

The Basics:

Grade: 10-12	Objective: Students will be familiar with Sources of Strength and the Sources of Strength Wheel, be able to cite the eight strengths referenced in the Sources Wheel and be able to articulate both personal areas of strength and areas that need further work.	Start here: Sources of Strength uses positive peer influence and social norming to spread hope while emphasizing a focus on strength and resilience instead of trauma and failure.
Theme: Support Network		
Duration: 35 minutes		

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES:

- (5 min) First, explain that Sources of Strength promotes the following ideas while asking students to stop and think about whether or not the ideas align with their own beliefs/approaches to taking on a challenge:
 - We all have strengths in our lives that help us overcome adversity.*
 - Our strengths will vary in number: some of us may have more or fewer strengths, and some of our strengths may be especially powerful while others need to be made stronger.*
 - Know your strength and know which strengths need work.*
 - When faced with a challenge, Sources of Strength encourages you to seek help and support from people you trust.*
 - Focus on your strengths rather than your problems or failures.*
- (5 min) Show the Sources of Strength Wheel (Slide#) and facilitate a conversation with the class to be sure students understand what each Strength means. Some are obvious to students and require little discussion, but others may require clarification. Here is a brief description to help inform your own understanding of Strengths:
 - Healthy Friends** are people who not only support and love us, but who hold us to a higher standard. In a culture of 'don't snitch' and online friendships, this can be a complex thing for younger people to understand. For example, can a loyal and long-standing 'friend' also encourage you to use drugs, skip school or get into trouble?
 - Medical Access** may be most relevant to students with chronic health issues, but athletes may also value access to healthcare when they are injured, as might a student whose parent or guardian are facing health issues.
 - Spirituality** can mean organized religion to one student while another student uses the word to describe being present, grateful or connected (we live in Durango, after all!). This is largely up to the individual student to define.
 - Family Support** is most often understood to mean the student's family of origin (biological), but for students who have experienced divorce, are adopted, or who live in an abusive home, 'family' can look very different and may instead be found with their sports team, neighbors, extended family, adopted parents, friends, even faculty and staff at their school.
 - Mentors** are adults, older siblings or older peers who provide guidance, insight, advice, help and support.
 - Healthy Activities** specifically refers to physical, emotional and intellectual outlets that incur health benefits, eg. exercise can be a critical protective factor against depression and suicidality. This will

- often generate healthy debate among students. For example, can a violent video game be a healthy activity if student's insist it relaxes them? Can smoking weed with close friends be healthy if students believe it helps reduce stress and anxiety? (Hint: Ask yourself: does it incur a direct health benefits?).
- g. **Generosity** is the act of giving time, physical support or financial help to others without expecting something in return. It implies an altruistic one-way exchange rather than a two-way transaction.
 - h. **Mental Health** is the condition in which one's psychological and emotional wellbeing is stable, understood and valued.
3. (10 min) Handout a copy of Sources Wheel and follow the instructions on the attached PowerPoint (also summarized below).
- a. On the first round, have students mark where they **currently stand** with each strength by placing an **X** on each spoke. The center of wheel indicates a strength is weaker; further out on the individual spokes indicate the strength is more powerful (Slide 5).
 - b. Next, have students place an **O** on each spoke to indicate *where they would like to BE* or to what extent they value that strength (Slide 6).
 - c. Have student connect the Xs, then have them connect the Os. (Slide 7,8).
4. (5 min) Explain to students that, ideally, they would see a symmetrical circle. Such a shape would indicate a perfectly balanced life. Ask your students to study their Strength Wheel, then pose the following questions and ask for insight from the class:
- a. Is it possible to have a perfect circle? Why or why not?
 - b. What do the gaps mean between where you **ARE** in a given strength, and where you **HOPE** to be (Slide 9)?
5. (Remaining time) With the remaining time, have students write on the back of their Sources Wheel a brief reflection on which areas they are most proud of and which areas require some work so that they have more of a circle. Collect student responses. **THESE WHEELS WILL BE USED FOR A DECEMBER ADVISORY LESSON!**

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- 1. Have student select one area on their Wheel and develop a plan on how to cultivate that strength over the next few weeks, months or year and provide a paragraph on how it might contribute to their resilience and success in and out of school.
- 2. Have students share their circle with a peer in class and talk through the unique aspects of their Wheel.

LITERACY STRATEGIES: Stop and think; Fishbowl; Connect to personal experiences