- Facilitation of psychological and emotional strengths:
  - Communication skills
  - Emotional regulation
- Facilitation of cognitive strengths:
  - Memory
  - Problem-solving

- Facilitation of social strengths:
  - Social confidence
  - Social competence

- Facilitation of physical strengths:
  - Physical health
  - Physical activity

- Facilitation of spiritual strengths:
  - Hope and optimism
  - Sense of meaning and purpose

Facilitation of spiritual resources:
- Reflection and insight
- Self-esteem and self-identity

WELL-BEING
- Psychological & Emotional Well-being
- Physical Well-being
- Social Well-being
- Spiritual Well-being

COGNITIVE WELL-BEING
- I think in a focused way and learn easily

SOCIAL WELL-BEING
- I relate well to others and belong to valued social groups

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING
- I do and act in my daily life with vitality and no barriers

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING
- I live my life hopefully in harmony with my values and beliefs

A Flourishing Life
- Environmental resources
- Personal strengths

Participant’s goals, dreams, and aspirations

What the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist Does

Outcomes the Participant Experiences

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Figure 1. Components of the Leisure and Well-Being Model

Components of TR Service Delivery

Enhancing Leisure Experience

- Savoring Leisure
- Authentic Leisure
- Leisure Gratifications
- Mindful Leisure
- Virtuous Leisure

Developing Resources

Psychological Resources
- Capacity for Happiness
- Emotion Regulation
- Self-awareness/Self-acceptance/Self-congruence
- Autonomy/Self-Determination/Goal Directedness
- Competence
- Optimism/Hope/Positive Illusions
- Sense of Meaning

Social Resources
- Communication Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Reciprocal Relationship Skills
- Social Confidence

Cognitive Resources
- Ability to Attend
- Concentration
- Following Directions
- Problem Solving

Physical Resources
- Physical Health
- Mobility
- Physical Fitness
- Energy

Environmental Resources
- Social Connectedness & Social Networks
- Community Engagement/Empowerment

Well-Being

Positive affect, emotion, and experience

a state of successful, satisfying, and productive engagement with one's life and the realization of one's full physical, cognitive, and social-emotional potential

Cultivation and expression of one's full potential

Proximal and Medial Goals

Distal Goals
WELL-BEING
I experience a state of successful, satisfying, and productive engagement with my life.

LEISURE WELL-BEING
I find enjoyment in my leisure experiences and they positively impact other aspects of my life.

COGNITIVE WELL-BEING
I think in a focused way and learn eagerly.

PSYCHOLOGICAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
I feel happy and perceive I am in control of my life.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING
I relate well to others and belong to valued social groups.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING
I do and act in my daily life with vitality and no barriers.

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING
I live my life hopefully, in harmony with my values and beliefs.

A Flourishing Life
Environmental resources and personal strengths that cultivate growth, adaptation, and inclusion

Outcomes the participant experiences

Anderson & Heyne 2018
Break

See you back here at 9:45am