

# Using strengths to overcome obstacles

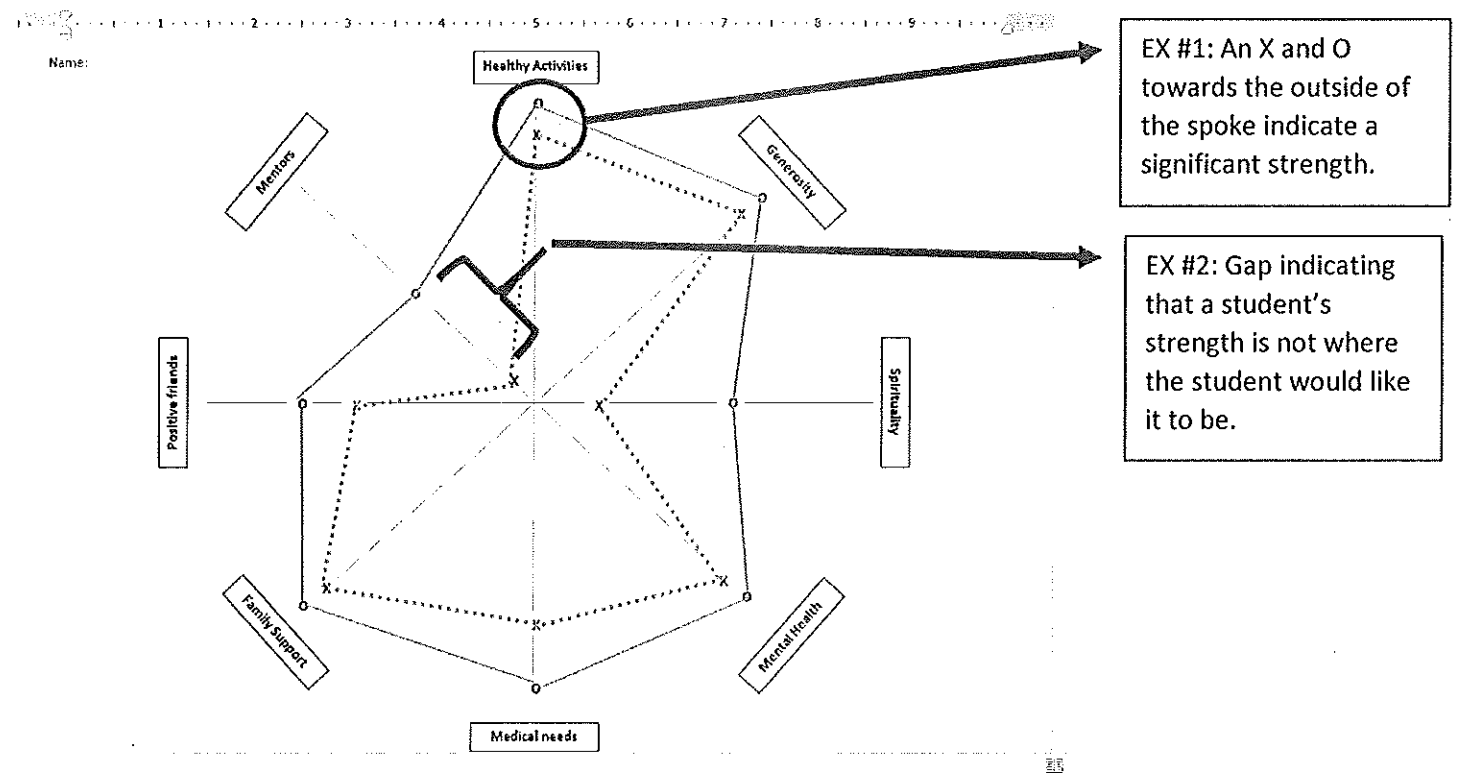
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## The Basics:

Grade: 9-12	Objective: Students will know the gaps between their current functioning and where they would like to be; students will cite their two most prominent strengths; students will reference one strength they used to overcome a recent challenge or barrier.	Start here: Successful students use strengths they <i>already</i> possess to overcome personal and academic barriers. The key is to be aware of one's strengths and a willingness to employ those strengths when action is necessary.
Theme: Self-Discovery		
Duration: 35 minutes		
Literacy strategies: Stop and think; Fishbowl/circle-up		

## REQUIRED ACTIVITIES:

- (5 min). Return the students' Sources of Strength Life Graph completed on September 30. For students who did not attend the September Advisory lesson, pass out a blank graph template and have a peer help the student complete it.
- (5 min). Ask students to take five minutes to review their Life Graph. Have them stop and think about :
  - Any changes or updates they feel they need to make.
  - Which strengths and relative weaknesses are most prominent?
  - Note any significant gaps between where they ARE and where they WISH TO BE with each of the eight strengths.



3. (15 min) Have students circle-up with their Life Graph in hand.
  - a. To create a safe space, remind students that there are NO right or wrong graphs; whatever shape their graph takes is OK. Everyone's Life Graph will look different based upon his or her life experiences. Also, while the 'ideal' graph is circular, all of us have areas in our lives that require work and attention so no one will have a circular graph.
  - b. Do a connection round by having each student share one emotional high over the previous week or month and one emotional low. Their answers will be revisited in #3, below.
  - c. For the second round, have each student share two prominent strengths from their Life Graph and answer:
    - i. How might one or both of those strengths contributed to their emotional high? Could that emotional high have existed without strengths the student cited?
    - ii. How might one or more strengths have helped resolve the emotional low the student referenced?
  - d. Once all students have participated in the second around, reflect back to students any trends you noticed. Emphasize that the strengths students possess are excellent tools to understand and resolve low points – challenges and barriers - in their lives.