

Challenge Model And Strengths-Based Social Work

Engagement

Talk about what has been working for you as you meet with families. What are your needs? If you are ready to improve your skills in using the challenge model and strengths-based social work, this guide can support you as you assess and plan.

Explore:

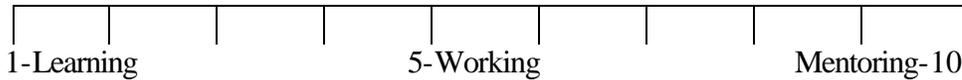
When you think about the challenge model and strengths-based social work, what are your strengths?

What improvements would you like to make in your use of the challenge model and strengths-based social work?

Assessment

Scaling:

On a scale of 1 (need to learn) to 10 (can mentor), where would you place yourself?
(Record on the functional assessment.)



Scaling Continuum:

<u>Learning</u> Learning the Skills	<u>Working</u> Using the Skills with Families	<u>Mentoring</u> Using the Skills to Mentor
1. Talk about the challenge model and what the lenses mean.	1. Talk with families about strengths and needs.	1. Model the use of the challenge model in working with caseworker.
2. Describe families through each lens.	2. Use specific solution-focused questions with the family to explore strengths.	2. Provide examples of work with families showing how the challenge model worked.
3. Use the strengths/resiliency lens to identify the strengths of the family.	3. Use the damage lens to assist families in identifying needs.	3. Explain strengths-based social work.

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4. Use the damage lens to identify family needs.	4. Help families to see their strengths and needs through the challenge lens (with the use of solution-focused questions).	4. Model belief in strengths-based work by using and describing in different contexts.
5. Use solution-focused questions to identify the previous successes and the coping skills of families:	5. Work with families to find out what referrals might be appropriate to assess their underlying needs.	5. Model the belief that families are not "broken," but reflect their strengths and their challenges
	6. Show willingness to be mentored by and learn from the family.	6. Show willingness to be mentored and learn from the caseworker.

Planning

1. What will it look like when you use the challenge model and strengths-based social work as you would wish?
2. What steps can you take that will lead to the desired result?

Practice Opportunities

Mentor with Caseworker	Caseworker with Family	Family with Family
When new caseworkers are discouraged, use their strengths to reframe their current challenges.	When families are discouraged, use their strengths and progress to reframe their current challenges.	Coach families through using family member's strengths to reframe challenges family members are experiencing.
When caseworkers are learning a new skill, point out their strengths that can be used to learn the new skill.	When families are learning a new skill or behavior, point out the strengths that they have that can be used to learn the new skill or behavior.	Coach family members through pointing out other family member's strengths that will help them as they are learning new skills.
Demonstrate for new workers how to join strengths and weaknesses to look through the challenge lens.	Demonstrate for families how to join strengths and weaknesses to look through the challenge lens.	Coach families through joining strengths and weaknesses to look through the challenge lens.

Knowledge Base

Concept:

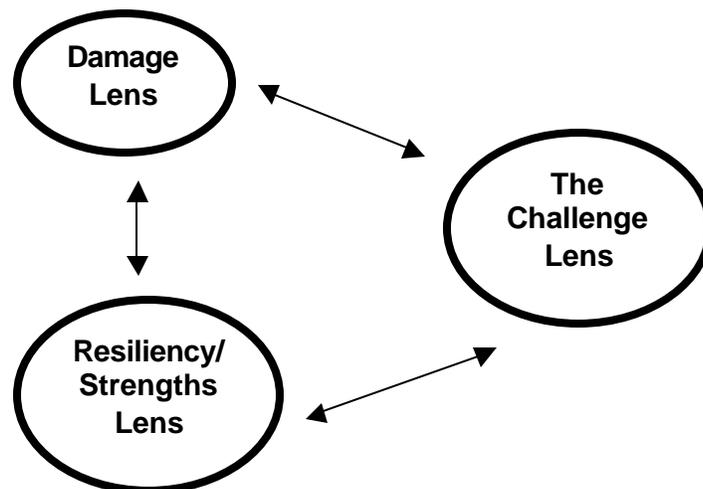
Strengths-based social work
Challenge model

Basic Elements:

Damage lens
Strength/resiliency lens
Challenge lens
Solutions-focused questions for coping
Identifying strengths
Identifying needs

Definitions:

Challenge model:



Strengths-based:

“The strengths perspective is deeply rooted in social work practice, but it was not until 1989 that the words ‘strengths perspective’ were formally introduced into the literature and the field began to seriously challenge social work’s overwhelming emphasis on problems and pathologies... Strengths-based assessment is founded upon the belief that all people have an innate potential for healthy functioning. This core of strength has a tendency to resurface by itself, helping people to solve their own problems, even in the absence of outside intervention” [Day et al. 1998]

Damage lens:

Is looking only at the needs such as: grief, loss, mental health issues, physical health issues, and developmental needs without putting them in individualized perspective for the family.

Challenge lens:

Looking at the strengths and needs of a family and pulling them all together so that you are able to see this family as having strengths to meet their needs and the ability to access the services and resources necessary with assistance.

Solution-focused questions:

- After having been through what you've been through, how did you find enough strength to keep pushing on?
- What is making it possible for you to cope right now?
- Think of a time when you have had success in coping. What has made it possible to cope in the past?