

## Section 3 – Supporting young people with help-seeking and being hopeful about the future

Use the information in this document to support you to deliver Section 3 of the Jigsaw toolkit. Being able to identify strengths and thinking about the supports which exist within their environment are important parts of young people feeling able to cope with current and future challenges which, in turn, supports their mental health. This section will support you as you work with young people to reflect on their strengths and to encourage them to be hopeful for the future.

### What is a strengths-based perspective?

The strengths-based perspective was developed by people working in mental health services in North America in the 1990s (Saleebey, 1996; Rapp, 1998). They sought to challenge key ideas in medical and psychiatry services. The strengths-based perspective suggests concentrating on problems and the past can take up too much energy and resources and be fruitless.

Using a strengths-based perspective with young people means focusing on the positives of the young person's circumstances. The approach does not disregard the young person's difficulties but it draws heavily on the young person's expertise and potential to resolve their own problems.

### Concepts:

- Adverse life events are not strong predictors of future capacities.

- Young people usually demonstrate resilience, not pathology, when faced with adverse life events. It is important to trust the young person's perception of their situation and it is critical that those working with the young person do not assume the upper limits of their capabilities.
- To support a young person using a strengths-based perspective, one must identify and mobilise the young person's strengths (talents, knowledge and capacities) with the aim of reaching their goals.
- The strengths-based perspective avoids pathologising and thus avoids unhelpful labelling.

### Key features of a strengths-based approach:

1. Adopt an optimistic attitude.
2. Focus primarily on assets\*.
3. Collaborate with the young person.
4. Work towards the long-term empowerment of young people (focus on future possibilities rather than past problems).
5. Support the young person to identify community connections.

For information, support, or just to find out more about what we do, visit [jigsaw.ie](http://jigsaw.ie)



\*the resources that a young person has within themselves and their environment that can support them to overcome challenges and lead a flourishing life.

### Do's and don'ts for promoting a strengths-based approach

Do	Don't
<b>Acknowledge young people's pain and distress.</b>	Focus so much on strengths and positives that you forget to listen to their pain and distress.
<b>Encourage young people to think about their strengths. The 'identifying strengths exercise' will support young people with this.</b>	Blame young people or other people in their lives. When you support young people with the 'Who can help activity', try to practice this.
<b>Support young people to take action to deal with whatever they are facing.</b>	Make assumptions about solutions.
<b>Believe young people's experiences.</b>	Ignore signs that something is difficult for young people.
<b>Find out what the young person wants to happen. The 'Hopes timeline activity' will support young people with this.</b>	Focus only on problems.
<b>Collaborate with young people.</b>	Tell young people what they should do.
<b>Seek to discover what makes each young person unique.</b>	
<b>Support young people to identify external sources of support. The 'Asset mapping activity' will support young people with this.</b>	

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## Signposting and promotion of help-seeking:

### One Good Adult®:

There will be times when young people may need additional support. It is important for them to connect with someone and talk about how they are feeling.

The theme of One Good Adult emerged from Jigsaw's My World Survey (2012). One Good Adult refers to an adult whom a young person can turn to if they are in need of support. Having a One Good Adult was identified as a key protective factor for young people's mental health. Young people who had One Good Adult were found to be more connected, had higher self-esteem and felt better equipped to deal with life's challenges.

### Jigsaw.ie:

Our website **jigsaw.ie** is a useful source of information and support for young people, their parents/guardians, and those who work with young people.

Here, you will find useful articles and videos on a variety of mental health difficulties a young person may be experiencing, along with information on the range of supports and services available.

The following can all be accessed directly from **Jigsaw.ie**:

### Jigsaw Live Chat

Young people can get support directly from trained Jigsaw staff. Register to access daily live 1:1 chats, Mon-Fri 1pm-5pm or send an email at any time, and someone will respond within 48 hours.

### Ask Jigsaw

#### Freephone Service/Text/Email

- 1800 JIGSAW (544729) - Mon to Fri, 1pm-5pm
- Text 086 180 3880 - text "call me" with your preferred day and time for a call, Mon to Fri, 9am-5pm
- Email: [help@jigsaw.ie](mailto:help@jigsaw.ie) - clinicians will respond from Mon to Fri, 9am-5pm

### One-to-one support at your local Jigsaw service

If a young person feels they need additional support, a referral can be made to their local Jigsaw for one-to-one support with a Jigsaw clinician. Please note that this service is only available in Jigsaw service areas. Visit **jigsaw.ie** for more information.



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