Core Principles of Strength-Based Practice

Researchers and practitioners have developed the following principles that serve as the foundation for guiding and implementing strength-based practice.

1) An absolute belief that every person has potential and it is their unique strengths and capabilities that will determine their evolving story as well as define who they are - not their limitations (not, I will believe when I see – rather, I believe and I will see).

2) What we focus on becomes one’s reality – focus on strength, not labels – seeing challenges as capacity fostering (not something to avoid) creates hope and optimism.

3) The language we use creates our reality – both for the care providers and the children, youth and their families.

4) Belief that change is inevitable – all individuals have the urge to succeed, to explore the world around them and to make themselves useful to others and their communities.

5) Positive change occurs in the context of authentic relationships - people need to know someone cares and will be there unconditionally for them. It is a transactional and facilitating process of supporting change and capacity building– not fixing.

6) Person’s perspective of reality is primary (their story)– therefore, need to value and start the change process with what is important to the person - not the expert.

7) People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they are invited to start with what they already know.

8) Capacity building is a process and a goal – a life long journey that is dynamic as opposed to static.

9) It is important to value differences and the essential need to collaborate – effective change is a collaborative, inclusive and participatory process – “it takes a village to raise a child”.

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