



SOURCES OF STRENGTH



GRANT WRITING RESOURCES

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About Sources of Strength

Sources of Strength is a strength-based comprehensive wellness program that focuses on suicide prevention. However, as a wellness program it also seeks to impact social issues such as bullying, substance abuse, and violence. We do this by using peer leaders and Hope, Help, and Strength messaging to positively change school and/or community cultures around help seeking behavior, codes of silence, and perceptions of adult support. These strength messages are strategically designed by Sources of Strength and the local peer teams, to engage local culture and impact local groups of youth, teens, young adults, and/or parents. In the 2012-13 school year, Sources of Strength trained approximately 6000 teen and young adult peer leaders in 200 teams, impacting over 250,000 teens and young adults in the US and Canada.

The program is based on a relational connections model that uses teams of peer leaders, mentored by adult advisors, to change peer social norms about help seeking and encourage students to individually assess and develop strengths in their life. Sources of Strength is often implemented as a school-based program in middle schools, high schools, or colleges. However, it can also be used effectively in community, faith-based, and cultural settings. The model promotes and focuses on connectivity, school or community bonding, peer-adult partnerships, protective factors and the promotion of help seeking behaviors.

In tribal or 1st Nation communities Sources of Strength is most often implemented as a school-community partnership model. After identifying a lead coordinator, we initially train a broad team of “adult advisors” from school staff, community staff, parents, spiritual leaders, law enforcement, elders, and especially young adults. Diverse middle school and high school students are recruited, trained, and continue to meet as a team with their “mentoring” adults, planning together healthy activities and Hope, Help, Strength messaging efforts that use local faces and voices. A directional approach is common, with young adults reaching down to high school and middle school students, and those students reaching into grade school. Most 1st Nation peer teams also promote community-wide events that reach out to parents of all ages.

Fidelity to the Sources of Strength model for positive cultural change requires a three year start-up process in which peer leaders and adult advisors receive a 4-6hr highly interactive training once per year and then continue to meet, plan, and spread activities/messages throughout each year. A typical development team process usually involves Year One teams completing 3-5 activities or messaging campaigns. Year Two often shows a significant increase in peer leader creativity and understanding of their role. In Year Three the team often broadens peer recruitment, creativity of messaging campaigns increases, and their overall ability to partner with diverse groups in spreading their culture change messages develops.

Throughout this process Sources of Strength continues to provide resources and consultation to individual teams, through tele-conference support, ongoing webinars, and web-based resource materials and templates. In most regions a train the trainer process is

also implemented. The train the trainer process involves observing and attending a 4 day national Skills Session in Year One, co-training and completing a 10 month trainer mentor process in Year Two, and being certified for regional training in Year Three.

The 5 Step Sources of Strength Process

1. Awareness and Buy-In

This often includes training of a community/coalition on Sources of Strength, obtaining key administrative support and conducting a brief protocol review of handling distressed or suicidal students.

2. Identify and train adult advisors

Identify adult advisors that will mentor a peer leader team. Train adult advisors in the Sources of Strength process, in peer leader recruitment, as well as their role in meeting and guiding peer teams during the action step phase. Adult advisors can be school counselors, teachers, school resources officers, youth workers, pastors/spiritual leaders, friendly aunties and often are a mix of school staff and community adults that have high relational connectivity and positivity with students.

3. Recruit and Train Peer Leaders

Peer leader teams are often between 10-50 students in size. The initial peer leader training is provided by a certified Sources of Strength trainer in a 3-5 hour highly interactive training process. It is mandatory that local adult advisors participate in the peer leader training.

4. Peer to Peer Contacts and Messaging

After the initial training the peer leaders and adult advisors begin a 3-6 month series of conversations with other trusted adults and their 5-10 closest friends as well as create a wide range of Hope, Help, Strength messaging activities targeting a wider and diverse peer group. Sources of Strength provides a recommended step by step guide of peer leader activities but teams are able to adjust these actions steps based on their readiness level and perception of what will work best in their setting.

A pattern of meeting together, planning, problem solving, and then going out and activating a variety of strategies is used in all settings. Some teams meet as often as once a week, others less frequently, but all peer teams are encouraged to complete several of the recommended strategies. The frame work is grounded in Hope, Help, Strength messaging rather than shock, trauma, or sad messaging. Sources of Strength templates and resources are provided to assist peers in connecting with adults and their friendship groups. These templates include examples of local faces posters, local voices audio, videos, presentations, text forwarding and internet social networking messaging. Peer teams are encouraged and expected to share their creative efforts with other teams across the country via Sources of Strength webpages, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Every group is required to provide honoring and recognition events for the peer leader teams at the close of the year.

5. Ongoing Support and Technical Assistance

Sources of Strength staff provides ongoing teleconference support as well as planning materials and resources for each step of the way. 4-6 national training webinars are provided each year by Sources of Strength. These webinars focus on continued training, resources, and ideas for adult advisors.

Awards & Recognition

- National Public Health Practice Award – American Public Health Association
- Best Practice Registry – Included in SPRC and AFSP Best Practice Registry
- Published in The American Journal of Public Health
- NREPP – SAMSHA National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices
- Funded by National Institute of Mental Health for 6-year study.

Media

- Sources of Strength teams have been featured by CNN, NPR, Christian Science Monitor, Psychology Today, as well as numerous local news stations and newspapers.

Research

From 2003-2007 Peter Wyman, Ph.D. (University of Rochester, NY) and Hendricks Brown, Ph.D. (University of South Florida) conducted the nation's largest randomized trial on the effect of adult gatekeepers. This research offered an extensive study of 32 middle and high schools (48,000 students) in Cobb County just north of Atlanta, focusing on adult staff gatekeeper-training. Their findings reflected a medium to large effect on knowledge of suicide warning signs and perceived access to services, but only a small effect on trained adults asking students about suicide. Included in this research was a survey of 2,000 students in these schools indicating that suicidal students were much less willing to seek help from adults than their non-suicidal peers. Implications of findings for this trial were threefold: 1) Adult training alone was unlikely to significantly increase detection and response to suicidal youth; 2) Suicidal peers were the least likely to seek adult help and; 3) developmentally, adolescents seek help through their peer friendships.

In 2006 Dr. Wyman and Dr. Brown began a nationwide search for a comprehensive peer approach toward suicide prevention and discovered Sources of Strength. After witnessing the strength based messaging and the connection being built between youth and adults, it was decided to conduct an initial trial of Sources of Strength in six high schools in Cobb County, GA with a significant sample of Latino, African-American, and Caucasian students.

Sources of Strength had previously engaged in local and statewide evaluation efforts with rural and tribal communities and had spread to several states, however, like almost all other suicide prevention efforts in the nation it had not participated in a rigorous randomized trial. The 2008 Cobb County trial results (including six high schools, 177 peer leaders, and 4,300 students surveyed) showed a positive intervention impact on peer leaders, increasing youth-adult connectivity through help-seeking acceptance and communication with adults. It also had an impact on more adaptive suicidal peer norms

by increasing rejection of codes of silence as well as expectations that adults can help suicidal peers. **The Cobb County trial showed that peer leaders had a four-fold increase regarding referrals of suicidal peers for adult help.**

In 2009, the randomized trials continued with a dozen rural schools in upstate New York and in North Dakota, further measuring the impact of Sources of Strength. This study appears to be the first population-based trial of peer leaders (supported by adult advisors) showing significant impact on key suicide markers; **impacting norms across an entire student population, with the most positive impact being amongst students identifying themselves as suicidal and less connected than other students.** The results of this study were published in the September 2010 issue of American Journal of Public Health: Schools and Mental Health.

The key findings highlighted in this article show:

- an increase in Peer Leader's connectedness to adults;
- an increase in Peer Leader's school engagement;
- Peer Leaders in larger schools were four times more likely to refer a suicidal friend to an adult;
- among the general student population the program increased positive perceptions of adult support for suicidal youth and the acceptability of seeking help;
- positive perception of adult support increased most in students with a history of suicidal ideation;
- **Sources of Strength is the first suicide prevention program involving Peer Leaders to enhance protective factors associated with reducing suicide at the school population level.**

The University of Rochester, NY is expanding this ongoing trial of Sources of Strength into a National Peer Leadership Study with another 40 high schools being recruited for a five-year evaluation. This study will measure: impact on connectivity, school bonding, suicidal ideation and attempts. It will evaluate the social networking model as a means of spreading messages aimed at suicide prevention and other public health issues. This model examines how the connection between peers and adults, as well as peers and their friendship groups effect the dissemination of hope, help, and strength messaging.

At present Sources of Strength is also partnering with Stanford University and the University of Rochester on a trial involving the impact of Sources of Strength in schools with recent suicide contagion events and with the University of Manitoba and the Swampy Cree communities in northern Manitoba on the impact of the program in remote 1st Nation villages.

Sample Questions and Answers in Grants

1. Because it can be difficult to engage students, if this is the target audience, please explain how you will engage students in suicide prevention activities.
 - a. Sources of Strength is one of the national leaders and trainers in recruiting, engaging, retaining, and successfully using peer leaders to engage other students. The program has provided training at numerous national and international conferences in the past several years including several webinars for the National Suicide Prevention Resource Center and ongoing presentations at the International Bully Prevention Conference. Student engagement is essential through all phases of the project.
 - b. An essential element of the program is the effective recruitment and training of adult advisors who display connectivity, caring, and positivity with the students. The program provides not just initial training, but ongoing consultation, and provides 4-5 webinars designed to support adult advisors. Recruiting and supporting the right Adult Advisors is critical for engaging students.
 - c. Recruiting diverse peer leaders from a wide variety of social cliques and groups is an essential element in achieving the wide spread social network impact that is core to the Sources of Strength model. The nomination process being used at (enter Name of School/District or Community Org) will encourage a diversity of peer leaders. The project also incorporates the largest xxxxxxxx group and LGBTQ groups in the school system.
 - d. Using local faces and voices is critical for engagement, such as school wide messaging campaigns, whether through posters, videos, or peer to peer PA announcements. This localized messaging encourages local students to present hope, help, and strength messages to their peer group with compelling strength stories.
 - e. The program is grounded in an interactive learning model, in which “fun factor” plays an essential part of student engagement. Sources of Strength demonstrates a wide range of games that can be incorporated into presentations and messaging campaigns. Sources also provides a Games Manual and links to websites that allow the use of games with a teaching point. Making use of students’ music, art, interests, drama, social media, etc., adds to the engagement of other students.
 - f. Sources of Strength research with 23,000 students clearly demonstrates that interactive messaging in which students are asked to name their trusted adults, participate in games, share their strengths with their classmate, participate in a What Helps Me contest by writing, using art, video, music, etc., is the most effective peer to peer effort in reaching and helping the most vulnerable students. Opportunities that require interaction, are strength-focused, and bring examples to life in the lived world of students have the most lasting power for wide spread climate and culture change.

- a. This grant for (enter Name of School/District or Community Org) is specifically designed to assist with the infrastructure start-up of training adult advisors, peer leaders, staff, and a trainer within our school system. Once this initial process is completed the costs of maintaining Sources of Strength is minimal (approximately \$500 per year per team for new materials, banners, posters, per school). Having a locally certified trainer allows us to continue to grow and expand the program throughout our area at minimal cost.
 - b. From the start sustainability efforts will be built into the program specifically partnering with other school prevention efforts, community coalitions, community organizations, and other efforts. Staff resources will be shared and paid staff time is not required to continue Sources of Strength.
 - c. The most effective sustainability effort will be having our Sources of Strength peer leaders present to adult groups. We plan to have peer leaders give a brief presentation each semester during a monthly teacher staff meeting, have them present at least once a year to the school board, and present at coalition meetings, community service organizations, and other key stakeholder groups. This peer to adult presentation has been the single most effective sustainability strategy in programs around the country.
 - d. Evaluating program success through the use of pre and post peer leader surveys, as well as measuring impact and messaging spread throughout the entire school system is also critical in demonstrating impact and fidelity to the evidence-based model.
5. If you are using a onetime training, please explain in detail how you will incorporate what you have learned into daily activities for suicide prevention.
- a. Sources of Strength is not a one-time training model, but a comprehensive social norm and cultural change process in which the startup phase is ongoing for the first three years. The model of Sources of Strength is one in which the peer leaders continue to meet (2x per month), plan, and implement messaging activities throughout the school year.
 - b. The core activities will include: school wide poster campaign highlighting courage to use your voice, breaking the silence campaign, A Thank Your Trusted Adult Campaign, classroom or small group presentations to whole school by peer leaders, a What Helps Me Campaign, a I am Stronger Campaign, a Sources of Strength Week, fun-connecting activities, and a strength a month throughout the school year.
 - c. Sources of Strength research has shown the quantity and quality of these campaigns grow significantly from year to year. Peer leaders in year one traditionally do some basic messaging campaigns, but become much more creative in year two, and in year three become very adept at partnering with other clubs and organizations in large whole school events.

Sample Deliverables Language: Fall Rollout

Specific duties and deliverables of Sources of Strength, Inc. will be the following...

1. Assist in developing, training, and supporting Sources of Strength peer teams in (enter Name of School/District or Community Org).
 - a. **School and Community Buy-in.** Assist in obtaining buy-in and support for the Sources of Strength project in local school/community programs by providing teleconference and/or video conference support. September/October
 - b. **Adult Advisor Training and Support.** Provide support and resources for recruiting and training adult advisors that will mentor the peer leader teams. 3-6hr trainings will be provided for 2-15 adult advisors for the peer leader teams. October
 - c. **Peer Leader Recruitment/Training.** Sources of Strength will provide materials and assistance to the schools/community groups in the peer leader recruitment process and will provide 2-3 Sources of Strength trainers to lead the training of the initial two peer teams started in September/October and an additional 2-3 peer teams will be recruited and trained from September/October the following year.
 - d. **Provisional Train the Trainer Process.** Provide a Train the Trainer provisional trainer process to 2-3 (enter Name of School/District or Community Org) trainers.
 - e. During the same year provide a 4 day Trainer Skills Session at a national Sources of Strength Train the Trainer event. Scheduled during (month) in (location).
2. Technical assistance and support will be provided to the provisional trainers from (enter Name of School/District or Community Org).
 - a. **Ongoing Adult Advisor Technical Assistance.** Provide technical assistance teleconference meetings as requested and national training webinars to the adult advisors/coordinators of the peer leader teams as they complete their first year action steps and peer to peer messaging process.
 - b. **Materials.** Provide manuals, handouts, materials, magnets, t-shirts, wristbands, posters, templates, and training supplies to complete the Sources of Strength project with fidelity. Additional costs may apply for additional materials.

The success of these efforts depends on both training and support from Sources of Strength and the ability of (enter Name of School/District or Community Org) to recruit schools or community groups, engage adult advisors, and assist in recruiting peer leaders following an agreed upon timeline – if scheduled trainings are canceled by the local leaders those canceled days shall count as days of service to the program.

Specific Duties

Specific duties of (enter Name of School/District or Community Org) shall be the following ...

1. Assist in identifying adult advisors to work with peer leader teams in the targeted schools or community.
2. Assist in recruiting peer leaders and obtaining appropriate parental consent for participation in the project (forms and templates provided by Sources of Strength)
3. Provide training sites for adult advisor and peer leader trainings with proper room setup.
4. Provide drinks and snacks for adult advisors and peer leader trainings.
5. Provide time and place for peer leader teams and advisors to conduct planning meetings (2x per month) during their 3-5 month action step phase.
6. Adult advisors participate in at least four technical assistance phone contacts or webinars during the action step phase of the project.
7. Provide at least 2-3 trainers in training from (enter Name of School/District or Community Org) to participate in the Train the Trainer process.

Sources of Strength Sample Timeline for 2014 Fall Rollout

Date	Activity Focus	Steps	Responsible
Sep 2014	1. Review policy/protocol for suicidal students/staff and clarify roles and expectations for admin, adult advisors, and peer leaders.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sources meeting with all school administrators and key stakeholders 2. Review and update school policy/protocol – Sources shares template. 3. Complete school MOU with expectations for Sources 	Sources staff leads with collaboration from partnership groups
Oct 2014	2. Recruit, identify, and provide initial training to local adult advisors – 3-6hr training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrators and stakeholders recruit AA's 2. Initial training of AA's 3. Adult Advisor Field Guides distributed, focus on core sustainability issues, planning meeting activities, games resources, safe messaging, core campaign materials. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Admin helps id and recruit local AA's 2. Lead school staff helps organize AA training. 3. Sources staff leads training.
Oct 2014	3. Recruit diverse peer leaders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review groups and students already 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sources, partners and

		<p>identified and expand for diversity of cliques.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Provide Sources recruitment packet (nomination forms, parent permission letters, etc.) 	<p>school AA's will discuss groups already id.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Local school AA's will recruit PL's and obtain parent permission.
Oct 2014	<p>4. Train diverse peer leaders (4-5hrs) at (enter Name of School/District or Community Org), including Four Directions and Gay Straight Alliance groups. Also provide staff in-service and parent presentation. Pre-evaluation by peer leaders is completed prior to training.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train peer team with local AA's attending. 2. First three Peer to Peer activities identified. 3. Have newly trained peer leaders assist with staff in-service and parent presentation. 4. Peer leaders complete pre-survey prior to training. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School/community partner obtains adequate training site. 2. Sources - trainer and materials. 3. Peer leaders/AA's assist with staff and parent presentations. 4. Sources provides survey tool - school staff compile results.
Oct - Nov 2014	<p>5. PL planning meetings and implement first 3-4 campaigns</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PL's/AA's meet minimum of 2x a month for planning. 2. 3-4 campaign efforts completed (I am stronger video/poster/text, What Helps Me video/poster/art, Courage posters, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Templates and resources provided by Sources. 2. Local peer team id's activities/efforts using their voices/faces to students
Sep - ongoing project	<p>6. Ongoing technical assistance and support to AA's and teams</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National training webinars for AA's every two months. 2. TA teleconference calls as need 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sources national staff provides ta and webinar support.
Feb or March 2015	<p>7. Sources of Strength Week put on by peer leaders in each school</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer team plans activities for whole week that impacts full school population. 2. PL team implements the plan. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sources provides examples from other regions. 2. PL team creates best fit activities
May 2015	<p>8. Evaluate 1st year progress and provide recognition/celebration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete PL post survey, student, and staff focus groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sources would provide evaluation templates.

	event for peer teams.	2. Evaluate quantitative and qualitative spread of peer to peer messages. 3. Honor and recognize PL's.	2. school team would evaluate and report results.
Feb 2014	9. Begin sustainability efforts by having PL's speak to adult groups.	1. Select PL's give brief update of activities at school staff meeting. 2. PL's give update at school board. 3. PL's present to community coalitions, service organizations, and conferences.	1. AA's and community partners create opportunities for PL's to speak to school and community adults.
June – August 2014 –	10. (enter Name of School/District or Community Org) trainers attend National Sources T4T Skill Session. Recruit incoming students and additional AA's.	1. Expand diversity and recruit incoming students and any additional AA's as needed. 2. Follow steps 2-9 using Sources Year 2 curriculum.	1. Returning AA's and PL's provide lead in recruitment. 2. Sources staff leads Year 2 training. 3. Partnership groups continue to support efforts.
Sept 2015	11. Begin Year Two with local trainers co-training Fall 2015 begin start-up process with four new schools.	1. Follow steps 1-9 for with expanded teams and additional campaigns using Year Two curriculum.	1. Ongoing partnership effort. 2. Sources provides co-training and T4T mentorship. 3. Evaluation surveys at beginning and end of school year.

Budget

Contact the Sources of Strength national team for personalized budget information related to the scale and scope of your planned implementation of the program. Although costs vary regarding the size of implementation, the standard cost is \$5,000 per team, per year of implementation, planning for a 3 year rollout. Train the Trainer registration also varies based on the specific scope of implementation. The standard cost is \$4,000 per trainer. Once a trainer is fully certified and can participate in team training for your area, the cost of the implementation is \$500 per returning school and \$750 per new school for materials and inclusion in the Sources of Strength support network. Contact Scott LoMurray at scott@sourcesofstrength.org to get a detailed and personalized budget proposal.