5-11-2019

Character Strengths are Superpowers: Using Positive Psychology to Help Children Realize Their Potential

Courtney Bigony
University of Pennsylvania

Alaina Cowley
University of Pennsylvania

Amanda Carreiro
University of Pennsylvania

Stephanie Florez
University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.upenn.edu/mapp_slp

Part of the Psychology Commons

Character Strengths are Superpowers: Using Positive Psychology to Help Children Realize Their Potential

Abstract

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is a national non-profit organization that facilitates one-on-one mentoring between at-risk youth and adults in order to build developmental assets and promote the well-being of youth. The organization utilizes mentoring to facilitate strong, caring relationships that help marginalized youth realize their potential. The Great Lakes Bay Chapter of BBBS (Midland, Michigan) seeks to expand positive psychology resources and curriculum to: (a) bring together staff, mentors, mentees, and parents with a common language; (b) build and support strong relationships; and (c) enhance well-being in youth. This project provides a character strengths curriculum to support these goals. The project includes a train-the-trainer model and implementation recommendations to pilot the curriculum at the Great Lakes Bay chapter. If impactful, BBBS can adapt and scale the curriculum for other programs. To meet the diverse needs of the mentees, a research-informed Positive Psychology Playbook is included. The playbook is an expertise kit covering eight topics relevant to the development of at-risk youth. These topics, which include gratitude, grit, growth mindset, optimism, resilience, self- efficacy, character strengths and positive relationships, further equip the Great Lakes Bay Chapter with positive psychology knowledge, tips, and activities to support the development and well-being of marginalized youth.

Keywords
positive psychology

Disciplines
Psychology

Character Strengths are Superpowers: Using Positive Psychology to Help Children Realize Their

Potential

Courtney Bigony, Amanda Carreiro, Alaina Cowley, and Stephanie Florez

University of Pennsylvania

A Positive Psychology Service Learning Project Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
MAPP 714: Applying Positive Interventions in Institutions

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

May 11, 2019

Leveraging Character Strengths with At-Risk Youth at Big Brothers Big Sisters Great Lakes Bay

Courtney Bigony, Amanda Carreiro, Alaina Cowley, and Stephanie Florez

Service Learning Project
MAPP 714: Applying Positive Interventions in Institutions
University of Pennsylvania

May 11, 2019

Abstract

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is a national non-profit organization that facilitates one-on-one mentoring between at-risk youth and adults in order to build developmental assets and promote the well-being of youth. The organization utilizes mentoring to facilitate strong, caring relationships that help marginalized youth realize their potential. The Great Lakes Bay Chapter of BBBS (Midland, Michigan) seeks to expand positive psychology resources and curriculum to: (a) bring together staff, mentors, mentees, and parents with a common language; (b) build and support strong relationships; and (c) enhance well-being in youth. This project provides a character strengths curriculum to support these goals. The project includes a train-the-trainer model and implementation recommendations to pilot the curriculum at the Great Lakes Bay chapter. If impactful, BBBS can adapt and scale the curriculum for other programs. To meet the diverse needs of the mentees, a research-informed Positive Psychology Playbook is included. The playbook is an expertise kit covering eight topics relevant to the development of at-risk youth. These topics, which include gratitude, grit, growth mindset, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy, character strengths and positive relationships, further equip the Great Lakes Bay Chapter with positive psychology knowledge, tips, and activities to support the development and well-being of marginalized youth.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) began in 1904, has over 114 years of service, and is the largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network in the country (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America [BBBS], 2019). Their mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and lasting, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships that can positively impact their lives forever. Millions of children need an adult role model and Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America addresses this by pairing them with caring adults who help guide them on a path to achieving their goals. Specifically, they pair one child between the age of five and young adulthood ("Littles"), usually from a single-parent low-income family, with one adult volunteer ("Bigs"), who serves as a mentor, friend, and role model (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2019). Nearly 400,000 volunteer mentors and families are currently engaged, and over the past 10 years more than two million children have been served. The vision of BBBS is for all children to achieve success in life, and BBBS strives to get them there by helping them build their futures and realize their full potential (BBBS, 2019). By nurturing individual children, their hope is to strengthen the larger community as well.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Great Lakes Bay Region

Our organization, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region (BBBS-GLBR), is a chapter of the national BBBS organization, based in Midland Michigan and serving approximately 400 families and 650 children from four surrounding counties (BBBS-GLBR, 2019; H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). With 13 staff in four locations, BBBS-GLBR focuses on serving underprivileged children, including those living in poverty, ALICE (households that are asset limited, income constrained and employed, yet not earning enough), single parent households, foster care, and more (H. Miller, personal communication,

January 22, 2019; Big Brothers Big Sister of Great Lakes Bay Region [BBBS-GLBR], 2019).

The organization successfully impacts children when they can facilitate strong relationships and

reach a large youth population. Collaboration with other non-profits, schools, and agencies

allows BBBS-GLBR to affect more children (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22,

2019). Nationally, BBBS specializes in intentional mentoring and building successfully-matched

relationships (BBBS, 2019). In alignment with this, the Great Lakes Bay Chapter establishes and

supports one-to-one mentoring relationships. Currently, the chapter facilitates over 650 Big/Little

mentoring pairs across three programs (A. Moore, personal communication, January 28, 2019).

The community-based program serves approximately 241 children, the school-based program,

"Teaming Up with YOUth," utilizes high school students as Bigs and serves approximately 273

Littles, and the literacy program ("Lunchbox Learners") serves approximately 138 children.

BBBS-GLBR currently interacts with about 400 parents through monthly case management

meetings that include the mentor and child (A. Moore, personal communication, January 22,

2019).

      The organization's strengths include leadership, staff culture, and volunteers. The

Execute Director, Holly Miller, has a certificate in positive psychology, embodies a growth

mindset, and is open to new ideas. Miller credits the Board of Directors and the leadership team

for valuing innovation (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). For the past two

and a half years, BBBS-GLBR has focused on staff culture through encouraging empathy,

conflict resolution, and coordinating reflective listening training conducted by the organization

Our Community Listens (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). Miller and

Angel Moore, Director of Mentoring Programs, attribute a continued focus on these three

elements for producing an honest, reflective team culture with shared core values. A strong

mission-focus is evident in the culture; the team puts the needs of the children first (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). Volunteers often work with case managers to solve problems for mentees outside the scope of mentorship. BBBS-GLBR also benefits greatly from a robust, dedicated volunteer base with continued interest generating from national and local recognition (A. Moore, personal communication, January 22, 2019).

Curriculum and programming are areas of strength and opportunity at BBBS-GLBR. BBBS-GLBR would benefit from positive psychology-based resources, first for staff to embody themselves, and second, for staff to deploy in varying situations as they attempt to meet the needs of all populations involved (staff, mentors, mentees, parents). In the words of Holly Miller, Executive Director at BBBS-GLBR, they need "resources that we can deploy in different ways and different situations to meet the needs of our mentors...we have parts of the puzzle, but not the whole thing" (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). The national organization does not have a mandated curriculum. While the Great Lakes Bay Chapter utilizes curricular resources, such as safety and developmental stages training provided by the national organization, the chapter has the opportunity to create a curriculum specific to their chapter needs (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). This presents an opportunity to implement positive psychology in the services provided at BBBS-GLBR. Miller noted that, the Great Lakes Bay Chapter has been recognized by the national organization for their programming strengths and national organization is interested in adopting successful initiatives.

At its core, BBBS-GLBR is about creating strong relationships to support and nurture the well-being of children. Incorporating positive psychology into the curriculum to support the mentor-parent and mentor-mentee relationships, as well as to support case workers/staff, could enhance relationships and positively impact well-being. Parent-mentor relationships could

benefit from shared language and an understanding of what to reinforce for the success of the

child. In addition to the direct well-being benefits from positive psychology interventions, the

children could also benefit from hearing consistent messages from parents and mentors. A

challenge, however, is that time and access to parents, mentors, and mentees is limited.

Volunteers already make a time investment, and many parents lack the spare time and means of

transportation to commit to training (A. Moore, personal communication, January 22, 2019). We

suggest that BBBS-GLBR could benefit from a digitally accessible curriculum that is adaptable

to different demographics and time constraints. Because every child and relationship is different,

a compilation of positive psychology resources relevant to at-risk youth could provide parents

and mentors with tools necessary for an array of unique situations (H. Miller, personal

communication, January 22, 2019). Ideally, this information would be accessible online and/or

adapted into current programming to support overall success, specifically incorporating ways to

practice positive psychology-based skills for all constituent groups (mentors, parents, mentees,

and staff). Furthermore, our situation analysis revealed the need and desire for a shared language.

Often the parent and mentoring relationship can be at odds because they don't share a common

language and reinforce different child behaviors. Sharing resources across the organization,

parents, and mentors could align the key influences to the child's development.

　　BBBS-GLB lacks time and depth of knowledge within positive psychology to create the

curriculum (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). In addition to creating a

common language, our BBBS-GLB liaisons articulated a desire for positive psychology

resources that could benefit marginalized youth and be delivered in the context of one-on-one

relationships. They are interested in having a central resource, or "toolbox," of "mini-lessons" to

teach mentors and parents positive psychology principles (H. Miller, personal communication,

January 22, 2019). BBBS-GLB identified seven topic areas of particular interest (i.e., growth

mindset, positivity, gratitude, resilience, grit, self-efficacy, and compassion) that could

potentially disseminate through current programs (e.g., "Lunch and Learn" sessions, sponsored

dinners, smartphone-friendly e-blasts, and short videos) (H. Miller & A. Moore, personal

communication, January 22, 2019). They are looking for evidenced-based training and resource

materials based on positive psychology to build skills for mentors and parents in support of

children's development.

Proposed Application Plan and Deliverables: Character Strengths are Superpowers!

Team Red recommends a Character Strengths curriculum to create a common language,

enhance relationships, and cultivate well-being. We will share with the Great Lakes Bay Chapter

a robust topic overview on Character Strengths, including interventions, how to implement them,

and how to assess impact. Our proposal includes four character strengths-based interventions,

framed as "Character Strengths are Superpowers!" The interventions we are proposing will be

implemented first with the staff during phase one and subsequent phases will spread character

strengths as superpowers to mentors, the children they serve, and to the parents of mentees. We

recommend piloting implementation with youth in the Teaming Up with YOUth program in a

four-phase approach, which we will elaborate on later. We believe that promoting the discovery

and application of character strengths will create a shared language, positively impact

relationships, and enhance well-being for all.

In addition to our application plan for "Character Strengths are Superpowers," we will

deliver to BBBS-GLBR a draft PowerPoint slide deck to assist in introducing the staff to the

character strengths curriculum, and a research-informed Positive Psychology Playbook. The slide

deck will provide a starting point for BBBS-GLBR Director of Mentoring Programs, Angel

Moore, and Executive Director, Holly Miller, to introduce character strengths to the BBBS-GLBR staff. The playbook will be an expertise kit covering seven other positive psychology topics through four core sections: (1) topic summary; (2) a bite-sized education example, or "big potential bite"; (3) an activity example, sharing an innovative way to practice the topic and integrate learning into behaviors over time; (4) recommendations/considerations for implementation. Topics covered will include the following: optimism, gratitude, resilience, grit, growth mindset, self-efficacy, and positive relationships. The Positive Psychology Playbook can be used in three core programs offered through BBBS-GLBR: the community-based program, the school-based program that utilizes high school students as mentors ("Teaming Up with YOUth"), and the literacy program ("Lunchbox Learners"). The Positive Psychology Playbook will provide training materials, resources, and tools to foster positive relationships between and among parents, mentors, children, and staff; tools for parents and mentors to build similar skills and/or a common language; and actionable resources for positive youth development. We have recommended character strengths-based interventions below, however, BBBS-GLBR can utilize and reference the playbook if they decide to roll out similar interventions in the future for the other topics represented.

Character Strengths: Definition, Benefits and Relevance

Character strengths are traits that enable positive experiences and produce positive outcomes such as well-being, positive relationships and achievement (Niemiec, 2018). According to Ryan Niemiec (2018), the Education Director of the VIA Institute on Character, character strengths are personally fulfilling capacities that are ubiquitous, and don't diminish others. They are valued across many diverse cultures and are association with numerous positive outcomes. After conducting a historical review on the topic of character in "philosophy, virtue

ethics, moral education, psychology, and theology over the past 2,500+ years" (Niemiec, 2018, p. 3), Chris Peterson and Martin Seligman (2004) created a classification of six virtues comprised of 24 character strengths. The six virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence are universal in all human beings no matter their religion, culture, or belief system. In their research, 24 strengths emerged as pathways to these virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The 24 strengths provide a common language to portray what is best in humans, and according to Niemiec (2018), the language of character strengths is easily understood and resonates with children as young as four years old. A common, easy to understand language is relevant to our population of mentors who serve marginalized children. Character strengths can bridge the relationships between parents and mentors by creating a shared language and a common understanding of what and how to reinforce behaviors with children to enhance their well-being.

Our goal is to support Big Brother Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region in their efforts to help marginalized children not only survive, but thrive, and character strengths are key to thriving. Those who utilize their strengths are 18 times more likely to flourish (Hone, Jarden, Duncan, & Schofield, 2015). Character strengths contribute to individual satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness (Peterson, 2006). Specifically, "strengths of the heart" such as zest, gratitude, hope, and love are more strongly associated with life satisfaction than the more cerebral strengths like "love of learning" (Peterson, 2006, p. 155). Research shows that using strengths in a new way every day has a lasting positive impact on happiness (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). According to Park (2004), among youth, character strengths promote well-being and buffer against psychological disorders. For example, character strengths such as hope, kindness, social intelligence, self-control, and perspective can shield against the negative

effects of stress and trauma (Park, 2004). Skinner and Wellborn (1994) show that optimism (which is related to the character strength of hope) is consistently associated with better adjustment among youth because it reduces emotional and behavioral problems, and children interpret stressors as less threatening to their basic needs (as cited in Park, 2004). Additionally, research on the prevention of depressive symptoms in low income minority middle school students by Cardemil, Reivich, and Seligman (2002) show that optimism successfully decreases and prevents symptoms of anxiety and depression (as cited in Park, 2004).

As noted above, people who use their strengths are more likely to flourish (Hone, et al., 2015), but unfortunately, two-thirds of people are unaware of their strengths, so personal awareness is key (Linley, 2008). There are six integration strategies recommended for character strengths-based practitioners (Niemiec, 2018), three of which are highly relevant to our site, BBBS-GLBR, including: (1) recognizing, labeling, and affirming strengths in yourself, (2) strengths spotting in others, and (3) aligning character strengths with activities and tasks. "Bigs" and "Littles" (mentors and mentees) can start their journey to deepen their relationship and begin self-development by taking the VIA strengths assessment online and learning how to spot strengths in themselves, as well as in others (Niemiec, 2018). Mentors can build on additional strengths-based strategies and interventions to increase well-being.

Chris Peterson (2006) begins a chapter on Character Strengths with the question, "How can we help youth to realize their full potential?" (p. 137). This question resonates with our group and reflects our motivation to focus deeply on character strengths as we provide resources for the staff at BBBS-GLBR. The classification of VIA Character strengths was created to understand and measure positive youth development, which is highly relevant to our site of study. The VIA not only characterizes optimal development for youth, but it also creates a

common vocabulary which is a key need for BBBS-GLBR as identified by our liaisons

(Peterson, 2006). Character strengths are not bound by culture, age, gender, or social class and

are generalizable across all populations, which is useful for the diverse group of youth that

BBBS-GLBR serves (Peterson, 2006). There are two separate inventories that assess the 24

strengths, one for adults (VIA Inventory of Strengths: VIA-IS) and one for young people (VIA

Inventory of Strengths for Youth: VIA-Youth, intended for those aged 10-17). The VIA-Youth

can be used with children as young as eight years old (Peterson, 2006). The VIA survey is

accessible to all the populations with whom BBBS-GLBR works, and thus holds particular

potential and value to the organization.

     For staff and mentors, it is important to set expectations regarding what they can control,

and what is their potential impact. We recommend prefacing the introduction of all interventions

at BBBS-GLBR with research by Sheldon & Lyubomirsky (2004). This research suggests, that

happiness is determined by a mix of genetics, life circumstances, and also, by the actions we

choose to perform. It is important for BBBS-GLBR staff, mentors, and parents to know that they

can have an impact on a child's happiness based on their interactions and actions with the

children. Additionally, in order for positive interventions to be successful, Sheldon and

Lyubomirsky (2004) specify that (a) there must be a person-activity fit, (b) people must be

prepared to put in the necessary effort, and (c) people must vary the activities to avoid

diminishing effects.

Alignment of BBBS-GLBR Goals

The work at BBBS-GLBR is focused on building strong, positive relationships to enhance flourishing and well-being of youth (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2019). As previously mentioned, our situation analysis revealed a central need for BBBS-GLBR is to have a common language for staff, parents, and mentors (H. Miller, personal communication, January 22, 2019). The benefits associated with the cultivation and daily use of character strengths support the goals of BBBS-GLBR to (a) build a common language; (b) support and enhance positive relationships; and (c) enhance flourishing and well-being of mentees.

Common language

The 24 character strengths provide a common language for staff, parents, and mentors working with children. Character strengths are a lens and common language to describe the best in human beings (Niemiec, 2018). Research has shown that the words associated with character strengths are understood by children as young as four-years-old and "there is often immediate resonance with these concepts" (Niemiec, 2018, p. 3).

Positive relationships

There appears to be a reciprocal nature of positive relationships and character strengths (Gillham et al., 2011). Other-directed strengths such as kindness, forgiveness, and teamwork, along with social strengths can deepen connections and enhance relationships, and "positive relationships are likely to be a cause and consequence of good character" (Gillham et al., 2011, p. 41). Strengths endorsement and strengths deployment are also associated with relationship satisfaction (VIA Institute on Character, 2019).

Enhance flourishing and well-being

Just being aware of your strengths has benefits; a study by Hone, Jarden, Duncan, and Schofield (2015), showed that people who "were highly aware of their strengths were 9 times more likely to be flourishing" than their less aware coworkers (cited by Niemiec, 2018, p. 22). Engagement of character strengths has shown to increase self-esteem and self-efficacy, which supports feelings of confidence and assuredness (VIA Institute on Character, 2019). Thus, building an understanding and use of character strengths into the training curriculum and activities at BBBS-GLBR is a fruitful method of addressing multiple goals of the organization.

Character Strengths Interventions

We are proposing the following interventions to the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region:

- VIA Survey – a survey of character strengths

- Strengths Spotting – an activity to build awareness and use of character strengths

- Strengths Spotting Through the Eyes of Mentors/Role Models – a variation on strengths spotting

- Use a Signature Strength in a New Way – an activity to expand the use of signature strengths on a daily basis

Intervention 1: Take the VIA Character Strengths Survey

The VIA Character Strengths Survey is a free, online survey available through the VIA Institute on Character and found at http://www.viacharacter.org/www. Staff, parents, mentors, and youth ages 10-17 complete the VIA Character Strengths Survey (youth under 10-years-old require a parent's permission to take the VIA survey) (Niemiec, 2018). We recommend the following three steps:

1. Go to www.viacharacter.org and choose the VIA Survey or VIA Youth Survey, complete the questions (Niemiec, 2018).

2. After completing the survey, print out the results. The results will list 24 character strengths and their definitions in rank order (with strongest strengths at the top and lesser strengths on the bottom (Niemiec, 2018).

3. Read through your strengths. Take note of anything that surprises you or stands out, or any insights that emerge (Niemiec, 2018).

Tips for staff working with parents or mentors, & parents/mentors working with youth.

Remember that all 24 strengths are strengths – none are weaknesses. Some may be lesser strengths that require more energy for the individual to use them, but all are strengths. *Explore* the individual's strengths profile (24 rank ordered strengths) with them. Consider asking: "As you look at your profile, what is your reaction to the results?" (Niemiec, 2018, p. CSI 2). *Affirm* the individual's highest strengths – help the individual affirm his/her highest strengths. When does s/he see these strengths in action?

Intervention 2: Strengths Spotting – Spotting, Explaining, Appreciating (SEA) (Niemiec, personal communication, February 2, 2019).

Our relationships are a good place to start when working on strengths; spotting them in others is an opportunity for connection (Niemiec, 2018). Spotting strengths requires that the individual is first familiar with the language of character strengths (Niemiec, 2018). We recommend that staff, parents, and mentors complete the VIA survey and familiarize themselves with what each strength is before working on character strengths with youth. A "Character Strengths Fact Sheet" is available on the website as a resource (The VIA Institute, 2019). Once familiar with the strengths language, one should adopt a strengths mindset (Niemiec, 2018). This

involves looking through a strengths lens, or watching the behavior of children and actively

trying to catch them in the act of using their strengths. For example, if a child is resisting putting

away his/her game, project, etc., looking at this situation through a strengths lens would mean

recognizing that perhaps the child is deploying his/her strength of perseverance or zest. We are

prone to look for and point out the negative (e.g., the child is being disobedient), so it takes

conscious effort to put on our strengths glasses and look for the good (Niemiec, 2018). For

example, instead of saying to the child something like "I've told you, it's time to clean up. You

need to do as I say", one could say "Wow, I see you're really working hard at that. I love the

energy you're putting into that, but now it's dinner time so we have to put it away. You can work

on it again later". We recommend the following:

1. Spotting: Label strengths when you see them. What did you observe? "To give words to a

   behavior or cluster of behaviors is powerful" (Niemiec, 2018, p. 51). Labeling strengths

   can enhance the strength and help the child use it more frequently. For example, should a

   mentor or parent notice a child helping up another child who has fallen, point out their

   strength of kindness and applaud them for it (e.g., "I noticed you being kind. You're

   friend fell and you helped him/her up. I appreciate you doing that."). Additionally, the

   fact sheet can support this step by helping mentors and parents familiarize themselves

   with character strengths and give language to label behavior. For instance, an adult may

   notice a child asking repeated questions and be able to recognize a love of learning and/or

   curiosity.

2. Explain: Explain what you saw. What is the evidence that you saw a strength in action?

   Explaining can help the individual recognize strengths they may be blind to or that they

   minimize in themselves (Niemiec, 2018).

3. Appreciate: Show appreciation of what you saw. Affirm the individual's strength. Appreciation expresses value for the person and what s/he has done. It can help the person internalize and feel the strength they possess (Niemiec, 2018). For staff, a bulletin board could be placed in a common room where staff members can write on a sticky note about a strength they spotted in a colleague. Maybe a BBBS-GLBR staff member notices the strength of leadership in his/her colleague when brainstorming a new project. The staff member writes a note naming the strength they spotted, as well as expressing support and appreciation for his/her colleague's actions. An exercise like this could have a positive impact on team morale.

Tip for parents and mentors working with youth.

Help the children learn to identify and appreciate their strengths through strengths spotting and continuing the conversation about strengths. For example, if you see a child sharing appropriately with another child, you could comment on how s/he is using his/her strength of fairness. You may find that when you point out someone's strengths to them, they "light up"; they'll have more energy, more ideas, and more excitement (Niemiec, 2018).

Intervention 3: Strengths Spotting Through the Eyes of Mentors/Role Models

1. Ask the mentee to name someone they consider to be a role model or mentor (e.g., a superhero, teacher, family member – anyone they look up to). Tell them it could be someone who helped them through a tough time or someone who has taken the time to help them in some way.

2. Ask: "What was their core belief about you and your strengths? What did they see in you? How did they communicate this with you?" (Niemiec, 2018, CSI 10).

3. "How did this impact you at the time? How does it impact you today?"

4. "Looking back, what were their character strengths? How did they use their strengths

to help you?

Tips for parents and mentors working with youth.

This exercise can be extended to other people in the child's life. Children can find the

"hero" or "heroine" in an imperfect parent, sibling, friend, or teacher, such as in a struggling

single-parent's perseverance despite hardships. You can ask "what do you admire in these

individuals? How have they positively influenced you? How do they see the real you?"

(Niemiec, 2018, CSI 10).

Intervention 4: Use a Signature Strength in a New Way

Signature strengths are strengths that come naturally and authentically to us (e.g., "this is

the real me"). They are usually the highest strengths on our VIA profile (but not always). They

tend to be energizing and easy to use, we typically feel they are essential to who we are, and we

use them in many different settings (Niemiec, 2018). Signature strengths tend to be intrinsically

rewarding. We recommend the steps below.

1. Identify Signature Strengths: Explore strengths and confirm your three to seven

signature strengths - they are often, but not always, the top strengths on the VIA

survey (Niemiec, 2018).

2. Choose one of your signature strengths to focus on.

3. Use that strength in a new way every day for a week. For instance, say a child takes

the VIA Youth Survey and gets the result that love is their top strength. The child can

be tasked by the mentor to show love to the important people in his/her life in

different ways each day. Recommendations for doing so could include: writing a

poem about a loved one, drawing a picture for them, singing a song, or even planting

a flower in their honor.

To make character strengths fun for the "Littles" we suggest a framework of "Character

Strengths are Superpowers!" See Appendix A for details regarding introducing character

strengths to the BBBS-GBLR staff. The four interventions above align well with the goals of

BBBS-GLBR, and provide a variety of ways in which character strengths can be incorporated

into the work BBBS-GLBR does with parents, mentors, and youth. In addition, as explained

below, these interventions can be incorporated into existing programs. By providing

interventions, in particular the VIA Survey, that can be done at no cost and by staff, parents,

mentors, and youth, we anticipate having a broad impact on the relationships that are central to

the work of BBBS-GLBR. Character strengths provide a common language and provide a path to

relationship building and well-being.

How to implement a character strengths program at BBBS-GLBR

We recommend that BBBS-GLBR utilize a train-the-trainer model to implement

character strengths within the organization and to ultimately impact the lives of the children. To

do this, we recommend building upon the success of the implementation of the eight skills from

Our Community Listens (OCL), by the staff fully understanding and utilizing the skills first.

However, to address the common language need and support of skill development across the

relationships influencing the child's life, we recommend that all three roles BBBS-GLBR

reaches be involved in character strengths interventions: staff, mentors, and parents (Figure 1).
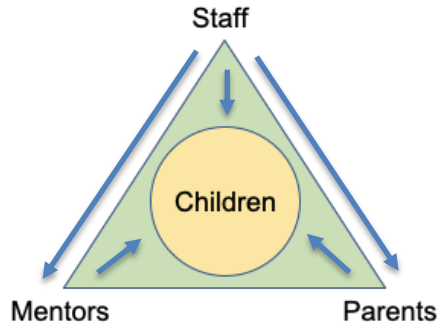
Figure 1. Train-the-Trainer Impact Pathways.

BBBS-GLBR can accomplish this by training staff to train mentors and utilizing and communicating the interventions with mentees ("Littles") and parents.

There are six integration strategies recommended for character strengths-based practitioners, three of which are highly relevant to our site, BBBS-GLBR, including: (1) recognizing, labeling, and affirming strength in yourself, (2) strengths spotting in others, (3) aligning character strengths with activities and tasks (Niemiec, 2018, p. 46). Therefore, we are recommending three methods (plus one variation, thus four interventions) by which character strengths can be implemented in the BBBS-GLBR context: use of the VIA survey, strength spotting, and daily novel use of strengths.

We recommend piloting implementation with the Teaming Up with YOUth program in a four-phase approach (see Figure 2). Pre-implementation plans prior to phase one should include training for BBBS-GLB leadership. Specifically, the Executive Director and Director of Mentoring Programs can utilize the information and resources provided to become knowledgeable about character strengths, including usage and impact. Thereafter, BBBS-GLBR leadership will take the VIA survey and utilize the three methods outlined above to adopt and "live" the content prior to training staff.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
STAFF [Pre-phase] Site Coordinators: Train-the-Trainer - Concept Understanding - Personal Usage - Knowledge of mentee activities	**MENTORS** Incorporate in fall training Take VIA Survey Use 3 methods: - Recognize, Label & Affirm - Strength Spot - Align Intervention Comfortability Supplemental Training Reporting usage	**CHILDREN & PARENTS** Take VIA or VIA Youth Survey Share results Mentor & Parent review child's results SEA & Novel Use Interventions Supplemental training Parents: e-mail Mentors: in-person	**EVALUATION** Staff Survey Initial Mentor Survey Activity Usage Mentor Survey BBBS Survey

Figure 2. Intervention Approach Phases

Phase One: Staff training

We recommend that phase one take place over the summer prior to the training of

mentors in the fall for the Teaming Up with YOUth program that operates generally within the

academic year. We recommend that the Executive Director and Director of Mentoring Programs

introduce character strengths by using the slide deck provided (see Appendix A) to the site

coordinators, then site coordinators take the VIA Survey (free) online and receive in-person

training from the Director of Mentoring programs to utilize the three methods outlined above and

understand the intervention activities mentors and parents can utilize. To measure the impact on

staff well-being, staff can take either the SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) or PANAS

(Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) questionnaires before and after the intervention to

determine any changes (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen,

1988). Both are quick to take and can be accessed for free on AuthenticHappiness.com. Parents,

mentors and mentees could also use these surveys pre- and post-intervention to track changes in well-being.

Phase Two: Mentor training

We recommend that mentors take the VIA Survey (free) online (available at http://www.viacharacter.org/www) in conjunction with required training that takes place prior to the school year. For high school mentors in this program, this may require parental permission and they may want to take the youth version. We recommend that each mentor utilize the three methods outlined above personally prior to commencing the mentor-mentee relationship. Mentors should receive an overview of each intervention that incorporates ways to demonstrate and practice those strengths-based strategies to build comfortability with the subject matter. This could include mentors to tracking their usage on a worksheet and asking them to come prepared to discuss insights and challenges regarding taking the assessment and using the interventions. Because this training will be included in the annual required training for the Teaming Up with YOUth program (therefore, time limited), materials should be distributed in advance of the training. Open dialogue amongst mentors and with the site coordinator could support clarification before implementation with Littles. Additionally, completion of the assessment, any requested pre-materials, and participation in the discussion should be verbally recognized to encourage engagement and build a supportive environment surrounding a new topic. Supplementally, it could be useful to have case workers follow up with high school mentors individually to help them determine how best to implement character strengths in their own lives.

Phase Three: Impact Children & Involve Parents

We recommend that enrollment in the Teaming Up with YOUth program include an invite for the child and parent to take the VIA Survey (free) online and share results with the site

coordinators. Results can be shared by a physical copy or emailed. We recommend that this is

framed for parents as a common lens and common language for relationships among staff,

parents, mentors and mentees (see Appendix A for information on framing). Research-based

articles on the benefits of promoting character strengths in children could be sent along with the

results. The "Character Strengths Fact Sheet" could be included as well so that parents and

mentees can go over the summary of each strength, thereby reinforcing the common language

used between all BBBS-GLBR populations. Parents and mentors will be asked to engage in

strengths spotting, novel usage, and utilize the interventions. We recommend that BBBS-GLBR

consider email content for parents as reminders and refreshers. Content can be sourced from the

VIA website (http://www.viacharacter.org/www)

"Bigs" and "Littles" (mentors and their mentees) can deepen their relationship and begin

self-development by starting with strengths-spotting, or spotting strengths in oneself and spotting

strengths in others (Niemiec, 2018). From there, mentors can build on strengths-based strategies

and interventions to increase well-being. Using an existing process, mentors report the activities

utilized with mentees on a weekly basis. Mentors can add to their daily log of activities any

strengths-based engagement they do their mentees. Site coordinators can use the logs to track

how frequently mentors are utilizing the character strengths curriculum. We recommend that

usage of the character strengths interventions be recorded within this existing framework and

shared with the central BBBS-GLBR office (e.g., a shared and accessible spreadsheet could

support this communication). We recommend that existing supplemental training throughout the

year (15 minutes after each session and half-way through the year) include additional training,

refreshers, and clarifications regarding character strengths. Considering that many mentors

cannot stay after each session, the half-way training should address questions and comfortability

with the interventions. To encourage participation in supplemental training, in-stock BBBS swag items could be offered if available and affordable to BBBS-GLBR. If a higher-valued BBBS swag item is in-stock, the organization could host a raffle for mentors completing activity logs and participating in supplemental training. An incentive may promote participation and encourage them to use of their free time to gain familiarity with character strengths.

Phase Four: Evaluate

We recommend the effectiveness of Character Strengths implementation within the Teaming Up with YOUth program be evaluated in multiple ways (see Appendix B for details). First, we recommend that staff take either the SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) or PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) questionnaires pre and post-intervention to determine any changes, complete a survey after receiving summer training and utilizing the methods (see Appendix B for survey; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Second, mentors can complete the same survey as staff following the annual fall training. Usage of Character Strengths can be measured by weekly reporting based on mentors' daily logs, and a survey to mentors to gauge the frequency of usage and comfortability with character strengths. This survey can be administered to mentors half-way (for potential adjustment) and at the end of the school year. Third, impact to the mission of BBBS-GLBR can be measured through the organization's existing survey that addresses developmental assets and relationships of mentees. If evaluation indicates positive results, adaptation to BBBS-GLBR's other programs could be considered.

Conclusion

The four "Character Strengths are Superpowers!" interventions, implementation plan, and accompanying measurement strategy we recommend would benefit all populations of BBBS-

GLBR: staff, mentors, parents, and mentees. The proposed application plan and slide deck will serve as a framework for the rollout of the character strengths curriculum within the organization. The supplemental Positive Psychology Playbook is a toolkit that will provide context on research and benefits, implementation recommendations, and other resources on seven additional positive psychology concepts. These topics include: optimism, gratitude, resilience, grit, growth mindset, self-efficacy, and positive relationships. The playbook will arm BBBS-GLBR staff with the foundational information needed for future implementation of other topic-specific interventions. We believe that all deliverables will help to create a common language for consistency purposes between all populations, enhance positive relationships, increase well-being, and support the effectiveness of mentoring on the children BBBS-GLBR serves.

References

Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist, 37*, 122-147.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development, 72*, 187-206.

Baumeister, R. F., Gailliot, M., DeWall, C. N., & Oaten, M. (2006). Self-regulation and personality: How interventions increase regulatory success, and how depletion moderates the effects of traits on behavior. *Journal of Personality, 74*(6), 1773-1801.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 497-529.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (2019). About us. Retrieved from https://www.bbbs.org/about-us/

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region (2019). About. Retrieved from http://bbbsgreatlakesbay.org

Benson, P. L., Leffert, N., Scales, P. C., & Blyth, D. A. (2012). Beyond the "village" rhetoric: Creating healthy communities for children and adolescents. *Applied developmental science*, *16*(1), 3-23.

Cardemil, E. V., Reivich, K. J., & Seligman, M. E. (2002). The prevention of depressive symptoms in low-income minority middle school students. *Prevention & Treatment*, *5*(1), 8a.

Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., Miller, C. J., & Fulford, D. (2010). Optimism. *Clinical Psychological Review, 30*(7), 879-889.

Chase, M. A. (1996). Children's sources of self-efficacy, accuracy of appraisal and motivation in sport skills and physical activities. *Information and Learning, 56*(11), 4317.

Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of personality assessment*, *49*(1), 71-75.

Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(6), 1087-1101.

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York, NY: Random House.

Ey, S., Hadley, W., Allen, D. N., Palmer, S., Klosky, J., Deptula, D., & Cohen, R. (2005). A new measure of children's optimism and pessimism: The youth life orientation test. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, *46*(5), 548-558.

Froh, J. J., & Bono, G. (2008). The gratitude of youth. In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Praeger perspectives. Positive psychology: Exploring the best in people, Vol. 2. Capitalizing on emotional experiences* (pp. 55-78). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group.

Froh, J. J., Bono, G., Fan, J., Emmons, R. A., Henderson, K., Harris, C., & Wood, A. M. (2014). Nice thinking! An educational intervention that teaches children to think gratefully. *School Psychology Review*, *43*(2), 132-153.

Froh, J. J., Miller, D. N., & Snyder, S. F. (2007). Gratitude in children and adolescents: Development, assessment, and school-based intervention. *School Psychology Forum, 2,* 1-13.

Froh, J. J., Yurkewicz, C., & Kashdan, T. B. (2009). Gratitude and subjective well-being in early adolescence: Examining gender differences. *Journal of adolescence*, *32*(3), 633-650.

Gable, S. G., & Gosnell, C. L. (2011). The positive side of close relationships. In K. M. Sheldon,

    T. B. Kashdan, & M. F. Steger (Eds.), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and*

    moving forward (pp. 265 – 279). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gillham, J., Adams-Deutsch, Z., Werner, J., Reivich, K., Coulter-Heindl, V., Linkins, M.,

    Winder, B., Peterson, P., Park, N., Abenavoli, R., Contero, A., Seligman, M. E. P.,

    (2011). Character strengths predict subjective well-being during adolescence. *The*

    Journal of Positive Psychology, *6*(1), 31-44.

Gleason, J. B., & Weintraub, S. (1976). The acquisition of routines in child language. *Language*

    in Society, 5(2), 129-136.

Gunderson, E. A., Gripshover, S. J., Romero, C., Dweck, C. S., Goldin-Meadow, S., & Levine,

    S. C. (2013). Parent praise to 1-to 3-year-olds predicts children's motivational

    frameworks 5 years later. *Child development*, *84*(5), 1526-1541.

Hone, L. C., Jarden, A., Duncan, S., & Schofield, G. M. (2015). Flourishing in New Zealand

    workers: Associations with lifestyle behaviors, physical health, psychosocial, and work-

    related indicators. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *57*(9), 973-983.

Howe, M. J. (2001). *Genius explained*. Cambridge University Press.

Laursen, E. K. (2015). The power of grit, perseverance, and tenacity. *Reclaiming Children and*

    Youth, *23*(4), 19.

Layous, K., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2014). Benefits, mechanisms, and new directions for teaching

    gratitude to children. *School Psychology Review, 43*(2), 153-159.

Linley, A. (2008). *Average to A+: Realising strengths in yourself and others.* Coventry, UK:

    CAPP Press.

Lopez, F. G. (2009). Adult attachment security: The relational scaffolding of positive

    psychology. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology*

    (pp. 405-415). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Luthans, F., & Youssef-Morgan, C. M. (2017). Psychological capital: An evidence-based

    positive approach. *The Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational*

    Behavior, 4, 339-66.

Maddux, J. E. (2009). Self-efficacy: The power of believing you can. In C. R. Snyder & S. J.

    Lopez (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 335-343). New York,

    NY: Oxford University Press.

Masten, A. S., Cutuli, J. J., Herbers, J. E., & Reed, M. G. J. (2009). Resilience in development.

    In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology*

    (2nd ed., pp. 117-131). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

McCullough, M. E., Kilpatrick, S. D., Emmons, R. A., & Larson, D. B. (2001). Is gratitude a

    moral affect?. *Psychological bulletin*, *127*(2), 249.

Niemiec, R. M. (2018) *Character strengths interventions: A field guide for practitioners*. Boston,

    MA: Hogrefe Publishing.

Park, N. (2004). Character strengths and positive youth development. *The Annals of the*

    American Academy of Political and Social Science, *591*(1), 40-54.

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: NY: Oxford University Press.

Peterson C., & Seligman M.E. (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues: A handbook and*

    classification (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press. New York, NY.

Peterson, C., & Steen, T. A. (2009). Optimistic explanatory style. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 313-321). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Reivich, K. J., Seligman, M. E. P., & McBride, S. (2011). Master resilience training in the U.S. army. *American Psychologist*, *66*(1), 25-34.

Reivich, K, & Shatté, A. (2002). *The resilience factor: 7 essential skills for overcoming life's inevitable obstacles.* New York, NY: Broadway Books.

Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): A re-evaluation of the life orientation test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*(6), 1063-1078.

Seligman, M. E. P. (1991). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and live your life.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and wellbeing*. New York, NY: Free Press

Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: empirical validation of interventions. *American psychologist*, *60*(5), 410.

Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2004). Achieving sustainable new happiness: Prospects, practices, and prescriptions. *Positive psychology in practice*, 127-145.

Skinner, E.A., & J. G. Wellborn. (1994). Coping during childhood and adolescence: A motivational perspective. In *Life-span development and behavior*, vol 12, edited by D. L. Featherman, R. M. Lerner, and M. Perlmuter, 91-133. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

VIA Institute on Character (2019). Retrieved from http://www.viacharacter.org

VIA Institute on Character (2019). Character strengths fact sheet. Retrieved from

      http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Reports-Courses-Resources/Resources/Character-

      Strength-Fact-Sheets

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures

      of positive and negative affect: the PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social*

      Psychology, *54*(6), 1063.

Werner, E. E. (1992). The children of Kauai: Resiliency and recovery in adolescence and

      adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *13*(4), 262-268.

Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe

      that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational psychologist*, *47*(4), 302-314.

Appendix A
Character Strengths are Superpowers! An Introduction for Staff
(PowerPoint slide deck to be provided to BBBS-GLBR)

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

"Provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever."

"All children achieve success in life."

https://www.bbbs.org/about-us/

We all know that the mission of BBBS is to…

"Provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever"

…and our vision is that….

"All children achieve success in life".

Today, we're going to talk about how viewing our work through a lens of Character Strengths can help achieve our mission and vision.

Agenda

- Introduction to Character Strengths

- How do Character Strengths align with our work?

- How we can use Character Strengths to further our work?

S T R E N G T H S

We'll talk about character strengths - what they are and how they align with our work, and we'll discuss how we can use character strengths to further our work with parents, mentors and mentees.

WHAT ARE CHARACTER STRENGTHS?

- Personally fulfilling capacities

- Traits that enable positive experiences and produce positive outcomes.

- Capacities that are valued across cultures

- 24-character strengths provide a common language that describes what is best in human beings

(Niemiec, 2018).

S T R E N G T H S

According to Ryan Niemiec, the Education Director of the VIA Institute on Character (2018), character strengths are…

"positive traits/capacities that are personally fulfilling, do not diminish others, ubiquitous and valued across cultures, and aligned with numerous positive outcomes for oneself and others" (p. 2). There are 24-character strengths that provide a common language that describes what is best in human beings (Niemiec, 2018).

CHARACTER STRENGTHS ARE SUPERPOWERS!

Optimism (which is related to the character strength of hope) is...

- associated with better adjustment among children and youth because it...
  - reduces emotional and behavioral problems, and
  - children interpret stressors as less threatening to their basic needs (Skinner & Wellborn, 1994 as cited in Park, 2004).
- Optimism in low income minority middle school students can decrease and prevent symptoms of depression and anxiety (Cardemil, Reivich, & Seligman, 2002 as cited in Park, 2004).

S T R E N G T H S

Additionally, according to Bensen et al. (2012), character-relevant developmental assets like commitment to learning, positive values, social competence, and sense of purpose increase the likelihood for academic success, leadership, valuing diversity, delay of gratification, and helping others, as well as reduced problem behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, violence, depression, and suicidal ideation (as cited in Park, 2004).

To arrive at the 24 character strengths, Chris Peterson and Martin Seligman conducted a historical review on the topic of character in "philosophy, virtue ethics, moral education, psychology, and theology over the past 2,500+ years (Niemiec, 2018, p. 3).

Peterson and Seligman created a classification of six virtues, including wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence that are universal in all human beings no matter their religion, culture, or belief system.

In their research 24 strengths emerged as a pathway to each virtue (Niemiec, 2018). The 24 character strengths provide a common language to describe what is best in human beings and, according to Niemiec (2018), "the character strength words are readily understood by persons as young as 4-years old and there is often immediate resonance with these concepts" (p. 3). A common, easy to understand language is relevant to our population of mentors who serve marginalized children.

The cultivation and daily use of character strengths, align with three BBBS-GLBR goals…
Build a common language
Support and enhance positive relationships
Enhance flourishing and well-being of mentees

Common language.
The 24 character strengths provide a common language for staff, parents, and mentors working with children. Character strengths are a lens and common language to describe what is best in human beings (Niemiec, 2018). Research has shown that the words associated with character strengths are understood by children as young as four-years-old and "there is often immediate resonance with these concepts" (Niemiec, 2018, p. 3).

Positive relationships.
There appears to be a reciprocal nature of positive relationships and character strengths (Gillham et al., 2011). Other-directed strengths such as kindness, forgiveness, and teamwork, along with social strengths can deepen connections and enhance relationships, and "positive relationships are likely to be a cause and consequence of good character" (Gillham et al., 2011, p. 41). Strengths endorsement and strengths deployment are also associated with relationship satisfaction (VIA Institute on Character, 2019).

Enhance flourishing and well-being.
According to a study by Hone, Jarden, Duncan, and Schofield (2015), people who use their strengths are 18 times more likely to flourish. Engagement of character strengths has shown to increase self-esteem and self-efficacy, which supports feelings of confidence and assuredness

(VIA Institute on Character, 2019). Thus, building an understanding and use of character strengths into the training curriculum and activities at BBBS-GLBR is a fruitful method of addressing multiple goals of the organization.

WHAT'S YOUR SUPERPOWER?

Everyone has a unique constellation of strengths that can help them lead flourishing lives (Niemiec, 2018)

S T R E N G T H S

Through the use of a free, online survey we can access our unique set of strengths (see VIA Institute on Character http://www.viacharacter.org/www/)

We can learn about our own strengths and mentors and mentees, as well as parents, can learn about their strengths.

CHARACTER STRENGTHS ARE SUPERPOWERS!

- Contribute to individual fulfillment, satisfaction, and happiness (Peterson, 2006).

- Promote well-being and buffer against psychological disorders among youth (Park, 2004).

- Character strengths such as hope, kindness, social intelligence, self-control, and perspective can buffer against the negative effects of stress and trauma (Park, 2004).

S T R E N G T H S

What are the benefits?

"Character strengths contribute to the full range of human experiences, influencing and creating positive opportunities while also helping us to endure the mundane and embrace and navigate the struggles." (Niemiec, 2018, p. 1)

According to Peterson (2006), specifically "strengths of the heart" such as zest, gratitude, hope, and love are more robustly associated with life satisfaction than the more cerebral strengths like "love of learning" (p. 155).

The 24 Character Strengths include everything listed on this slide (recommending providing training participants with a list of the 24 strengths with their definitions).

The idea here is that first we, the staff, will take the VIA Survey, learn about our strengths and get comfortable recognizing and using our strengths, and recognizing when others are using their strengths.

Then we'll have mentors do the same -

Once staff and mentors are comfortable with character strengths, we'll roll this out to parents and mentees.

This will help build a common language AND build capacities in mentees (and in staff, parents and mentors too!).

Character Strengths:

- Individuals have a unique constellation of strengths (Niemiec, 2018).
- Good character involves a combination of multiple positive traits (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004).
- Strengths work in combinations, and they are expressed in different ways and to different degrees depending on context (Niemiec, 2018).
- Character strengths are different then talents, skills and abilities (Park, et al., 2004).

S T R E N G T H S

Much of this will become clearer, once we've each taken the VIA survey and learned about our own strengths.

Each of us have certain strengths that are more central or core to who we are, and we have these strengths in different degrees.

We have to think about the whole child - "good character comprises a family of positive traits" (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004).

Character strengths are distinguished from talents and abilities by the criteria Peterson and Seligman used to define them - for example, Character Strengths are widely recognized across cultures, are fulfilling, morally valued, trait like and measurable. Talents and abilities (e.g., being good at art, or the long jump) don't meet the same criteria as character strengths.

Character Strengths

- A central aspect of the character strengths model is that people can recognize and act on their strengths to impact a positive outcome (Park, et al., 2004).

- Prioritize the use of *signature strengths* (see next slide) but keep in mind, all 24 strengths are important capacities that can be used for positive outcomes (Niemiec, 2018).

S T R E N G T H S

We can learn to recognize our own strengths - "people can reflect on their own strengths of character and talk about them to others" (Park, et al., 2004, p. 604).

And, that means they can choose to use their strengths more frequently and build their character.

Signature Strengths

- Are strengths "a person owns, celebrates and frequently exercises" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p18).

- Are central to who the person is, to the individual's identity; they are energizing and the individual tends to deploy them naturally (Niemiec, 2018).

S T R E N G T H S

Signature strengths are an individual's top strengths - they are core to who the person is. When people learn about their strengths - usually it's pretty clear which ones are their signature strengths…they're the one's the person can't imagine living without. Signature strengths are the

strengths that come naturally to the person - it's their default way of being and they can't imagine doing without them.

Signature Strengths

- Using signature strengths in new ways can positively impact life satisfaction (Schutte & Malouff, 2018).

- Daily, novel use of signature strengths is associated with increased happiness and decreased depression (Seligman et al., 2005).

S T R E N G T H S

Using signature strengths in a new ways is an energizing activity…but…it can take some thought. We need to get creative here. This is all about finding ways to use one's best qualities regularly in life - it might mean using a strength in a different context, like using your love of learning that you use at home learning to cook fancy meals and applying it to learning a new software program at work. Or perhaps, your strength of perspective could be combined with your leadership strength to suggest a new way of doing something at work. The bottom line is, the more you're able to use your top strengths regularly - at work, at home, everywhere - the better off you'll be.

Customize this - the point is to get buy-in, so craft the script here to talk about what your staff do, what is their role, and how can they help your clients (parents, mentors and children) understand and use their "superpowers".

These three ideas correlate to three activities we can introduce to mentors and mentees.

1. Take the VIA Survey and learning about one's strengths. In fact, parents as well as mentors and mentees can take the VIA Survey. It's free and it's online here: http://www.viacharacter.org/www/
(note: there's a youth version of the survey that the children take).
2. Strength spotting - learning to notice strengths in self and others, explain and appreciate strengths in others (more to come on this when we learn the activities). This is all about noticing and naming when people (staff, parents, mentors and mentees) are using their strengths. Become a strengths detective!
3. Practicing using a top strength in a different way each day. We want to learn to be creative with our top strengths – using them more frequently and in different contexts. This takes knowing our strengths and being able to recognize when we're using them, then sitting down and really thinking and planning how else and where else we can use them. Get creative! Find 10 new ways to use "creativity" or "judgment" or "love of learning" or "kindness"!

Common Language and Lens

The 24 character strengths provides a common language for staff, parents and mentors that describes what is best in human beings, including our children (Niemiec, 2018).

Character strengths also provide a common lens through which to look at youth development.

S T R E N G T H S

As we learn to our own strengths, and to see the strengths in our mentors, our parents and our mentees - and as we help them do the same - we have an opportunity to get everyone talking the same language, looking for the same things in our youth and supporting and rewarding the same developmental assets.

It's really important that we (the staff) get really comfortable with the strengths and use the strengths language (e.g., say I see you're using your strength of "curiosity" or "persistence" etc.) as mentors and parents, as well as children, use their strengths. This will help embed character strengths in our work, normalize the language and begin to create that common language we all need. And it will help us, the parents, and the mentors all reinforce the same kind of behaviors in the children, so they'll get consistent messages.

Also,….The unique set of signature strengths each youth possesses is a way to encourage and support their individual identity and build their capacities based on what they naturally already possess in terms of strengths. We're encourage each individual child to develop his or her own best qualities.
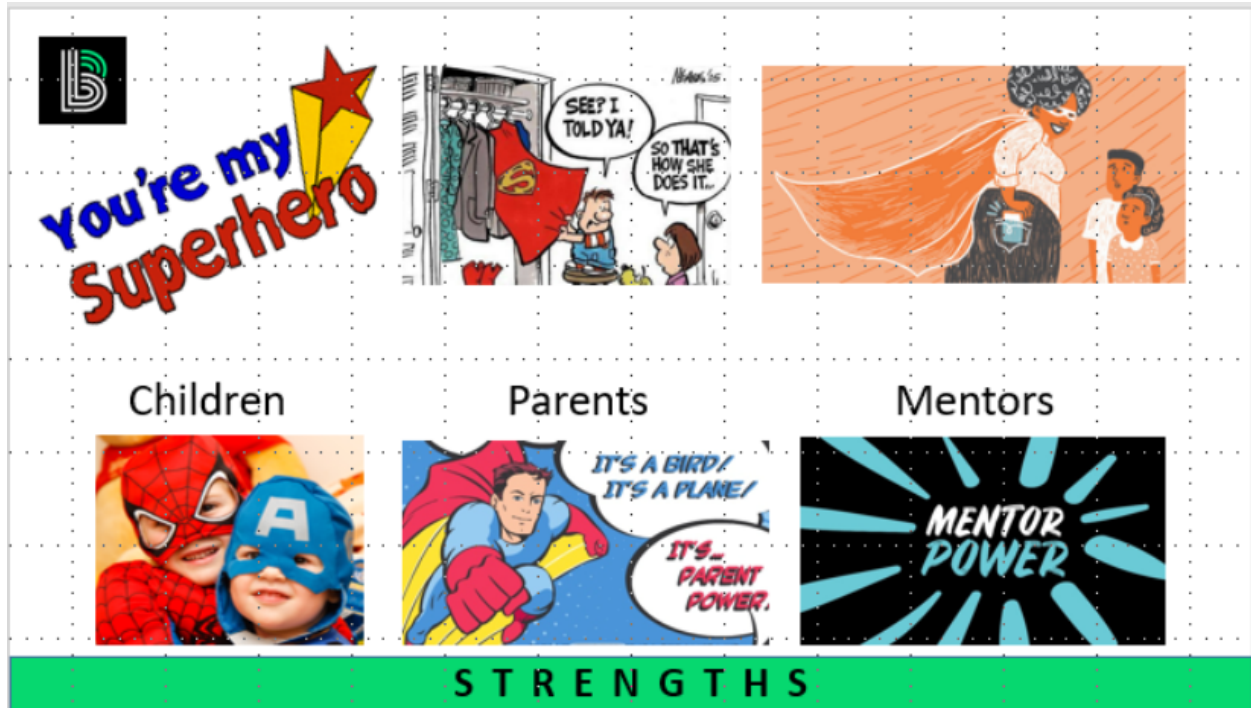
Our job is to understand our own strengths and how to use them, so that we can help mentors, parents and children understand and use their strengths – and fully realize their superpowers!

Appendix B
Measures and Measurement Timeline

Survey 1 – Staff and Mentors

Please tell us about your experience learning and implementing the character strengths

curriculum by answering the following questions:

1. Did you take the VIA Survey? Yes/No

2. Did you use the interventions? Yes/No

3. If yes, how often? Daily/weekly/Monthly/Rarely

4. What worked well? Open ended

5. What didn't? Open ended

6. Any additional feedback? Open ended

Survey 2 - Mentors

Please tell us about your experience learning and implementing the character strengths

curriculum by answering the following questions:

1. To what extent are you using character strengths with your mentee? Almost Always/

   Often/ Sometimes, Seldom/ Never.

2. How would you rate your understanding of character strengths? Good/ Very Good/

   Acceptable/ Poor/ Very Poor.

3. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience incorporating character

   strengths into your work with mentees?

Survey 3

To measure any impacts in well-being, staff, mentors, and/or mentees can take either the SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) or PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) questionnaires pre and post-intervention to determine any changes (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Both can be accessed for free on AuthenticHappiness.com.

Measurement Timeline

1. Staff complete survey 1 after receiving summer training and utilizing the methods for a minimum of one week.

2. Mentors complete survey 1 following the annual fall training.

3. Mentors report usage of character strengths weekly. Existing: Site coordinator collects activities used weekly. Recommendation: Record character strength activity usage weekly.

4. Mentors complete survey 2 half-way through school year and upon school year completion.

5. Impact to the mission at BBBS-GLBR can be measured through the organization's existing survey that addresses developmental assets and relationships of mentees.

Appendix C
Playbook: Description and Literature Review

Description

The Positive Psychology Playbook is an expertise kit covering eight topic areas and including three core sections: Robust education: summary of each topic; One bite-size education example: mini lesson ("coach bites"); Activity example: innovative ways to practice positive psychology topics and integrate learning into behaviors over time. Topics covered will include the following: optimism, gratitude, resilience, grit, growth mindset, self-efficacy, character strengths, and positive relationships. The Positive Psychology Playbook will be used in the three core programs offered through BBBS-GLBR: The community-based, school-based, and literacy programs. The Positive Psychology Playbook will provide training materials, resources and tools to foster positive relationships between and among parents, mentors, children and staff; tools for parents and mentors to build similar skills, or a common language; and the playbook will provide actionable resources for positive youth development that BBBS-GLBR can deploy in various situations as they see fit.

Literature Review

Optimism

The construct of optimism is defined as "an individual difference variable that reflects the extent to which people hold generalized favorable expectancies for their future" (Carver, Scheier, Miller, & Fulford, 2010, p. 879). It can also be considered a mindset and set of skills that can broaden and enrich life (Reivich & Shatte, 2002). Research shows that there are many benefits to being an optimistic person. First, higher levels of optimism are associated with increased subjective well-being in challenging situations and adversity (Carver et al., 2010). Optimists are more likely to adjust positively to significant life transitions (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994).

Additionally, optimism is associated with better relationships, physical health outcomes, coping skills, persistence in educational efforts, and income later in life (Carver et al., 2010).

Optimism's counterpart is pessimism and when considering the two, we can examine explanatory style, or how one explains the causes of events that happen to them (Peterson, & Steen, 2009). From the optimistic explanatory style perspective, negative events are perceived to be external (i.e., "It's not my fault"), unstable (i.e., "This won't last forever") and specific (i.e., "This bad event is just related to this one thing"). A pessimistic explanatory style is the opposite (Seligman, 1991).

Optimism and pessimism are believed to develop early in life, however, there is minimal research regarding when and how they arise in children (Ey et al., 2005). Evidence does show that pessimism is related to the psychological well-being of children in elementary school, including being associated with reported lower self-esteem and poorer peer relations (Ey et al., 2005). Research suggests, however, that optimism training in youth is linked to a lower risk of developing depression up to two years after implementing a school intervention. Lastly, youth who were optimistic about their ability to overcome challenges reported fewer depressive symptoms, as well as higher self-worth and competence (Ey et al., 2005). These are key benefits to increasing optimism in youth, making it a relevant and beneficial topic to include within the playbook.

Gratitude

Gratitude is a critical element in social life and has important implications for well-being. Gratitude is experienced when a person feels they have received something beneficial (Froh & Bono, 2008). It is both a response to and a motivator for virtuous behavior (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). The research on gratitude clearly demonstrates the

advantages to cultivating gratitude in youth. BBBS-GLBR may find that teaching gratitude is a simple way to advance the well-being of youth.

Research shows a plethora of benefits to experiencing and expressing gratitude. Gratitude is associated with subjective well-being, relational support, and prosocial behavior (Froh, Miller, & Snyder, 2007). It improves social and emotional functioning, promotes academic gains by way of achievement motivation, and gratitude may be an effective strategy to bolster peer friendships (Froh et al., 2007). Evidence suggests that individuals high in gratitude experience more positive relationships, have more appreciation for their social resources, and use social support more than those lower in experiences of gratitude (Froh et al., 2014). As Froh, Yurkewicz, and Kashdan (2009) wrote, adolescents high in gratitude reported "greater subjective well-being, optimism, prosocial behavior, gratitude in response to aid, and social support. Thus, gratitude is likely an important ingredient for adolescent flourishing" (p. 645).

How we cultivate gratitude in youth matters and may determine the type and degree of benefits that result. Gratitude is a learned process that takes effort and musts be practiced to see benefits. (Froh et al., 2007). Gratitude is often taught as a social convention; as a polite formula with a focus on when one is supposed to give thanks (e.g., parents requiring their children to say thank you) and rarely with an emphasis on the reasons gratitude matters (Gleason & Weintraub, 1976). Adult and parental support and encouragement may advance the development of expressions and experiences of gratitude in youth (Froh et al., 2007). Gratitude allows people to capitalize on beneficial social exchanges (Froh et al., 2014), and youth could benefit from understanding this. Writing three good things that happened and why they happened each day for a week was shown to increase happiness and decrease depressive symptoms (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005). In teaching gratitude to youth, however, interventions that help youth

understand the "social exchange of benefits may be more effective than simply listing blessings because they impart social skills that can be immediately applied to social life" (Froh et al., 2014, p.135). In particular, if parents and adults explain to children the connection between expressing gratitude and the benefit the child received from the benefactor, and explain that the benefit was bestowed intentionally, it may aide in the child's development of gratitude (Froh et al., 2014). In designing how to teach gratitude to youth, we need to move beyond obligatory or socially expected gratitude, and instead break down the concept of gratitude into digestible bits (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). We can do this by helping youth understand the intent of the benefactor to help, the cost the benefactor incurs by helping, and the benefits the youth received. This strategy has been shown to be successful with children eight to eleven years old (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014).

The research on gratitude clearly demonstrates the advantages to cultivating gratitude in youth. BBBS-GLBR may find that teaching gratitude is a simple way to advance the well-being of youth. BBBS-GLBR can implement gratitude through the strategies outlined above, in particular communicating the benefits of gratitude, rather than just teaching social conventions of polite behavior and going beyond making lists of blessings, may hasten the development of gratitude in youth.

Resilience

Resilience refers to the ability to adapt positively to significant challenges in life (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009). This ability allows an individual to navigate and recover from adverse events and risk, such as poverty, loss of a parent, or other trauma. This is often referred to as the ability to "bounce back" (Reivich & Shatté, 2002, p. 23). The study of resilient individuals - those who sufficiently meet developmental expectations despite conditions that

threaten positive outcomes - indicates the presence of attributes that support adaptation (Masten et al., 2009). These attributes, called protective factors, act as resources that protect individuals from potential negative outcomes by compensating, mitigating, intervening, or preventing risk (Masten et al., 2009). Protective factors include self-efficacy, self-regulation, adaptability, meaning and faith, optimism, self-awareness, and self-worth (Masten et al., 2009; Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Werner, 1992; Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011).

These individual attributes can be strengthened, and are influenced by relationship and environmental influences (Masten et al., 2009). Factors such as authoritative parenting (warm, structured, and a high-expectation environment), positive attachment relationships (loving and dependable), and close relationships with competent, supportive, and resilient adults influence the development of resilience in youth (Masten et al., 2009). Additionally, factors such as postsecondary education attainment of parents, socioeconomic advantages, effective schools, and access to public safety, health care, and prosocial organizations and communities predict resilience in youth.

Programs to develop resilience utilize three strategies (Masten et al., 2009). First, risk-focused strategies seek to prevent or reduce unsafe experiences. This includes strategies that seek to lower incidents of low birthweight, homelessness, or neighborhood crime (Masten et al., 2009). Second, asset-focused strategies aim to increase the quality and access to social capital, such as basic needs (food, water, and shelter), parenting classes, tutoring, or community services. Third, process-focused strategies utilize human adaptation systems to build resilience (Masten et al., 2009). This strategy leverages systems such as the basic human protective (brain development and attachment parenting) and adaptive (motivational systems for mastery) systems to nurture healthy brain development, develop secure attachments to caring adults, and build

self-efficacy. Strategies at each level that support these systems support comprehensive

resiliency development in youth (Masten et al., 2009).

Since BBBS-GLBR seeks to promote positive outcomes for at-risk children, it seems

relevant that mentoring is noted as a process-focused strategy to build resiliency. Positive

attachment-style relationships that model protective factors can aid the development of

protective factors in youth to promote healthy developmental outcomes, such as academic

achievement, conduct, friendships, and mental health (Masten et al., 2009).

Grit

Building on a body of work stretching back over a hundred years, renowned psychologist

Angela Duckworth and colleagues have explored the question of why some people accomplish

more than others (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). Intelligence is correlated

with success, but perseverance - hard work and an unrelenting drive - is equally important to

high achievement (Howe, 2001). Ability or intelligence alone does not guarantee

accomplishment. Grit, or "perseverance and passion for long-term goals," is a significant factor

in determining who succeeds (Duckworth et al, 2007, p. 1087).

Grit involves working hard, persevering, and having enough passion to sustain effort and

interest spanning long periods of time despite setbacks, challenges, and failures (Duckworth,

2016). Duckworth (2016) posits that the formula for achievement involves talent and effort, but

effort counts more than talent. As such, talent multiplied by effort equals skill and skill

multiplied by effort equals achievement. Thus, as we pursue success, effort counts twice

(Duckworth, 2016). Gritty individuals stick to their goals over the long run, while their less gritty

peers may give up or change goals in the face of frustration, boredom, or adversity (Duckworth

et al., 2007).

Research has shown that in children and adult populations, gritty people outperform their less gritty peers (Duckworth et al, 2007). Gritty individuals attain higher levels of education and change careers less frequently (allowing time to develop career expertise), and even when their SAT scores were lower, gritty individuals outperformed their less gritty peers academically, scoring higher GPAs (Duckworth et al, 2007). Non-cognitive skills (intrapersonal resources, attributes, and skills, as opposed to content knowledge) including grit are essential for students to become successful community members (Laursen, 2015).

Duckworth et al. (2007) suggest that to develop grit we should encourage stamina in children's work, and support not just talent and ability in youth, but their exceptional commitment to what interests them. In addition, we should prepare youth to accept that setbacks and failures are normal and inevitable on the long road to success, as well as help them see that it takes persistence over years to reach excellence in any discipline *(*Duckworth et al, 2007). Grit can be developed and parents, mentors, and staff at BBBS-GLBR can help youth get grittier.

Growth mindset

According to Carol Dweck (2006), "growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things that you can cultivate through your efforts" (p. 7). In contrast, fixed mindset is "believing that your qualities are carved in stone" (Dweck, 2006, p. 6). Why is this important? Dweck's (2006) research shows that the view people adopt for themselves profoundly affects the way they lead their life, so it is especially important to help young children develop a growth mindset early on. Their personal beliefs that their abilities can grow and develop impact a multitude of factors, including reducing depression and increasing resilience and school achievement (Dweck, 2006; Yaeger & Dweck, 2012).

One key practice for cultivating growth mindset is praise, which is a key means through which youth become aware of their beliefs and values (Gunderson et al., 2013). Specifically, using person versus process praise can impact the beliefs and behaviors of a child. Children who hear person praise, such as "you're so smart," may come to believe that the sources of their accomplishments are fixed traits, whereas children who hear process praise, such as "you must have worked really hard," may believe that the sources of their accomplishment are due to effort and practice (Gunderson et al., 2013). Research suggests parent praise early on (ages 1-3) can impact their child's motivational frameworks five years later, so it is important that parents learn how to praise children right early on (Gunderson et al., 2013). It is also important to train both parents and mentors on person versus process praise so there is consistency when children interact with their parents at home and when children are with their mentors. Lastly, we must educate both parents and mentors that boys tend to receive more process praise than girls, and to keep this gender imbalance in mind with their children in order to counteract it (Gunderson et al., 2013).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy theory, examined by James Maddux (2009), is the personal control individuals have in the belief of their abilities to produce desired outcomes. This theory has roots in social cognitive theory, which is an approach to understanding what drives us as humans in the realms of cognition, motivation, emotion, and action, and suggests that we have control over outcomes as opposed to just passively reacting to our environment (Maddux, 2009). Maddux explains that the core component of social cognitive theory is the idea that we are capable of self-regulation, or the innate capacity we have as human beings to manage our thoughts, emotions, and responses (Baumeister, Gailliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006).

Efficacy development has four approaches, which include: mastery or success experiences (i.e. performance), vicarious learning or modeling from relevant others, social persuasion, and positive feedback, in addition to physiological and psychological arousal (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Among these, performance experience is arguably the most critical, as it provides us with tangible evidence of previous successes, therefore motivating us more to reach our end goal (Baumeister et al., 2006).

Research suggests that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with greater performance and lower emotional arousal (Bandura, 1982). In a study of a sample of 289 children divided into two treatment groups, those who had exposure to a high self-efficacy scenario had greater intended effort, persistence, and future self-efficacy as opposed to children in the a low self-efficacy scenario (Chase, 1996). Researchers also determined that a child's perceived academic, social, and self-regulatory efficacy impacts their academic aspirations and future career pursuits (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). For these reasons, self-efficacy increasing techniques would be beneficial to the at-risk youth BBBS-GLBR serves.

Positive Relationships

Chris Peterson (2006) summed up positive psychology as, "other people matter" (p. 249). While psychology had previously turned inward and potentially neglected the impact of interpersonal relationships, positive psychology now places relationships at the forefront by acknowledging their significance as a central component of well-being (Peterson, 2006; Seligman, 2011). Research has shown that having close relationships is linked to positive health and well-being measures throughout life (Gable & Gosnell, 2011). Relationships increase well-being through various mechanisms. In times of stress, people turn to those close to them to cope. Similarly, in times of celebration, people benefit from sharing positive events. This is called

capitalization, which refers to the accentuating effect that occurs from disclosing positive experiences to a loved one and experiencing their response (Gable & Gosnell, 2011). Individuals are motivated to pursue relationships because they support achieving an ideal self, self-expansion (incorporating resources, perspectives, and identities of others), and love (Gable & Gosnell, 2011). Close relationships also provide a sense of belonging, which can be a powerful motivation to initiate and maintain relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Positive attachment relationships (i.e. close, enduring relationships) can support healthy human development from infancy into adulthood (Lopez, 2009). Research shows that positive adult attachment in children leads to security to pursue exploration and learning, which builds self-efficacy, mastery, and meta-cognitive skills (Lopez, 2009). Attachment relationships provide the supportive framework for adaptive adult functioning and are linked to the experience of positive emotions, dispositional optimism, cognitive flexibility, and better self-worth (Lopez, 2009). These outcomes lead to healthy adult functioning. Those with positive attachment relationships experience more healthy relationships, effective parenting, academic achievement, motivation, career development, job satisfaction, and post–traumatic growth (Lopez, 2009). Attachment relationships are a basis for a healthy functioning adult life and promote resilience (Lopez, 2009; Masten et al., 2009). Enhancing positive relationships will both strengthen the connections throughout BBBS-GLBR and benefit the youth served.

Conclusion

The research on the eight positive psychology topics reviewed above (optimism, gratitude, resilience, grit, growth mindset, self-efficacy, character strengths, and positive relationships) will provide the foundation for the evergreen content we provide in the Positive Psychology Playbook, which BBBS-GLBR will draw from to create trainings. These resources

will help BBBS-GLBR achieve their goal of providing positive psychology training and

resources, and creating a common language and skills for mentors and parents.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY PLAYBOOK

THEIR POTENTIAL. A BIGGER FUTURE.

Big Brothers Big Sisters ®
OF THE GREAT LAKES BAY REGION

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome! The Big Brothers Big Sisters Positive Psychology Playbook is your guide to the latest science of thriving - for Littles! The purpose of this playbook is to *help you* help Littles reach their full potential. In the playbook, you will find bite-size education and activities on eight key positive psychology topics including gratitude, grit, growth mindset, optimism, resilience, self efficacy, character strengths, and positive relationships. Each chapter can be deployed in different ways to the Big Brothers Big Sisters staff, mentors, and parents to help Littles reach their full potential.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

CUSTOMIZATION.

When it comes to activities that create meaningful behavior change there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Customize activities to every Little based on their personality, strengths, lifestyle, goals, interests, and passions. For example, an introverted Little may be more comfortable writing a gratitude letter than participating in an in-person gratitude visit!

MEASUREMENT.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Staff: please include a short survey before and after each activity to measure the effectiveness and impact, and adjust the activities as needed to ensure success. Even a short two question survey asking if they completed the activity and measuring satisfaction works!

CONSISTENCY.

Littles are developing habits right now that can last a lifetime. Big Brothers Big Sisters staff, mentors, and parents can reinforce positive thoughts, behaviors, and habits through consistent messaging and practice.

GRATITUDE

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. *Appreciating what you've been given.*

Key Indicators. *An environment filled with positive feedback and appreciation from Littles, mentors, and parents.*

Benefits.

- *Decreased depression and anxiety.*

- *Increased resilience following traumatic events.*

- *Increased physical and psychological health.*

- *Increased well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction.*

- *Increased positive emotions and optimism.*

- *Increased helpfulness.*

- *Strengthened relationships with others and bonding.*

- *Better sleep, less fatigue, and lower inflammation.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors.

- Gratitude develops in childhood and most children understand gratitude by age 5.

- Mentors can teach children to be more grateful through daily and weekly gratitude practices.

- Gratitude means more than being polite and saying thank you. Encourage littles to go beyond thank you and recognize others using their interests and strengths.

- Teach littles how to both give gratitude and also receive gratitude. Focus on helping children *savor* the gratitude when they receive it.

What This Means For Parents.

- Parenting is important for the development of gratitude and parents play a key role teaching children to be more grateful.

- One of the best ways to raise more grateful children is to be more grateful yourself!

- Most parents teach their kids to say thank you, but it's important to encourage deeper forms of gratitude so it doesn't feel obligatory. For example, rather than just teaching your child to say thank you, ask them to share the *impact* the good deed had on them.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Three Good Things Bite.
Write down (draw, color, or paint!) three good things every day!

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Recognition Bite.
Don't follow the golden rule! For high impact, recognize others they way *they* like to be recognized, not the way you like to be recognized.

ACTIVITIES.

- **Count Your Blessings.** Keep a gratitude journal and count your blessings by writing three good things each day for a week.

- **Gratitude Letter.** Write a letter of gratitude and send it to someone who made your day. Get creative: add stickers, color, draw, or write a song!

- **Gratitude Visit.** Visit someone in person and say thank you! Share the impact they had on you.

FURTHER READING.

Gratitude is a powerful practice that will positively impact the youth being served through Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region. Gratitude is experienced when a person feels he or she has received something beneficial (Froh & Bono, 2008). Gratitude stems from a sense that you have experienced a positive benefit due to another person's intentional effort (Froh, Yurkewicz, & Kashdan, 2009).

Gratitude is a critical element in social life and has important implications for well-being. Research shows experiencing and expressing gratitude has many benefits. For example, writing three good things that happened and why they happened each day for a week was shown to increase happiness and decrease depressive symptoms (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005). Gratitude also increases subjective well-being, strengthens relationships, increases prosocial behavior (or how helpful someone is to others), promotes academic achievement due to increased motivation, and it may expand the options for how a person thinks and acts in a

situation, paving the way for building lasting social, intellectual and physical resources. (Froh, Miller & Snyder, 2007). It's also a motivator for good behavior (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001).

Most importantly, evidence has shown that gratitude in adolescents strengthens social relationships, which is crucial to the success of Littles (Froh et al, 2009). Research suggests that individuals high in gratitude experience more positive relationships, have more appreciation for their relationships, and use social support more than those lower in experiences of gratitude (Froh et al., 2014). It may also function as a safeguard against the "eroding effects of materialism" and social media's impact on friendships (Froh et al., 2007, p. 3). Thus, gratitude is likely an important ingredient for adolescent flourishing.

How we cultivate gratitude in youth matters. Gratitude is a learned process that takes effort and musts be practiced to see benefits. Gratitude is often taught as a social convention; as a polite formula with a focus on when one is supposed to give thanks (e.g., parents requiring their children to say thank you) and with little or no emphasis on the reasons gratitude matters (Gleason & Weintraub, 1976). Even this obligatory gratitude (e.g., being made to say thank you) offers some benefit; children learn social scripts that help them navigate the social world (Froh et al., 2007). Adult and parental support and encouragement may advance the development of expressions and experiences of gratitude in youth, so it's important for the adults and mentors in children's lives to practice gratitude themselves and encourage a gratitude practice in their Littles. (Froh et al., 2007).

In designing how to teach gratitude to youth, we need to move beyond obligatory or socially expected gratitude (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). Parents and mentors can highlight how another person's generosity is an opportunity to give thanks and then

explain to Littles the impact their gratitude has on others (Froh et al., 2014). Parents and mentors can also help youth understand the intent of the benefactor to help, the cost the benefactor incurs by helping, and the benefits the youth received. This strategy has been shown to be successful with children eight to eleven years old (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014).

The research on gratitude clearly demonstrates the advantages to cultivating gratitude in youth. Big Brothers Big Sisters can implement gratitude through the strategies outlined above, in particular communicating the benefits of gratitude, rather than just teaching social conventions of polite behavior and going beyond making lists of blessings, may hasten the development of gratitude in youth.

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- **Read more about the science of gratitude.**
    - [Book] Gratitude Works! A 21 Day Program from Creating Emotional Prosperity by Robert A. Emmons (a deep dive into the latest science of gratitude!)
    - [Online Magazine] Greater Good Magazine (the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley breaks down the latest science on positive psychology. This resource tab includes a list of the seminal research on gratitude and links to the original studies)
        - [Whitepaper] The Science of Gratitude (an in-depth white paper on the science of gratitude)

- **Find additional science-based activities.**

  - [Character Lab | Gratitude Playbook](#) (a science-based Gratitude Playbook written by Angela Duckworth, the leading researcher on grit, that includes a summary of gratitude research, gratitude activities, links to the latest books on gratitude, and videos about gratitude by the gratitude experts!)

  - [App] Happify.com (science-based activities and games designed by positive psychology experts. Gratitude tracks / activities include "Be Thankful and Stop Comparing Yourself to Others' and "The Power of Positive Communication")

GRIT

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. *Passion and perseverance for long-term goals.*

Key Indicators. *Passion, effort, and hard work toward goal(s) of personal interest over a long period of time; getting back up even in the face of setbacks. Mental toughness* 💪 *(and sometimes this means knowing when to adjust and set a new and better goal).*

Benefits.

- *Increases the likelihood of accomplishing challenging goals that are meaningful to Littles.*

- *Increases the likelihood of graduating from high school or college.*

- *Increases the likelihood of both academic and professional success.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors & Parents.

- Help identify a child's passions and interests (what gets them excited? what are they interested in?).

- Set a long term goal related to their top passion, one that is exciting to Littles.

- Encourage hard work.

- Share that setbacks and failures are normal and inevitable on the long road to success.

- Help youth see that it takes persistence over years to reach excellence in any discipline.

- Talk to children about grit (share what it means and why it's important) and create opportunities for children to research gritty

  people like their favorite heroes and idols.

- Help them see intelligence as malleable and something that can grow and develop over time.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Love Filled Goal Bite.
What do you LOVE? Set a goal related to something you love and write down three next steps!

BIG POTENTIAL BITES! 💪

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Grit Bite.
Passion and effort will help you accomplish your goal. Take it one step at a time!

YOU!   YOUR GOAL

BIG POTENTIAL BITES! 💯

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Monday Goal Setting Bite.
Set goals on Monday with to increase the likelihood they will be achieved.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ACTIVITIES.

- **Gather Grit Stories.** Littles and bigs can interview other children, friends, and family about times in their life when they persisted in the face of challenges. Bigs can share a story with Littles about when they worked hard toward a long term goal, the obstacles they faced, and how they persisted.

- **Grit Spotting in Favorite Books and Movie Characters.** Explain what grit is (passion and perseverance for long-term goals) and then practice spotting grit in your Littles favorite heroes by reading children's books (such as Oh, the Places You'll Go by Dr. Seuss) or watching children's movies (such as Brave, PG) that highlight stories with gritty characters. After the movie, talk about and celebrate the key grit moments to inspire grittiness in Littles!

FURTHER READING.

Why do some people accomplish more than others do? Building on a body of work stretching back over a hundred years, renowned psychologist Angela Duckworth and colleagues have explored this question (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). Ability or intelligence alone does not guarantee accomplishment, but grit (perseverance and passion for long-term goals) is a significant ingredient in the recipe for success (Duckworth et al, 2007, p. 1087). In other words, intelligence is correlated with success, but perseverance, hard work, and an unrelenting drive is equally important to high achievement (Howe, 2001).

Is grit and self-control the same thing? Self-control, or controlling one's attention and actions despite temptation is correlated with grit, but they are not the same (Duckworth, & Gross, 2014). Self-control is about dependability and lacks the passion identified in high achievers (Duckworth et al, 2007). Self-control allows one to stick to a goal despite temptations in the moment. Grit, on the other hand, is about sticking to a goal on a much longer timescale (Duckworth, & Gross, 2014). Grit involves working hard, persevering, and having enough passion to maintain effort and interest over long periods of time despite setbacks, challenges and failures. A gritty individual will stick with long-term goals for years or even decades (Duckworth, 2016).

Research demonstrates that in children and adult populations, gritty people outperform their less gritty peers (Duckworth et al, 2007). Gritty individuals attain higher levels of education and change careers less frequently (allowing time to develop career expertise), and even when their SAT scores were lower, gritty individuals out performed their less gritty peers academically, scoring higher GPAs (Duckworth et al, 2007).

Achievement requires both talent and effort, and Duckworth (2016) posits that effort counts twice in the formula for achievement. Effort is comprised of intensity (full engagement during practice), duration (amount of time invested), and direction (not switching goals or objectives, following through) (Duckworth et al., 2007). Gritty Littles stick to their goals over the long run, while their less gritty peers may give up or change goals in the face of frustration, boredom or adversity (Duckworth et al., 2007).

The implications of the research on grit for youth development are many. Importantly, researchers Hoeschler, Balestra, and Backes-Gellner (2018) demonstrated that grit is malleable during adolescence. To develop grit, Duckworth et al., (2007) suggest we

encourage stamina in children's work. Adults and parents should not only support talent and ability in youth, but also their exceptional

commitment to what interests them (Duckworth et al, 2007). We should prepare youth to accept that setbacks and failures are normal

and inevitable on the long road to success, and we should help youth see that it takes persistence over years to reach excellence in

any discipline (Duckworth et al, 2007). We should also talk to children about grit and create opportunities for children to research

gritty people such as someone who has persevered through hardship or achieved excellence despite major setbacks (Laursen,

2015). In addition, we need to help youth internalize the motivation to persist (Duckworth et. al, 2007) and help them see intelligence

as something that can grow and develop (Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015). Believing that intelligence can grow and change can help

youth develop grit and increases the likelihood of attaining goals (Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015).

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- **Read more about the science of gratitude.**

  - [TED Talk]: Grit: The power of passion and perseverance (a talk by leading grit researcher, Angela Duckworth, who

    explains her theory of grit as a predictor of success)

  - [Book] Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth (a deep dive into the latest science of grit)

- **Find additional science-based activities.**

- Character Lab: Grit Playbook (a science-based Grit Playbook written by Angela Duckworth that includes a summary of grit research, grit activities, links to the latest books on grit, and videos about grit by the latest grit experts!)

- [App] Happify.com (Science-based activities and games designed by positive psychology experts. Grit tracks / activities include "Get Tough and Grow Your Grit")

- Big Life Journal (nine activities to build grit and resilience in children)

GROWTH MINDSET

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. *The belief that abilities, intelligence, and talents can be developed.*

Key Indicators. *A desire to learn, embracing challenge, persisting in the face of obstacles, putting in the hard work / effort, learning*

from criticism, and celebrating mistakes. When Littles make a mistake and smile anyway, they have a growth mindset. 😃

Benefits.

- *Decreased depression.*

- *Reduced aggression and bullying.*

- *Increased resilience.*

- *Increased helping behavior.*

- *Have more fun and enjoy learning.*

- *Increased achievement.*

- *A greater sense of free will.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors and Parents.

- Recognize your own mindset (do you believe your intelligence can be developed? Do you have a desire to learn? Do you celebrate mistakes?). If you have a fixed mindset, you're more likely to judge children as having low potential.

- The way you praise your child matters and will impact their mindset. Person praise (such as "you're so smart") has a label and leads to a fixed mindset. Instead, praise children for *effort* (you worked so hard), strategies (I like how you covered your mouth) or action (nice catch). This is called process praise and encourages a growth mindset.

- Boys tend to receive more process praise (the good kind of praise) than girls, which is important to keep in mind. Praise that girls tend to hear frequently like "you're so beautiful" is a form of person praise and leads to a fixed mindset. Make a point to praise girls correctly using process praise, and praise for effort, strategy or action.

What This Means For Parents.

- Parent praise early on (ages 1-3) can impact their child's belief systems five years later (at age 6 - 8), so it is important that parents learn how to praise children right early on - starting at 1 year old! 🍼

BIG POTENTIAL BITES.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Believe In Yourself Bite.
You can learn anything...if you *believe* in yourself.

😞 I'm not good at this

😃 I'm not good at this...YET!

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Your Praise Matters Bite.
Ditch the label. Praise effort instead.

👎 You're so smart

👍 You worked so hard

ACTIVITIES.

- **Learn How The Brain Grows with Learning. Then Try Something New!** First, watch this [kids video] that explains the growth mindset and shows how the brain grows with learning. Then, learn something new together with your Little!

- **Celebrate Mistakes.** Think of a time when you made a mistake. Celebrate it. 🎉 Remember, we can't learn and grow without making mistakes. Reflect on what you learned and how you grew as a person to reframe mistakes as a gift.

FURTHER READING.

Dweck's (2006) research shows that the view people adopt for themselves profoundly affects the way they lead their life, so it is especially important to help young children develop a growth mindset early on. Growth Mindset is the belief that abilities, intelligence, and talents can be developed whereas fixed mindset is the belief that abilities, intelligence and talents are fixed traits (Dweck, 2006). The belief that abilities can grow and develop has many benefits including reducing depression and increasing resilience and school achievement (Dweck, 2006; Yaeger & Dweck, 2012).

One key practice for cultivating growth mindset is praise, which is an important vehicle through which children become aware of their beliefs and values (Gunderson et al., 2013). Specifically, using person versus process praise can impact a child's beliefs and behaviors. Children who hear person praise, such as "you're so smart," may come to believe that the sources of their accomplishments are fixed traits, whereas children who hear process praise, such as "you must have worked really hard," may come to believe that the sources of their accomplishment are due to effort and practice (Gunderson et al., 2013). Research suggests parent praise early on (ages 1-3) can impact their child's belief systems five years later (ages 6 - 8), so it is important that parents learn how to praise children right early on (Gunderson et al., 2013). It is also important that both parents and mentors understand the difference

between person versus process praise so there is consistency when children interact with their parents at home and when children are with their mentors. Lastly, we must educate both parents and mentors that boys tend to receive more process praise than girls, and to keep this gender imbalance in mind with their children in order to counteract it (Gunderson et al., 2013).

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- **Read more about the science of growth mindset.**
  - [TED Talk]: The power of believing you can improve (a talk by Carol Dweck, the leading research behind growth mindset, on the new psychology of success)
  - [Book] Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck (a deep dive into the science of growth mindset)
- **Find additional science-based activities.**
  - Big Life Journal (inspire a growth mindset in your child: journals, activities and posters to raise resilient, confident kids)
  - Growth Mindset Board Game

OPTIMISM

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. *The belief or expectation that good things will happen!*

Key Indicators. *When things go wrong, saying to yourself that it won't last forever, that it isn't your fault, and that it won't impact all other areas of life.*

Benefits.

- *Prevent chronic disease and reduces depressive symptoms.*

- *Improved relationships and higher self worth.*

- *Improved immune system.*

- *Increased resilience.*

- *Increased life expectancy.*

- *Increased physical health, mental health, and emotional wellbeing.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors & Parents.

- Optimism and pessimism develops early in life, so it's important to help Little develop an optimistic explanatory style (see details below) early on.

- Help Littles develop an optimistic outlook. Teach Littles (1) to not take things personally (explain bad events as external), (2) to know that the bad event is not permanent (will not continue to occur) and (3) that it won't impact all other parts of life. For example, if a Little does poorly on a math test s/he could explain this to his/herself in one of the two following ways:

  - Pessimistic explanatory style: (1) I am no good at math (2) I always do bad in math (3) I'm not a good student

  - Optimistic explanatory style: (1) That test was hard (2) I didn't study enough for this test, but can do better next time (3) I'm good at other subjects, and can study more for math next time.

- How do you respond to bad events? Do you take it personally, feel like it's permanent, and that it will impact all areas of life. Become aware of your own explanatory style (internal thoughts in reaction to setbacks) so you can become aware of your own thoughts patterns and set a good example for Littles.

Big Brothers
Big Sisters®
OF THE GREAT LAKES
BAY REGION

BIG POTENTIAL BITES! 🥰

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Loving Kindness Meditation.

Think about the important people in your life.

Do you want them to feel happy? Do you want them to feel loved?

Send positive thoughts their way.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Positive Response Bite.

👎 "I'm not good at math, I always do bad on tests, and I'm not a good student."

👍 "That test was hard. I didn't study enough for the test, but I'm good at other subjects, and next time I can study more for math."

ACTIVITIES.

- **Practice Positive Thoughts.** Prompt Little to come up with a list of positive thoughts about themselves (i.e., I am kind to my other classmates). This will help them to think positively about themselves and others, leading to a more optimistic view in the future.

- **Share Optimism Stories!** Think about a time you faced a really hard setback and how you responded. Share stories to give Littles a glimpse into how you process hard events as well as celebrate good events, which will promote positive thinking in them.

FURTHER READING.

Optimism reflects the extent to which people expect good things in the future (Carver, Scheier, Miller, & Fulford, 2010). Optimism is considered a mindset and set of skills that can broaden and enrich life (Reivich & Shatte, 2002). Research shows that there are many benefits to being an optimistic person. First, higher levels of optimism are associated with increased subjective well-being in the face of challenging situations and adversity (Carver et al., 2010). Optimism is associated with better relationships,

physical health outcomes, coping skills, persistence in educational efforts, and income later in life (Carver et al., 2010). Optimists also are more likely to adjust positively to significant life transitions (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994).

Optimism's counterpart is pessimism. The difference between falling into optimistic or pessimistic way of thinking is dependent on explanatory style, or how one explains the causes of events that happen to them (Peterson, & Steen, 2009). For those with an optimistic explanatory style perspective, negative events are perceived to be external (i.e., "It's not my fault"), unstable (i.e., "This won't last forever") and specific (i.e., "This bad event is just related to this one thing"). A pessimistic explanatory style is the opposite (Seligman, 1991). People with a pessimistic explanatory style think that bad events are their fault, that the bad event will last forever, and that it will impact all other areas of life.

Optimism and pessimism are believed to develop early in life, however, there is minimal research regarding when and how they arise in children (Ey et al., 2005). Evidence does show that pessimism is related to the psychological well-being of children in elementary school and is associated with lower self-esteem and poorer peer relations (Ey et al., 2005). Research suggests, however, that optimism training in youth is linked to a lower risk of developing depression up to two years after implementing a school intervention. Lastly, youth who were optimistic about their ability to overcome challenges reported fewer depressive symptoms, as well as higher self-worth and competence (Ey et al., 2005).

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- **Read more about the science of optimism**

    - [Website] What Are Attributional and Explanatory Styles in Psychology? (a deep dive into explanatory style!)

    - [Website] Positive Psychology Resources (to learn more about optimism, the advantage of optimism, why optimism matters, optimism in children, learning to be optimistic, the power of pessimism, defensive pessimism, and optimism and culture)

    - [Website] The Psychology of Optimism and Pessimism: Theories and Research Findings (a deep dive into the science of optimism, pessimism, explanatory style, and the dark side of optimism)

RESILIENCE

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. *The ability to grow in the face of challenges.*

Key Indicators. *Persisting through setbacks, bouncing back, bending but not breaking* 💪

Benefits.

- *Improved learning and academic achievement.*

- *Reduced risk taking behaviors such as drinking, smoking and drug use.*

- *Healthy development in conduct, friendships, and mental health.*

- *Increased involvement in the community and family activities.*

- *Lower mortality and increased physical health and immune functioning.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors.

- Relationships play a vital role in building and developing resilience so you have a huge impact.

- Resilience is strengthened by relationships and the environment. Create safe environments that are both warm and structured.

- Be someone a child can count on; make them feel supported and appreciated.

What This Means For Parents.

- Resilience develops early on an is significantly influenced by parents.

- A parenting style that is loving, nurturing, but structured with high expectations can strengthen resilience.

- Show them it's okay to fail and how you personally handle setbacks. Being a model of resilience for your children can influence the level of resilience in them.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Nobody's Perfect Bite.
Failure is okay. What matters is what you do about it. So, the next time you don't ace the test or win the game, think about what you can do to change that the next time.

💪 📖 ⚽

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Name Your Feeling Bite.
Resilient children are highly self-aware. However, only 36% of people can name their feelings! What are you feeling right now? Can you name it?

😃 😆 🤩 🤪 😒 😔 🥺 😭 😤

ACTIVITIES.

- **Resilience Role Play.** Create task cards with a range of different situations in which Littles might face challenges (e.g., falling down in front of classmates, arguing with a friend, missing the buzzer beater shot). Each card should prompt them to reflect on how they would handle the difficult scenario. Talk through their answer and guide them to reaching one that is productive.

FURTHER READING.

Resilience refers to the ability to adapt positively to significant challenges in life (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009). This ability allows someone to navigate and recover from adverse events and risk, such as poverty, loss of a loved one, or other trauma. Resilience is often referred to as "the ability to bounce back" (Reivich & Shatté, 2002, p. 23). The study of resilient individuals - those who sufficiently meet developmental expectations despite conditions that threaten positive outcomes - shows that there is a presence of attributes that support bouncing back (or adaptation) (Masten et al., 2009). These attributes, called protective factors, act as resources that protect individuals from potential negative outcomes (Masten et al., 2009). Protective factors include self-efficacy, self-regulation, adaptability, meaning and faith, optimism, self-awareness, and self-worth (Masten et al., 2009; Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Werner, 1992; Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011).

Resilience can get stronger and are impacted by relationship and environmental influences (Masten et al., 2009). For example, factors such as authoritative parenting (warm, structured, and a high-expectation environment), positive attachment

relationships (loving and dependable), and close relationships with competent, supportive, and resilient adults influence the development of resilience in youth (Masten et al., 2009). Additionally, factors such as postsecondary education attainment of parents, socioeconomic advantages, effective schools, and access to public safety, health care, and prosocial (helpful) organizations and communities predict resilience in youth.

Programs to develop resilience utilize three strategies (Masten et al., 2009). First, risk-focused strategies seek to prevent or reduce unsafe experiences. This includes strategies that seek to lower incidents of low birth weight, homelessness, or neighborhood crime (Masten et al., 2009). Second, asset-focused strategies strive to increase the quality and access to social capital, such as basic needs (food, water, and shelter), parenting classes, tutoring, or community services. Third, process-focused strategies utilize human adaptation systems to build resilience (Masten et al., 2009). This strategy leverages systems such as the basic human protective (brain development and attachment parenting) and adaptive (motivational systems for mastery) systems to nurture healthy brain development, develop secure attachments to caring adults, and build self-efficacy. Strategies at each level that support these systems support comprehensive resiliency development in youth (Masten et al., 2009). Lastly, mentoring is a process-focused strategy to build resiliency. Positive attachment-style relationships that model protective factors can aid the development of protective factors in youth to promote healthy developmental outcomes, such as academic achievement, conduct, friendships, and mental health (Masten et al., 2009).

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- **Read more about the science of resilience.**

  - [TED Talk]: How failure cultivates resilience (clinical psychologist Raphael Rose on failure as a key to resilience)

  - [Book] The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles (a deep dive into

    the science of resilience with resilience experts, Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte)

- **Find additional science and activities.**

  - [Online Toolkit] Sesame Street: Resilience (created an Educator Activity Guide to assist in the development of

    resilience skills in kids. Includes: guides: tips for parents and caregivers and educators as well as resilience activities

    such as my morning resilience routine and how am I feeling games)

  - Building Resilience in Children Using Fun Games (activity ideas from Tom's of Maine including form a compliment

    circle, play musical chairs, and do a hula hoop challenge!)

  - [Website] Resilience in Positive Psychology: Bouncing Back and Going Strong (additional resilience science, a

    resilience exercise, and visualization technique!)

SELF-EFFICACY

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. *Belief in your abilities to reach a goal or handle any situation!*

Key Indicators. *Higher confidence/self-esteem, drive, perseverance, self-regulation (the ability we have to manage our thoughts, emotions, and responses).*

Benefits.

- *Higher optimism and perseverance.*

- *Greater resilience, effort, and performance, which can sustain through adulthood.*

- *Lower vulnerability to stress and anxiety.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors & Parents.

- Celebrate successes! Not only that, but dig deep into what led to the wins! What did the Little do to contribute to this success? Understanding this will strengthen their self-efficacy in the future.

- Create environments where children feel empowered to problem-solve, set goals for themselves, and map out ways they can reach those goals. Doing so will help to build their self-efficacy.

- Keep an eye out for negative thoughts. These can undermine the belief children have in themselves. So, if you see negative emotions or self-doubt creep up in kids, challenge them with something positive.

- Assist them in practicing resilience. If they fail, don't sweep it under the rug. Talk about what went wrong and what they can do to create a different outcome for the next challenge.

ACTIVITIES.

- **Teach them a new skill.** This can be as simple as following a recipe and creating something delicious. The process of Littles trying out something new and excelling at it will increase the belief they have in themselves to succeed when encountering something unfamiliar.

FURTHER READING.

What is self-efficacy and where does the concept come from? Self-efficacy theory, examined by James Maddux (2009), is the personal control individuals have in the belief of their abilities to produce desired outcomes. This theory has roots in social cognitive theory, which is an approach to understanding what drives us as humans (think our minds, emotions, actions, and what motivates us). It suggests that we have control over outcomes as opposed to just passively reacting to our environment (Maddux, 2009). Maddux explains that the core component of social cognitive theory is the idea that we are capable of *self-regulation*, or the innate capacity we have as human beings to manage our thoughts, emotions, and responses (Baumeister, Gailliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006).

Efficacy development has four approaches, which include: mastery experiences (i.e. focusing on successful performance), vicarious learning or modeling from relevant others, social persuasion and positive feedback, in addition to physiological and psychological arousal (your emotional and physical states have an impact on how you judge your self-efficacy) (Luthans &

Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Among these, performance experience is the most critical, as it provides us with tangible evidence of previous successes, therefore motivating us more to reach our end goal (Baumeister et al., 2006).

Research suggests that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with greater performance and lower emotional arousal (Bandura, 1982). In a study of a sample of 289 children divided into two treatment groups, those who had exposure to a high self-efficacy scenario had higher intended effort, persistence, and future self-efficacy than children exposed to a low self-efficacy scenario (Chase, 1996). Researchers also determined that children's perceived academic, social, and self-regulatory efficacy impact their academic aspirations and future career pursuits (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001).

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- **Read more about the science of self-efficacy.**
  - [Website] What is Self Efficacy Theory in Psychology: Definition and Examples (+PDF) (dig deep into the latest science including: what is the meaning of self-efficacy, 5 examples of high self-efficacy, self-efficacy theory in psychology, can we test and survey self-efficacy, research and studies on the concept, and 11 self-efficacy quotes!)
  - [Book] Self Efficacy: The Exercise of Control by Albert Bandura (a science deep dive by self-efficacy expert, Albert Bandura)

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. Natural capacities for thinking, feeling, and behaving in ways that benefit oneself and others. We each have a special constellation of strengths that makes us unique!

Key Indicators. Knowing your own strengths, recognizing strengths in others and adjusting life (work, school, play, to use strengths as much as possible!)

Benefits.

- *Increased academic achievement.*

- *Improved close relationships.*

- *Positive and supportive social networks.*

- *Less stress and improved coping.*

- *Improved health and well-being, including both mental and physical health.*

- *Greater happiness.*

- *Acceptance of oneself.*

- *Greater reverence for life.*

- *Competence, mastery, efficacy.*

- *Satisfying, engaging, and meaningful work.*

- *Accomplishment of goals.*

- *Greater engagement and life meaning.*

- *Higher work productivity.*

- *Increased likelihood of work being a life calling.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors.

- A strengths perspective helps mentors to "see" more of the child they are mentoring; it offers the mentor a more complete picture that is simultaneously energizing for both the mentor and mentee. Such an approach does not negate or avoid problems, rather it offers a different "lens" for seeing them.

- A character strength lens allows mentors to know what behaviors to reinforce.

- Talking about character strengths can help mentors related to their mentees in a positive way – focusing on what are the child's best qualities.

- Mentors can teach children to recognize their own strengths, and to recognize strengths in others.

- Help Littles think of new ways to use their signature strengths. Research shows that using strengths in a new way every day has long-term positive effects on happiness.

What This Means For Parents.

- Character strengths are a tool to relate to children in a positive way – focusing on the child's best qualities.

- Rather than focusing on weaknesses, character strengths is a way for parents to reinforce what is best in their child.

- One of the best ways to help children build their strengths is to understand our own strengths. Parents can learn to recognize and appreciate their strengths and their children's strengths.

- Help the children learn to identify and appreciate their strengths through strengths spotting and continuing the conversation about strengths. For example, if you see a child sharing appropriately with another child, you could comment on how s/he is using his/her strength of fairness. You may find that when you point out someone's strengths to them, they "light up"; they'll have more energy, more ideas, and more excitement! 🎉

What This Means For Littles.

- Littles have superpowers! They're called character strengths and every child has them.

- The character strengths language means children hear encouraging messages from parents and mentors. They get praised for what they do right!

- Children learn to name what are their best qualities – they get to own their strengths.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Be a Strengths Detective!
Spot strengths in yourself. What are you naturally good at? What do you love to do?

BIG POTENTIAL BITES!

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Be a Strengths Detective!
Spot strengths in others! When you see a strength others, tell them about it and let them know how awesome they are!

BIG POTENTIAL BITES! 💪

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Flex your strengths
Use your top strengths in a new way today.

ACTIVITIES.

- **SEA - Spot, Explain, Appreciate:**

  - **Spot** or notice when you and others are using their strengths.

  - **Explain** what you saw. What is the evidence that you saw a strength in action?

  - Show **appreciation** of what you saw. Affirm the individual's strength. Appreciation expresses value for the person and what s/he has done. Make a game out of this - how many strengths can you see? And, use the SEA method in day-to-day interactions. For example, should a mentor or parent notice a child helping up another child who has fallen, point out their strength of kindness and applaud them for it (e.g., "I noticed you being kind. You're friend fell and you helped him/her up. I appreciate you doing that."). Or if an adult notices a child asking repeated questions s/he could recognize and appreciate that the child has a love of learning and/or curiosity.

- **Strengths Spotting Through the Eyes of Mentors/Role Models:**

  - Ask the mentee to name someone they consider to be a role model or mentor (e.g., a superhero, teacher, family member – anyone they look up to).

  - Try SEA: spotting, explaining and appreciating strengths in the role model, superhero, teacher, etc. Children can find the "hero" or "heroine" in an imperfect parent, sibling, friend, or teacher, such as in a struggling single-parent's

perseverance despite hardships. You can ask "what do you admire in these individuals? How have they positively influenced you? How do they see the real you?"

- **Use a Signature Strength in a New Way Every Day for a Week:** Choose a top strength and get creative - think of news ways to use it, or use it in a different context (e.g., use the perseverance you use to get better in sports to stick to it when doing your homework). A child for whom a top strength is love can be tasked by the mentor to show love to the important people in his/her life in different ways each day. Recommendations for doing so could include: writing a poem about a loved one, drawing a picture for them, singing a song, or even planting a flower in their honor. 🌼

FURTHER READING.

According to Ryan Niemiec, the Education Director of the VIA Institute on Character (2017), character strengths are "positive traits/capacities that are personally fulfilling, do not diminish others, ubiquitous and valued across cultures, and aligned with numerous positive outcomes for oneself and others" (p. 2). There are 24 character strengths and to arrive at this number, Chris Peterson and Martin Seligman (2004) conducted a historical review on the topic of character in "philosophy, virtue ethics, moral education, psychology, and theology over the past 2,500+ years" (Niemiec, 2017, p. 3). Peterson and Seligman (2004) created a classification of the 24 strengths through six virtues, including wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, that are universal in all human beings no matter their religion, culture, or belief system. In their research, 24 strengths emerged as

pathways to these virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The 24 character strengths provide a common language to describe what is best in human beings. According to Niemiec (2017), "the character strength words are readily understood by persons as young as 4-years old and there is often immediate resonance with these concepts" (p. 3). A common, easy to understand language is relevant to our population of mentors who serve marginalized children.

Character strengths are important because, according to a study by Hone, Jarden, Duncan, and Schofield (2015), people who use their strengths regularly are 18 times more likely to flourish. Our goal is to support our organization, Big Brother Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region and help marginalized children not only survive, but thrive, and character strengths are key to thriving. Unfortunately, two-thirds of people are unaware of their strengths, so personal awareness is an important first step (Linley, 2008). According to Niemiec (2017), there are six integration strategies recommended for character strengths-based practitioners, three of which are highly relevant to BBBS-GLBR, including: (1) recognizing, labeling, and affirming strengths in yourself, (2) strengths spotting in others, and (3) aligning character strengths with activities and tasks. As a first step, "Bigs" and "Littles" (mentors and mentees) can start their journey to deepen their relationship and begin self-development by taking the VIA strengths assessment online and learning how to spot strengths in themselves, as well as in others, (Niemiec, 2017). From there, mentors can build on additional strengths-based strategies and interventions to increase well-being.

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- **Learn more about the science of character strengths.**

    - [Website] The VIA Institute on Character

    - [Website] The Positivity Project

    - [Book] Character Strengths Interventions: A Field Guide for Practitioners by Ryan Niemiec

    - [Book] Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification by Chris Peterson and Martin Seligman

    - [Ted Talk] Martin Seligman, The New Era of Positive Psychology (learn more about positive psychology from the founder of positive psychology Martin Seligman!)

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

TOPIC SUMMARY.

Definition. Close, enduring relationships that support optimal growth and development in children.

Key Indicators. Relationships that are enjoyable, supportive, and bring out the best in one another.

Benefits.

- *Reduced stress levels.*

- *Improved physical health.*

- *Improved well-being.*

- *Improved learning.*

- *Improved coping.*

- *Increased resilience.*

- *Improved adult functioning.*

THE RESEARCH.

What This Means For Mentors.

- All it takes is one positive relationship to change a Littles life forever.

- Relational energy (the way an interaction *feels* between two people) is contagious! In other words, the way you show up in the relationship will impact how your Littles show up - show up at your best to bring out their best.

- Building a relationship that is supportive and enjoyable helps Littles learn, and experience self-efficacy (the belief that they can do something) and self-worth.

- Participate in activities that your Little *enjoys* - let them choose based on their interests, preferences and strengths! This can help them have a sense of agency and choice, and also feel valued.

- Really listen to your Little. Make sure they feel heard and understood.

- The way you respond to good news matters a lot! If a little shared good new with you - celebrate! 🎉 Respond with supportive interest and enthusiasm to deepen the relationship. Ask lots follow up questions and relive the experience with them.

What This Means For Parents.

- Close, enduring relationships (also known as positive adult attachment) supports healthy development from childhood into adulthood. In other words, building close relationships with your child *now* provides a foundation for healthy adult functioning for them *later on* in life.

- Close relationships help children feel safe and secure to explore on their own, which supports adaptability, learning, and self-worth. Encourage exploration often to reinforce the feeling that is safe to learn.

- The more socially isolated adults are the less healthy and happy they are. Develop supporting relationships for yourself for your own well-being to encourage and model healthy relationships for your children.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES! 🎉

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Magnify Good News Bite.

Your Little just shared good news. You have two response options:

- Option 1: "Nice job!" or "That's awesome!"
- Option 2: "Tell me more!" or "Let's share this with the world!"

Option 2 strengthens the relationship - respond by extending the good news.

BIG POTENTIAL BITES! 🎤

Actionable insights. Backed by research. Made for littles.

Grab the Mic and Sing Bite!

Singing, dancing, and listening to music together creates the strongest bonds and connections!

Put on your favorite tune and dance! 💃🕺

ACTIVITIES.

- **One Good Thing.** Ask a friend one good thing that happened this week. Practice responding with interest and enthusiasm. Share one in return.

- **Belonging.** Initiate and sustain relationships that offer support, love, and help each other be their best.

- **Respond (not react) to feelings.** Before responding to someone's behavior, identify the feeling they might be having. Consider how you would like them to feel and respond accordingly.

- **Magnify Good News Activity.** The way you respond to good news is just as important as the way you respond to bad news. Ask a Little to share good news and respond *actively* and *constructively* - this means asking them follow up questions, reliving the experience with them and sharing it to the world!

FURTHER READING.

"Resonant relationships are like emotional vitamins - sustaining us through tough times and nourishing us daily" ~ Daniel Goleman

Chris Peterson (2006) summed up positive psychology as, "other people matter" (p. 249). While psychology had previously turned inward and potentially neglected the impact of interpersonal relationships, positive psychology now places relationships at the forefront by acknowledging their significance as a central component of well-being (Peterson, 2006; Seligman, 2011). Research has

shown that having close relationships is linked to positive health and well-being throughout life (Gable & Gosnell, 2011).

Relationships increase well-being through various ways. In times of stress, people turn to those close to them to cope. Similarly, in times of celebration, people benefit from sharing positive events. This is called capitalization, which refers to the amplifying effect that occurs from disclosing positive experiences to a loved one and experiencing their response (Gable & Gosnell, 2011). Individuals are motivated to pursue relationships because they support achieving an ideal self, self-expansion (incorporating resources, perspectives, and identities of others), and love (Gable & Gosnell, 2011). Close relationships also provide a sense of belonging, which can be a powerful motivation to initiate and maintain relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Positive attachment relationships (i.e. close, enduring relationships) can support healthy human development from infancy into adulthood (Lopez, 2009). Research shows that positive adult attachment in children leads to security to pursue exploration and learning, which builds self-efficacy, mastery, and meta-cognitive skills (Lopez, 2009). Attachment relationships provide the supportive framework for adaptive adult functioning and are linked to the experience of positive emotions, dispositional optimism, cognitive flexibility, and better self-worth (Lopez, 2009). These outcomes lead to healthy adult functioning. Those with positive attachment relationships experience more healthy relationships, effective parenting, academic achievement, motivation, career development, job satisfaction, and post–traumatic growth (Lopez, 2009). Attachment relationships are a basis for a healthy functioning adult life and promote resilience (Lopez, 2009; Masten et al., 2009). Enhancing positive relationships will both strengthen the connections throughout BBBS-GLBR and benefit the youth served.

FURTHER RESOURCES.

- [Character Lab | Social Intelligence Playbook](#) (a science-based Social Intelligence Playbook written by Mitch Prinstein, an adolescent psychologist that includes a summary of why social intelligence matters and how to encourage social intelligence in others)

- [[Online Magazine] Greater Good Magazine | Social Connection](#) (the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley breaks down the latest science on positive psychology. The social connection chapter explains what social connection is, why you should practice it and how to cultivate it)
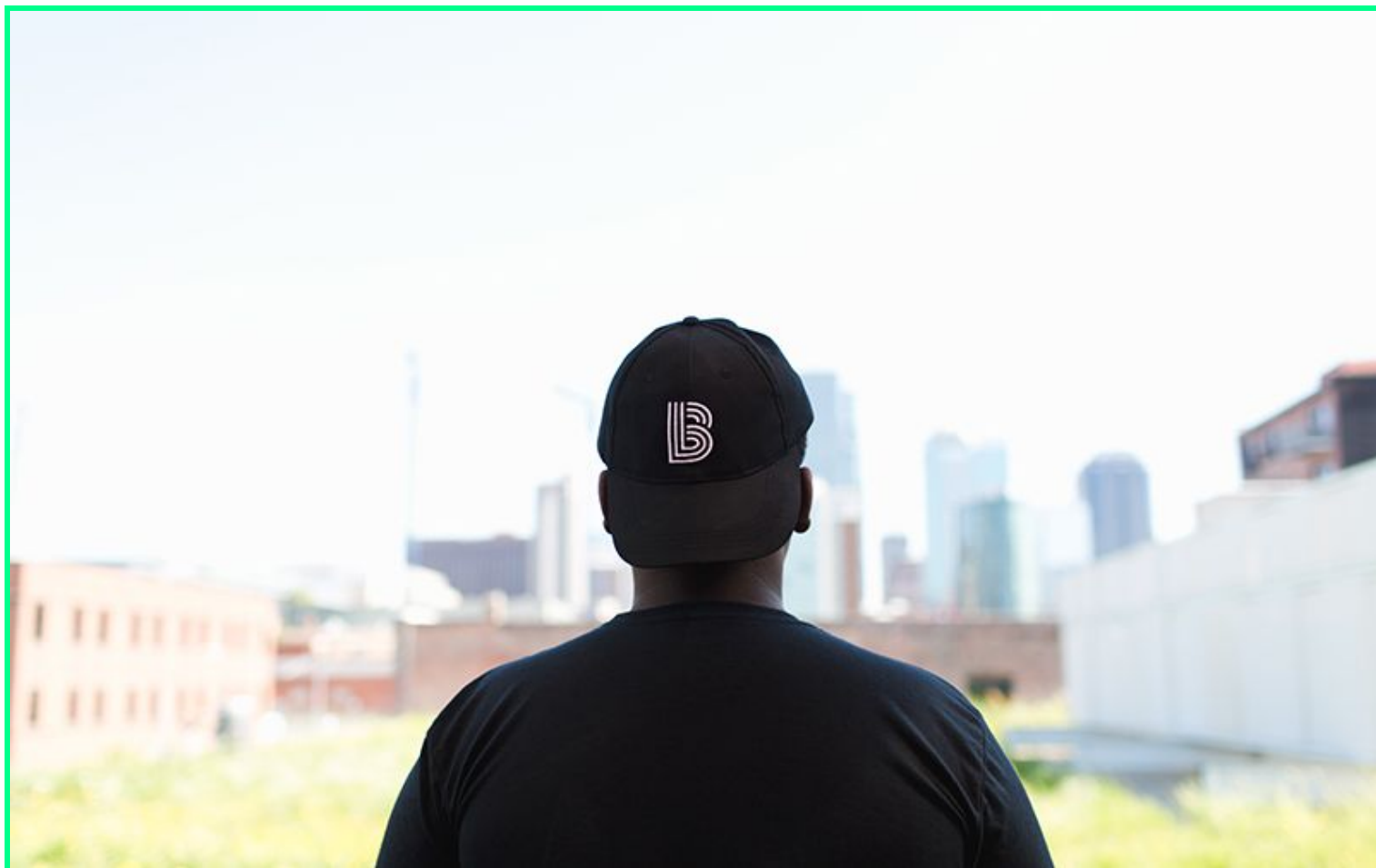
References

B

Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist, 37*, 122-147.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development, 72*, 187-206.

Baumeister, R. F., Gailliot, M., DeWall, C. N., & Oaten, M. (2006). Self-regulation and personality: How interventions increase regulatory success, and how depletion moderates the effects of traits on behavior. *Journal of Personality, 74*(6), 1773-1801.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 497-529.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (2019). About us. Retrieved from

https://www.bbbs.org/about-us/

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region. (2019). About. Retrieved from http://bbbsgreatlakesbay.org

C

Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., Miller, C. J., & Fulford, D. (2010). Optimism. *Clinical Psychological Review, 30*(7), 879-889.

Chase, M. A. (1996). Children's sources of self-efficacy, accuracy of appraisal and motivation in sport skills and physical activities. *Information and Learning, 56*(11), 4317.

D

Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance.* New York, NY: Scribner.

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(6), 1087-1101.

Duckworth, A., & Gross, J. J. (2014). Self-control and grit: Related but separable determinants of success. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 23*(5), 319-325.

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success.* New York, NY: Random House.

E

Ey, S., Hadley, W., Allen, D. N., Palmer, S., Klosky, J., Deptula, D., & Cohen, R. (2005). A new measure of children's optimism and pessimism: The youth life orientation test. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, *46*(5), 548-558.

F

Froh, J. J., & Bono, G. (2008). The gratitude of youth. In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Praeger perspectives. Positive psychology: Exploring the best in people, Vol. 2. Capitalizing on emotional experiences* (pp. 55-78). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group.

Froh, J. J., Bono, G., Fan, J., Emmons, R. A., Henderson, K., Harris, C., & Wood, A. M. (2014). Nice thinking! An educational intervention that teaches children to think gratefully. *School Psychology Review*, *43*(2), 132-153.

Froh, J. J., Miller, D. N., & Snyder, S. F. (2007). Gratitude in children and adolescents: Development, assessment, and school-based intervention. *School Psychology Forum, 2,* 1-13.

Froh, J. J., Yurkewicz, C., & Kashdan, T. B. (2009). Gratitude and subjective well-being in early adolescence: Examining gender differences. *Journal of adolescence*, *32*(3), 633-650.

G

Gable, S. G. & Gosnell, C. L. (2011). The positive side of close relationships. In K. M. Sheldon, T. B. Kashdan, & M. F. Steger (Eds.), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 265 – 279). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gleason, J. B., & Weintraub, S. (1976). The acquisition of routines in child language. *Language in Society*, *5*(2), 129-136.

Gunderson, E. A., Gripshover, S. J., Romero, C., Dweck, C. S., Goldin-Meadow, S., & Levine, S. C. (2013). Parent praise to 1-to 3-year-olds predicts children's motivational frameworks 5 years later. *Child development*, *84*(5), 1526-1541.

H

Hochanadel, A., & Finamore, D. (2015). Fixed and growth mindset in education and how grit helps students persist in the face of adversity. *Journal of International Education Research*, *11*(1), 47-50

Hoeschler, P., Balestra, S., & Backes-Gellner, U. (2018). The development of non-cognitive skills in adolescence. *Economics Letters*, *163*, 40-45.

Hone, L. C., Jarden, A., Duncan, S., & Schofield, G. M. (2015). Flourishing in New Zealand workers: Associations with lifestyle behaviors, physical health, psychosocial, and work-related indicators. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *57*(9), 973-983.

Howe, M. J. (2001). *Genius explained*. Cambridge University Press.

L

Laursen, E. K. (2015). The power of grit, perseverance, and tenacity. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, *23*(4), 19.

Layous, K., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2014). Benefits, mechanisms, and new directions for teaching gratitude to children. *School Psychology Review*, 43, 153–159

Linley, A. (2008). *Average to A+: Realising strengths in yourself and others.* Coventry, UK: CAPP Press.

Lopez, F. G. (2009). Adult attachment security: The relational scaffolding of positive psychology. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 405-415). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Luthans, F. & Youssef-Morgan, C. M. (2017). Psychological capital: An evidence-based positive approach. *The Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 4,* 339-66.

M

Maddux, J. E. (2009). Self-efficacy: The power of believing you can. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 335-343). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Masten, A. S., Cutuli, J. J., Herbers, J. E., & Reed, M. G. J. (2009). Resilience in development. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 117-131). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

McCullough, M. E., Kilpatrick, S. D., Emmons, R. A., & Larson, D. B. (2001). Is gratitude a moral affect?. *Psychological bulletin*, *127*(2), 249.

N

Niemiec, R. M. (2017*). Character Strengths Interventions: A Field Guide for Practitioners.* Boston, MA: Hogrefe Publishing.

Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of social and Clinical Psychology*, *23*(5), 603-619.

P

Peterson, C. (2006). *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Peterson C. & Seligman M.E. (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues: A handbook and classification* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press. New York, NY.

Peterson, C. & Steen, T. A. (2009). Optimistic explanatory style. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 313-321). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

R

Reivich, K. J., Seligman, M. E. P., & McBride, S. (2011). Master resilience training in the U.S. army. *American Psychologist*, *66*(1), 25-34.

Reivich, K, & Shatté, A. (2002). *The resilience factor: 7 essential skills for overcoming life's inevitable obstacles.* New York, NY: Broadway Books.

S

Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): A re-evaluation of the life orientation test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*(6), 1063-1078.

Seligman, M. E. P. (1991). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and live your life.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: empirical validation of interventions. *American psychologist*, *60*(5), 410.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and wellbeing*. New York, NY: Free Press.

V

VIA Institute on Character. Retrieved from viacharacter.org

W

Werner, E. E. (1992). The children of Kauai: Resiliency and recovery in adolescence and adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *13*(4), 262-268.

Y

Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe   that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational psychologist*, *47*(4), 302-314.

Disclaimer: All content draws on cited sources from the bibliography and / or further resources.