



ADULT ADVISOR

# FIELD GUIDE

Our vision is:



TO EMPOWER A  
**WELL WORLD**



## **Sources of Strength**

All Rights Reserved. © 2019 Sources of Strength, Inc  
Second Edition, 2021

[sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org)

## **Editor in Chief**

Mish “Need Some Coffee” Moore

## **Chief Illustrator**

Tanya “The Ringer” Adams

## **Layout Design**

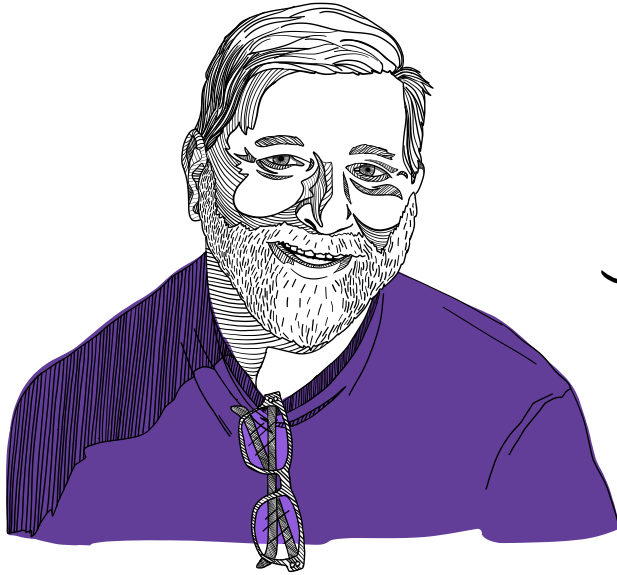
Cody “Happy to Help” Sletten

## **In Gratitude:**

We would like to thank the Sources of Strength team for many hours of brainstorming, writing, editing, humor, encouragement, and feedback throughout this process, including Janell Anema, Rana Razzaque, Jaymie Sheehan, Matthew Hofmeister, Carey Franklin, Kelsey Hopstad, and Kristen Musselman. Thank you especially to Dan Adams and Scott LoMurray for your help and support. Thank you to the many research partners, individuals, and organizations for your tireless creativity, work, and feedback. Your friendship and passion have helped make our powerful vision of Hope, Help, and Strength a reality. Thank you to Mark LoMurray for giving your life to help young people and communities thrive, even in the face of immense difficulties. Thank you to our Adult Advisors, your hard work and powerful stories enable us to keep working to empower the voices of young people to spread Hope, Help, and Strength. Finally, thank you to our Peer Leaders: you are the heart, soul, and voice of Sources of Strength.

## **Distribution:**

This Field Guide is available in its entirety with Adult Advisor access of our website. If you would like to purchase additional hard copies of this Field Guide, please visit our store at [sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org)



# Letter from the founder

**MARK LOMURRAY**

Welcome!

My past 45 years of working with teens, young adults, and families and the experiences of that work, both joyful and tragic, shaped the building of Sources of Strength. I started Sources of Strength initially because I stood at far too many grave sites of young people. Those tragedies burned into me a conviction that we could do something different, more effective, more life giving. Sources of Strength was also born out of the resiliency I have watched come to life in thousands of individuals facing challenges and the amazement I felt at the diverse ways individuals, families, and communities come to healing and health.

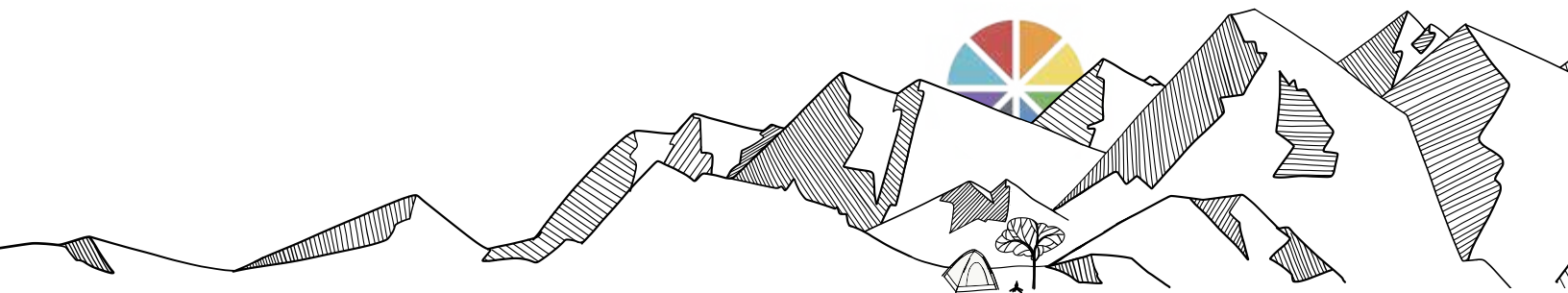
The Sources of Strength wheel is designed to be simple and understandable. It is an accessible tool to help us share stories of Hope, Help, and Strength and guide us through the ups and downs of life. As you work with young leaders, maintain the simplicity of Sources of Strength and celebrate the amazing diversity of individual paths toward Strength and resiliency. That is what makes Sources life giving - for Peer Leaders, Adult Advisors, trainers, administrators, parents, and you!

I have given my life to this work. For me, this has never been a job, but rather a labor of love to help individuals thrive in the face of adversity. What we offer at Sources of Strength is radical: the chance to practice a community of health and hope. We use Active Learning to help cast a vision of what a well world can look like. We will stumble along the way, but within this community we learn to laugh, listen, and live with deep gratitude as we walk alongside others working towards Strength.

Now go forward and use this Adult Advisor Field Guide! Write in it and on it. Make stars by the things you find great. Place your adaptations in the margins. Share with us again and again. I have found this to be deeply meaningful work, and I have faith that you will too. I am grateful to call you a partner in hope.

Thank you. Thank you for giving your life to young people and for being willing to be part of Sources of Strength. Keep lighting up your corner of the world.

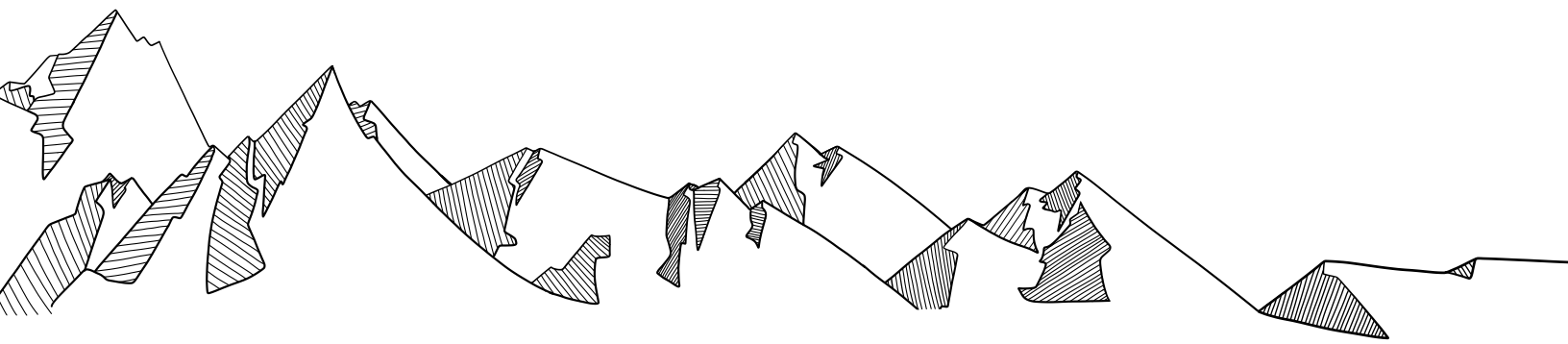
*Mark Lomurray*



# Table of contents

<b>Field Guide: Getting Started . . . . .</b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
How to Use the Field Guide . . . . .	<u>8</u>
Field Guide Legend . . . . .	<u>9</u>
Glossary . . . . .	<u>10</u>
Pack Your Bag: Gear for the Road . . . . .	<u>12</u>
 <b>Chapter 1: The Scenic View: Overview and Philosophy . . . . .</b>	 <b><u>14</u></b>
Upstream Prevention . . . . .	<u>16</u>
A Brief History and Overview . . . . .	<u>18</u>
Theory of Change . . . . .	<u>20</u>
Sources of Strength Model . . . . .	<u>21</u>
Sources of Strength Wheel . . . . .	<u>22</u>
Definition of Strengths . . . . .	<u>23</u>
Shared Risk & Protective Factors Approach . . . . .	<u>24</u>
Active Learning . . . . .	<u>25</u>
 <b>Chapter 2: Building Below the Waterline: Practicing a Community of Strength . . . . .</b>	 <b><u>26</u></b>
Building Below the Waterline . . . . .	<u>28</u>
Fun, Sharing, and Planning: Peer Leader Meetings . . . . .	<u>30</u>
Base Camp: First Peer Leader Meeting . . . . .	<u>32</u>
When, Where, and How to Meet . . . . .	<u>33</u>
Facilitation Guidelines . . . . .	<u>34</u>
Peer Leader Ownership . . . . .	<u>36</u>
Rationale for 1 Part Fun . . . . .	<u>38</u>
Rationale for 1 Part Sharing . . . . .	<u>40</u>
Helpful Prompts for Group Discussions . . . . .	<u>41</u>
Rationale for 1 Part Planning . . . . .	<u>44</u>
Inclusive Practices . . . . .	<u>45</u>





**Chapter 3: On the Trail: Sharing a Community of Strength . . . . . [48](#)**

Sources Messaging and Philosophy . . . . .	<a href="#">50</a>
Hope, Help, and Strength-Based Messaging . . . . .	<a href="#">50</a>
Targeted Messaging . . . . .	<a href="#">52</a>
Layered Messaging . . . . .	<a href="#">52</a>
Campaign Planning . . . . .	<a href="#">53</a>
Templated Campaigns . . . . .	<a href="#">54</a>
Getting the Word Out . . . . .	<a href="#">56</a>
What Helps Me . . . . .	<a href="#">60</a>
I Am Stronger . . . . .	<a href="#">64</a>
Thankfulness . . . . .	<a href="#">67</a>
Connect . . . . .	<a href="#">70</a>
We Belong . . . . .	<a href="#">73</a>
Trusted Adults . . . . .	<a href="#">76</a>
Sources of Strength Week . . . . .	<a href="#">79</a>
Ideas for Strength-Specific Campaigns . . . . .	<a href="#">81</a>
Postvention Guidelines: Do's and Don'ts . . . . .	<a href="#">86</a>

**Chapter 4: Staying the Course: Evaluating your Efforts and Impact . [88](#)**

Multi-Year Implementation Strategy . . . . .	<a href="#">90</a>
District and Community Level Strategy . . . . .	<a href="#">95</a>
First Aid Kit: Troubleshooting Key Challenges . . . . .	<a href="#">98</a>
Fidelity Markers . . . . .	<a href="#">101</a>
Evaluating your Sources of Strength Team . . . . .	<a href="#">105</a>
Tracking Activities . . . . .	<a href="#">107</a>

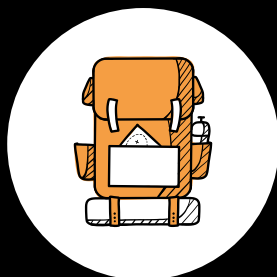
**Chapter 5: The Wilderness: Additional Tools and Resources . . . . [110](#)**

Games . . . . .	<a href="#">112</a>
Frequently Asked Questions . . . . .	<a href="#">120</a>
Suicide Intervention Protocol . . . . .	<a href="#">125</a>
Sources of Strength End of Year Peer Leader Survey . . . . .	<a href="#">128</a>
Additional Features: Visuals and Tear-outs . . . . .	<a href="#">130</a>

# field guide **GETTING** STARTED



Every journey requires preparation.  
Whether you're just starting out or traveling a well worn path, here  
are resources you'll use on the trail.



# INTRODUCTION

*How to Use the Field Guide* [08](#) | *Field Guide Legend* [09](#)

*Glossary* [10](#) | *Pack Your Bag: Gear for the Road* [12](#)



# HOW TO USE THE FIELD GUIDE

Welcome to Sources of Strength! By becoming an Adult Advisor, we are inviting you to embark on a journey. This Field Guide was thoughtfully crafted to be your companion as you work to empower, support, and sustain a peer-led social change initiative in your school or community. Whether you are just getting started or looking for some new resources after several years on a well-established team, we hope this Field Guide is a resource for you.

Sources of Strength is always working to help support a wide variety of cultures and contexts of Peer Leader teams. We have spent time listening to what Adult Advisors say they need and have tried to speak to many of those requests in this updated Field Guide. We consider this guide to be only one of several tools offered to support teams. Other tools include our website ([sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org)), online and phone support with our staff, as well as Train the Trainer events held in several locations across North America each year. We believe that with all of these tools, any caring, connected, and positive Adult Advisor will be able to start and sustain a thriving Peer Leader team.

Any Adult Advisor team will benefit from looking through this guide after a training for important reminders of how to lead a diverse Peer Leader team to fidelity, as well as how to retain Peer Leaders. We have included sections on games and sharing prompts and give directions for running a variety of different campaigns. We have also included a section for [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to help troubleshoot problems that may arise along the way. If you do not find what you are looking for in these pages, please do not hesitate to visit [sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org) to schedule a support phone call with one of our amazing National Trainers or Support Staff. We are truly committed to helping your team grow, sustain, and thrive for many years to come, so don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything.

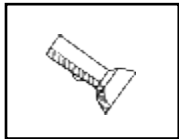


# FIELD GUIDE LEGEND

Throughout this Field Guide, we have included various icons to cue important tips, offer reminders, and share research relevant to your work as an Adult Advisor and Peer Leader Team. As you read, these icons will signify important markers along the journey. Explore the Field Guide legend below to familiarize yourself with these icons and their meaning.



A Talk Bubble signifies a tip about sharing or communicating with your team.



A Flashlight will draw your attention towards something we think is really important to remember.



Are you on track? The Compass invites you to take a moment to check how your team is running according to the program's evidence-based standards.



Sources of Strength believes in the power of sharing our stories. A Campfire will highlight powerful quotes or stories we've heard from wise people along the way.



Just as the rings of a tree tell the story of its longevity, the Wood Cut icon will give tips for how to keep your team running strong for years to come.



This little Tent says, "Camp here: focus on this."



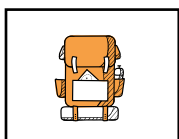
The Lantern illuminates a bright idea you might find helpful.



A Tree symbolizes a stage of growth in your team's development.



The Mountain highlights a tip about how to overcome common challenges that often stand in the way of moving your teams progress forward.



The Backpack will highlight an important tool that you can use along your journey towards Hope, Help, and Strength.



# GLOSSARY

**Adult Advisor:** Adult member of a school or community who fosters an environment of Strength amongst staff, Peer Leaders, and students, and works to facilitate safe, strategic, Strength-based messaging.

**Strength-Based Approach:** A philosophy that uses Strength and potential as a foundation for creating positive change. Asset-based approaches uncover, uplift, and grow Strengths, assets, and resources.

**Deficits-Based Approach:** A philosophy which focuses on mitigating risk, what is lacking, wrong, or broken in a student, system, or culture.

**EDM:** “Electronic Dance Music”. For more information also see, “NOPE”.

**Evidence-based:** Refers to a designation that a program or curriculum has undergone research and evaluation and has demonstrated reliable and effective outcomes.

**High Potential Youth:** Growth Mindset alternative to at-risk youth. Indicates that a young person is not simply a problem to be solved or the sum total of their environment, but that they have agency, Strength, and potential for growth and positive impact.

**Mindful & Mindfulness:** Being intentionally aware of and noticing the ways in which we experience our emotions, thoughts, actions, and situations. This fosters greater social, emotional, physical, and cognitive insights that benefit ourselves and others.

**NOPE:** No, Absolutely not, Nada, Never, No way, Negative.

**On Fleek:** A slang term once used by adolescents to describe something that they consider “perfect”. As used in a sentence: Do not use “on fleek” in a sentence.

**Peer Leader:** A student on a Sources of Strength team who uses their story of Strength and their influence to positively impact and change school norms and culture through Strength-based messages.

**Protective Factors:** Conditions and characteristics that reduce risk in individuals, families, and communities, and increase overall health and wellbeing.

**Positive Psychology:** The scientific study of the experiences, traits, and institutions that allow an individual and community to thrive.

**Positive Social Norming (Social Norming):** Social norms are the unwritten rules of behavior that are considered acceptable in a group or society. Norms function to provide order and predictability in society. Positive Social Norming refers to the prevention strategy of highlighting healthy norms and behaviors, rather than the unhealthy norms or behaviors we are trying to prevent. It is based upon the notion that peer social influence is the greatest predictor of behavior change.

**Post Programmatic Stress Disorder:** The hesitation to initiate a new program based on the perceived ineffectiveness of previously implemented programs. (“Programs don’t work, so why would this one?”)

**Post Traumatic Growth:** Change experienced after a group or individual has survived a traumatic life event, which may be marked by growth in one’s appreciation of life, relationships with others, new possibilities in life, personal Strength, and spiritual change.

**Resilience / Resiliency:** The capacity of an individual or group to recover from and grow stronger in the face of adversities, challenges, or failures.

**Risk Factors:** Any characteristics or exposures that increase a person's risk of detrimental outcomes.

**Shared Risk and Protective Factors:** A Public Health model predicated on the notion that certain risk factors increase risk for a variety of negative health outcomes, while certain protective factors decrease risk for these outcomes. Focusing on shared risk and protective factors allows for less siloed prevention strategies that have a more comprehensive impact using a wider variety of funding streams.

**Social Networking Theory:** A theory of how humans are interconnected which explains how attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs can spread through networks of connections to influence people throughout a population and enact change.

**Sustainability:** Integration of the Sources of Strength program into practices, systems, and culture that results in continuous, positive, population level change over multiple years.

**Trauma:** An experience that is physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on an individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being. Trauma may be chronic and recurring or a single event. Trauma can occur on an individual level, but it can also be generational, communal, and/or historical/systemic.

**Trusted Adult:** Any adult who exhibits attitudes and behaviors towards youth that contribute to the youth's sense of well being, connection, and support.

**Upstream:** A prevention strategy that moves beyond a reactive crisis intervention model and takes a public health approach to promote wellness, coping, connection, help-seeking, and protective factors that result in reduced negative downstream outcomes.

**Wellness:** Being in good health mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Wellness is an active process, rather than a state of being.

**Yabba Dabba Doo:** Originally a catchphrase from the cartoon 'The Flintstones', it has since been co-opted by youth culture as an expression of enthusiasm and support. Go ahead, use it with some teenagers...we definitely didn't make it up.

# PACK YOUR BAG: GEAR FOR THE ROAD

You are starting out on a journey! It can seem daunting, but you are not alone and there is plenty of gear for the road. Here are the tools, resources, and support you'll need to build a great Sources of Strength program.



**Field Guide:** This guide can help you start and sustain a team. It includes tips, directions, and information from all areas of the program.

**Website:** At [sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org) you'll find the most up-to-date videos, photos, tips for your team, research articles, and our contact information. Make sure you are registered on this site as an Adult Advisor for access to more tools and support, including campaign examples and guidance. We will make reference to the website throughout the Field Guide for further information.

**Sources of Strength Support:** Have a question? Need a fresh perspective for approaching a challenge? Want to chat about last night's episode? Email us at [info@sourcesofstrength.org](mailto:info@sourcesofstrength.org), or call our staff for support. Our support staff will also reach out to you at various points throughout the year.

**Online Store:** Need prizes for Sources games or campaigns? Would this Field Guide work as the perfect stocking stuffer for family and friends? Visit [our store](#) for campaign materials, hats, pop-sockets, stickers, t-shirts, and more!

**Email and Text Drip Campaign:** Sources of Strength will periodically send emails or texts with photos, tips, videos, and more to help your team keep ideas fresh and engaging. Be sure to take advantage of this resource.

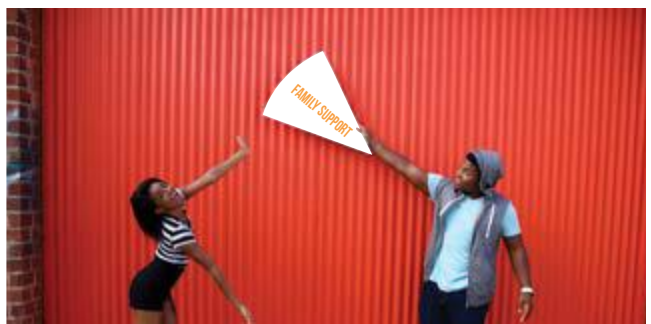
**Social Media:** Follow us on Social Media to see what our, and other teams have been up to, and to see recent videos, photo's, tips and inspiration.

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/sourcesofstrength/](https://www.facebook.com/sourcesofstrength/)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/sourcesstrength](https://www.twitter.com/sourcesstrength)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/sourcesofstrength/](https://www.instagram.com/sourcesofstrength/)

**Coffee:** We don't sell coffee or anything, we're just pretty sure you'll need it.



# the SCENIC *View*



Before we hit the trail, let's get the lay of the land and look at the foundational pieces of the Sources of Strength landscape.



CHAPTER ONE:

# OVERVIEW & PHILOSOPHY

*Upstream Prevention* [16](#) | *A Brief History and Overview* [18](#)

*Theory of Change* [20](#) | *Sources of Strength Model* [21](#) | *Sources of*

*Strength Wheel* [22](#) | *Shared Risks and Protective*

*Factors Approach* [24](#) | *Active Learning* [25](#)

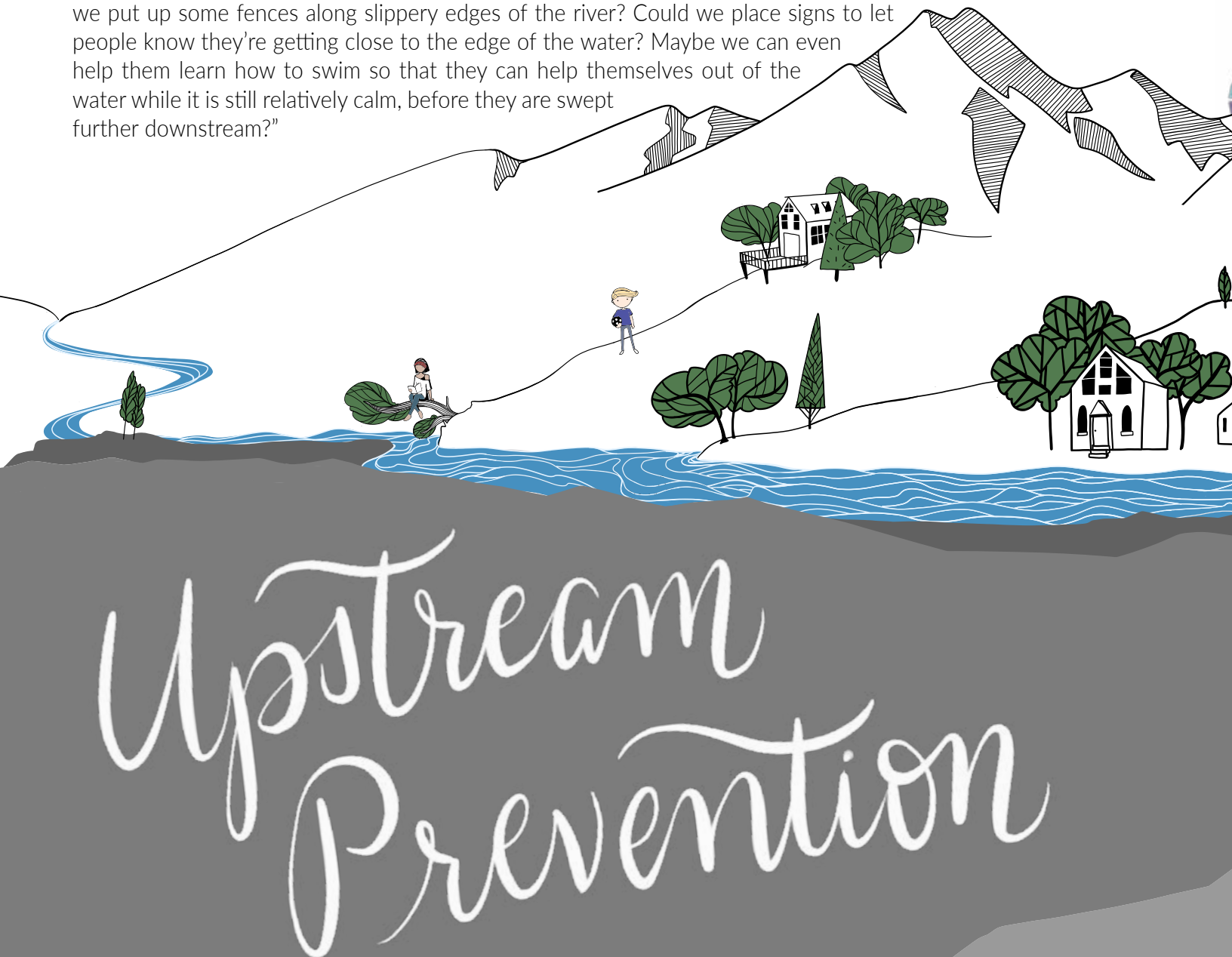


## UPSTREAM PREVENTION: A STORY

There is a parable we like to tell in the Suicide Prevention field. Imagine a valley with a river running through it. Near a waterfall sits a village. Every morning, a woman in the village walks along the river's edge. One morning as she's walking, she hears a shout from a person caught up in the river's current, and about to go over the falls. Without a thought, the woman jumps into the water, swims out to the person, and pulls them safely to shore. The village celebrates that a life was saved.

Over the next several weeks, the town starts to notice more and more people caught up in the river's current, about to go over the falls. The villagers jump into action and start to build watchtowers and equip lifeguards to monitor the waterfall's edge. Through these efforts they save a number of lives, but not all. One morning, while contemplating this problem, the woman turns and begins to walk upstream, away from the waterfall.

The villagers were alarmed. "Where are you going?" they asked. "We need all hands on deck. You can't leave us!" The woman, nodding her head with understanding says, "Of course I am not leaving. I am simply walking up the river to see if we can stop some people from falling in the water in the first place. Could we put up some fences along slippery edges of the river? Could we place signs to let people know they're getting close to the edge of the water? Maybe we can even help them learn how to swim so that they can help themselves out of the water while it is still relatively calm, before they are swept further downstream?"



Our primary mission at Sources of Strength is radically Upstream Prevention. We believe it is so important to have gatekeepers who understand the risk factors and warning signs of a person at risk and how to get them to help. However, we believe that this is not a comprehensive model for prevention. We also want to help individuals and communities interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives so that they may build grit and resilience for the ups and downs of life. We want to move as far upstream as possible to increase protective factors across a school or community, by building youth-adult connectedness, changing perceptions of adult support, increasing early help-seeking behaviors and coping skills like mood management and emotional regulation. We want to give students and staff a shared language for talking about the Strengths they use in their life to overcome and cope with life's challenges.

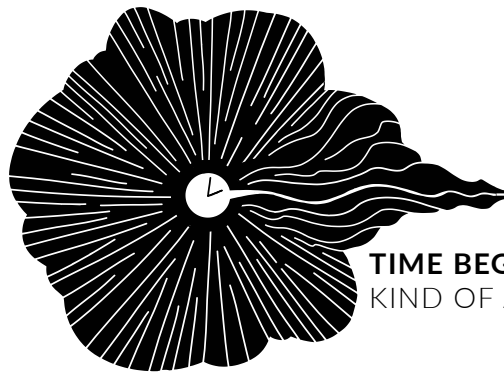
While our primary focus is on Upstream Prevention, Sources of Strength teams have been shown to have significant impact in other areas as well. A Peer Leader who has been trained in Sources of Strength is four times more likely to refer a friend they are worried about to a Trusted Adult. A Sources of Strength team works to create a culture of help seeking and connection, where it is okay to not feel okay and where reaching out for help is a sign of Strength, not weakness.

We also realize that tragedy and hardship still occur in life, despite our best efforts: loved ones can get sick, a school could lose a beloved teacher, etc. However, a Sources of Strength team can have great impact on a community after such loss. Peer Leaders can act as the eyes and ears of the school, helping adults be more aware of the areas of the school that may be struggling and in need of support. Sources is also about helping people heal and recover after tragedy. In this way, Sources can have a more universal and comprehensive impact in prevention, intervention, and postvention.



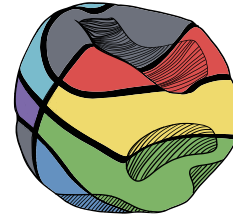


# A BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW



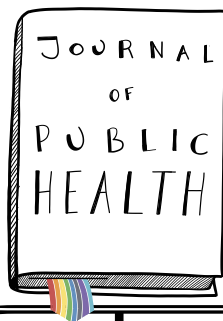
**TIME BEGAN...**  
KIND OF A BIG DEAL.

1997



MARK LOMURRAY TEARS ACL, ENDING HIS DREAMS OF AN NBA CAREER (THAT AND HIS 5'8" STATURE). SOURCES OF STRENGTH BECOMES HIS BACKUP OPTION.

2010



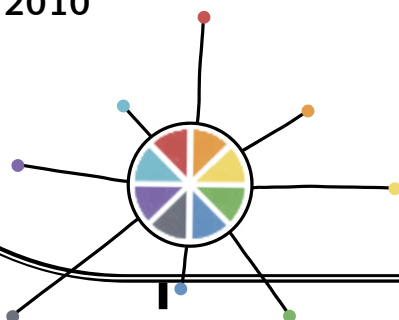
WYMAN STUDY PUBLISHED IN THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH SHOWS PEER LEADERS CAN BE UTILIZED TO CHANGE POPULATION LEVEL HEALTH NORMS.

2009



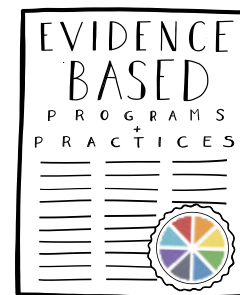
SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES REGISTRY BY THE SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER (SPRC) AND THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION (AFSP).

2010



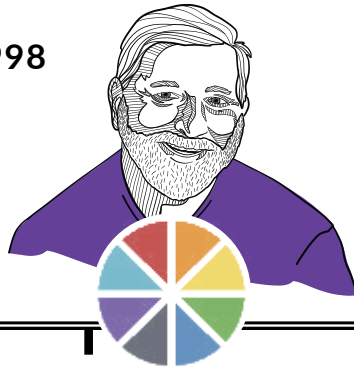
NATIONAL PEER LEADERSHIP STUDY FUNDED BY NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH BEGINS, STUDY EVALUATING SOURCES OF STRENGTH IN 40 HIGH SCHOOLS, LARGEST STUDY TO DATE ON PEER LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH.

2011



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS LISTED ON SAMHSA'S NATIONAL REGISTRY OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES (NREPP).

1998



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS DEVELOPED IN NORTH DAKOTA.

2005



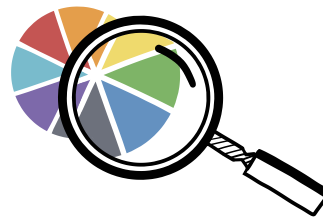
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARDED THE NORTH DAKOTA ADOLESCENT SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE (OF WHICH SOURCES OF STRENGTH WAS A PRIMARY PART) THE NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE AWARD.

2009



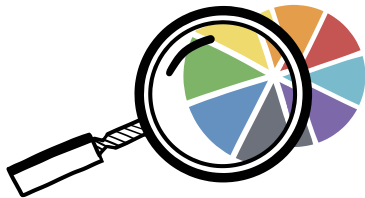
IN A FANTASTIC AND BRAZEN DISPLAY OF NEPOTISM, SCOTT LOMURRAY IS HIRED AS SOURCES OF STRENGTH'S SECOND EMPLOYEE. IMMEDIATELY ATTEMPTS FAILED COUP.

2006



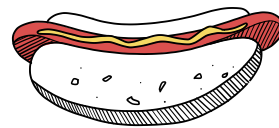
SOURCES OF STRENGTH PARTNERED WITH DR. PETER WYMAN AND DR. C. HENDRICKS BROWN FOR A RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL STUDYING PEER LEADER IMPACT ON INCREASING PROTECTIVE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCING SUICIDE RISK.

2017



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WORKED WITH THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE CDC TO STUDY OVERLAPPING PROTECTIVE FACTOR'S EFFECT ON REDUCING TEEN DATING VIOLENCE, BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND SUBSTANCE USE.

2018



JOEY CHESTNUT SETS THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS FOR EATING 74 HOT DOGS IN 10 MINUTES... THIS DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SOURCES BUT WE ALL THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY NEAT.

# THEORY OF CHANGE

The prevention field is littered with countless well intentioned programs and campaigns that may at times move the needle in creating greater awareness around an issue or help shift attitudes around a particular topic, but very often do little to create real and lasting change in behavior or culture. Ultimately, our goal is not just to make people more aware of the work we are doing, but to really change the way people engage with issues of Mental Health, wellness, and connection in their own lives, and to enact that change on a cultural and community level.

There are a few elements that we believe can play a significant role in helping us accomplish this goal. We think of this as our Theory of Change.

**Peer Led and Social Network Theory:** Far too often we have teen suicide prevention efforts that don't involve teenagers; we believe that to shift youth culture, we must have young people not only involved but at the forefront of what we do. Adults do not shift teen culture, teenagers do. Their voice is critical to this work. Social Network Theory informs us that peer opinion leaders can shift population level health norms. We need to see and empower our Peer Leaders as Agents of Change, not as junior psychologists, so they can be the patient zero in creating an epidemic of health and contagion of Strength in their school or community.

**Upstream:** If we are to move beyond a reactive and crisis-driven intervention model and truly engage in prevention work that is impactful on a community and population level, then we must move upstream in our efforts. We must focus on determinants of health, and how to foster and support healthy individuals and communities. See page [16](#) for more information on Upstream Prevention.

**Positive Psychology:** Brain science has shown that our brains are hardwired for negativity. The good news is we can actually begin to rewire our brains to look for, notice, and savor the good things and allow those things to change us and make us stronger, healthier, more resilient, kinder, and more joyful. We are trying to participate in a public health movement with a goal of broad-based culture change. That is not easy or immediate. By incorporating Positive Psychology into what we do, we can create the necessary foundation for growth.

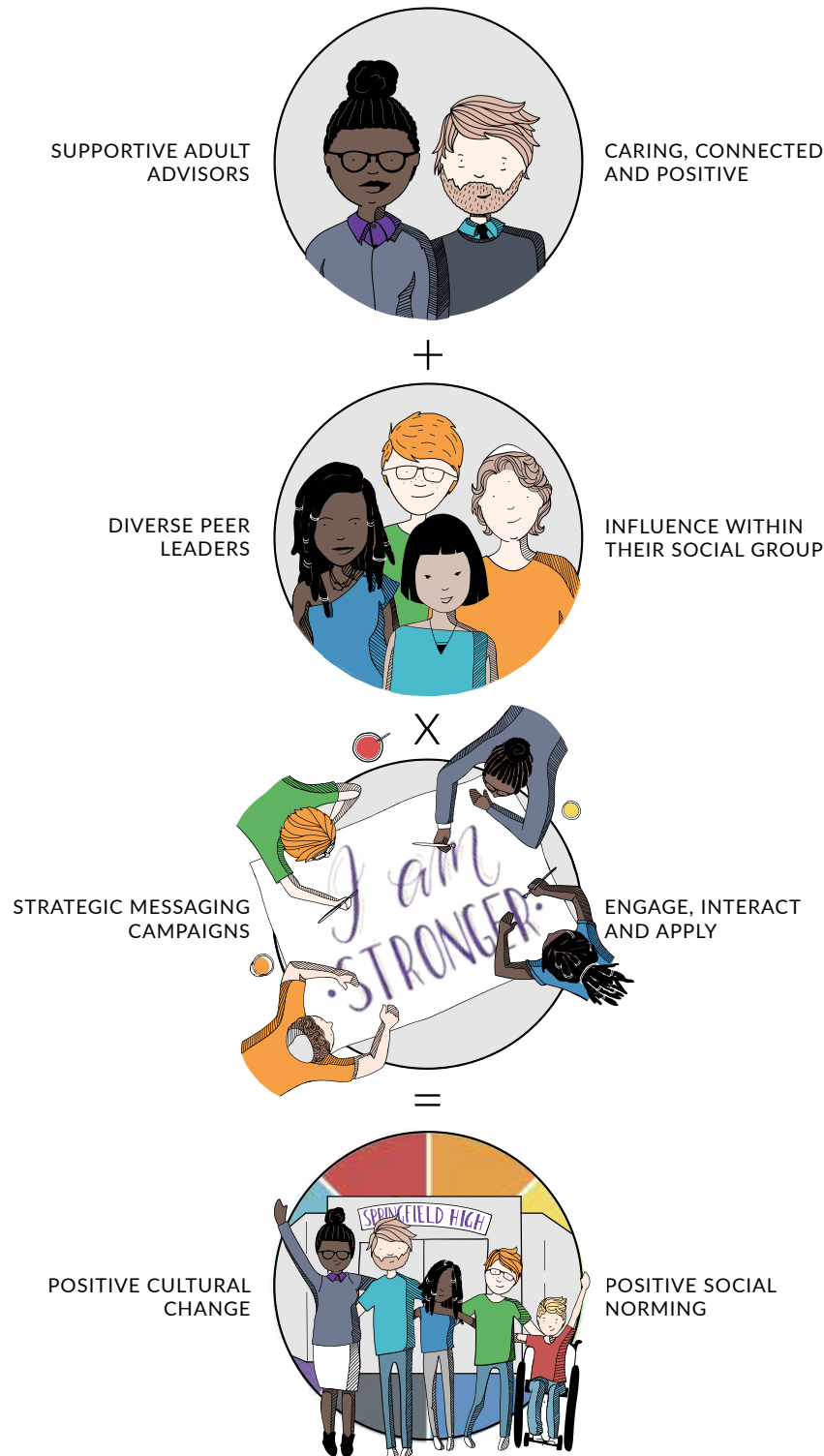
**Active Learning:** We believe that learning must be active and participatory in order to really learn and integrate a concept authentically into our lives. This work should be fun, collaborative, engaging, and applicable to the context and real world experiences of young people. Turn to page [25](#) for more information on Active Learning.

**Final Thoughts:** In order to enact the large scale cultural and behavioral change we hope to see in the world, we must empower and lift up peer voices to leverage their inherent power and influence to engage their Strengths and resiliency and draw others into that same work. We must move beyond reactive crisis-driven models and get upstream. Through utilizing the emerging sciences of Positive Psychology and Social Network Theory, we can actively provide a platform and process that empowers young people to be Agents of Change in their world and thus create a real and lasting impact.

The rest of this chapter will explore some of these concepts in greater detail and explore how you can utilize our Theory of Change in practical ways with your Sources of Strength team.

# SOURCES OF STRENGTH MODEL

Relationship is at the center of the Sources of Strength model. We work to partner caring, connected, and positive Adult Advisors with a diverse group of Peer Leaders from across the social network of a school or community. We truly believe that one without the other lacks prevention power. Meeting together regularly, this team of youth and adults work to build a community of Strength, not only by practicing Strength in their own lives, but by sharing that Strength with others through Strength-based/public health style messaging campaigns. Spreading stories of Strength across a school or community, Peer Leaders invite students, staff and their community to interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives. Partnered together, we seek to create a contagion of Strength, an epidemic of hope, and a culture of connection, help-seeking, resilience, and wellbeing.



## SOURCES OF STRENGTH WHEEL

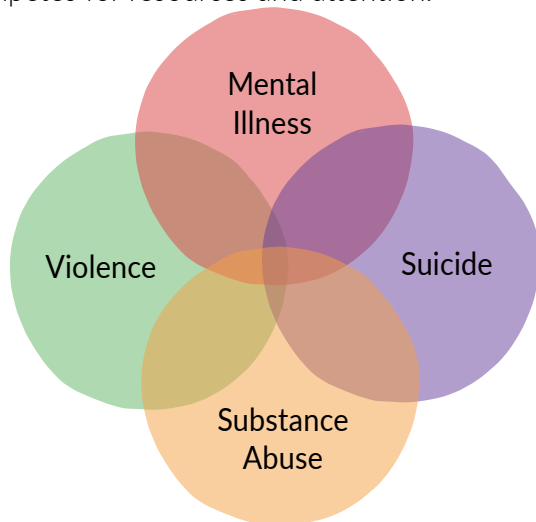


# DEFINITION OF STRENGTHS

<b>FAMILY SUPPORT</b>	Whether related to us by blood, or by choice, these are the people who support, nurture, and care for us.
<b>POSITIVE FRIENDS</b>	Positive Friends lift us up, make us laugh, are honest with us, and are there for us when we need them.
<b>MENTORS</b>	A Mentor is an experienced person who shares their insight to help guide us, and help us draw on our own Strengths to be the best version of ourselves.
<b>HEALTHY ACTIVITIES</b>	When we feel stressed, Healthy Activities - whether they are social, physical, or emotional - help us unwind, lift our mood, and gain clarity.
<b>GENEROSITY</b>	Generosity can look a lot of different ways, from donating money or time, to being intentionally kind to other people. These acts of kindness towards others, big or small, can make an impact on how we feel about ourselves.
<b>SPIRITUALITY</b>	Spirituality is practiced in many ways, but at its core we consider what gives us a sense of purpose and connection in our spirit. Thankfulness is a profound way to practice Spirituality together no matter what our cultural heritage and/or spiritual tradition.
<b>PHYSICAL HEALTH</b>	When we are injured, we don't have to stay in pain. We can get better, with access to the medical care we need and deserve. Physical and social/emotional pain are often integrated and it's important to take care of our bodies, hearts, and minds.
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>	Mental Health is all about getting the support we need and deserve to help us when we are struggling. Our Mental Health is a very important part of living a healthy life, and oftentimes, getting together with a trusted person, counselor, or doctor can help empower us to overcome internal struggles we might be facing.

# SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS APPROACH

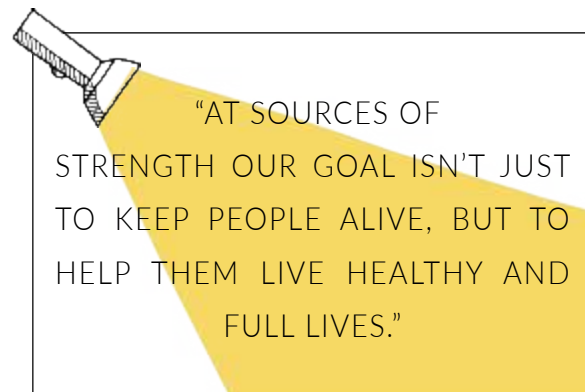
Within the prevention field, we often talk about overlapping risk factors - events or behaviors that may co-occur, compounding an individual's risk. We find that risk factors are often interconnected and impact each other. One negative impacting event could also potentially put a person at higher risk of a number of harmful outcomes. For example, an individual who experiences violence may find that their Mental Health or risk of substance abuse is also impacted. All too often, prevention efforts become siloed - tobacco prevention, bullying prevention, suicide prevention, marijuana prevention, teen dating violence prevention, etc. - each important effort competes for resources and attention.



Just as risk factors cannot be separated, protective factors, too, are interwoven. Growing in Strength will result in a ripple effect of protection in a person's life. A young person who has a caring, connected, and positive adult invested in their lives is not only less likely to die by suicide, but they are also less likely to engage in other risky behaviors such as substance abuse or teen dating violence. By boosting protective factors, we can build Strength against a variety of risk factors. Sources of Strength draws upon this shared risk and protective factor approach. When we see a person holistically, we can offer Strength and protection in multiple areas.

Sources of Strength has worked with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to measure overlapping protective factors' effect on reducing teen dating violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. While the final results of the study are

pending, we are confident that boosting protective factors will help mitigate risk factors in the lives of middle and high school students, creating safer and more welcoming schools and communities.



A rising tide lifts all boats; if we are effective in moving upstream and increasing connection, resilience, protective factors, help seeking, and healthy coping, we will have an impact on suicide, but we can also have an impact on substance misuse, violence, truancy, GPA, etc. Ultimately, Sources of Strength is a wellness model. At Sources of Strength our goal isn't just to keep people alive, but to help them to live healthy and full lives. Our mission is to foster and create healthy, whole individuals and communities to empower a well world.



# ACTIVE LEARNING

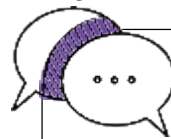
One of the core differentiators that sets Sources of Strength apart is our commitment to utilizing Active Learning techniques and strategies in everything we do. We believe that the process is as important as the program. How we engage and are engaged matters. It is important that we understand that games aren't just games, that movement and laughter light up critical learning centers in our brain and help us engage with and internalize information in more impactful and lasting ways.

Active Learning is particularly critical when it comes to learning about and engaging in our Mental Health and wellness. The internalization and application of this content is crucial to fostering behavior change and growing our brain's capacity to navigate the challenges that life may throw our way. Active Learning methods also go a long way in establishing more equitable learning environments as they engage and empower all participants in their learning and sharing. Students may be experiencing their own challenges with Mental Health, relationships, or sense of belonging, purpose, and worth. Active Learning provides an opportunity to express their ideas and engage with their Strengths in a more receptive and helpful environment.



So with Sources of Strength, always be thinking of ways to make the learning process active. Avoid lectures and powerpoints as much as possible. Play games. Make art. Laugh. Laugh a lot. Engage in conversations and dialogue with Peer Leaders about the topics we are working to address. Ask questions. Listen to the answers. Share authentically. Address and talk about conflict. Tell stories. Create space for life, learning, and growth to happen.

Work on using your coaching and facilitation skills to draw out and empower quieter Peer Leaders and provide guidance and support to those Peer Leaders who like to share a lot. Try to provide simple, quick, and clear directions for activities and keep summaries brief. Explain things when necessary, but when possible, have the Peer Leaders do the explaining, teaching, and modeling with one another.



"PLAY GAMES. MAKE ART. LAUGH. LAUGH A LOT. ASK QUESTIONS. LISTEN TO THE ANSWERS. SHARE AUTHENTICALLY. TELL STORIES. CREATE SPACE FOR LIFE, LEARNING AND GROWTH TO HAPPEN."

If you are curious to learn more about Active Learning, a couple of books that might be helpful are: *Learning That Lasts: Challenging, Engaging, and Empowering Students with Deeper Instruction* by Ron Berger, and *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom* by Charles Bonwell. A fantastic website that has a lot of resources on Active Learning is: <https://cei.umn.edu/active-learning>



Building  
**BELOW** the  
Waterline



Forging a deep and sustainable foundation for your team.



## CHAPTER TWO:

# PRACTICING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

*Building Below the Waterline* [28](#) | *Fun, Sharing, and Planning: Peer*

*Leader Meetings* [30](#) | *Base Camp: First Peer Leader Meeting* [32](#)

*When, Where, and How to Meet* [33](#) | *Facilitation Guidelines* [34](#)

*Peer Leader Ownership* [36](#) | *Rationale for 1 Part Fun* [38](#)

*Rationale for 1 Part Sharing* [40](#) | *Helpful Prompts for Group*

*Discussions* [41](#) | *Rationale for 1 Part Planning* [44](#)

*Inclusive Practices* [45](#)



# building the below waterline

**SCOTT LOMURRAY**

At the time of its construction, The Brooklyn Bridge was to be one of the largest and most iconic suspension bridges in the world. Enormous sums of money and effort went into the design and construction of the bridge. Years into the construction, residents of Manhattan and Brooklyn began to complain that though they always saw construction crews and apparent work being done, there was yet to be any tangible sign of progress on the bridge. As these grumblings grew louder, more frequent, and more unified, the architect of the bridge began to explain that the reason they saw no bridge was that they had spent years building below the waterline. He and his team had pioneered innovative and revolutionary techniques to provide anchor points in the riverbed and it was only as a result of this work that the bridge would stand the test of time.

I reflect on that story and I think about how often in this work we can look around and ask ourselves "Where's my bridge?" We wonder if we are having any impact, if we are making a difference, if we are building anything of substance and value.



Working with young people is building below the waterline. Working in education, Mental Health, and public health is building below the waterline. It can be difficult, even frustrating, and might leave us wondering where our bridge is...but this work is foundational. And it is only as a result of that foundational work that we can help build communities, and schools, and cultures, and young people that stand the test of time.

The time spent meeting with your Peer Leaders is not just another task; it is foundational work, a time when students and staff are able to practice building a community of Strength, playing and laughing together, reflecting and sharing together, and planning on how to invite and engage others into that community of Strength. It is in these spaces where we build anchor points that will stand the test of time.

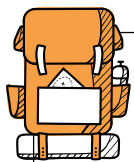
When we recruit for Sources of Strength we ask that Adult Advisors be Caring, Connected, and Positive. We often joke that we have had caring, connected, cynical, and pessimistic Adult Advisors before and it doesn't work as well. The truth is we are trying to get a public health culture change initiative off the ground, and that work is not easy. There will be fits and starts, and failures. It is vital that we are able to press through those growing pains if we are to ever see the bridge. So please don't give up. The world needs more people willing to go deep and spend their time, energy, passion, talent, and hope on the foundational work of building Strength below the waterline.

We must also build below the waterline in our own lives. Taking care of ourselves, cultivating our own Strengths and resilience, doing our inner work is also crucial if we are going to stand the test of time in this work. So please, build below the waterline in your own life as well. Take care of yourself, practice gratitude, be vulnerable and authentic, ask for and extend forgiveness, cultivate and tap into your Strengths so you can be here. We need you here. Our world needs you here doing the foundational work of bringing just a bit more Hope, Help, and Strength to your world.



# FUN, SHARING, AND PLANNING: SOURCES OF STRENGTH PEER LEADER MEETINGS

The Sources of Strength Adult Advisor and Peer Leader trainings are designed to be fun (really fun), engaging, and a catalyst for your local social change initiative. Although the real “work” of this change happens as teams meet together regularly, growing in and practicing their Strengths, and then seeking to share, cultivate, and spread Hope, Help, and Strength-based messages and stories across a school or community at a population level. This is no small endeavor you are embarking on and we hope to offer the necessary resources, support, and strategy you’ll need to do this well amongst your adult and Peer Leader teams.



FOR MORE  
INFORMATION ABOUT  
MEETING REGULARLY,  
SEE PAGE [33](#).

## Where to Start

We recommend that you have your first Peer Leader meeting within ten days of the original Peer Leader training (see Base Camp on page [32](#) for more information and ideas). This will help you to capitalize on the energy, momentum, and connection cultivated in the training. From there, your team should meet on a regular basis; twice a month for about an hour each time or four times a month for a half hour each. How this looks may vary by school and context. The important point is that you meet regularly and with enough time to have some fun, do some sharing, and execute on campaign planning and construction. While it’s not always possible to have every Adult Advisor and Peer Leader present at every meeting, we hope that you’ll continue to engage your team at multiple levels and keep them coming back and excited to make a difference. When adults or peers don’t attend, we recommend following up with them to fill them in on what happened, share how they can be involved with the plan, and invite them to the next meeting to continue sharing their voice and

ideas. Peer Leader meetings are a great time and space to build connection, share stories, envision the impact we want to have on our school or community, and then turn that vision into a concrete reality that helps students and staff weather the ups and down of life by drawing on the Strengths and supports that all around us (for more information about meeting regularly, see page [33](#)).

To facilitate efficient and effective Peer Leader meetings, we recommend that you stick closely to our simple planning meeting formula of “1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, 1 Part Planning”.

Practically this looks like:

- Running a game from our games section on page [112](#);
- Facilitating a turn-and-share, small group, or campaign card sharing time using one of the sharing prompts on pages [41-43](#) or from the campaign materials provided in the training, or downloaded from our website;
- Leading the group in a structured brainstorming and planning time, where they contextualize, bring to life, and put into action one of our many Sources of Strength templated campaigns on pages [54-85](#), or their own ideas and campaigns.



“REMEMBER  
THE MEETING FORMULA: 1 PART  
FUN, 1 PART SHARING, 1 PART  
PLANNING.”

1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, 1 Part Planning. These essential elements are the road map for a vibrant and thriving Sources of Strength team and will greatly help with Peer Leader retention. While the various elements can be divided up over multiple meetings (due to time constraints), we believe each piece is vitally important to the success, sustainability, and long term impact of the program on Adult Advisors



and Peer Leaders, as they each speak to key motivations and drivers for change - having fun and laughing, connecting with others through shared stories, and actively carrying out practices that help people interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives. If one or more of these elements is lost, teams will often see a drop in Adult Advisor and/or Peer Leader engagement and involvement. If we stop having fun this work can become too serious and heavy, and we might lose some student participation. If we stop sharing then our team and our campaigns

will feel thin and inauthentic, and we won't fully realize a community of Strength. If we stop planning then we will fail to achieve our mission of impacting our school and creating a healthy climate and culture amongst other students and staff.

For more information about games, see page [112](#). For helpful sharing prompts, turn to page [41](#). If you would like ideas for how to build and carry out a campaign, check out page [53](#).

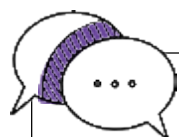


# BASE CAMP: FIRST PEER LEADER MEETING

So, you've assembled a team. You've had your Peer Leader Training...now what? It's time for your first Peer Leader Team meeting!

We ask that Peer Leader teams meet within the first ten days after training. When it takes longer than 10 days, Peer Leaders lose their excitement from the training, and start to believe that it is just another program that didn't get off the ground.

Gather as many Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders from the team as you can. Thank everyone again for participating in the training, reaffirming that their voices have great power, and that by working together, many people will be connected to help and Strength. Remember the meeting formula: 1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, 1 Part Planning. Play a short game (for games and directions, see page [112](#)). Take a moment to have team members share about their favorite part of the training, something they are excited about going forward, or a Strength they are focusing on that week (for more sharing prompts, turn to page [41](#)).



"GATHER YOUR  
TEAM'S CONTACT INFORMATION  
AND DECIDE ON THE BEST  
TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION  
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS."

In the first meeting, it's important to help students understand what they might expect going forward. If you can, give them an idea of when and where you will be meeting. If you have not done so already, gather your team's contact information and decide on the best tool for communication and announcements: is it the Remind app? A Google Classroom? A private Twitter account? Once you have decided on this as a team, move to planning your first campaign.

We have found it helpful for teams in their first

meetings to jump back into their brainstorming groups and talk about their favorite campaign idea that they came up with in the Peer Leader training. Depending on how much time you have, have the group discuss and vote on their first campaign. Typically, the group's first effort is the Getting the Word Out campaign, which uses various mediums to introduce Sources of Strength and the Wheel to the rest of the school.

Think of as many ways to "get the word out" as you can: social media, classroom presentations, art and wall displays, group activities, audio/video announcements - the sky is the limit! Help the Peer Leaders decide what will work best in their social circles and start moving forward with tangible steps. Remember, your job is to help the team make achievable goals, encourage their stories, and work towards Hope, Help, and Strength, and follow through on commitments.



# WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW TO MEET

Meeting consistently is vital to the growth and Strength of your Peer Leader team. Within these meetings, Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors come together to form something radically different: a community of Strength. It is important that we are sharing our stories of Strength with each other so that they are internalized, changing the way that we view and engage in the world around us. It is important that we laugh and play together, strengthening our youth-adult connections and living from a place of joy, compassion, and authenticity. To be most effective, we have to plan contagious ways to share Strength with others, inviting them to join in our efforts. Meeting together regularly is when we remember and practice our mission together in community. We get many questions about where, when, and how to meet. While no one formula will work for every team, here are some guidelines.



“IT IS  
IMPORTANT FOR SCHOOLS TO  
BE WILLING TO GIVE UP PART OF  
THEIR TIME AND NOT ALWAYS BE  
PUTTING THE BURDEN OF TIME  
ON PEER LEADERS.”

When deciding where to meet, consider if a classroom could be easily freed for meetings. A circle is important to the work we do at Sources, allowing for games, sharing stories, and brainstorming ideas. Any meeting place should have enough room for a circle of chairs (chairs with desks attached can be problematic and should be avoided if possible). Libraries also work well, as do stages, cafeterias, or gyms. It is important, however, that group members be able to hear each other easily and that the space is free of traffic.

Your team should meet within 10 days of their training. When it takes longer than this, Peer Leaders can start to believe that this is just another program that never really took off. Follow-through is an important part of your role as an Adult Advisor team. After this initial meeting, teams should meet together

twice a month for about an hour each time to have fun, share their Strength stories, and plan campaigns. If a group cannot meet for a whole hour, they can meet each week for half an hour.



“BEING A PART OF  
A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH  
CHANGES YOU.”  
- ADULT ADVISOR ON  
MEETING REGULARLY

Some groups meet during the same period each time, taking advantage of a longer lunch or Advisory period. We find a team will have trouble growing or retaining Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors if they cannot find a time to regularly meet. For more ideas about meeting times, see Troubleshooting Key Challenges on page [98](#).

Peer Leader teams have the capacity to change population level norms for the better. They cannot do this unless they meet consistently to play, share, and plan. If you are still facing challenges around meeting consistently, don't hesitate to reach out to a Sources of Strength staff member to brainstorm some solutions.



# FACILITATION GUIDELINES

The power of this program is not what happens in the training, but in the work that you and your Peer Leader team do to internalize Strength stories and spread Hope, Help, and Strength throughout your school or community. When you invest in a community of Strength, powerful relationships will develop along the way! Here are some tips and techniques for facilitating your Peer Leader meetings and cultivating a space to practice a community of Strength. For more guidance on our formula for successful Peer Leader meetings, see page [30](#).

## Location, Listening, and Leadership

When it comes to selecting the perfect campsite, it's all about location, location, location. In the same way, the space you choose to hold your Peer Leader meetings in, and the way you organize that space matters! If you remember back to your training, we spent most of our time together in a circle or in small groups. You will want to continue to work alongside your Peer Leader team in this way. Sitting in a circle recognizes the power of each person and pushes back against hierarchy and power struggles, and small groups give everyone a chance to hear and be heard, to see and be seen. Avoid teaching from the front of a room or working at individual desks. Collaboration builds trust and relationship, and a key outcome of Sources of Strength is the increase in connection between Peer Leaders and adults, not just in moments of crisis, but also in everyday life.

For the majority of a meeting, your main job as an Adult Advisor is to listen and guide Peer Leaders. We all know the difference between a person who is listening and a person who is simply waiting for their turn to talk. Be the kind of Adult Advisor who develops and models the skills of active listening. We recommend you think about active listening in three ways: listening with your body, listening to learn, and

reflecting and re-framing.

Listening with your body means listening with your ears, your eyes, and your body language! Position yourself in such a way that your team knows that you value what they are saying because you are facing or positioned alongside your Peer Leaders. Match the body posture of whomever is speaking, and stay at or below students' eye levels.

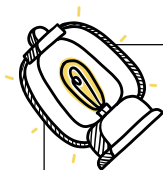
Listening to learn means that you are willing to hear the perspectives, opinions, and ideas of your Peer Leader team without fixing or correcting. What could happen if you validate their opinions first before ever trying to change them? And finally, we have learned how powerful it is to listen by either reflecting (often called mirroring) back exactly what a Peer Leader has shared, or by re-framing what they shared in your own words. These simple techniques build trust and rapport.

It can be challenging to balance listening with guiding a team. Listening well doesn't mean not shaping the direction of your team. Work to ask good questions that help Peer Leaders further sharpen their great ideas. Make sure to add insights around the Sources messaging philosophy of Hope, Help, and Strength (for more on this, see page [50](#)). Suggest ideas for how your team could partner with community groups or clubs that they might not have thought of before. Always be asking, "What message are we sending with this prompt, campaign, or activity?" Once you have set up a space for this Strength-based Active Learning, get out of the way! You will be amazed at the great ideas a well guided Peer Leader team can come up with.

In addition to listening, you will also need to find ways to be heard! As a team it is important to choose a



way to get each others' attention. You can raise your hand until everyone is quiet, or maybe use one of our favorites, "Waterfall! Waterfall!" "Shhhhhhhhhhhh." Others say, "If you can hear me, clap/snap/stomp once", if you can hear me, clap/snap/stomp twice, etc. Many Peer Leader teams come up with their own ritual for getting attention- ask the Peer Leaders to come up with a solution! Remember to keep it playful. It's possible their side conversations are on message, and we want to regularly honor and recognize how powerful Peer Leader voices are (even if sometimes we need them to be quiet!).



"WHEN YOU START  
A MEETING, IT'S A GOOD  
IDEA TO BEGIN WITH A QUICK  
REVIEW OF WHAT HAPPENED IN  
THE LAST MEETING, AND  
UPDATE THE TEAM ON YOUR  
NEXT STEPS."

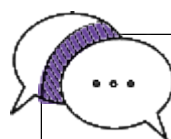
As you build relationships with your Peer Leader team, you can empower them with more responsibilities and help to develop their leadership skills. Always be on the lookout for ways a Peer Leader may have a chance to grow in leadership skills. Everything we do at Sources of Strength is a practiced skill set, from learning about the Wheel and incorporating the Strengths into our day-to-day lives, to brainstorming and problem-solving with a diverse group of peers, to conflict management, project management, and celebration of all of our accomplishments, large and small. Part of growing a sustainable Peer Leader team is looking for opportunities to move from adult-initiated ideas and activities, in which decision making is shared with youth, towards a space where ideas and activities are initiated by peers and decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

Find ways to share responsibility with your Peer Leaders. Perhaps some of them can take attendance, but instead of simply noticing who is missing, they

can write cards letting those absent know they were missed. Many of your Peer Leaders are playing games and doing activities in the other clubs and communities they participate in; encourage them to incorporate their expertise and those experiences into your meetings. Remember that your job is not to call others out, but rather to invite them in to this radical community of Strength.

Remember, the model of this program is Adult Advisors + Peer Leaders x Strategic Messaging Campaigns = Climate and Culture Change. You, as an Adult Advisor, are an integral part of your Sources of Strength team. Your Peer Leader team will never take on so much responsibility that you no longer have a role. Since we take a Strength-based approach, the Wheel isn't just for Peer Leaders; it's for all of us. Your Peer Leaders need opportunities to share personally about how their Strengths have helped them through life's ups and downs, and so do you. For more information about how to encourage Peer Leadership on your team, turn to page [36](#).

Regularly circling back to the Peer Leader Mission Statement (Included in the Visuals and Tear-outs section starting from page [130](#)) will help you and your team refocus on our shared purpose, and stay on the right trail. And as you trek together, don't hesitate to reach out to one of our National Trainers, who are eager to walk alongside your team, offering guidance and troubleshooting challenges.



"BE THE KIND OF  
ADULT ADVISOR WHO  
DEVELOPS AND MODELS THE  
SKILLS OF ACTIVE LISTENING."

# PEER LEADER OWNERSHIP

One of the defining characteristics within the Sources model is that of peer leadership. For too long, adults have attempted to do the work of prevention for young people. While many adults care and may want to affect change, adults alone lack the insight and influence that young people have. At Sources, adults and young people work together. There is incredible power in the voices of young people, and a great Adult Advisor team will focus on creating a space where these voices can be empowered for positive change. Every part of living in a community of Strength is a learned skill. Students don't always naturally know how to use their voices for Hope, Help, and Strength. They need excited and engaged

Mentors who can model and help them as they grow into leaders who can leverage their power and influence for positive change.

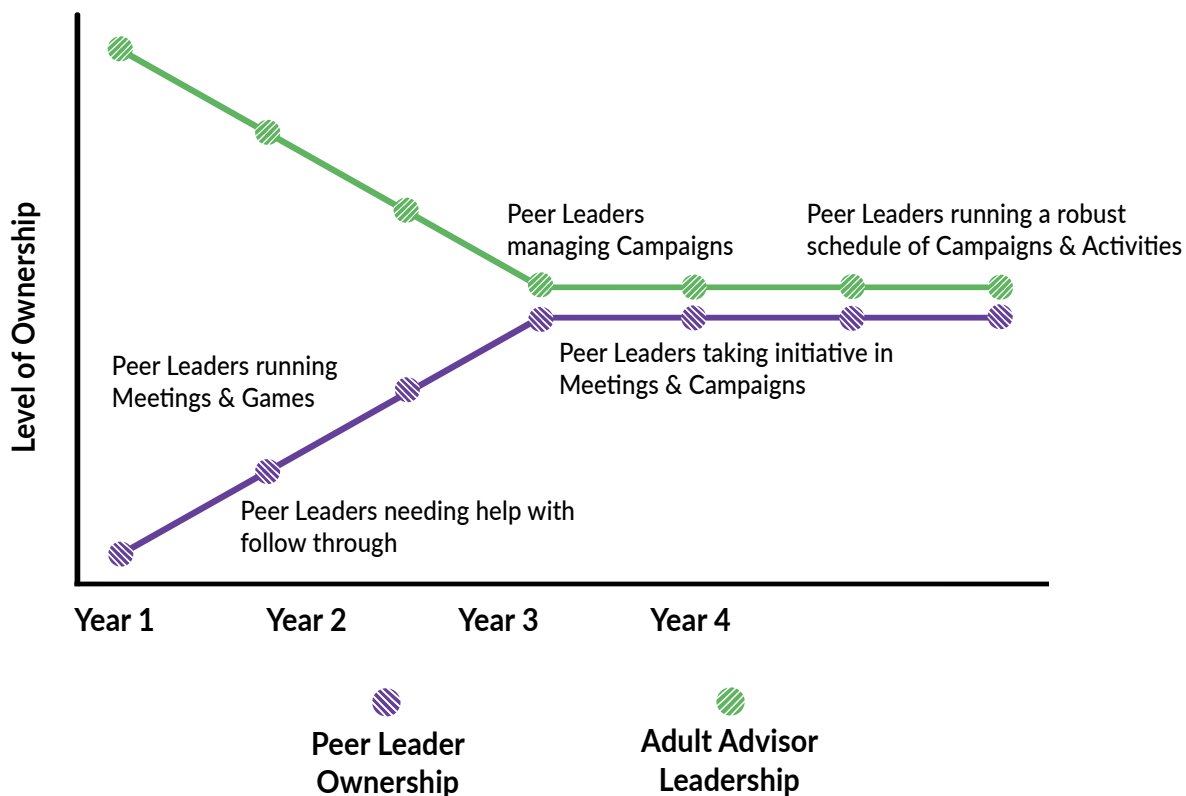


"EVERY PART OF LIVING  
IN A COMMUNITY OF  
STRENGTH IS A LEARNED SKILL."  
- ADULT ADVISOR ON  
GROWING IN COMMUNITY

We are sometimes asked about how much Adult Advisors should be doing for Peer Leaders. These graphs were created to show the progression towards Peer Leader's ownership of a Sources of Strength program over time. It looks different

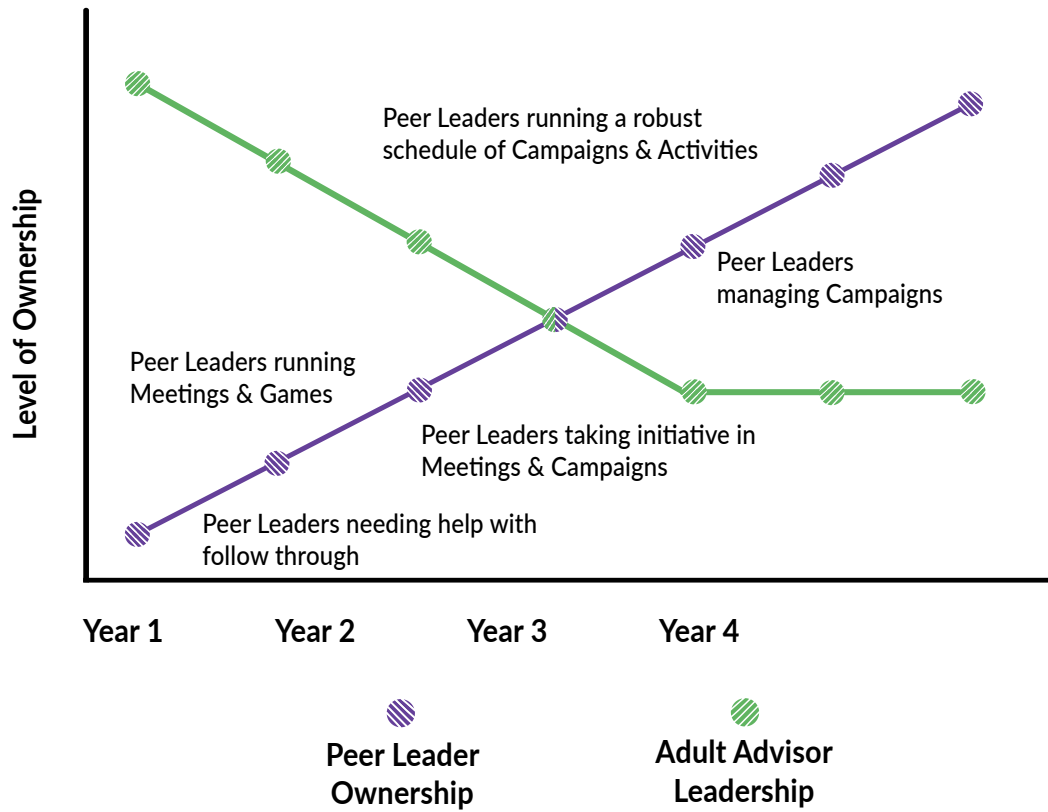
for middle and high school teams. While a high school Peer Leader team may eventually run games, meetings, and campaigns, a middle school team may need a little more help from adults. This balance will vary from team to team, but we hope these graphs will provide some general guidance.

## PEER LEADER OWNERSHIP (Middle School Model)



# PEER LEADER OWNERSHIP

(High School Model)



# RATIONALE FOR 1 PART FUN

We are often asked, “Why do we play so many games?” This is a fantastic question, usually asked by people who did not win... All joking aside, games can be a helpful tool for connection, learning, and enjoyment within a group learning context. As we venture into our prevention work, we want to remember why the play and laughter that games offer us are important components of our journey together.



“MY FAVORITE PART  
OF THIS TRAINING WAS  
SEEING A DIFFERENT SIDE OF  
MY TEACHERS AND PRINCIPAL  
WHEN THEY PLAYED GAMES  
WITH US.”

**- MIDDLE SCHOOL PEER  
LEADER FROM KENTUCKY**

There is vast research about why play is important to human development and learning. Yet we often forget how vital play can be for one’s health and relationships.

We strongly recommend the use of games and a sense of playfulness in Peer Leader team meetings and campaign efforts for several reasons. We believe that as humans, we simply take ourselves too seriously: we need more fun in our lives! Many of us interact with some difficult stories in our work and personal lives, but that does not mean that all of our prevention efforts have to be serious. Games can alleviate the heavy emotions around discussions of suicide prevention and life challenges.

Furthermore, as Peer Leaders are nominated from a wide variety of social groups, games help learners mix, bond, and become more comfortable, laying the groundwork for discussion and collaboration.

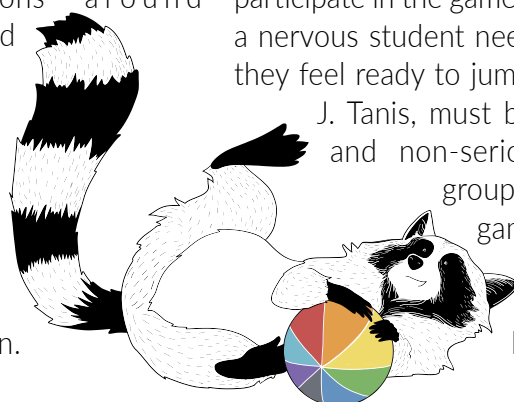
Sources believes that laughter is important within a team setting; laughter has been shown to not only release endorphins, but to also turn on learning centers within the brain. Games do not just help us bond. They also help us to better remember what we are learning.

Fun is attractive to others. If we are practicing having fun with each other in our meetings, campaigns, and everyday interactions, others will be curious and more likely to want to be a part of what we are doing. If Peer Leaders are not having fun, they are also less likely to stay involved. Not only is fun a vital part of Active Learning and community building, it is also a powerful tool for retention. With this contagious fun, our movement of hope and help will continue to spread to those around us, making our schools and communities stronger.

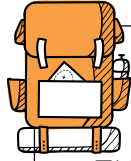
Importantly, Sources of Strength believes that increased peer-adult connection is vital to the mission of teen suicide prevention and general well-being. Games within a meeting or campaign may be one of the first instances that a caring adult has been willing to spend time with a Peer Leader in a silly, fun, or “unproductive” way. Young people constantly move through the world in a top-down power hierarchy. They often have teachers, coaches, parents, or bosses speaking at them rather than with them. Countless times we have heard a Peer Leader say that one of their favorite parts of Sources of Strength is that they get to spend time in fun, face-to-face interactions with caring adults who believe in them and really want to hear what they think. Games and laughter help build strong and trusting adult to peer relationships.

Although everyone is highly encouraged to participate in the games, no one is forced. Sometimes a nervous student needs to observe a game before they feel ready to jump in. Play, according to David

J. Tanis, must be, “fun, enjoyable, voluntary, and non-serious” to be beneficial in a group learning context. All of the games that Sources uses during training try to meet these characteristics. If your team has a favorite game they



love to play, let a Peer Leader facilitate that part of the meeting, building the student-led aspect of a Sources of Strength team. Not only are Peer Leaders more likely to learn, interact, bond, and experience less anxiety, they are also more likely to connect with safe adults in a fun and non-threatening atmosphere. Games should be used not only in Peer Leader meetings, but in school-wide campaigns as well. The vast majority of what we do should be infused with a sense of playfulness and fun, adding a human element to our work. If needed,



FOR MORE ABOUT  
THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE  
LEARNING, TURN TO PAGE [25](#).

many of the games we play can be adapted to meet your Peer Leader team's specific needs. Games appropriately played can give the sense of belonging and buy-in needed for the Sources of Strength mission to be achieved, and they should continue to be used readily by Peer Leader teams. As you plan your meetings and campaigns, make sure to never leave fun out of the equation. A team that plays together, grows together! For a list of Sources of Strength games and directions, turn to page [112](#)).





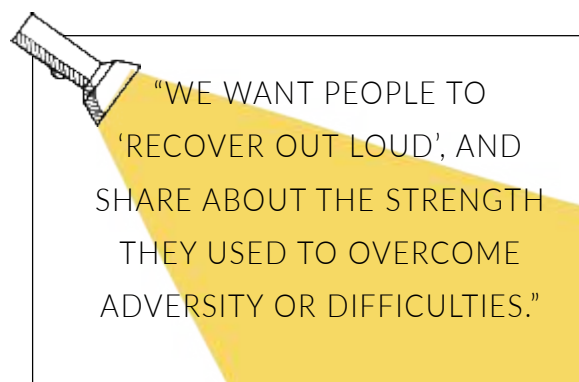
# RATIONALE FOR 1 PART SHARING

We strongly believe in the power of our stories and in Strength-based storytelling. Our vision is to empower a well world by saturating schools and communities with stories of Hope, Help, and Strength. This way, stories of recovery and resilience become the norm, and people who are struggling or experiencing adversity can have hope that others have found a way through or around adversity, and they could use some of the same skills or Strengths as well. In the news and media, we are often surrounded by stories of everything that can go wrong. Unfortunately, when this is the information we are surrounded with, we can start to believe that this is an accurate proportion of good to bad in the world. Individuals who are not exposed to another, more positive option can often resort to sharing sad, shocking, or traumatic stories which can have discouraging or even dangerous outcomes.

At Sources, we work with Peer Leader teams to talk about what can go right. Research shows that by noticing our positive stories of Strength and recovery, our brains can physically change to be more positive. When we see stress as a challenge to be overcome rather than an insurmountable obstacle, we can become better at problem-solving, academically, professionally, or relationally. Whether Adult Advisors or Peer Leaders, we share our stories of recovery and Strength with each other to remind ourselves of what helps. In doing this, we add to our resiliency “toolbox” to create more ways that we, too, can overcome the difficult times that life throws our way. It is vital that Peer Leader teams are engaging and applying Strength to their own lives; it is through the internalizing of Strength that we can live authentic lives and effectively invite others to do the same.

It is not enough, however, to simply share a story of Strength once. We want to get to the level of internalized Strength stories, where Strength becomes a part of our self-narrative, a part of who we are and how we tell our story. Even students that may have been labeled “at-risk youth” can begin to tell their story through a lens of Hope, Help, and Strength. By doing this, they can come to understand that they are not the sum total of their

environment, but rather, high potential youth and resilient individuals with the Strength to overcome or mitigate that risk. When Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors experience and practice a community of Strength, they are much more likely and able to build a community of Strength around them with their friends, families, and in their schools and communities.



Learning to share our stories of Strength is both a personal coping skill as well as a public health messaging strategy. We often hear stories about how others struggle but we rarely hear stories of how they recover, cope, or heal. These stories are the true norm. We want people to “recover out loud” and share about the Strengths they used to overcome adversity or difficulties. Within the news media, for example, a difficult story may exhibit a 90:10 ratio of negative to positive information: 90% of the story tells about a difficult story while 10% may talk about how a situation was improved or what the reader could do to enact positive change. Sources of Strength challenges individuals and groups to flip that ratio, making 10% of the story about the challenge, adversity, or struggle a person faced and 90% about what helped and how they were able to recover, manage, and get better. While this approach takes intention and practice, it is a powerful skill that will cause ripple effects of Hope, Help, and Strength throughout a school and community.



# HELPFUL PROMPTS FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Peer Leader meetings are an important time for Peer Leaders to process and share their stories of Strength and to hear others' stories of Strength. Connecting through stories is a vital component of Sources of Strength, and sharing can be done in several different styles, including through games, turn-and-talk with a neighbor, breaking into small groups and sharing, writing your story of Strength on a campaign card, in large group discussion, etc. Here are some campaign and Strength-specific prompts that can help facilitate discussions in Peer Leader meetings or amongst other students and staff.

## **You Belong**

- When is a time you felt that you belonged?
- Who is someone that makes you feel like you belong?
- How do you help others feel that they belong?
- Who has invited you into belonging?
- What makes you unique?

## **What Helps Me**

- Which of the Big Three Emotions (Anger, Anxiety, or Sadness) is most common when you're stressed or experiencing a challenge? What helps you manage that emotion?
- Who are people in your life that help you? What do they do to help you?
- What activities help you to feel joy?
- What activities are calming for you?
- If someone were to write a self care plan for you, what activities, places, or people might it include?

## **I Am Stronger**

- One thing that I have done to grow in     (Strength)     is                     .
- One thing that I can do tonight to grow in     (Strength)     is                     .
- A person that I can support in growth is                     .
- What Strength have you used in the past week? How did it help?
- Is there someone who has helped you grow in Strength? Who is it and how has this helped you?

## **Trusted Adults/Mentors**

- Who is a Trusted Adult that makes you feel safe to be yourself?
- Name an adult you feel is "in your corner". How do they show you that they are for you?
- Which adult do you most commonly ask for help, whether with school, a social issue, etc?
- Tell about how your Trusted Adult worked to gain your trust.
- One adult you would like to connect more to is                      because                                     .

## **Connect**

- When did you connect someone else to help?
- When did you connect someone to a healthy activity?
- How has someone else connected you to better Mental Health?
- How have you connected others to your community?
- Where would you go to connect a struggling friend to help?

## **Spirituality** (This could include traditions, practices, culture or religion)

- In what ways do you experience Spirituality in your own life?
- What are spiritual or gratitude practices that help you?
- How has a gratitude practice impacted you?

- Where are spiritual places for you?
- Tell about a spiritual moment in your own life.
- Name three things you are grateful for today.

### **Healthy Activities**

- Share a story of how you used Healthy Activities to cope.
- What are your favorite calming Healthy Activities?
- Name three Healthy Activities you enjoy - only one can be a sport.
- What are your favorite energizing Healthy Activities?
- What is a Healthy Activity you might like to try?

### **Generosity**

- Who do you think is the most generous person that you know and why?
- Name a person who has been generous towards you. How have they shown Generosity?
- How do you contribute to the community?
- Name a time in which you demonstrated Generosity.
- What is one way you can show Generosity today?

### **Family Support**

- What unique traditions do you have in your family?
- What makes a person “family”?
- Who in your own Family Supports you? How do they show support?
- Who do you consider to be your “family of choice”? How do they support you?
- How do you show Family Support to others?

### **Getting the Word Out**

- What part of Sources of Strength really “clicks” for you? How can we help Sources of Strength to “click” for others?
- What messaging and mediums break through to you and your friends?
- How do we tell others about Sources of Strength in a way that draws them in?
- Name three friends that you will go and talk to about Sources of Strength.
- What would be your “elevator pitch” to someone else to quickly explain what Sources of Strength is about?

### **Positive Friends**

- What makes a person a Positive Friend?
- Who is your most Positive Friend and why?
- Tell a story of a time a friend was honest with you and it helped.
- Tell a story of a time a Positive Friend supported you in a difficult time.
- Who are your Positive Friends and why?
- How have you shown up as a Positive Friend?

### **Physical Health**

- How well are you taking care of your physical well-being?
- How much water are you drinking?
- How often are you getting exercise?
- How often are you eating nutritious foods?
- How much sleep are you getting per night?
- How might you take better care of your physical well-being?
- How might you sleep more?
- How might you drink more water?

- How might you get better exercise?
- How might you eat more nutritiously?
- If you made a map outlining places one could find medical resources in your school and community, what might you include? (example: Nurses office, free community health clinic, food pantry, community garden, partnerships with local gyms, Walk-with-a-Doc events, free eye and dental exam events in the community, etc.)

### Brainstorming or Voicing Concerns

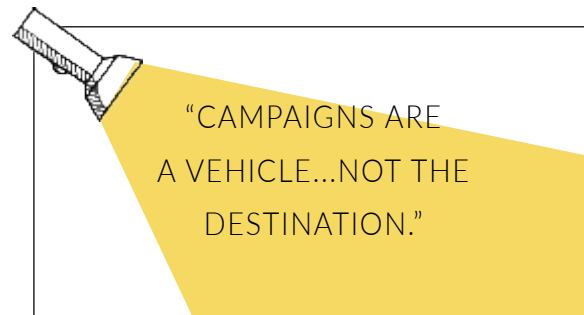
- What Strength is the most difficult for your friends to connect with? Why do you think that may be?
- What are you most concerned about in your school or community's culture?
- What part of the school year could use more support, connection, or restful moments?
- Are students in the school watching 13 Reasons Why (or whatever song/show/movie/trend is equivalent at the time)? What are they saying? Given this, what conversations might be most helpful?
- Where are unresolved pockets of grief within the school or community that adults might not be aware of?
- If you conducted a survey about the top five stressors a student at your school faces, what would these be? And what might help students cope healthily with these stressors?
- We can always grow stronger. Where would you like to start growing on this Wheel?
- What advice would you give parents about supporting their students?
  - About having Strength based conversations with their students.
  - About sharing and practicing their own Strengths.



# RATIONALE FOR 1 PART PLANNING

Sources of Strength is not simply a school club, program, or student group but rather a vital part of a school and community-wide public health initiative. We envision each Peer Leader as the “Patient Zero” of an epidemic of health, and a contagion of hope and Strength, that they would go out and infect their social network and closest peers with positive social norms and behaviors, creating a wave of positive social change. They do this both through experiencing and practicing a community of Strength in their Peer Leader meetings and then by transforming this positive energy and these stories of Strength into strategic messaging campaigns that invite other students and staff to engage, interact, and apply Strength to their own lives. While regular meetings are a wonderful place to connect and share with other Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors, the power of Sources of Strength happens when this positive energy is taken out to the school and community in practical ways.

of Strength events. The true magic of growing resilience happens in coffee shops, lunchrooms, and in the small, everyday work of relationships, connections, and conversations; there is power in the small in-between moments that invite people into discovering and cultivating Strength in their own lives, where relationships are strengthened and health is lived out.



“IT’S NOT ABOUT THE CAMPAIGNS: SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THAT HAPPEN YOU’LL NEVER SEE. IT HAPPENS ON THE PLAYGROUND AND IN THE LUNCHROOM.”

**- ADULT ADVISOR FROM ALASKA**

Effective campaign planning helps people interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives. While a catchy poster or short celebrity video may be positive, we know that regular practices, actions, habits, and ideas, are what help individuals and communities grow in their health and wellness.

While campaigns are important, remember that they are only a tool and not an end in themselves. Even the most fun and exciting campaign is simply a starting point for larger discussions, interactions, and choices that happen outside of official Sources

# INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

We believe that school culture will shift toward Hope, Help, and Strength when we recognize and empower a diverse group of Peer Leaders with varied social, demographic, and life experiences. Drawing on knowledge from Social Network Theory, we want to embody inclusivity and thereby empower every corner and culture of our school and community. So what are we talking about when we talk about inclusivity? We're talking about:

## **Demographic Identities:**

This may include our racial and ethnic identities, socio-economic experiences, gender identities, sexual orientation, and grade level.

## **Social Identities:**

This is our representation within our peer groups, activities, and greater social environment. Think about the characters in "The Breakfast Club."

## **Life Experiences:**

This includes our wide range of experiences in life that help shape our identities. Examples may include family history, religious or spiritual traditions, cultural heritage, physical capabilities, history of trauma, mental illness, and physical and clinical diagnoses.

It's important to consider these varied definitions of inclusivity when initially nominating Peer Leaders and in recruiting more Peer Leaders to your established team. Later we will highlight some accommodations and inclusive practices with regard to diversity of all students, including those with varied needs and/or abilities.

As you recruit, support, and sustain a Sources of Strength Peer Leader team, you want to create collaborative group norms within your team. Instead of relying on traditional norms and majority culture, each person can, and should contribute to the unique culture of your Sources of Strength team.

## **Tips Before Training**

Host an All-Staff presentation to recruit Adult Advisors from all demographic backgrounds, social groups, and departments. If any of your Peer Leaders have been personally impacted by suicide, seek them out individually before the training and establish a Trusted Adult connection. Be aware that hard emotions may come up during a training, but you ultimately want to communicate that the training will be a celebration of our Strengths, and is usually a lot of fun. Before training, we also recommend that you establish strategic partnerships with like-minded community groups who work with your student population (i.e. intervention specialists, drug and alcohol prevention staff, faith leaders, Gay Straight Alliance, and Black Student Alliances, etc.). Lastly, when you are scheduling training, consider accommodations for students with special needs; this includes training space, scheduled breaks, sensory elements, ability, and peer-to-peer and peer-to-trainer communication.



"TAKE A TRAINING LITMUS TEST: WHO SHOWED UP? WHO SKIPPED? WHO LEFT DURING BREAKS? DO YOU SEE TRENDS IN PARTICIPATION?"

## **Tips During Trainings, Meetings, and Campaigns**

Take a training litmus test. Who showed up? Who skipped? Who left during breaks? Did you see trends in participation? Ask your Peer Leaders if they think the group is representative of the cultural and social demographics in your school. If the answer is no, reflect during the Adult Advisor debrief on which groups

were underrepresented at the training and brainstorm who to invite next to your Peer Leader meeting. Set a goal to make every student feel seen and included by at least one Adult Advisor during training. Pursue edgy students and push yourself out of your comfort zone! Finally, be considerate and equitable with students of different needs and abilities. When in doubt about how to make an accommodation, ask the student!

### **Tips After Trainings, Meetings, and Campaigns**

Continue to create opportunities for students of different social and cultural backgrounds to connect, create, and lead one another. Instead of trying to overlook differences, choose to celebrate them! When grouping students for activities, create groups based upon shared interest, rather than solely on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and social grouping. As your students engage with the wider community, create opportunities for them to share and collaborate with diverse groups and organizations. Dive into the language needs of your Peer Leader team, including both the student and family needs for English language accessibility as well as inclusive language for all people. Use person-centered or person-first language (student with disabilities vs. disabled student). Make your language Strengths-based (What problems do you want to solve in the world? vs. What do you want to be when you grow up?). Honor gender identity and sexual orientation, and use the name and pronouns the student gives you. For more ideas and resources, connect with a National Trainer to discuss strategies of inclusivity for your specific context, and visit our Resources page at [www.sourcesofstrength.org/resources](http://www.sourcesofstrength.org/resources).



## Examples of Inclusive Language

### People-Centered Language

"What problems do you want to solve?"  
"Student leaders"  
"You all / Y'all"  
"Everyone"  
"That's interesting/cool/ wild"  
"Student with disabilities"  
"Person experiencing homelessness"

### Exclusive Language

"What do you want to be?"  
"Kids, Kiddos, Sweetie(s)"  
"You Guys"  
"Boys & Girls"  
"That's crazy"  
"Disabled student"  
"Homeless person"

Sources of Strength seeks to foster a safe environment for all Peer Leaders, regardless of their differences. We celebrate the unique voices, experiences, and identities of each of our students, and we believe that a culture of inclusivity within our team can positively shift the culture within the entire school.







Learning how to share our stories of Strength with those we meet  
along the way.



### CHAPTER THREE:

# SHARING A COMMUNITY OF STRENGTH

*Sources Messaging and Philosophy* [50](#) | *Hope, Help, and Strength-based*

*Messaging* [50](#) | *Targeted Messaging* [52](#) | *Layered*

*Messaging* [52](#) | *Campaign Planning* [53](#) | *Templated*

*Campaigns* [54](#) | *Getting the Word Out* [56](#) | *What Helps Me* [60](#) |

*Am Stronger* [64](#) | *Thankfulness* [67](#) | *Connect* [70](#)

*We Belong* [73](#) | *Trusted Adults* [76](#) | *Sources of Strength*

*Week* [79](#) | *Ideas for Strength Specific Campaigns* [81](#)

*Postvention Guidelines: Do's and Don'ts* [86](#)

# SOURCES OF STRENGTH MESSAGING AND PHILOSOPHY

With every Peer Leader team idea, the team should answer the question, “What message are we trying to send?” Everything at Sources should be sent through a lens of Hope, Help, and Strength. As an Adult Advisor, your job is to create a space where students can use their voices, insight, and influence to create interesting and engaging ways for people to apply Strength to their lives.



“WITH EVERY PEER LEADER TEAM IDEA, THE TEAM SHOULD ANSWER THE QUESTION, ‘WHAT MESSAGE ARE WE TRYING TO SEND?’”

If their ideas are not Strength-focused, work to gently push them towards Strength. If your team never makes that pivot, you may need to stop that campaign from going out to

the larger population, as it could actually be harmful.

Peer Leaders have incredible power to effect change and strengthen a community. All of your efforts should be focused on helping people grow stronger by engaging with the Strengths given on the Wheel (see page [22](#)).

This chapter focuses on many different mediums you might use to help others

explore Strength and helpful coping strategies.

## HOPE, HELP, AND STRENGTH-BASED MESSAGING

Sources of Strength’s vision is to empower a well world. We strive towards this vision one school or community at a time, by empowering Adult Advisor and Peer Leader teams to spread messages of hope, examples of help, and stories of Strength. For us, Hope, Help, and Strength is not just a catchy phrase or slogan, but a sign post by which we navigate, pointing the way forward and lighting the path ahead. It is the foundational philosophy of our prevention strategy and we hope it will help guide you as you work to impact your school or community for the better.

At the risk of mixing metaphors, we hope that it will also function as a filter, helping you and your Peer Leaders create hopeful, safe, and effective prevention messaging. As you brainstorm and plan your messaging campaigns, run everything through this filter: does it focus on Hope, Help, and Strength? Does it feel hopeful? Does it lift people’s spirits? Does it highlight how people get help, where people get help, or what resources are available for asking for help? Does it normalize help-seeking rather than individualized, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps thinking? Does it start and end from a place of Strength? Does it focus on the Strengths people already have in their lives and communities? Does

it highlight how people get better, how they recover and practice resilience in the face of adversity, or how they grow and practice their Strengths to increase their sense of wellness?

Hope, Help, and Strength based messaging is also in direct contrast to well-meaning public health or prevention strategies that commonly use sad, shocking, or traumatic messaging to encourage people to change their behavior or make healthier choices. What we have learned is that for the most at-risk and vulnerable amongst us, these messages can often have a negative impact. They can be triggering, reinforce a false norm, or contribute to a sense of inevitability and hopelessness for those who are struggling. Sources of Strength has lifted one of the tenets of the Hippocratic oath of “do no harm”; we have found that focusing on Hope, Help, and Strength is one of the most effective and powerful ways to avoid causing harm and actually help where it is needed most.

The core of what we are trying to do is to make hope contagious, to make help-seeking accessible and the true sign of bravery and courage, to make Strength an everyday practice in our lives, and to build connections and belonging among students

and adults, so that relationship is the true foundation of community.



“IF WE ENGAGE  
IN AND PRACTICE THE  
LEADING CAUSES OF LIFE,  
WE WILL REDUCE THE  
LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH.”

We fundamentally believe that Hope, Help, Strength-based stories are a more motivating, inspiring, and persuasive force in the world than stories of fear. We cannot shock people into lasting, better behavior. We change our behavior and practices more often based on what calls us to something better than what drives us out of fear of failure.

It's not always easy to make this change, because it is truly a paradigm or worldview shift in our fundamental culture as human beings. We tend to gravitate towards and stay focused on the negative

stories and events in ours and other's lives. While our stories of Strength and recovery often stay hidden in the shadows of our personal lives, Sources of Strength seeks to promote stories of recovering out loud, to share how we can grow and get better, how we can practice and use our Strengths to overcome life's challenges. We truly believe that the stories we tell can become self-fulfilling prophecies. If we tell stories of how we've grown stronger through adversity, then we will see Strength in the face of adversity. If we tell stories of hope in the face of despair, then we will find hope in the midst of despair. If we practice Hope, Help, and Strength, we can reduce the circumstances that lead to such prevalent sadness, shocking statistics, and traumatic events in the world.

Rather than focusing on the leading causes of death we want to focus on the leading causes of life; where is life breaking forth and what does it look like? How can we practice life, promote life, and celebrate life?

In what follows we will outline how to practically focus your messaging activities on Hope, Help, and Strength-based messaging.

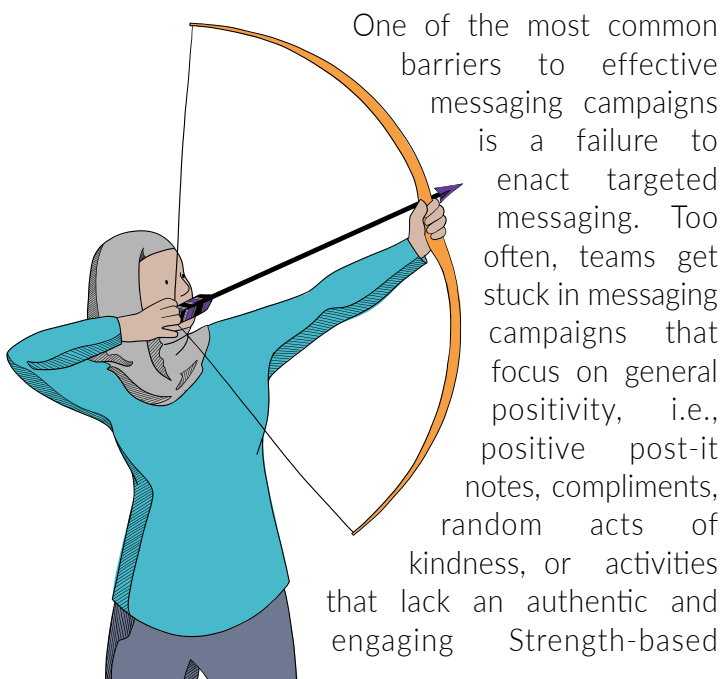
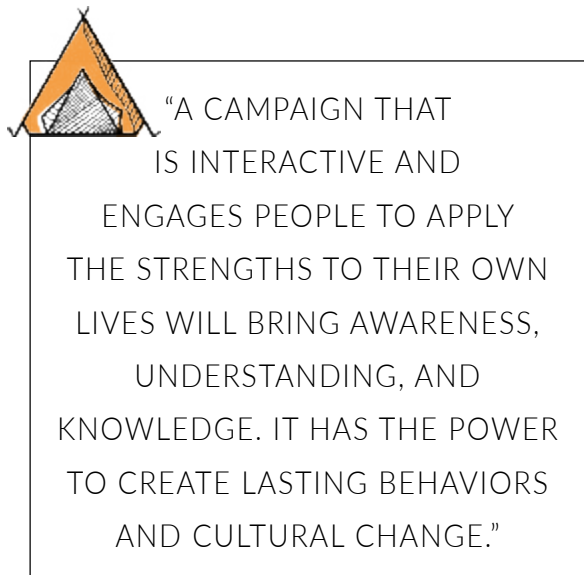


“WHEN WE TALK ABOUT OUR FEELINGS, THEY BECOME LESS OVERWHELMING, LESS UPSETTING, AND LESS SCARY. THE PEOPLE WE TRUST WITH THAT TALK CAN HELP US KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE. LOVE IS AT THE ROOT OF ALL LEARNING, ALL RELATIONSHIPS...LOVE OR THE LACK OF IT. EVERYONE LONGS TO BE LOVED AND THE GREATEST THING WE CAN DO IS TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THEY ARE LOVED AND ARE CAPABLE OF LOVING.”

*Mister Rogers*

# TARGETED MESSAGING

Effective messaging is a vital part of bringing Hope, Help, and Strength to a school and community. As teams build campaigns, it can be challenging to come up with ideas that can impact positive and strategic change in a community. Our research has shown campaigns that are interactive, and allow people to reflect on and share what the Strengths look like in their own lives, are far more effective than campaigns wherein people simply view or receive information. A campaign that is interactive and engages people to apply the Strengths to their own lives will not only bring awareness, understanding, and knowledge, but has the power to create lasting behavior and culture change.



message. While Sources of Strength messaging should always have a positive focus or component, it can lack impact if it gets stuck in that realm and fails to engage people on a personal level. Your role as an Adult Advisor is to help your Peer Leader team to move generally positive ideas to the next level, by incorporating Strength-based language and activities into their activities.

However, your role is not simply to help students and staff be more aware of the Strengths. While there is great power in the Strength Wheel as a tool for discussion, sharing, and reflection, it will have little impact if it never hits home and becomes practical and real in our own lives. Every Sources of Strength message should be positive and should raise awareness of the Strengths. However, more is needed if a team is going to help affect positive culture change: every campaign must also be interactive and engaging, helping people apply Strengths to their own lives.

A campaign will not be deeply effective unless it helps individuals and communities interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives. While a group may enjoy a campaign that is mainly positive, the effects of such messaging is relatively short-lived. Deep and lasting culture change will only occur when people are truly putting Strength into action and sharing their stories of resilience.

## LAYERED MESSAGING

Have you ever noticed that we learn best when we interact with information in a few different ways? This is one of the tenants of Active Learning Theory. Typically, we don't remember things if we only hear them one time. By approaching a Strength through multiple mediums, an individual can interact with the same message in several ways. Additionally, layered messaging can help a person apply a Strength to several areas of their life.

For example, while an art and wall display about Trusted Adults can catch someone's attention for a few minutes, an eye-catching display loses its power if the interaction stops there. Rather, if over the course of a month, a student adds to the art display by writing the name of their own Trusted Adult, shares about that adult during a classroom

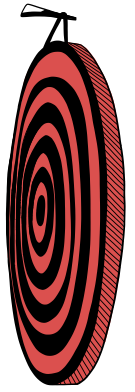
presentation, sees a video of their peers giving shout-outs to their Mentors, and writes a thank-you note to their Trusted Adult at a lunchroom display table, the impact of that conversation will be much deeper and more memorable.

As you plan campaigns, think creatively of different mediums that your community naturally gravitates towards. Do your students love art? Could a classroom presentation help with exploring a Strength more personally? What is a widely used social media platform your students are already using? Do you have events or traditions that many people rally around? How could your Peer Leaders combine their efforts with another club or organization to make the most of their efforts and help people engage with Strength in a variety of different ways?

As your team is brainstorming ideas for campaigns, we highly recommend that you layer your efforts, approaching the same ideas through several different mediums. As people, we need to see information presented in multiple ways before we can fully grasp it. A great teacher knows that we cannot master information we have only heard once; they will find different ways to help a student reflect on and practice important material. If our goal is to help individuals interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives, they must see and hear it more than once. Additionally, what is compelling to one person may not catch someone else's attention. By layering campaign messages with different mediums, a Peer Leader team has the best chance at helping their community internalize stories of Strength.

## CAMPAIGN PLANNING

A little bit of planning goes a long way. It's a great idea to gather a team of insightful Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors on a quarterly basis to evaluate and plan for the next season of campaigns, translating the popular brainstorming ideas of the larger groups into concrete and realistic plans. Gather around a calendar and ask yourselves, "What message are we trying to send?" Allow all of your decisions to filter through the lens of that question to ensure that your campaign is clear and on target.



Some teams choose to cover a Strength over a month, but a Strength campaign can last as long as six to eight weeks. Ask your Peer Leaders which Strength their peers need to engage with the most and go from there. Here are some helpful questions to ask as you calendarize a campaign:



TO ENSURE YOUR  
CAMPAIGNS ARE  
INTERACTIVE AND FOCUSED  
ON HOPE, HELP, AND  
STRENGTH, SEE PAGE [50](#).

- Are there events happening in the school that Sources of Strength should be a part of?
- What other clubs or organizations could we partner with to carry our message forward?
- Are we including a wide range of mediums that will reach to the edges of our community?
- Are there local community entities that would be willing to sponsor our efforts?
- Who are we leaving out? How could we better include them?



# TEMPLATED CAMPAIGNS

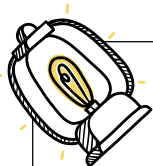
We have created a whole set of templated campaigns for your team to use to help people interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives. These were each created to focus on different goals that allow people to grow in Strength. While we hope these are helpful for you, we also believe that they are only a tool. The real power is in the creativity and insight of your Peer Leader team. As an Adult Advisor, your job is to foster a space of safety and creativity where helpful and effective Peer Leader ideas can come to life. While these campaign templates can be helpful, don't let them restrict you either. Consider looking at social media, Pinterest, or on our website to see some photos that might work for your setting; make it work for your context, whether that includes a local town tradition, your school's mascot, or giving a nod to the nature around you! When your team comes up with great campaigns, put them on display and share them with us on social media, by tagging #sourcesofstrength! We love seeing what teams come up with.

**What Helps Me:** When stressed, it's likely that we will feel one or more of the Big Three Emotions: anger, anxiety, or sadness. The What Helps Me campaign helps students and adults identify healthy and helpful coping strategies in their lives that can help them navigate the ups and downs of life. This campaign asks participants to share which emotion they experience most and then share a short explanation of what helps.

**Example:** *"When I get stressed, I feel anxious and sad. It helps me to write in my journal, go for a run, do some art, and talk to a friend."*

**I am Stronger:** The I Am Stronger campaign helps us reflect on how we have grown and makes us realize that our Strengths are not static, they are fluid and can be strengthened. Here, individuals can share about an area they feel they have recently grown in and explain how that has helped them.

**Example:** *"This time last year, I didn't feel like I had a solid group of friends. The people I hung around with were pretty negative and I didn't like who I was around them. But this year, I joined the soccer team. The girls are super fun and we all push each other to do our best in all areas of life."*



"MAKE A CAMPAIGN  
WORK FOR YOUR CONTEXT,  
WHETHER THAT INCLUDES A  
LOCAL TOWN TRADITION, YOUR  
SCHOOL'S MASCOT, OR GIVES  
A NOD TO THE NATURE  
AROUND YOU!"

**Thankfulness Journals:** Thankfulness campaigns provide opportunities for people to practice gratitude in their own lives and reap positive psychological rewards. A recent study showed that writing down three new things we are grateful for each day for 21 days can physically change our brain chemistry, making us more grateful, resilient, and positive people. This campaign has 21 days with three lines each for individuals to write down the people, places, and things they are grateful for.

**Example:** *"Day 14 - Coach Owens, springtime, and Costco hotdogs"*

**Thankfulness Challenge:** Students and staff can write three things they are grateful for in that moment. The back

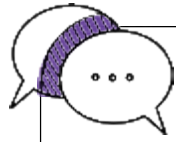
of the campaign card lists dozens of answers we hear everyday from people we work with.

**Example:** *"My mom's lasagna, my dog, and my friend Tony's sense of humor."*

**Connect:** The Connect Campaign provides an opportunity to normalize asking for, providing, and receiving help. These stories are instrumental in breaking down codes of secrecy and silence. This campaign focuses specifically on Mental Health, allowing participants to share short stories of how they have been connected or how they have connected someone else to Mental Health.



**Example:** “I was really feeling out of control after my dad died, but I didn’t feel like I could really talk to anyone. My friend Brent noticed I was struggling. He introduced me to our school counselor, Mrs. Hinson. I’ve met with her this semester a few times. While I’m still sad, she’s given me tools to deal with my grief in a healthier way.”



“WHEN YOUR TEAM COMES UP WITH GREAT CAMPAIGNS, PUT THEM ON DISPLAY AND SHARE THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA! WE LOVE SEEING WHAT TEAMS CAN COME UP WITH.”

**We Belong:** We all need to feel like we belong somewhere. The truth is, we all offer something unique to the world, through our voice, talents, interests, culture, and perspective. The We Belong campaign provides an opportunity to identify the things that make us unique and celebrate them, helping create a culture of connection and community. This campaign asks students and staff to share what they bring to their school and community, celebrating the Strength that comes with diversity.

**Example:** “I am a strong woman; I bring my tennis skills; I bring my love of math; I bring my Jewish faith; I am transgender; I bring my musical talent, etc.”

**Trusted Adult Cards:** One of the best ways to protect a young person from suicide is to have caring, connected, and positive adults engaged in their lives. Also known as Thank You cards, these look like postcards. Individuals are encouraged to write a short note to a Trusted Adult, thanking them for their influence in their lives. They are then asked to hand-deliver this note to that adult. This helps them formalize a protective relationship in their minds, allowing a young person to practice a “help-seeking pathway”. This increases the likelihood that they will reach back out to that adult when they need help.

**Example:** “Dear Mrs. Cahill, thanks for letting me eat lunch in your room on Thursdays. It’s always a highlight of my week. I appreciate you listening and helping me with my Chemistry homework. Sincerely, Rollin”



## CAMPAIGN:

# Getting the Word Out

**Summary:** Now that you have completed Sources of Strength Peer Leader Training, it's time to start sharing Sources of Strength with the rest of your school and community. In your first planning meetings your team should brainstorm ways to introduce Sources of Strength to your school and community.

### Goals:

- Introduce your Peer Leader team to the rest of the school and community.
- Allow the school to become familiar with the Sources of Strength wheel.
- Help individuals apply the Wheel to their own lives.
- Prepare the community to be watching for future events in which they are invited to participate.

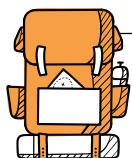
### Research:

Research shows that positive personal stories, shared by people you are familiar with, can have a huge impact in the creation of positive social norms within a community.

### Peer Leader Meeting

**Fun:** There are many games that you can play to break the ice and remind Peer Leaders of things they learned during their initial training. Generate excitement for individuals so they want to take what they learned at training out to their friends and classmates. For example, play the Chair Game and have Peer Leaders introduce themselves and share about which Strength is helping them that week.

**Share:** If this is the first meeting since your training, allow Peer Leaders to share some takeaways or thoughts they have had since then. Break into smaller groups and have Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors share which of the Strengths on the Wheel they are tapping into in this season.



FOR HELPFUL  
DISCUSSION PROMPTS,  
SEE PAGE [41](#).

**Plan:** Pull out your brainstorming sheets you worked on in the training. Your goal for the Getting the Word Out campaign is to start getting the message out about ways that we can grow in resilience: rather than focusing on one Strength, your team is introducing the entire Wheel. You may decide to have Peer Leaders return to their original poster group, or you may have already decided to focus on a few solid ideas. Start breaking down these ideas with

your Peer Leaders into attainable steps. Help them to be successful by guiding them towards realistic goals.

Help your Peer Leaders to remember that their goal is to use Hope, Help, and Strength to focus on making a difference. They need to come up with ideas that help others interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives.

### School Wide Campaign:

Now that you have explored the Wheel, consider how you will take it out to the rest of your school and community!

## Mediums:

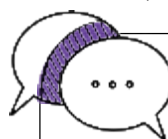
Here are some ideas that you could use to introduce the Wheel to your whole school. Don't be overwhelmed with these lists - you can pick one or two or even make up your own! Remember that these are only meant as suggestions: contextualize anything to make it work for your school and community!

## Presentations

- Have Peer Leaders go to classrooms and present on all, or part of the Wheel. Ask students to identify two Strengths they are strong in, and one that they would like to grow in over the year.
- Bring poster boards into classrooms and lead students in the poster activity where everyone draws out the people, places, and things that make them stronger. Then, present briefly on the Wheel.

## Classroom Integration

- English classes can read *Catcher In the Rye* and discuss the character of Holden. What Strengths did he have? How might life have looked different had he tapped into Strength?
- Ask history students to write a report on a period when a group or individual exhibited one or more of these Strengths for the greater good. For example, how did Americans at home during WWII exhibit Generosity? Family Support? Physical Health? Spirituality?
- Have Science students read different studies behind the benefits of being positive or thankful.
- Have a film class write case studies on especially resilient characters and what Strengths that individual tapped into.



"ASK YOURSELVES,  
'WHO COULD  
BENEFIT FROM ENGAGING  
WITH STRENGTHS?' THE  
ANSWER IS, 'EVERYONE!' SO  
GET CREATIVE AND THINK  
OF HOW TO ENGAGE WITH  
ALL GROUPS ACROSS YOUR  
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY."

## Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Host a sidewalk chalk show where artists make live art outside the school with the theme "My Source of Strength." As students, staff, and community members walk through, give them multiple opportunities to hear about the Wheel. Provide chalk to allow others to share their own Strengths.
- Have some Peer Leaders briefly explain the pieces of the Wheel. Fill water balloons with paint that matches the colors of the Wheel. Allow participants to pick a water balloon and share which area on the Wheel they have grown in during the last year. Have them throw the balloon at a giant blank canvas. Place this splatter painting on a wall with a short explanation of how we can tap into Strength to move through difficult times.
- Create a mural of the Wheel on a public wall or in a quad. Use this mural often to allow people to check in about their Strengths and create a school culture where sharing about Strengths is common.

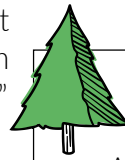
## All School Activities

- Post-It Note Challenge: Hang posters up around the school with the names of different Strengths on the top. Hand out markers and Post-It Notes, and ask your Peer Leader team to come up with 5-10 ways to practice the Strength listed on that poster. For example, a Generosity poster might say, "Bake cookies for a Trusted Adult," "Pay for someone behind you in line at Starbucks," "When someone drops something, pick it up," "Volunteer at a local shelter," "Put your phone down and have a real conversation with a friend or family member," or "Do the dishes without being asked." Then post a sign that encourages passers-by to take one of these notes and complete the challenge. You could then encourage them to post/share about it on social media using a hashtag.
- Create large paper chains where participants write down their Strengths on strips of paper. Connect all

of the strips and display the chain in a public place to remind the community of how strong they are.

### Video and Photography

- Create a Peer Leader Mission Statement video where Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors read the Mission Statement together. Show this video in classrooms, during half times, in assemblies, on social media, the school website, the local television station, before movies in local theaters, etc.
- Have students take photos of themselves holding a prop representing something that is a source of Strength for them. It could be a camera, paint brushes, hugging a friend, standing with a teacher, palming a basketball, measuring cooking ingredients, etc. Print these photos and display them in a public place with a poster saying, "What are your Sources of Strength?"



"DON'T TAKE OVER  
ANOTHER GOOD CLUB: JOIN  
TOGETHER TO MAKE EVEN  
MORE OF AN IMPACT!"

### Social Media

- Host a photo booth with fun props and paper. Have participants write about a Strength in their life. (Example: "My dog Hank, who takes my mind off of stressful testing") Make it contagious by posting these photos on social media and tagging others to do the same.
- Film and post short form interviews where people are asked which Strength they have grown in during the last year.
- Include hashtags such as #MySourceOfStrength, #WhatsYourStrength, #ShowMeYourStrength, or make it personal to your school by using your name or mascot, such as #TitansUnited, #MustangsStrong, etc.

### Audio: Music and Announcements

- Have Peer Leaders share two minute stories of Strength. Try to focus 10% of the story on what was difficult, and 90% on what helped them. Share one a day during morning announcements for a week.
- Take a poll of students favorite encouraging or pump-up song. Allow a Peer Leader to introduce why the chosen song is important to them and let it play during the passing period.

### Modifications (if needed)

Make sure you are getting the word out to all corners of your school's social network, including alternative learning classrooms, part-time students, teachers and administration, immigrant populations, ELL students, sports teams, clubs, and special interest groups!

### Ways to Partner With Other Entities

- Introduce yourselves to Student Council and invite them to work with you on projects that can make your community stronger.
- Throughout the year, think creatively about groups that may not be as included and invite them to work with you.
- Don't take over another good club: join together to make even more of an impact!

### Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
  - How many Peer Leaders participated?
  - What percentage of students and staff participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned:
  - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight stories of

Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?

- Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

### **Celebrate!**

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude for your team's ideas and efforts.
- Share stories of success in a newsletter to staff, board of education, parents, community, or other prevention groups.
- Tag us, #sourcesofstrength, so we can celebrate with you and share your great ideas with other teams around the world.

### **What's Next?**

- Continue meeting as a Peer Leader team and plan your next campaign.





## CAMPAIGN:

# What Helps Me

**Summary:** *The What Helps Me Campaign focuses on highlighting emotional regulation and what Strengths help us to cope or manage our emotions in times of stress or difficulty. No one gets through life without regularly experiencing one of the Big Three Emotions: anger, anxiety, or feeling down, sad, or depressed. The What Helps Me campaign is about helping individuals to identify which of these emotions they wrestle with the most, and which Strengths function as positive and healthy coping strategies for them. We know that these emotions are common and pervasive but we don't as often hear how people cope or manage them. Let's tell that story, and give others hope that they are not alone; they too can discover Strength to overcome.*

### Goals:

- To increase participants social-emotional awareness of how they react to stress, difficulty, or challenges.
- To identify ways to manage difficult events in healthy ways.
- To share options that could help others with emotional regulation and resilience.
- To normalize healthy coping strategies and change the narrative on how we respond to hard times.

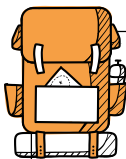
### Peer Leader Meeting:

**Fun:** Lead group in a round of the Shoe Kick game (see games list on our Website). When the shoe's owner comes to claim their shoe, each person should share which of the Big Three Emotions is most familiar to them when stressed, and what helps them when they are feeling big emotions.

**Alternative Option:** Lead the group in the Chair Game (see page [113](#)), where each round participants are prompted to answer the question, "Which of the Big Three Emotions is most familiar to me when I'm stressed, and what helps?"

**Share:** Break into small groups and give Peer Leaders time to share about a time when they felt one of the Big Three Emotions. They should then share what they did or what Strengths they used, that helped them find balance, or feel better. After small group sharing, gather back together and ask 8-10 Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors to raise their hands and share briefly about what Strengths they used to work through difficult emotions.

**Plan:** Have Peer Leaders brainstorm ideas for how they might engage the rest of the school to reflect on and share what helps them with the Big Three Emotions. (For ideas about different ways to facilitate brainstorming, see page [44](#).)



REMEMBER TO  
RECORD YOUR EFFORTS  
IN THE ACTIVITIES TRACKING  
FORM ON PAGE [107](#).

### School Wide Campaign:

Now that you have planned your campaign, develop some campaigns elements that you can layer over a period of time that will help people practice Strength in their own lives.

Help Peer Leaders carry out their ideas in creative and attractive ways that invite people to interact and engage with a Strength, and apply it to their own lives. Help students and staff to share their own stories, internalizing Strength in a way that makes it relevant to their everyday lives. This will help both groups and individuals better cope with the natural ups and downs of life. It will also normalize that big emotions are a part of life and that we already have a number of skills that help us cope and overcome.



## Mediums:

### Presentations

- Have Peer Leaders come before the school board or staff and lead a short discussion around how these adults find balance during times of stress.
- Help Peer Leader teams go into classrooms and lead discussions and activities about What Helps Me. This is also a good time to get students to complete elements to add to a wall display, i.e., What Helps Me feathers, snowflakes, balloons, or leaves.

### Classroom Ideas

- English teachers can give writing assignments interpreting Strengths that might have helped literary characters manage difficult emotions, relationships, or circumstances, i.e., *Catcher and the Rye*, *Lord of the Flies*; have students research the effects of various emotions and Strengths, and write essays of how specific Strengths may have or did help the characters to cope.
- Psychology teachers could teach on emotional regulation and the body's reaction to stress over time, as well as what helps relieve stress.
- Biology teachers could teach on the human stress response and how it effects our brains neurological and physiological processes.

### Art, Mural, Wall Displays

- Create a wall display where everyone lists which of the Big Three Emotions they wrestle with the most and what helps them. Common wall displays or sharing prompts have been: Leaves on a tree; elements of school mascots; seasonal displays like snowflakes or fall leaves; feathers on two big wings; petals on flowers; bricks on a wall of Strength etc.
- Create photo displays or story posters of students sharing their own stories of Strength.



"DON'T FORGET TO  
EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR  
THE EXPERIENCE AND THANK  
YOUR TEAM."

### All School Activities

- Host a screening and discussion of the Pixar movie *Inside Out* and discuss the Big Three Emotions and how we can find balance.
- Host a "Chill Room" during stressful seasons where students can visit to take a break and mentally get away from the demands of the day. Have tea, yoga mats, coloring pages (see the Tangled Ball of Emotions or Strength coloring pages from page [130](#)), relaxing music, and have school counselors there to introduce themselves. Peer Leaders can take shifts to share about the Big Three Emotions and how we can find balance in stressful times.

### Video and Photography

- Get a number of the Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors to state "What Helps Me with \_\_\_\_\_ (emotion) is \_\_\_\_\_ (Strength) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Strength) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Strength) on video. Example: "What helps me when I get too anxious or worried is playing my guitar, talking to my mom, and going for a run." Stories can be simple or more detailed, as long as they remain Strength focused and hopeful. Show video in classrooms, at events, or on morning TV announcements. The more students and staff that can participate in these videos the better.
- Fun Tips: shoot B-roll footage of students engaging in their Strengths in a funny way; i.e., running through a forest screaming, playing with their dog, jamming out airband style to their favorite song, climbing a tree, listening to music on their bed, or retail therapy in the local mall.
- Host a photography show where individuals take photos on the topic "What Helps Me" and display it in a public area with short captions about people's stories.

## Social Media

- Ask Peer Leaders to make short videos sharing how they recover from stress and then challenge others to share their own stories.
- Create a school wide Instagram challenge: anyone who enters a photo and caption sharing their story of which Strength helps them with stress will be entered to win a prize at the end of the week or month.

## Audio: Music and Announcements

- Take a poll for students' favorite "chill out" song. Once they have been reviewed, play them during passing periods during a stressful season, like testing.
- Have Peer Leaders share their stories of "Strength Over Stress" on morning announcements. One Peer Leader can share a one to two minute story each morning for a week.
- Start a school podcast with students sharing what helps them with difficulties, stress, or challenging emotions.

## Ways to Partner With Other Entities (students, staff, community).

- Team up with a local yoga studio or Zumba instructor to teach a one hour event focusing on stress relief and easy practices for students to use in life.
- Partner with coaches to help them spread the word about dealing with stress with their athletes. Have athletic trainers check in with athletes about how they are dealing with stress at each interaction.
- Math teachers can share about how their subject is historically one of the most anxiety provoking subjects and how calming yourself, breathing, sharing a moment of gratitude, or meditation for a few minutes before class can often help calm fears and help students focus and perform better.

## Modifications (If needed/applicable)

- Identifying and speaking about emotions is not an easy skill for everyone. Be sure to give support in teaching how an emotion might feel physically in someone's body (such as tense shoulders, a tight chest, clenched jaw, sweating, etc.), as this will help increase mind-body awareness.

## Evaluation (mini)

- Ask for stories of success of impact with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection, coping, or emotional regulation.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
  - How many Peer Leaders participated?
  - What percentage of the school body participated? (Remember, we are aiming for 90%!)
- Consider the impact and/or lessons learned:
  - Did you (adults or Peer Leaders) learn something about how you or others manage difficult emotions?
  - Did you hear stories from friends or peers about stresses they experience and how they cope with them?
  - Do you feel like we helped normalize these emotions and break the silence on how people cope with them?

- Were various resources, coping strategies, or management skills promoted or highlighted?
- How could you increase or diversify participation in this campaign?
- Did you keep this campaign fun and engaging?
- Did you highlight student stories of Strength?
- Was there diversity in the stories highlighted?
- Make note of what to keep in mind for next year and how you could improve the campaign next time.



## Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as an Adult Advisors or Peer Leader team.
- Share powerful stories of Strength, coping, or connection with each other and with your staff or community.
- Express gratitude for the experience and thank your team.



## CAMPAIGN:

# *I Am Stronger*

**Summary:** *The I Am Stronger Campaign focuses on Strengths that have grown for you. This campaign spreads the idea that the Strengths on the Wheel are not static; just because one area on the Wheel isn't strong for you now, doesn't mean you can't strengthen it in the future. You are not stuck. The I Am Stronger Campaign is about collecting stories of Strength from your school and community and sharing them through photos, videos, conversation, wall displays, and social media.*



"AFTER RUNNING A CAMPAIGN, ASK YOUR PEER LEADERS IF IT WAS INTERESTING TO THEIR FRIENDS. IF NOT, ASK WHAT THEY THINK COULD GET A GROUP'S INVOLVEMENT."

### **Goals:**

- Encourage Peer Leaders to tell their stories of Strength.
- Promote resilience through the development and growth of Strengths/protective factors.
- Promote the development of a growth based mindset.
- Aid Peer Leaders in thinking about and sharing ways that they have grown physically, socially, spiritually, or emotionally in the last season by developing their Strengths.

### **Research:**

Research indicates that being able to identify Strengths increases a person's likelihood to use that Strength later. A

young person who learns skills tied to resilience can return to these habits when difficult times arise. When we practice telling our difficult stories through a lens of Strength, we are able to grow by reframing and internalizing Strength that we can then share with others.

### **Peer Leader Meeting:**

**Fun:** Pass around a Sources of Strength basketball. When a student catches the ball, encourage them to share which one of the Strengths they have grown stronger in during the last year. This can also be played with a Sources of Strength frisbee.

Play the Chair Game with the prompt being, "Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I have gotten stronger in \_\_\_\_\_ because..." This game should be done in a safe environment where trust is high.

**Share:** Peer Leaders write down short stories about how they have grown or want to grow on the I Am Stronger cards. After they have had a chance to write, have them break into small groups and share what they learned about themselves.

**Plan:** Talk with your Peer Leader team about ways in which you could bring out a school-wide campaign. Remember, your goal is to involve at least 90% of your school population, so challenge your group to think of ways to reach to all corners of your school.

### **School Wide Campaign:**

Now that you have planned your campaign, take it to the rest of your school in a way that helps others interact, engage, and apply Strength to their own lives.

## Mediums:

### Presentations

- Help Peer Leaders lead a short explanation of the Strengths in classrooms or during a pep rally, then ask the class/crowd to turn to a friend and share how they have grown stronger.
- Help Peer Leader teams prep short presentations about the Strengths and ways in which we can grow stronger. Have these groups present to Freshman English classes. Or, involve the local community by taking these presentations to libraries, elementary schools, rotary clubs, or veterans groups.

### Classroom Integration

- Ask English, Writing, or Newspaper classes to interview friends on ways in which they have grown stronger. With permission, feature some of the most inspiring stories in the school newspaper.
- Have Science or Psychology students learn about Post Traumatic Growth by watching and discussing Jane McGonigal's TED Talk, "The Game That Can Give You Ten Extra Years of Life". Discuss areas in which they have grown or Strengths in which they would like to grow.

### Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Place a large blank canvas up outside. Provide paint that matches the colors of the Wheel. Prompt participants to share a short story of how they are growing in a specific Strength; create a painting with everyone's painted handprints spelling out the word "Strong". Find a high-traffic area to display your new work of art.
- Collect short stories of Strength on pieces of paper, then create a wall display, inspiring anyone who walks by to commit to growth today!

### All School Activities

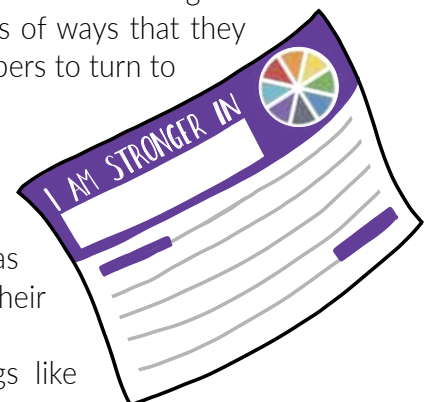
- Host a color run at your school! Connect different colors of chalk to Strengths on the Wheel. When participants arrive, share a short description of each Strength. After learning about the Strengths, encourage participants to choose one Strength in which they have grown in the last year. As they run, the participant will be covered in that color of chalk. At the end of the run, have two or three Peer Leaders share their own stories by following a simple script: "Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I have grown in \_\_\_\_\_ because..." Every participant should then turn to a neighbor and briefly share their own story how they have grown stronger.
- Host a bocce ball or hotshot basketball tournament where the balls are the colors of the Wheel. Before a student throws their ball, they should briefly share how they have grown in a certain Strength. The winners of the tournament could receive a Sources of Strength t-shirt, basketball, or frisbee.

### Video and Photography

- Find individuals who are willing to share short, Strength-based stories about ways that they have grown in the last year using the Strengths on the Wheel. Take a photo of each person and create a display with the photos and stories.
- Ask a local movie theater to donate some before-film screen time to Sources of Strength. Use the time to show a short video of local faces sharing very brief stories of ways that they have grown stronger during the last year. Challenge the audience members to turn to a neighbor and share their own stories.

### Social Media

- Challenge students to take photos that represent them engaging in a Strength they have grown in. Captions explaining how this Strength has helped them should be included. Have students tag a friend to share their story too.
- Make your social media efforts more contagious by using hashtags like



#IAmStronger, #HowHaveYouGrown, #GrowingStrong, or make it personal by using your mascot or school name such as #WildcatsStrong or #LittletonIsStrong.

### Audio: Music and Announcements

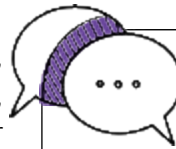
- Create a playlist of Peer Leaders' favorite songs that pump them up or encourage them. Play these during lunches or passing periods for mini school-wide "dance parties".
- For one week, have one Peer Leader share a brief story about how they have grown by using one of the Strengths. Allow the participants to share these brief stories during morning announcements.

### Modifications (if needed)

- Not every individual naturally has the social-emotional skills to reflect on their lives and see specific growth. Help participants to recognize signs of growth in various areas of their lives to help lead them to their own stories of Strength.

### Ways to Partner With Other Entities

- These stories are not simply powerful for middle and high school students. They are helpful for everyone! Involve other groups to listen to stories of Strength and apply it to their own lives, such as younger students at an elementary school, local faith groups, retirement communities, or civic-minded coffee shops.
- If your Peer Leaders want to host a large event, invite another group like Student Council to partner, ensuring a lighter load, wider audience, and higher involvement. Visit our website and watch the video "Creating Partnerships" for more inspiration.



"GIVING PEER LEADERS OPPORTUNITIES TO REFLECT ON AND SHARE ABOUT THE STRENGTHS IN THEIR OWN LIVES INCREASES THEIR SKILL LEVEL, INTERNALIZATION, AND AUTHENTICITY AS THEY MOVE FORWARD WITH CAMPAIGNS."

### Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of Strength.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
  - How many Peer Leaders participated?
  - What percentage of the school body participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
  - How could you increase or diversify participation?
  - Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
  - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

### Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude for your Peer Leader team's creativity and hard work (Hint: a cookie can say "Thank You" when words fail).

## CAMPAIGN:

# Thankfulness

**Summary:** *Studies have shown that practicing gratitude can have powerful positive impacts on your brain and life. A simple way to practice thankfulness is writing down or journaling about things that you are grateful for. When we share these things with others, the benefits spread to those around us, infusing our community with Strength and changing the way we look at the world around us. No matter who we are, or where we come from, we believe that gratitude is a spiritual practice which can make us all more positive, mindful, and content.*

### Goals:

- To increase a culture of gratitude among students and adults.
- To build awareness of gratitude as a protective factor.
- To catalyze students and adults to train their brains in being more positive, hopeful, and resilient.

### Research:

- Writing down three new things we are grateful for each day for 21 days can physically change our brains, creating neural pathways that help our brains focus more on the positive.

### Peer Leader Meeting:

**Fun:** Gratitude BINGO: In one meeting, collect a list of specific things individuals are grateful for. Turn those things into BINGO cards and allow Peer Leaders to sign the blocks that they listed the previous week. Have a small prize for the first person who gets BINGO!

**Host** “Thankfulness Family Feud.” Have a student take a poll of things people are grateful for. At the next meeting, have Peer Leaders guess what the most common, silly, or unusual answers were.

**Share:** Allow students to write and draw on posters the people, places, and things they are grateful for. Have them share their answers in creative ways, i.e. a rap, poem, song, interpretive dance, group charades, etc.

**Plan:** Brainstorm ways your Peer Leader team could get the entire school involved in naming things they are grateful for.

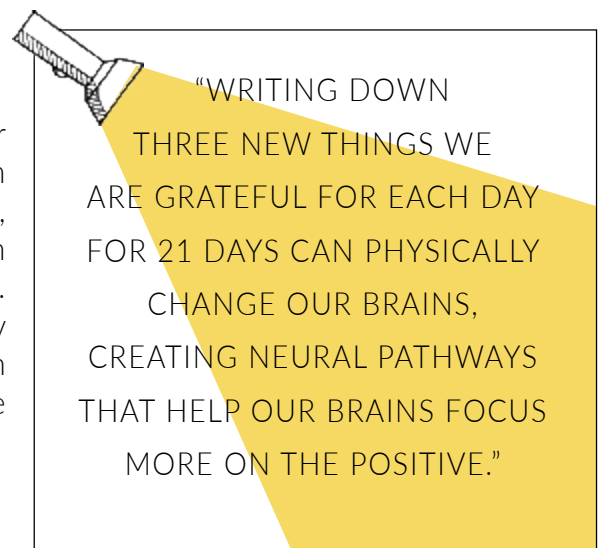
### School Wide Campaign:

Now that you have planned your campaign, take your message out to your school and community, helping them share in fun and interactive ways. At Sources of Strength, we often refer to gratitude as the “secret sauce.” It’s an incredibly powerful force for health in our brains and lives. If your team can develop a habit of sharing things they are grateful for, they will reap the positive Mental Health benefits. Everyone can grow from naming things they are thankful for.

### Mediums:

#### Presentations

- Help teams of Peer Leaders go into classrooms (their own or a partnering elementary school, etc.) and talk about the importance of gratitude.
- Lead a class in a mindfulness/gratitude exercise.





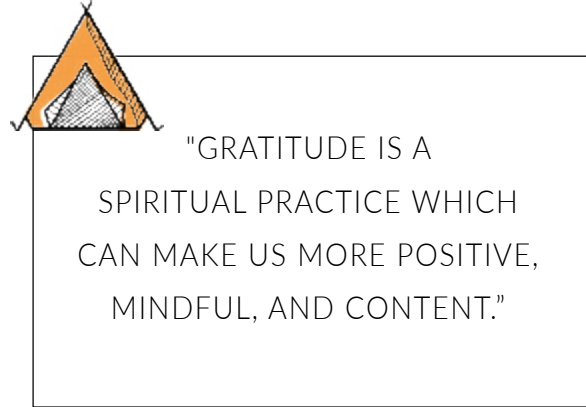
- Have Peer Leaders present the importance of gratitude to the staff/administration. Thank these adults for their dedication and ask everyone to name what they are thankful for.

### **Classroom Integration**

- Start class with a three minute mindfulness exercise, gratefulness challenge, or a breathing practice.
- Study how regular gratitude practices can heal the brain.
- Watch Shawn Achor's TED Talk, The Secret to Better Work, and discuss his findings on gratitude's role in success.

### **Art, Mural, and Wall Displays**

- Create a tree with branches growing out. Hand out many colorful paper leaves and ask participants to write things they are grateful for on them. (If this is happening around Thanksgiving, the leaves could be turkey feathers instead. Get creative with other holidays or school events.)
- Host a week at lunch where students can contribute to gratitude posters by drawing images of what they are thankful for. Put the posters on display.
- Create a display case filled with artifacts that represent things people in your school are grateful for. Allow them to include a short written explanation with their artifacts.



### **All School Activities**

- Host a card-making station where participants can create a thank you card for someone they are grateful for. Encourage participants to deliver the card within the week.
- Hand out 21 Day Gratitude Journals and give small prizes to individuals who show an Adult Advisor their completed journals at the end of the campaign.
- Collect inspiring testimonials about how gratitude has helped participants and share them on social media or in morning announcements.
- Hand out colorful paper slips to classrooms and encourage every class to start the day by having individuals write down things they are grateful for. Collect the slips at the end of the week and create a giant paper chain around your school.

### **Video and Photography**

- Create a video with participants sharing things that they are grateful for. Use the video as an opportunity to show how many things we have in common.
- Host a photo booth where students can bring props or write things they are grateful for on paper. Print photos and put them on display.

### **Social Media**

- Use the hashtag #ThankfulThursdays to have participants take a photo of something or someone they are grateful for, and post it to social media with a caption. Encourage them to tag others to do the same.
- Get others to join your social media efforts with tags like #ThankfulThursdays, #GratitudeChallenge, or make it specific to your school or town with names like #CouerdAleneGrateful or #GratefulTigers

### **Audio: Music and Announcements**

- Poll the school for what people are grateful for, read several items from the list each morning during announcements.
- Have Peer Leaders or Adult Advisors give shout outs to someone they are grateful for in morning

announcements or an assembly. A Peer Leader team could choose to host “Thankful Thursdays”. These could range from funny (“Junior Sam Reynolds is thankful that he has been told his eyebrows will grow back after last week’s chemistry incident”) to serious (“The whole CHS community is grateful to hear that Mr. Samson has been declared cancer-free”).

### Modifications (if needed)

- Make sure to include any alternative learning or distance learning classes or programs in your campaigns. We need everyone’s voice to create a grateful culture!

### Ways to partner with other entities

- Have students volunteer at a local shelter to gain perspective on gratitude as well as Generosity.
- Ask a local restaurant or coffee shop if your team could display some gratitude posters or paper chains in their shop, allowing the community to participate as well.

### Evaluation (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
  - How many Peer Leaders participated?
  - What percentage of students participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
  - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
  - Make note in your Activities Tracker of what to keep in mind for next year.



### Celebrate!

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Of course, express gratitude for your Peer Leader team!
- Bring some sparkling cider to your Peer Leader meeting and offer toasts of celebration and thankfulness to each other.



## CAMPAIGN:

# Connect

**Summary:** *The purpose of the Connect Campaign is to use positive social norming to break down codes of silence and secrecy, while increasing the acceptability of seeking help for one's self and for others, especially in the area of Mental Health. This is accomplished by creating space and opportunities for students and staff to share stories of times they either got connected during a difficult time in their lives, or connected someone else they saw struggling. As in all Sources of Strength campaigns, the goal is to create opportunities for the general population to engage, interact, and apply the principles underlying this campaign to their own lives and personal contexts. By creating space to tell personal stories of connection, the Connect Campaign contextualizes and normalizes help-seeking and the importance of getting connected to Mental Health during difficult times.*

### Goals:

- Increase and normalize help-seeking behaviors.
- Decrease secrecy requests and codes of silence.
- Increase norms and knowledge around seeking Mental Health help through sharing our stories.
- Normalize the idea that asking for help is a sign of Strength, not a sign of weakness, and that getting help for a friend is being a good friend.
- Increase awareness of what resources and pathways are available for seeking help for oneself or a friend in the school or community.

### Research:

- Young people are incredibly powerful in setting norms among their peers. While we often talk about negative norms, positive ideas and habits can also spread through social networks.

### Peer Leader Meeting:

**Fun:** Peer Leaders love the game "Walk Around Cool". Play the game and then share a light teaching point about the importance of connection, asking for help, and looking for those who need connection. Other games could be "The Human Knot," "Hog Call," or "1, 2, 3 Look".



**Share:** In a large group, ask students about times that they have reached out and received help, or when they have reached out to another person to connect them to help. You might prep a Peer Leader with a good story ahead of time so that they can lead with an example: "My name is Angela, and I saw that a friend of mine on the volleyball team seemed to be struggling. She was missing practice and I felt like she looked really down. I texted her to ask if she was okay and at the end of our conversation, she agreed to go see Miss Sanchez, our school counselor about some stuff she was dealing with. She's doing a lot better now."

**Plan:** Move into a time of brainstorming about how you could help spread the norm of connecting others to help to the rest of your school. Remember, your goal is to reach 90% of students and staff with a message that breaking codes of silence and reaching out is something that makes individual and communities stronger.

### School Wide Campaign:

Consider what could be hindering young people from reaching out for Mental Health support and work to remove those barriers by highlighting stories of Strength.

## Mediums:

### Presentations

- Allow students to present to younger classrooms about stories of help-seeking and connection. You could have a school counselor accompany the students so that everyone could meet them.
- Form teams of Peer Leaders to present at halftimes at sports games. Allow 2-3 Peer Leaders to briefly share a story of connection and remind people of resources available, whether at the school or in the community.



“IF PEER LEADERS  
SEEM NERVOUS TO START A  
CONVERSATION, IT CAN BE  
HELPFUL TO GIVE SMALL  
PRIZES, (STICKERS, SUNGLASSES,  
CANDY, FULL RIDES TO  
COLLEGE, ETC.) TO GET  
THINGS MOVING.”

### Classroom Integration

- Study the impact of various therapies on a person's well being.
- Study and discuss Social Network Theory.
- Use a novel to discuss how a character seeks help to get through a difficult situation. Bring up the importance of multiple Strengths, and seeking out access to Physical and Mental Health support.

### Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Create a poster campaign of students with stereotypical physical injuries to make a connection between getting access to, and using Physical and Mental Health resources, i.e., the hockey player with a blacked out tooth saying- “If I lost my tooth, I’d go to a dentist, and when I lost my way, I went to the school counselor.”
- Collect individuals stories of connection, starting with “I Got Connected” or “I Am a Connector”. Post these stories up in a colorful wall display.

### All School Activities

- Host a basketball tournament where a counselor, social worker, or Trusted Adult is on every team. Several times throughout the event, have Peer Leaders share brief stories of connection and help-seeking. Have signs and posters up in the gym that reinforce help-seeking and breaking the silence when someone is struggling.
- Join together as a community to host a walk or a 5k to raise money and awareness for Mental Health resources, and to hear stories of Strength and connection from different perspectives across your community.
- Create a short survey, asking students if they feel they can reach out for help for themselves or others, and ways that the school might make it easier (“Have counselors in their office during lunch hours, post signs of how to find the office, etc.”)
- Explore help-seeking pathways amongst staff at your school or organization, as well. Who might benefit from additional opportunities for mentorship (or mentee-ship)?

### Video and Photography

- Create a photo booth where students can take photos with someone they have connected to help, or holding up short stories of connection they have experienced. Print these photos and put them on display.
- Create a lighthearted and uplifting video with individuals sharing times that they have gotten connected or connected others to hope, help and Strength. Share this video on social media, in classrooms, during halftime shows, at pep rallies, during morning announcements, etc.
- Make a fun video introducing your school to the counselors and social workers at your school. Have the video include how to locate the counselors and social workers, provide their office hours, and give different ways to reach out.

## **Social Media**

- Show short videos about how individuals were able to find help and healing through help-seeking for themselves or someone else.
- Create a fun Instagram or Snapchat story about how a person can find the school's counseling office.
- Take a portrait of each school counselor and social worker, and allow them to include a caption introducing themselves and inviting people to visit.

## **Audio: Music and Announcements**

- Help Peer Leaders share a story of connection or help-seeking during morning announcements. Share appropriate resources available to students and staff.
- Host an open mic night where students can share stories of help-seeking and connection through their storytelling, poetry or music. It is advisable that an Adult Advisor listen to the entries ahead of time to check that they reinforce a message of Hope, Help, and Strength by centering 90% of the story on getting better rather than the difficult situation (See page [40](#) for more on the 90:10 ratio).

## **Modifications** (if needed)

- Don't assume that all students could seek out a counselor (or even walk into their office) with ease. This can be a scary thing! Make sure there are multiple avenues for a student to get in contact with a counselor or social worker. Additionally, ensure that your school has culturally informed counselors in regards to religious practices, family engagement, and views of Mental Health.

## **Ways to Partner With Other Entities**

- Invite the Student Council to co-host an event that focuses on connection to Mental Health and help-seeking.
- Talk to coaches about reminding athletes of resources available to them and the importance of refusing to keep secrets when a person needs help.

## **Evaluation** (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
  - How many Peer Leaders participated?
  - What percentage of students participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
  - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
  - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

## **Celebrate!**

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude.

## CAMPAIGN:

# We Belong

**Summary:** Everyone has something to offer their community. Whatever one's culture, talents, knowledge, experiences, or perspective, we need everyone's voice for a community to thrive. We miss out when people are excluded. The You Belong campaign focuses on the idea that diversity is something to be honored and celebrated. In this campaign, Peer Leaders help solicit stories of times when someone felt they belonged and highlight what groups and individuals bring to the community.

### Goals:

- To recognize that diversity is to be celebrated within a community.
- To help individuals champion stories of diversity and belonging.
- To aid individuals in recognizing what they uniquely bring to their community.
- To foster a sense of belonging for students who don't feel like they belong.



### Peer Leader Meeting

**Fun:** Play Cups or Rock Paper Scissors - When players find new partners, they have to introduce themselves and name someone who makes them feel that they belong. Conversely, they could also choose to share what makes them feel they belong. For example, "When someone takes the time to ask me about the traditions in my family's culture, they help me feel interesting and celebrated."

**Share:** Break into smaller groups, and ask students and staff to share what they feel like they bring to the community. Answers should range widely and could include things like, "I bring my love of tennis", "I bring my gender fluidity", "I am a strong black woman", "I am an artist with a view all my own", "I bring my passion for politics", "I bring my faith", etc.



"WHATEVER ONE'S CULTURE,  
TALENTS, KNOWLEDGE,  
EXPERIENCES, OR PERSPECTIVE,  
WE NEED EVERYONE'S VOICE  
FOR A COMMUNITY TO THRIVE.  
WE ALL MISS OUT WHEN  
PEOPLE ARE EXCLUDED."

**Plan:** Now that you have taken time to share about the importance of belonging and diversity, it's time to strategize together about ways your team could help the rest of your community internalize stories about the Strength that comes with belonging.

### School Wide Campaign

Now that you have planned your campaign, how will you bring a celebration of diversity to the rest of your school and community?

### Mediums:

#### Presentations

- Go to a local elementary school; read and discuss diversity and belonging with one of the following books:
- 1. **3 Balls of Wool** by Henriqueta Cristina
- 2. **Fur, Feather, Fin, All of Us are Kin** by Diane Lang and Stephanie Laberis
- 3. **The Word Collector** by Peter J. Reynolds



- Present on the importance of belonging within classrooms. Have students write down what they bring to their community on puzzle pieces. Assemble the puzzle for a visual reminder that we need everyone to create a vibrant community.

### Classroom Integration

- Prompt Psychology or Biology classes to study the emotional, physical, and psychological effects of connection and belonging.
- Assign Art, Photography, or Creative Writing students to create pieces based on the theme of belonging, or that speak to what they bring to their community.
- Have English or Literature classes read books that speak to the power of belonging.
- Allow Economics, Sociology, or Criminology classes to study the power of positive social ties as protective factors.



“HOST A STORY NIGHT  
WHERE PARTICIPANTS  
CAN SHARE SHORT STORIES  
OF TIMES THEY EXPERIENCED  
BELONGING.”

### Art, Mural, and Wall Displays

- Make a poll, and ask students to share about the different groups that make your school or group diverse. Using these words, create a large “Wordle” to display.
- Flowers can be a great symbol of diversity. Create a wall display where individuals write on different shapes and colors of flowers what they bring to the community, to form a wildflower bouquet.

### All School Activities

- Band with other community organizations to highlight cultural events where Peer Leaders explain what their group or sub-culture means to them.
- Host a story night where participants can share short stories of times they experienced belonging.

### Video and Photography

- Host a photography exhibit where participants take photos with the theme of “Belonging” and put it on display. Scan these photos and make them a running screensaver on school computers.
- Create a booth where groups and individuals can enter and answer the questions, “What do you bring to our community? Who or what makes you feel like you belong?” Share this video in an assembly or during morning TV announcements.

### Social Media

- Challenge participants to take photos with people who represent “belonging” to them with short captions. Ask them to tag two other friends to do the same.
- Make your campaign spread further by using hashtags like #YouBelong, #WeBelong, #WhatIBring, or make it fit your context with your town or mascot, such as #BearsBelong.

### Audio: Music and Announcements

- Have students and staff submit a song that they consider to represent them and play them during passing periods. Make an effort to include various genres.
- Highlight diversity in every sense by interviewing Peer Leaders in the newspaper about what they offer the people around them.

### Modifications (if needed)

- Note that not every student will feel a deep sense of belonging to a group of people. Some students will name objects, places, or animals that help them to feel that they belong. This may be a way that an

individual feels they add to their community. This campaign shouldn't feel like a school spirit campaign.

### **Ways to partner with other entities**

- Have club tables set up and share information for individuals who want to get more connected.
- Have Student Government host opportunities for individuals to volunteer their time and talents within the school or community.

### **Evaluation (mini)**

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
  - How many Peer Leaders participated?
  - What percentage of students participated?
- Consider what lessons were learned
  - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
  - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

### **Celebrate!**

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude for the belonging that the Peer Leader team offers each other!



## CAMPAIGN:

# Trusted Adults

**Summary:** One of the best ways we can protect a young person from suicide is for them to have caring, connected, and positive adults in their lives. A Trusted Adult could be a parent, an older sibling, a relative, employer, teacher, coach, faith leader, or community member - anyone that a young person could reach out to. This campaign focuses on helping individuals identify, name and connect to an adult they could go to if they were experiencing a difficult time or if a friend needed help.

### Goals:

- Increase youth/adult connectedness.
- Create a culture that increases students' belief that adults can help friends who are at risk and can be trusted in difficult times.
- Practice help seeking pathways.
- Use positive norming to encourage healthy trust and connection between youth and adults.



"A GREAT MENTOR IS  
AN ADULT WHO SEES  
WHO YOU REALLY ARE AND  
BELIEVES IN YOU ANYWAY"  
- HIGH SCHOOL PEER LEADER.

### Research:

- A student who tells a Trusted Adult that they play an important role in their life is more likely to return to that adult during a difficult time.
- A student is more likely to go to a Trusted Adult if a trusted friend names an adult, and explains why they have earned their trust.
- Students who have a Trusted Adult they can go to have significantly lower suicide rates.

### Peer Leader Meeting:

**Fun:** Take a survey of Trusted Adults around your school and create a Trusted Adult BINGO card. Have Peer Leaders sign the boxes of the Trusted Adult they named. Some boxes can be specific and others can be more general, like "My mom", "My grandfather", "My boss".

**Share:** Hand out postcards that say, "Thank You for Being a Source of Strength in My Life" and encourage students to write a short note thanking that person for showing up in their lives. Then encourage Peer Leaders to hand deliver their notes to the adults they named within the next 4-5 days. If you have already done this, have 5-10 Peer Leaders share with the group who they named as their Trusted Adult and why.

**Plan:** Discuss ideas about how to include 90% of your student body in this same process of identifying, connecting to, and sharing about their Trusted Adults.

### School Wide Campaign:

- Now that you have planned your campaign, help your school and community grow in youth-adult connectedness. Here are some ideas you might want to layer in.

### Mediums:

#### Presentations

- Send trained Peer Leaders into classrooms to describe the value of Mentors and ask students to share their own Mentor stories.
- Have Peer Leaders attend a staff/faculty meeting to lead a short discussion about who their Mentors are;

have Peer Leaders lead staff in shouting out others they feel are good Mentors.

### **Classroom Integration**

- Lead students in reading and discussion of the literary classic, *The Giver*. Is *The Giver* a Mentor to Jonas? If so, how?
- Read or watch *The Hunger Games* and compare and contrast the Mentor figures of Effie Trinket and Haymitch or Cinna.
- Read or watch *To Kill a Mockingbird* and examine the Mentor relationship of Atticus Finch to Jean Louise.

### **Art/Murals and Hall Displays**

- Create hallway displays with Trusted Adults named during campaigns.
- Create a pair of paper wings where the feathers are names of Trusted Adults. Encourage students and staff to take photos in front of the wings and tag the photos on social media.

### **All School Activities**

- Host a March Madness Mentor Month where the staff and faculty members who were named by students as Trusted Adults can participate in small competitions until one is left standing. Make the competitions fun and silly, i.e. which Mentor can fit the most marshmallows in their mouth at one time. Use the hashtag #MentorMadness to capture everything.
- Walk around the school with an empty frame and have students take photos with their Trusted Adults. Allow Peer Leaders to print these photos and give them to those adults to display in their classroom as a way of saying thank you for their support.

### **Video and Photography**

- Interview Peer Leaders to share stories of their Trusted Adults in a short video which could be shown in classrooms, student news, on social media, or during assemblies.
- Host a Dress Like Your Mentor Day and take selfies at a photo booth - then print and hang up the photos!



“HAVE STUDENTS INCLUDE THEIR NAME AND THE NAME OF THEIR TRUSTED ADULT IN THE DISPLAYS. THIS MAKES THEM MORE PERSONAL AND CAN ALSO HELP STUDENTS LOOKING FOR A TRUSTED ADULT GET CONNECTED.”

### **Social Media**

- Post selfies from the Trusted Adult photo booth on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat with a short caption describing why they were named. Then have Peer Leaders tag three friends to do the same.
- Post interesting Trusted Adult stories on social media, telling about times when an adult was helpful or supportive in a situation.
- Use hashtags like #Mentors, #TrustedAdults, #WhosYourTrustedAdult, #MyTrustedAdult, or make it reflect school spirit with your team or town, such as #TrustedEagles, #MentorsGiveGreeleyWings.

### **Audio: Music and Announcements**

- Host “Mentor Mondays” where morning announcements feature a student sharing a story about their Mentor each Monday.
- Collect a favorite song from each teacher or staff member. Play a new song each week and give a prize to the student who can identify which mystery adult chose that song.

### **Ways to partner with other entities:**

- Invite the National Honor Society to help sponsor the event.
- Ask student clubs, athletic teams, and groups to participate.

- Make sure that teachers, coaches, paras, and community leaders know about the event and are invited to participate.

### **Modifications** (if applicable)

- These campaigns can be applied outside of a traditional school context, such as youth detention facilities, a recently reorganized school, or an environment with low adult-student relationships, but they may take some extra work and care. Before engaging in a large-scale Trusted Adult Campaign, have staff dedicate time to building one-on-one relationships with students. This can be in the form of circle sharing during “Community Meetings” or lunchtime conversations with smaller groups of students where staff are sharing (but not oversharing) about their own experiences and also learning about students. It is not unusual that students who may not see themselves as “leaders” in the traditional sense, or who have low trust in adults, may need to be invited several times to join the program, or even to share about their experiences during a campaign. It is one job of the Adult Advisors to “woo” students into their potentially positive leadership roles.

### **Evaluation** (mini)

- Focus on successes with Peer Leaders.
- Celebrate and share stories of connection.
- Encourage staff and faculty to share what the event meant for them.
- Check your numbers:
  - How many Peer Leaders participated?
  - What percentage of students participated?
  - How many different Trusted Adults were named?
- Consider what lessons were learned:
  - How could you increase or diversify participation? Did you keep it fun? Did you highlight student stories of Strength? Was there diversity in your responses?
  - Make note of what to keep in mind for next year.

### **Celebrate!**

- Note what you accomplished as Adult Advisors.
- Share stories of connection with each other.
- Express gratitude for your team’s creativity and hard work.

# Sources of Strength Week

The Sources of Strength Week is designed to engage your school or community in a targeted and fun manner. Through various mediums, the campaigns will get students and staff talking about, engaging in, and developing their Strengths and connections to others. This guide is simply a set of suggestions and examples for how a Sources of Strength Week can be developed in a strategic and efficient manner. We strongly encourage you and your team to personalize every event and campaign to fit the needs and culture of your school or community. Please don't hesitate to contact Sources of Strength staff with questions about planning a Sources of Strength Week.

A typical Sources of Strength week will assign a Strength to each day of the week, either choosing five of the eight Strengths, assigning two Strengths for three days of the week, or running the campaign over the course of two weeks. Each day will have targeted messaging surrounding one of the Strengths, looking to tackle the Strength in a variety of fun and engaging ways. This means engaging students in games, classroom presentations, small group discussions, wall displays, social media posts and challenges, school-wide activities, photo booths, sidewalk chalk, art, posters, videos, school announcements, etc. The possibilities are endless and teams can decide what the scale and scope of the campaign will be and what will best fit their school schedule. This campaign is often run at the end of the year.

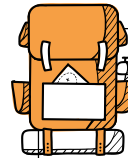
## Tips for Preparation Planning

Use one or two of your Peer Leader meetings to strategically plan and prepare for a Sources of Strength Week. Brainstorm all the various activities and partnerships that can be developed. Break Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders up into focus groups that will work on specific topics, mediums, or activities. Think about ways to engage as many students and staff in the campaign as possible.

## Adult Support

It is important to have administrative and staff

support for a campaign of this size. In the run up and preparation to a Sources of Strength Week, it can be helpful to get your Peer Leaders to present at a staff meeting to run the staff through the strategic plan for the week and elicit their support and participation.



FOR MORE CAMPAIGN  
IDEAS SEE STRENGTH  
SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS  
ON PAGE [81](#).

## Partnerships

It is important to partner with other groups, clubs, sports teams, activities, planning committees, and outside prevention agencies to achieve the broadest reach and impact of the campaign. Each focus group or planning team can tackle different kinds of partnerships that will help them achieve the widest reach of their efforts. Here are some ideas for groups to involve in your Sources of Strength Week:

- Ask Graphic Design students to participate in making posters with local faces and Sources of Strength messaging.
- Know students who love photography? Invite them to document the events of the week and help create great visual content for posters, social media posts, yearbook, or school newspaper articles.
- Invite Video Club at your school to help make Sources of Strength Week videos. There could be a promo video to get students excited about the week, as well as a video documenting the events of the week and the fun that was had by all.
- If you have a school newspaper, invite a few of the journalists to report on the run up to, as well as the events of the week, highlighting Hope, Help, and Strength. They can also detail resources and supports that are highlighted during the week.
- Involve all the sports teams and clubs in a Healthy Activities day, highlighting the numerous Healthy



Activities that are available in your school or community.

- Invite the Counseling, Mental Health staff, and Psychology classes to participate in a Mental Health day, leading students in positive Mental Health practices and highlighting and connecting students and staff to Mental Health supports and resources that exist in your local community.
- Connect with local service organizations that serve your community or school and invite them to participate in and support your Generosity day. Connect to and highlight existing efforts of Generosity that are practiced in your school or community.
- Engage your local news agencies and invite them to write about and highlight the efforts of your Peer Leader team and the events of the week.
- Engage local agencies that work with families and can help offer resources, content, and support for a Family Support day.
- Many local businesses would be willing to donate food, supplies, or prizes to your Sources of Strength week if asked. Help some Peer Leaders ask for their support in a way that also invites their participation.

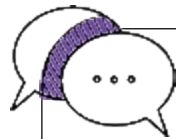
## Fun

It is essential to ensure that the Sources of Strength Week is fun, engaging, and remains focused on Hope, Help, and Strength. We do this by coming up with relevant ways to infuse games and a general sense of playfulness and fun into every activity. Avoid making activities or presentations too serious or long, or ever slipping into lecture or one-way presentation mode. Instead, engage students and staff in dialogue and discussion, always ensuring that the trajectory of your activities, social media posts, or challenges are pointed toward Strength and help to highlight

connection and resiliency. If done right, a Sources of Strength Week can quickly become the highlight of the school year.

Remember, this week is designed not only to highlight the Sources of Strength program and the efforts of your Peer Leaders, but to help connect existing efforts under the umbrella and philosophy of Strength, and help connect students

and staff to the Strengths, supports, and resources that are all around them.

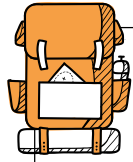


"PLEASE DON'T  
HESITATE TO CONTACT  
SOURCES OF STRENGTH STAFF  
WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT  
PLANNING A SOURCES  
OF STRENGTH WEEK."



# IDEAS FOR STRENGTH-SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS

Over the years, we have found great success in schools that choose to focus on one Strength at a time in various mediums. A school may choose to focus on one Strength a month for the whole school year. For example, a wall display about Trusted Adults may interest some students, while a colorful art project, morning announcement about a peers' Mentor, or clever social media campaign may catch the attention of others. This could also be a great resource for planning a Sources of Strength Week. There is no limit to the number



FOR MORE  
INFORMATION ON  
HOW TO CALENDARIZE  
A CAMPAIGN, GO TO PAGE [53](#).

of ways a Strength can be explored or expressed, so get creative! As you are moving through a Strength, check in with a wide range of Peer Leaders, asking them if the students from their corner of the social network are getting involved or interested.

The possibilities for creating events and campaigns to raise awareness of Strengths are endless! We are constantly impressed by the creativity and insight of Peer Leaders

and Adult Advisors to come up with unique ideas that can change their school's culture for the better. The following are a few ideas in each category to help you get started.

## Family Support

- Make a Family Tree and write down the positive qualities you appreciate about each of the members of the tree that you named. This could be the family the Peer Leader was born into, or their "chosen" family.
- Host an art show around the theme "Family" and allow artists to share what family looks like to them in many different mediums.
- Create a paper chain. On each link, write the name of someone in your family (the one you were born into, or the one that you chose) that you feel supported by. Pass out pieces of paper to everyone in the school, either in classrooms or the lunchroom and then add each piece to the paper chain. Display it in the school or a community space.
- Start a hashtag #WEAREFAMILY and have people post pics of their family - whatever that looks like for them, and print them up as posters to hang around the school.
- Host an awkward family photo competition where students are invited to find a funny picture of their family (the one they were born into, or the one that they chose), and then to post that photo to social media (#awkwardfamilyphoto, #FamilySupport), with a comment about how their Family Supports them. Have a prize for the winner.

## Positive Friends

- Challenge everyone in the school to meet five new friends and learn two truths and a lie about each of them.
- Host a school-wide kickball tournament. Each Peer Leader is a team captain, but they have to find five people they don't know to participate as their teammates.
- Hold auditions for a lip-sync battle: All band names and songs have to be about friendship.
- Each morning for a week, have a Peer Leader do a shout out for someone over the morning announcements, explaining what makes them a great friend.
- Host a poetry/story slam, where Peer Leaders tell powerful stories of unexpected friendships.
- Invite the Literature/Language Arts Departments to get involved. Assign an essay about unlikely friendships, using novels, essays, and poems that tell stories of Positive Friends that changed people's lives.

## Mentors

- Throw a Mentor's parade and invite local Mentors to the school to accompany high school leaders at the local middle or elementary schools. This can build community and celebrate the impact of Mentors. (This could include parents, 6th grade reading buddies, coaches, Young Life leaders, etc.)
- Host a Dress Like Your Mentor Day, then host a fashion show, voting on who captured the essence of their Mentor the most.
- Host classroom presentations about the importance of Mentors, allowing students to chat with one another about an adult they trust.
- Mentor Madness Bracket: Have the student population submit a list of Mentors/Trusted Adults in the school and/or community. Help the Sources team rank them in a March Madness style bracket with fun activities, feats of Strength, and silly challenges during lunch or passing periods. Advance different Mentors to the championship round and each year give out a trophy for the winning Mentor.
- Host a table in a common area with construction paper, markers, pens, stickers, etc. for students and staff to write thank you notes to their Trusted Adults. Challenge them to deliver that card to their Mentor in order to practice a help-seeking pathway.
- Set up a speed-dating style Mentor event, where a variety of known adults in the community who have a desire and a capacity to Mentor a student can meet them in a safe way, creating space for connection.

## Healthy Activities

- Set up a photo booth and have students bring in props to showcase what their Healthy Activities are. Print those photos and put them on display.
- Do a Mannequin Challenge video down the halls of the school where everyone is frozen in the pose of their favorite healthy activity.
- Create an art contest for Healthy Activity submissions; photography, spoken word, painting, poetry, music, etc.
- Trophy cases are usually reserved for athletic and academic achievements. For a period of time, replace those awards with "artifacts" that represent Healthy Activities of students and staff around the school. Include short explanations about why a person chose to submit a certain item.
- Set up different rooms in the school featuring the Healthy Activities preferred by students on the outsides of the social networks, not just the traditional (or more sporty) joiners. Rooms could include a video game room, poetry writing workshops, board game room, Iron Chef-style cook-offs, instrument jamming room, etc.
- Create partnerships with local organizations and have school-sponsored nights at bowling alleys, mini-golf courses, volleyball courts, water parks, amusement parks, etc. Have people post selfies to show how your school is tapping into their Strengths.

## Generosity

- Start a Random Acts of Kindness campaign so that the domino effect is seen (or the tidal wave, or snowball effect), showing more and more kindness catching on.
- Host school supply drives, winter coat and glove drives, food drives, etc., as is seasonally appropriate.
- Host a Day of Giving where students can sign up for service at retirement homes, animal shelters, Boys and Girls Clubs, or other local charities.
- Host a between-class competition to raise money for a special cause such as ALS, suicide prevention, or breast cancer research.
- Partner with an organization to help support a local immigrant family in need.



"I HAVE FOUND THAT,  
AMONG ITS OTHER  
BENEFITS, GIVING LIBERATES  
THE SOUL OF THE GIVER."  
- MAYA ANGELOU

- Host a book drive to bring books to an under-funded school library.
- During morning announcements, allow Peer Leaders to highlight a classmate or staff member who they think exemplifies Generosity.
- Set up a volunteer board next to the jobs board at the school. List opportunities for students to help others with homework, tutoring, yard work for the elderly, carpools for underclassmen, etc.
- Create a Get You Some Generosity wall display (could be renamed, Get Generous, Be Generous, Giving is Living, Share is Caring, etc.), where Peer Leaders write acts of Generosity on Post-It notes so other students can take a note off the wall and then go and participate in that act of Generosity. This activity is focused on inviting other students into acts of Generosity.

### **Spirituality**

- Run a Thankfulness Challenge for 21 days, based on research showing how our brains change when we are focused on gratitude. Allow students to share their experiences.
- Survey the entire student body about their top 20 things they are thankful for, then compile the list to highlight how many similarities there are among the students.
- Host an assembly where a diverse range of spiritual practices are showcased. This will require some prep to ensure that the event doesn't function as an evangelistic tool of one set of beliefs or practices. Instead, highlight the beauty that each spiritual practice offers.
- Invite the Literature/Language Arts Departments to get involved. Assign an essay about rites of passage in various cultural and religious practices, then have the student body create a rite of passage for students as they move up a grade level or as they graduate.
- Draw a tree with branches growing out. Hand out colored paper in the shape of leaves and have students write down things that they are thankful for, posting them on the branches when they are finished.
- Create an art contest for Spirituality submissions. Use photography, spoken word, poetry, or music to complete the sentence, "I feel connected to something bigger than myself when I \_\_\_\_\_."
- Have each class start with a three minute mindfulness exercise, gratefulness challenge, or a breathing practice.
- Offer a donut to anyone who participates in a gratefulness challenge. To earn one, each person writes down three things they are grateful for. Then put these papers on display.

### **Physical Health**

- Host a blood drive or eye exam station on campus. You could do a blood drive competition with other Sources schools in your area.
- Host a panel of medical practitioners to talk about Physical Health during an assembly or in classroom presentations.
- Invite a local Zumba instructor to visit and lead a fun class in the gym or outside, reminding participants of the importance of getting active.
- Create a poster campaign of students with stereotypical physical injuries to make a connection between getting access to Physical and Mental Health resources, i.e., the hockey player with a blacked out tooth saying- "When I lost my tooth, I went to the Dentist, and when I lost my way, I went to the School Counselor."
- Have Peer Leaders share short stories of when they accessed medical care and received help.
- Print and post information around the school about accessing affordable medical care.
- Print posters with your School Nurse or Doctor introducing themselves, reminding students of their role and their desire to help, and inviting students to stop by.

### **Mental Health**

- Survey the student body to see what helps them manage their anxiety, then create opportunities for those stress-relievers to be on campus during finals week (yoga, therapy dogs, open gym, etc.)
- Create a de-stress space at the school, where students can hang out when they are wrestling with one of

the Big Three Emotions- Anxiety, Anger, Depression. Use this during testing weeks, where students may come by and make a cup of tea, meet a counselor, stretch briefly on a yoga mat, color, or listen to relaxing music.

- Cut feathers out of construction paper and ask participants to share something that helps them when they are experiencing the Big Three Emotions. Assemble the feathers into wings including the hashtag #WHATLIFTSUSUP and pose with the wings for a social media campaign.
- Host a viewing party of the Pixar movie *Inside Out* and have the Peer Leaders facilitate a Q&A about managing big emotions.
- Host a community night where students and their families learn more about Mental Health resources in the area.
- Create a video contest for Mental Health submissions. Use videos (imagery/scripts/songs) to tell a story of how Peer Leaders manage big emotions. Remember to keep it focused on Hope, Help, and Strength.







# POSTVENTION GUIDELINES:

## DO'S AND DON'TS IN THE EVENT OF DEATH BY SUICIDE

These guidelines are intended to assist with messaging to the general public and to groups of teens or young adults in the event of a suicide. The focus should be on Hope, Help, and Strength-based messaging. We do believe that suicide survivors can and should have an opportunity to tell their stories in detail as part of the grief process. These detailed stories also have tremendous impact on policy makers, and can be a powerful tool in training professionals how to better respond to families experiencing loss by suicide. However, some research indicates that harm can be done to some groups of youth and individuals by telling traumatic stories as a prevention message. With all of this in mind:

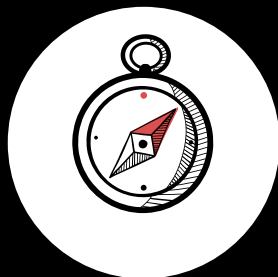
DON'T	DO
Don't sensationalize or memorialize an individual's death by suicide.	Do acknowledge the loss of an individual by suicide and give ongoing support to family and friends impacted by suicide.
Don't create a false norm or sense that everyone is suicidal or that dying by suicide is extremely common.	Do raise awareness of suicide as a significant health issue and give an accurate sense of rates of suicide fatalities, injuries, and ideation.
Don't try to shock and make the general public or teens aware of suicide by giving descriptive details of death or focus on methods used in a suicide attempt or fatality.	Do give messages of hope and Strength and highlight how individuals have recovered.
Don't focus on messaging around sad or traumatic stories.	Do focus on where help is available, as well as hope-based stories, and stories of resiliency.
Don't assume that if you talk about suicide it will make others become suicidal.	Do use care with how you present suicide prevention messages, and be sure to relate to the size of the group you are addressing.
Don't allow an overextended, distressed, or stressed teen to over-involve themselves in suicide prevention where it harms rather than heals.	Do assist these teens in maintaining balance in their lives and making healthy decisions.
Don't assume that Peer Leaders in suicide prevention are immune to "codes of silence".	Do have a caring adult, Mentor, or Adult Advisor engaged and involved in the process of creating trust and "peer-adult relationships".
Don't allow Peer Leaders to give public negative messages regarding blame, trust, nobody caring and similar themes, as these add to the groups sense of hopelessness.	Do talk to Peer Leaders about the vital importance of this hope and help message, rehearse public messaging, and encourage corrective and helpful feedback from other peers.

DON'T	DO
Don't allow vulnerable youth early in recovery from depression or addiction to tell highly personal stories in public that might harm or embarrass them. Also don't let them present as the "all-knowing expert."	Do provide vulnerable youth with individual and small group support and encourage maturity and listening to others in their healing and recovery process.
Don't take Peer Leaders for granted.	Do provide a variety of ways in which they can be recognized and honored for the good work they are doing.
Don't give the message that peers or adults can effectively do suicide prevention on their own.	Do continue to encourage the building of peer-adult relationships. We need each other.

# Staying THE Course



Seeing how far we've come, correcting course for the future, and  
choosing between many paths.



## CHAPTER FOUR:

# EVALUATING YOUR EFFORTS AND IMPACT

*Multi-Year Implementation Strategy* [90](#) | *District and*

*Community Level Strategy* [95](#) | *First Aid Kit:*

*Troubleshooting Key Challenges* [98](#) | *Fidelity Markers* [101](#)

*Evaluating your Sources of Strength Team* [105](#) | *Tracking*

*Activities* [107](#)

# MULTI-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Social change doesn't happen overnight. It's not a one time event or a day hike. It takes time, strategic planning, action, navigation, and skilled orienteering. In a multi-day hike, there can be many challenges and switchbacks, various paths and possible missteps in the hopes of reaching a destination. We hope that the following section will provide you with trail markers along the way, helping to gauge your current location on the trail, as well as possible next steps. Remember, this journey is fluid. You might be a Year One team passing Year Three milestones or you might be a Year Three team circling back to Year One trail markers. Either way, the journey is the destination. Wherever you find yourself, you can always take the next step in moving your team forward.

## Year One Trail Markers

Year One typically consists of nominating and recruiting an Adult Advisor and Peer Leader team, having your team trained, engaging in Peer Leader meetings and gaining initial experience with messaging campaigns. You will then focus on evaluating your efforts, identifying successes and challenges, and planning for the following year.

## Assembling Your Team

Visit the First Things First and Assembling Your Team sections of the Sources of Strength website for a more detailed version of this step-by-step process. Here we will outline a few key elements in case you need to circle back to steps that were initially missed during Year One of implementation.

### Trail Marker 1: Nominate/Recruit Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders

- Focus on building a diverse team with Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders from different social groups and walks of life.
- Your Peer Leader team should be at least 5%-10% of your student population and have a 1:10 Adult Advisor to Peer Leader ratio. Choosing your school's target number of Peer Leaders should be determined in collaboration with the Trainer prior to the nomination process.
- Having your Peer Leader team be 10% of the school population if it has 0-600+ students. If you have a student population of 1,000 - 1,500+ you

might move to a partnership model, recruiting other student led groups, clubs, and sports to amplify your impact.

- Building your team isn't a one-time event; it requires consistent invitations and follow up, making sure you are circling back with Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to re-engage them in meetings, activities, and the process.
- Make sure Sources doesn't become an exclusive club by developing a clear and transparent protocol for inviting and adding new Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders throughout the year, especially if participation wanes.
- Be careful to make sure one friendship group isn't dominating your Peer Leader or Adult Advisor Teams.



"IF YOU WANT TO GO  
FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT  
TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER"  
- AFRICAN PROVERB

### Trail Marker 2: Train Your Team

- A Trainer certified in Sources of Strength should train Adult Advisors (3-6 hours) in the philosophy and practice of Sources of Strength's model of peer leadership.
- A Trainer certified in Sources of Strength should train Peer Leaders (4.5-6 hrs) in using Strength-based messaging to practice and spread a community of Strength.
- It is optional, but highly recommended, to provide an all staff training (admin, teachers, custodians, bus drivers, food-service, resource officers ect.) using Peer Leaders to model Strength-based sharing and activities.
- Sources of Strength also offers All Staff Trainings, Community Nights, and Parent Trainings. Please contact your local Trainers or Sources of Strength National if you are interested in scheduling one of these additional components.

### Trail Marker 3: Meeting and Carrying Out Campaigns

- Start meeting with your Peer Leader team and practice sharing Strength with the wider student population.
- We recommend meeting at least twice a month for about an hour each time. This can happen in many ways. (See page [33](#) for further details on Peer Leader meeting recommendations.)
- Carry out 3-6 of our templated campaigns- Getting the Word Out, Trusted Adults, I Am Stronger, What Helps Me, Connect, We Belong, Thankfulness Challenge, Sources of Strength Week, or specific Strength-focused Campaigns (see page [54](#) for more details on campaigns).
- Work toward building layered messaging campaigns that incorporate multiple mediums of messaging (see page [52](#) for more detail on layered messaging).
- Develop an initial system and campaign calendar that work for you and your team.
- Use Strength-based prompts and sharing at staff meetings, school assemblies, parent meetings etc.
- Involve Peer Leaders in opportunities to share about Sources of Strength with school board, community organizations, PTAs, etc.
- Partner with elementary and/or middle school classes to lead Strength-based conversations and activities around the Wheel.
- Incorporate the Wheel and Strength-based sharing at athletic, club, and academic events hosted throughout the year.

### Trail Marker 4: Evaluate

- Develop a pattern of evaluation after each campaign.
- What worked well and what didn't work so well? How can you do this campaign more effectively next time?
- What are the challenges your team experienced throughout the year?
- What did you learn through those challenges?
- How has it helped you improve your efforts?
- Get Adult Advisor and Peer Leader feedback on how they are experiencing their involvement in the program.
- Do you feel we have a diverse Peer Leader team? Do you feel we have a diverse Adult Advisor team? Do you feel like you've made an impact in

your school or amongst your peers? (See Seward Alaska's end of the year Peer Leader Survey, page [128](#) of Field Guide.)

- What are the successes that your team experienced throughout the year?
- Complete the Team Assessment/Self Evaluation (see website or page [105](#) of the Field Guide) and request consultation or coaching from the Sources of Strength National team.
- Check in with Peer Leaders and Adult Advisors who have decreased their involvement and find out why. Have the team create solutions for those challenges and problem solve strategies to keep individuals involved.
- Start making a plan to turn Year One challenges into opportunities for growth and development in Year Two.



IT'S IMPORTANT THAT  
YOU COLLECT DATA TO  
MEASURE THE IMPACT OF  
YOUR EFFORTS. FOR MORE  
INFORMATION, TURN  
TO PAGE [107](#).

### Year Two Trail Markers

By now you have a Sources of Strength team, you have received a year one training, and you have had some experience in running meetings and carrying out campaigns. After evaluating your efforts in Year One, you may decide that you need to circle back and attempt to hit Year One Trail Markers in Year Two. Or you may realize that you accomplished far more than you expected and you are ready to move forward with new focus and clarity. Either way, remember that the journey is the destination and wherever your team finds itself, it is all a part of the social change process. Some schools or communities are ready for social change when they are presented with the possibility and other schools or communities have to make incremental change along the way to prepare the groundwork for future change. As Myles Horton says, "We make the road by walking it."

### Trail Marker 1: Increase Peer Leader Ownership

- Give Peer Leaders increased ownership of Peer Leader meetings.



- Encourage Peer Leaders to plan and lead games.
- Peer Leaders facilitate the sharing process and learn to lead small group sharing.
- Peer Leaders plan and facilitate brainstorming and campaign planning sessions.
- Remember to set Peer Leaders up for success by continuing to support them and by providing the necessary training and sounding board they need to understand the process and skills for the task at hand.
- Give Peer Leaders increased ownership of messaging campaigns.
- Help Peer Leaders systematize the campaign planning and action steps process.
- Ask Peer Leaders: Are there steps that can be repeated each time? Who do they need to talk to to get permission for wall displays, classroom presentations, hanging posters, or delivering the morning announcements?
- Consider forming a Peer Leader Advisory Board. This can help with pre-planning for Peer Leader Meetings. That way, you can start Peer Leader meetings with a clear structure and agenda that has been shaped by student voices.
- What campaigns do Peer Leaders want to run, when, and what mediums would they like to use?
- Remember to keep this group invitational and inclusive so that all Peer Leaders feel welcome if they have the time and energy to participate.
- Give regular time and space for Peer Leaders to voice their concerns, challenges, and ideas.

### Trail Marker 2: Grow Your Team

- Plan to increase the diversity, size, and quality of your team.
- Has your Peer Leader team reached 10% of your student population? If not, how many new Peer Leaders do you plan to add towards that goal?
- Common recruitment strategies include inviting incoming freshmen from feeder middle schools, friends of Peer Leaders, students that add diversity to your team, missing social groups, etc.
- Ask your team, what groups of students or adults are not represented on our team? Who is missing and how could you invite them

to be part of your efforts?

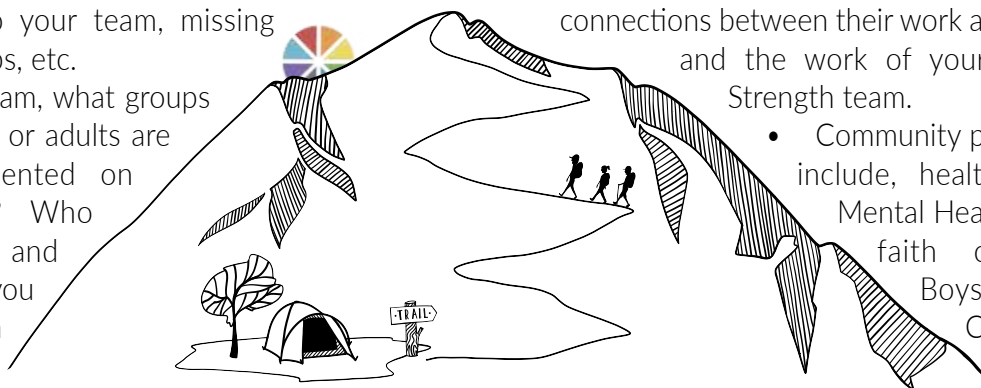
- Some teams will run a social mapping exercise to map out the diverse groups in a school or community and then to invite specific individuals from those groups to participate. Remember to mention that we are mapping these groups to include rather than exclude.
- Have Peer Leaders invite other students/staff members they would like on the team? You can find a form to inform and invite others on the website.

### Trail Marker 3: Layering Campaigns

- Layer templated campaigns using various messaging mediums.
- Avoid running “one-and-done” campaigns.
- Help Peer Leaders extend their campaigns over 6-8 weeks, strategically building momentum and giving space for multiple forms of sharing; remember, time and space are needed for Strength to be internalized.
- Experiment with rotational campaign planning by using stations in a Peer Leader meeting. This will build multiple layers of a campaign in a short period of time.
- Create multiple subgroups to build various parts of a single campaign. Peer Leaders and adults can sign up for mediums that interest them.
- Calendarize activities with other groups/teams/clubs.
- What are others already doing that incorporates Strength and how can the Sources team support their efforts?

### Trail Marker 4: Community Partners and Community Spread

- Encourage Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to communicate the Sources of Strength mission to various community partners, community organizations and entities.
- Invite community partners to imagine creative connections between their work and resources, and the work of your Sources of Strength team.
  - Community partners often include, health providers, Mental Health providers, faith communities, Boys and Girls Clubs, local



companies and businesses, youth services organizations, YMCA's, etc.

### **Trail Marker 5: All Staff Engagement**

- Clarify specific roles and responsibilities for Adult Advisors, including key coordinators focused on strategy, coordination, and communication; subgroup facilitators focused on campaign planning; some focused on retention and recruitment; some primarily focused on building relationships with students during planning meetings; as well as program advocates and champions.
- Have Peer Leaders update building staff on upcoming campaigns, share example stories from their own lives, prompt staff to share their own stories of Strength related to the campaign, and give three to four options (from simple to more engaged) for participation in the campaign.
- Schedule a few Peer Leaders to present briefly at staff meetings at least one time per semester.
- Encourage classroom teachers to use Strength-based language and concepts in their assignments or classroom activities.
- Use Strength-based prompts before class starts or over the intercom.
- Use Strength-based prompts to encourage staff wellness and sharing.

### **Year Three Trail Markers**

After evaluating your efforts in Year Two, you may decide that you need to circle back and attempt to hit key Year One or Year Two Trail Markers. Or you may be ready to move onto higher level tasks and objectives.

### **Trail Marker 1: Increase Internal & External Partnerships**

- Formalize internal partnerships with other student led groups, sports, and clubs.
- Have Peer Leaders support their efforts, give them shout-outs, and lend Sources language to their efforts.
- Ask adult leaders of other groups to sign up to promote Strength through their own activities and initiatives.
- Have a school-wide calendar sign up for campaigns in staff or counseling areas to increase partnership.
- Create a student group advisory board, where

key leaders from various student led groups can meet to strategize and coordinate their efforts for greater impact.

- Formalize external partnerships with community health providers, Mental Health providers, local businesses, and nonprofits.
- Create a community Asset/Strength Map highlighting the various organizations and entities that promote the Strengths of Sources of Strength.

### **Trail Marker 2: Formalize a System of Calendars, Roles, and Processes**

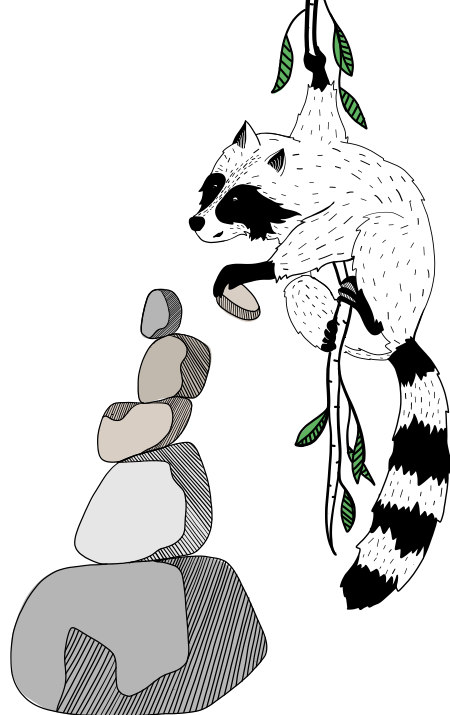
- Develop a formalized system for a school-wide Strength activities calendar.
- Have students and staff map out the school calendar, incorporating annual events, Sources campaigns, activities of other groups, as well as stressful or challenging times of the year where additional Mental Health supports or activities are needed.
- Clarify specific roles and responsibilities for Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders so that you can rely on individuals to carry out activities on a regular basis.
- Develop checklists for repetitive processes like wall displays, classroom presentations, announcements, social media campaigns, or school-wide activities.
- Support students in learning and following these agreed upon checklists.

### **Trail Marker 3: Broad Based Adult Support**

- All-staff in-service training.
- Ensure that all staff receive a 30-90 minute Sources of Strength workplace wellness training to increase their own Mental Health wellness, understand Peer Leader efforts better, and embed these Strengths into their classroom curriculum whenever possible.
- Have Peer Leaders present to the school board on their efforts and activities.
- Have Peer Leaders present to parents or host a Parent Night.
- Offer mini trainings to local groups that want to support student wellness and Peer Leader efforts.
- Partner with outside entities to develop trained Trusted Adult volunteers to support your Peer Leaders efforts and connect with students.

#### Trail Marker 4: Embed Strengths in Classroom Curriculum and School Culture

- Encourage or incentivize teaching staff to embed Strength-based language in their classroom curriculum. (See pages [60-79](#) for examples of campaigns.)
- Literature teachers can assign essays on books, Such as *Catcher in the Rye* where students research a Strength and then interpret the story and how this Strength may have helped the main character (i.e. Holden Caulfield) overcome adversity or Mental Health struggles.
- Science teachers can assign research projects on the impact thankfulness and gratitude have on the brain and our outlook on life.
- Industrial Arts teachers can assign projects creating the Wheel either for the purpose of games or sharing, or as art pieces.
- Health teachers can assign research projects on the impact of specific Strengths on overall health and wellbeing.
- Math teachers can commit to having a mindful moment at the beginning of every class to reduce stress and anxiety around the subject.
- Teachers can commit to having a thankfulness question as the first question on tests, to help students recalibrate their approach to testing.
- Teachers can commit to hanging a Strength Wheel poster in their classroom and referencing the Strengths when necessary throughout class time.
- Teachers can create their own Strength story on a poster so that students can read and know their teachers go-to Strengths and coping strategies.
- Teachers can hang up the Trusted Adult Pledge (Page [141](#)) on their doors or in classrooms.



# DISTRICT/COMMUNITY LEVEL STRATEGY

As we all know, health and wellbeing don't take place in isolation from our lived experience or simply inside the walls of our schools. It is a natural and encouraged progression for Sources of Strength schools or districts that have thriving and healthy programs to move beyond the walls of their school and start coordinating district/community wide collaboration, communication, and strategic efforts and events. This kind of collaboration can broaden the impact of your peer led efforts and bolster the Sources message with other schools, groups, or initiatives, fostering shared language and common vision for health and wellbeing in the community. The following strategies can be employed by a school, district, or community at any phase of implementation.

## Core District/Community Level Strategies

### District/community-wide quarterly or semester meetings for Adult Advisors.

- Create a community of learning and collaboration by having groups share Strengths and challenges, campaign ideas, Peer Leader meeting facilitation techniques, and creative messaging strategies.
- Develop a communication strategy, platform, or newsletter for regular communication, follow up, shared ideas and resources.

### Annual district/community-wide Peer Leader conference.

- Highlight strong/healthy Peer Leader teams and campaigns or strategies that they have developed.
- Invite facilitators to lead Strength-based breakout sessions on cultural practices, meditation, yoga, brain science, campaign planning strategies, etc.
- Coordinate district-wide Peer Leader campaigns with shared resources, planning, and social media challenges.

### District/community wide year end Peer Leader celebration/recognition event.

- Invite parents, community members, Adult Advisors, and local media to highlight peer led prevention efforts.

### Staff, parent, or other adult training opportunities.

- Host a district/community wide Sources of

Strength night (or parent night)

- Provide opportunities for district-wide staff wellness trainings or staff wellness campaigns.

### District/Community-wide stakeholders meeting.

- Invite various stakeholders (sheriff's office, health providers, public health agents, Mental Health providers, faith-based communities and organizations, youth facing organizations, etc.) to a Sources of Strength informational event.
- Pitch the program and the work that Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders are doing in all district schools.
- Invite community stakeholders to imagine new connections, flow of support, communication, and resources. How could Sources of Strength language be used in other arenas or services to create a degree of shared or common language across organizations and the community?

### Other district/community level strategies.

- Incorporate Sources of Strength messaging and language into existing programs, events, conferences, newsletters, messaging, or professional development days to foster shared vision, language, and wellness.
- Foster connection between high schools and their feeder middle schools. Encourage collaboration to support transitioning freshman and partner on campaigns and community events.
- Create district resources for supporting graduating seniors using a Strength framework. Encourage graduated Peer Leaders to attend meetings when home on breaks and give them an opportunity to share how they are using their Strengths in life beyond high school.
- Use the Strength Wheel in supporting incoming or transferring students to identify and plug into Strengths in their new context.
- Insert standing Sources of Strength highlight section into District newsletter.
- Work with local media to highlight Strength-based stories, positive messages and efforts, and hopeful work happening in the district/community.
- Organize community level campaigns/events, such as a Strength-based color run, amazing

race, storytelling evenings, etc.

- Peer Leaders can give presentations to local community, civic groups, organizations, and faith-based communities (i.e., Rotary, Lions Club, YMCA, churches, etc.).
- Use the Wheel in re-entry meetings.
- Collaborate with juvenile justice systems to help transition students back into the education system.

### **District Level Integration Strategies**

Potential ways to weave Sources of Strength into the fabric of what you're already doing as a district:

#### **Academics**

- Teachers should engage students in the power of thankfulness, positivity, maneuvering transitions such as college and career readiness, etc.
- Teachers and coaches can partner with Peer Leader teams at other schools to share about Strengths, including working together to run events or even co-hosting campaigns at sports games.

#### **Social-Emotional Learning**

- Sources of Strength is well-integrated with the five core SEL competencies outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning. This includes helping individuals and groups grow in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

### **Staff Wellness and Professional Learning**

- Sources of Strength can aid in staff readiness to face district/school level stressors big and small. Utilize Sources to support all staff in building out their own "resilience plan".

### **Asset/Strength Mapping**

- At the district level, assess what is already in place in your current prevention, intervention, and postvention support structures (think broadly). How can Sources integrate with these supports?
- At the community level, what organizations, businesses, and physical spaces help promote the different Strengths? How can these community entities be recognized for the support they are providing? Are there ways for your Sources of Strength team to collaborate with these community groups, or to uplift them as part of your own work?

### **Working with Elementary Groups**

- Consider how Sources of Strength can be used across different ages. Sources of Strength Peer Leaders can go into classrooms to work with younger students and teach them about the Strengths on the Wheel. While young students may not interact with the whole Wheel, they can greatly benefit from talking about ways they can be generous, cope with big emotions, or ask for help.
- Peer Leader teams can take the message of Strength back to their families by engaging siblings and family members at home.







# FIRST-AID KIT: TROUBLESHOOTING KEY CHALLENGES

We all know that change does not happen overnight, but we easily forget this when we are rolling out a new program. In schools, we are very familiar with Post Programmatic Stress Disorder (see the Glossary on page [10](#)), so take a deep breath, you are not alone! We move along a trail one step at a time. Three common challenges that we want to help you through are: administration support and teacher buy-in, finding an effective meeting time, and Peer Leader retention.

Remember that part of Sources is identifying some of the challenges we face and overcoming them by activating our Strengths. Every time you become aware of a challenge, remember that it is an opportunity for growth for you, your team, your Peer Leaders, and a chance to talk about what Strengths you are using to get through.

## **Key Challenge #1: How to Garner Administration Support and Teacher Buy-In**

A challenge schools often face is getting much-needed administrator support and teacher buy-in. Administrator support is a key step in a sustainable and successful program. We find that it is helpful to communicate the impact that Sources can have on school culture, student empowerment, and engagement. As an evidence-based program, we boost protective factors

to reduce risk, not only of suicide and suicidality, but also to reduce risk of violence, bullying, and harassment behaviors, as well as substance use and misuse. As we increase these protective factors and students feel physically and mentally well, they have more capacity to attend, engage, and excel at school.

Buy-in can really boost the power and influence of the Peer Leader team. Coach your Peer Leaders to lead a mini-presentation with administrators and/or teachers during a staff meeting. Admin-supported, regularly scheduled meetings are essential as a culture change program. Meetings are where Peer Leaders have the opportunity to share and apply Strength to their own lives, begin to incorporate the language of Hope, Help, and Strength into their daily conversations, and plan for whole school engagement. Keep inviting administrators and teachers to your meetings and events. Use the Activities Tracking Form (located on page [107](#)) to keep track of all Sources events, campaigns, and positive interactions and share those numbers with administration/staff as often as possible. Make a point to publicly thank your administrators for making it possible to run Sources at your school. Regularly ask Peer Leaders with powerful stories of Strength to share those stories personally with administrators (you can even create a regular schedule for when and who will share these stories).



It is also a good idea to have your Peer Leaders present to the school board or civic groups and then thank school administrators for their support. Don't be discouraged! Culture change is a slow process, celebrate the little successes and remember that a hiker doesn't reach their destination right away.



"IF YOUR TEAM HAS FEWER OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF LUNCH AND AFTER SCHOOL, IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO THINK OF CREATIVE WAYS FOR EVERYONE TO STAY CONNECTED THROUGH SMALL WORK-GROUPS, QUARTERLY MEETINGS, AND/OR CELEBRATIONS."

### Key Challenge #2: Finding an Effective Meeting Time

Finding an effective meeting time is a challenge faced by many schools. Have conversations with your administration early and often about the times that work best. It can be helpful to refer to the need for diversity and how positive norming happens through social networks.



With diversity in mind, what meeting times will be most easily attended by all social, athletic, and otherwise diverse groups? It is common to meet during lunch and after school, which can work.

However, transportation, work, sports, and clubs can impact diverse participation. We suggest that your school look to share the commitment to the program with the students. If you are asking students to give up lunch or meet after school then the school should also give of their time.

When meetings only happen on student time, the underlying message sent to the students can be that their wellbeing is less important than academic achievement. It can be helpful to meet as an Adult Advisor Team and administration to brainstorm suggested times and the pros/cons. Schools have found success in having a rotating schedule where, for example, week one, Peer Leaders meet for 45 minutes during first period, then the following meeting shifts to second period, and so on. By the end of the semester, no single class has been more impacted than any other.

Homeroom or Advisory classes are also effective meeting times. If your team has fewer options outside of lunch and after school, it can be helpful to think of creative ways for everyone to stay connected through small work-groups, quarterly meetings, and/or celebrations.

If you want to create a Sources of Strength class, please contact us and we can connect you with schools that are doing this successfully. Considerations for a class include maintaining diversity in Peer Leaders, how to include those who can't attend the class, and fidelity to the formula of learning through play, sharing, and planning.



"IF YOU WANT TO CREATE  
A SOURCES OF STRENGTH  
CLASS, PLEASE CONTACT US  
AND WE CAN CONNECT YOU WITH  
SCHOOLS THAT ARE  
DOING THIS SUCCESSFULLY."

### Key Challenge #3: Peer Leader Retention

We find that a Peer Leader team that is diverse and makes up about 10% of the student body is needed for population-level wellness norms to take hold. If your team's numbers are shrinking, there are a few things you can do to retain and recruit Peer Leaders.

A good starting place is to take attendance at your meetings to notice when Peer Leaders are gone and reach out. The invitation back can go a long way to communicate that their voice matters, catch them up, and find out if there are barriers to attendance. Teams have found it useful to involve Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to do follow up with Peer Leaders who miss a meeting, as this can increase positive connections and be a leadership opportunity. Remember to dig a bit deeper, if their answer is "too busy" there might be more going on, such as group conflict, not having fun, or they do not feel heard. If there are barriers, have the team brainstorm ideas to resolve it together.

When a Peer Leader stops attending; it is important to connect with them so they know when and if they are able to return, they are welcome. Remind them that they are a positive agent of change, and thank them. If a Peer Leader ultimately decides they need to drop out of the program, that is alright; they are always welcome to return. Ask them if they are willing to stay involved by promising to promote Sources campaigns and activities amongst their friendship group.

When there is a need for recruitment, do a quick scan of the lunchroom and see if you have students from all tables, or ask the students what groups are not represented in the team. You will also benefit from periodically asking your Peer Leaders some of the following questions:

- Are they still having fun? Does your team play enough games?
- Do they feel like they have time to share and grow their Strengths and connect with other students and staff on the team?
- Are meetings being structured efficiently? Is the team on task so that Peer Leaders feel they are really accomplishing their goals and being effective with their use of time?

Finally, **Celebrate, Celebrate, Celebrate!** Publicly celebrating the work that is being done to build a culture of wellness is powerful and empowering for your community. Celebrate the Peer Leaders with the administration, staff, school board, and community. Think about the recognition that athletes and academic all-stars get and recognize Peer Leaders during a public event such as a pep rally, give each a certificate, a letter, pin for a school jacket, or graduation honor cords, and share stories of impact and Strength. This can boost morale and momentum for the team. Keeping your Peer Leaders coming back is fun for everyone!

# FIDELITY MARKERS (CHECKLIST)

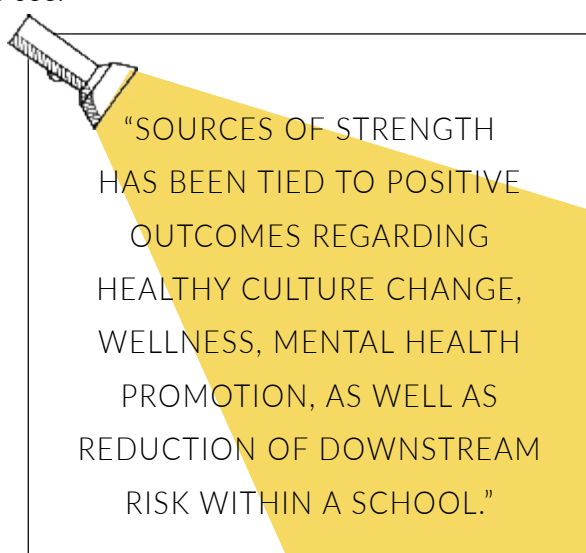
## Rationale:

Sources of Strength is an evidence-based, best practice prevention program. As such, there are several important elements that must be present to maintain a fidelity implementation of the program in order to provide the intended impact and outcomes.

These include Fidelity Markers in terms of:

- **Preparation and Planning,**
- **Training,**
- **Follow-Through**
- **Ongoing Implementation.**

This checklist serves as a resource in planning, implementation, and course-correcting to make sure that your Sources of Strength program is within fidelity and delivers the culture change we all hope to see.



## Preparation and Planning

- ☐ Someone from our Adult Advisor team spoke with Sources of Strength staff and watched the Implementation Overview Video prior to nomination, recruitment, and training.
- ☐ Administration values the ability of diverse Peer Leaders to positively change campus culture and time and resources will be available for training, meetings, and messaging campaigns.
- ☐ Safety/suicide protocol is in place and staff are trained in it. If not, we have reviewed the

Sources of Strength protocol and developed our own protocol and referral process for handling suicidal students.

- ☐ Our Adult Advisors are volunteers who are excited to be a part of Sources of Strength and have 4-6 hours per month in their schedules to support the Peer Leader team. Adult Advisors were not assigned or told to participate.
- ☐ Our core Adult Advisor team is made up of people who are caring, connected, and positive; they believe that social change is possible and are excited about empowering a group of students to enact change.
- ☐ Our Adult Advisor team consists of at least a 1-10 Adult to Peer Leader ratio and can include school, staff, parents, or community members.
- ☐ Our Peer Leader team is a diverse and representative sample of the student body and reflects our population in terms of: race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, grade level, socio-economic status, and social group.
- ☐ Our Peer Leader team consists of at least 5-10% of the student population, keeping in mind that 10% of the school population is the goal by Year Three, as this is a crucial tipping point in peer to peer spread of attitudes, norms, and behaviors.

## Training

The room for our training provided:

- ☐ Appropriate space for all Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to sit in chairs in a circle.
- ☐ Room to play games.
- ☐ Adequate acoustics and ability for the group to hear each other (no loud fans/interruptions/through traffic, a sound system provided for larger groups over 50, etc.)

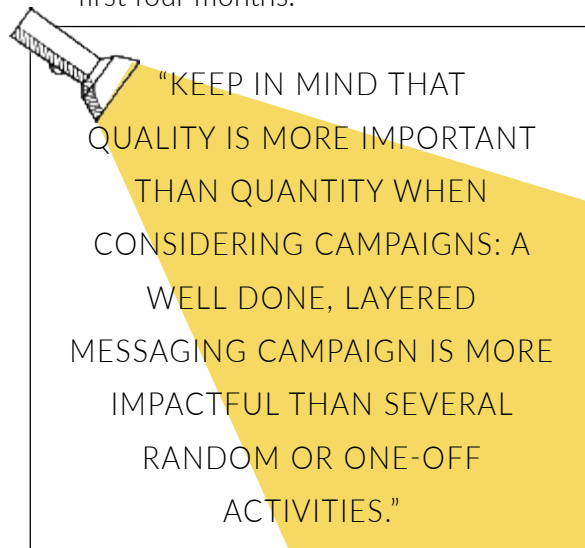
## Training Participation Checklist

- ☐ We have conducted an Adult Advisor training of at least 3-6 hours.
- ☐ We have conducted a Peer Leader training of at least 4.5-6 hours.
- ☐ Our Adult Advisors participated in both the Adult Advisor and Peer Leader trainings.
- ☐ We received training from a Sources of Strength National Trainer or locally Certified Trainer.
- ☐ Our Adult Advisors were fully engaged in the trainings; they played the games, participated in poster groups, shared and connected with the Peer Leaders.
- ☐ Our Adult Advisors did not engage in power struggles with Peer Leaders through lecturing, shouting, or disciplining during the training.

## Follow-Through and Ongoing Implementation Meetings

- ☐ We conducted regular meetings of at least 2x per month with our Adult Advisor and Peer Leader team. If most meetings were held during student free time (before and after school, during lunch, etc.), the school will also invest some school time for Peer Leaders to meet and implement activities.
- ☐ Our Peer Leader meetings over a month included 1 Part Fun, 1 Part Sharing, and 1 Part Planning.
- ☐ At least 70% of our Peer Leader team and 50% of our Adult Advisor team consistently attended meetings
- ☐ If our meetings were typically 30 - 45 minutes, we met more frequently to reach two hours, especially in the first three to four months to establish peer team identity and complete activities.
- ☐ The first peer meeting was conducted within 10-14 days after training.

- ☐ The first campaign was completed within the first 30 days.
- ☐ Three campaigns were completed within the first four months.



## Messaging

- ☐ 100% of Peer Leader campaigns and messaging was Hope, Help, Strength focused and did not use Sad, Shock, or Trauma techniques, statistics, or images.
- ☐ Our Peer Leader campaigns and messaging were engaging and interactive and invited the broader population to apply Sources of Strength principles and content into their own lives.
- ☐ We conducted the recommended minimum number of campaigns or activities:
  - ☐ Year 1: 3-6
  - ☐ Year 2: 4-7
  - ☐ Year 3 and beyond: 5-8
- ☐ Our campaigns reached the required percentage of the school population:
  - ☐ Year 1: 40%
  - ☐ Year 2: 70%
  - ☐ Year 3 and beyond: 90%
- ☐ We conducted a Celebration/Recognition

event or activity to honor our Peer Leader team.

**For Sustaining Programs (Sources of Strength Teams after initial Implementation)**

- ☐ We completed the Fidelity Markers Checklist and Team Assessment (located on page 101) at the end of the year and engaged in a period of reflection and goal setting for the following year.
- ☐ We nominated and recruited new Adult Advisors and Peer Leaders to add to the Strength and diversity of our team.
- ☐ We conducted an Adult Advisor or Peer Leader training every year for at least the first three years of implementation.

- ☐ We learned about the Sources of Strength Train the Trainer model and considered developing a locally certified Trainer. (Optimal for building sustainability)

- ☐ We paid our \$500 ongoing licensing fee to Sources of Strength and have continued to reach out for support and guidance.

**We participated in the Sources of Strength support framework by:**

- ☐ Watching the support videos emailed to us.
- ☐ Reading and utilizing the Field Guide.
- ☐ Accessing resources, templates, and content from [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org).
- ☐ Participating in a support call with Sources of Strength national staff.





# FIDELITY ASSESSMENT

## Fidelity Check in Preparation and Planning:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items completed: \_\_\_\_\_ of 8.  
Percentage of Fidelity for section: \_\_\_\_\_%

## Fidelity Check in Follow-Through and Ongoing Implementation Meetings:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items completed: \_\_\_\_\_ of 7.  
Percentage of Fidelity for section: \_\_\_\_\_%

## Fidelity Check in Training:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items completed: \_\_\_\_\_ of 3.  
Percentage of Fidelity for section: \_\_\_\_\_%

## Fidelity Check in Messaging:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items completed: \_\_\_\_\_ of 5.  
Percentage of Fidelity for section: \_\_\_\_\_%

## Fidelity Check in Participation Checklist:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items completed: \_\_\_\_\_ of 6.  
Percentage of Fidelity for section: \_\_\_\_\_%

## Fidelity Check in Sustaining Programs:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items completed: \_\_\_\_\_ of 5.  
Percentage of Fidelity for section: \_\_\_\_\_%

## Fidelity Check in Support Framework:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Items completed: \_\_\_\_\_ of 4.  
Percentage of Fidelity for section: \_\_\_\_\_%

Based on these numbers, what are your strongest areas? What areas may you need to focus on in the coming year?

# SELF EVALUATING YOUR SOURCES OF STRENGTH TEAM

Please circle the number in the box that most closely matches your school or community Sources of Strength team. This is intended take a quick look at the overall health and quality of your peer efforts.

<b>Partnership Support</b> (State, Provincial, Regional, other systems)	<b>0</b> Our program is not linked with any outside entities, coalitions, or groups.	<b>1</b> We communicate with our state-provincial, regional, or coalitions about our Sources of Strength efforts. They are aware.	<b>2</b> Our Sources program has shared funding, coordination, and training resources with other groups or have had our Peer Leaders present to coalitions.	<b>3</b> Our Sources program partners with a variety of groups and coalitions that are focusing on different issues. (i.e. – suicide, bullying, substance abuse, dating violence, LGBTQ, etc.) We are well known.
<b>Administrative Support</b>	<b>0</b> Our Administrator is not very supportive of Sources of Strength.	<b>1</b> Our Administrator is aware of Sources of Strength and passively supportive.	<b>2</b> Our Administrator actively supports Sources of Strength and makes time and space available for Peer Leaders.	<b>3</b> Our Administrator is an active champion promoting Sources of Strength to staff, parents, other schools, and community agencies.
<b>Adult Advisor Team</b>	<b>0</b> Our Adult Advisor/ coordinator team does not work well together or does not find time to coordinate the program.	<b>1</b> Our team has one very active Adult Advisor/ coordinator who feels somewhat overwhelmed.	<b>2</b> Our Sources of Strength project has 2-3 Adult Advisors/coordinators that communicate and share responsibility.	<b>3</b> Our Sources of Strength project has an active group of adults/ coordinators from both inside the school/agency and outside that work well together.
<b>Peer Diversity</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders are not very active and not diverse.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leader team is made up of good and active students but is not overly diverse.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leader team started with diverse students and we have been able to keep over 60% engaged.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leader team is extremely diverse for our setting and we have been able to keep over 75% engaged.
<b>Peer Leader Ownership</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders are driven almost totally by the ideas of the Adult Advisors.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leaders wait for adult initiative before pursuing many ideas or the Adult Advisors are using the Peer Leaders to initiate the Advisors ideas.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leaders actively facilitate most of the planning, meetings, games, and are effective at organizing messages and activities.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leaders have a high level of ownership, and engaged diverse Peer Leaders in facilitating/leading. Peer Leaders are acting on many of their own ideas.
<b>Staff and other adult presentations</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders have not presented to school staff, parents, or other outside groups about their Sources efforts.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least 1-2 activities or messaging campaigns.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leaders have presented at least once a semester to staff, parents, or other adult groups about their efforts.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leaders have presented several times to staff, parents, or other groups and also presented to school boards, councils or administrative groups.
<b>Level of Peer Leader activities</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders did not successfully complete any activities or messaging campaigns.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least 1-2 activities or messaging campaigns.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least 3-5 activities or messaging campaigns.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leaders have conducted more than five activities or messaging campaigns reaching more than 75% of our students. Almost all students and staff know about Sources of Strength and have participated in an activity.
<b>Peer Leaders engaging other students</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders have not engaged other students in conversations or activities involving Sources of Strength.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leaders have conducted a few non-interactive activities that other students did not seem overly engaged in, ie., gave presentations with powerpoints, but used few personal stories, or did not engage other students in sharing examples.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leaders have conducted at least two interactive activities, shared personal Strengths stories, and engaged some students in sharing Strengths, naming Trusted Adults, or actively engaging in peer led activities.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leaders have led very interactive activities, such as high level discussions with classes, small groups, or engaged many students in writing, art, video, drama, or sharing about their Strengths and supports.

<b>Planning meeting frequency</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders did not meet for the first two months after training.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leaders met less than once a month for the first three months after training.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leaders met at least two times a month during the first three months after training.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leaders met at least two times a month during the first three months and continued to meet, plan, and implement ideas after that time.
<b>Retention of Peer Leaders</b>	<b>0</b> We have less than 25% of the Peer Leaders involved that were originally trained.	<b>1</b> We have between 25% - 50% of the Peer Leaders involved that were originally trained.	<b>2</b> We have over 50% of Peer Leaders trained involved and active.	<b>3</b> We have over 75% of Peer Leaders trained involved and active.
<b>Recognition of Peer Leaders</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders have received little or no recognition for being involved in Sources of Strength.	<b>1</b> Some of our more outstanding Peer Leaders have received some verbal thank yous.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leaders have been given personal recognition and recognition as a group within our school or community.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leaders have received public and personal recognition in front of staff and other students and have had a celebration event for their accomplishments.
<b>Fun Factor</b>	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leaders did not seem to enjoy planning meetings or doing peer to peer activities.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leaders had fun doing activities that were occasionally led by Adult Advisors.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leaders regularly used humor, led fun games, and built fun into their activities and messaging events.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leader team was contagious with its fun and became known for leading great activities and enjoyable planning meetings. Other students want to become involved.
<b>Core Messaging:</b> A. Getting other students to publicly name or display Trusted Adults, Mentors, etc. B. Interactive classroom or small groups where students talk or apply Strengths to their life. C. Put on a Sources of Strength week.	<b>0</b> Our Peer Leader team did not complete any of the core messaging activities.	<b>1</b> Our Peer Leaders completed one of the three core messaging activities.	<b>2</b> Our Peer Leader team completed two of the three core messaging activities.	<b>3</b> Our Peer Leader team completed all three of the core messaging activities.

**Add up your total score \_\_\_\_\_**

*If you score yourself a 7 or under:* We might want to build some supports for the program and review your readiness level for a full program. It might be best to adapt and focus on individual pieces of the program and get success going in a couple of small areas before attempting the full program.

**8-14 :** OK progress, but it may be helpful to build on Strengths, but address 2-3 areas that may strengthen the program.

**15-24:** Good progress, highlight your areas of greatest Strength and focus on a couple to strengthen in the next year.

**25+:** Great program – Make sure to capture and share some of your experiences with the Sources team and help share or lead some of Sources of Strength national webinars.

What are your program's areas of greatest strength (highest scoring areas)? What are your program's areas of greatest challenge. What realistically would help your Sources of Strength program meet that challenge?

# TRACKING ACTIVITIES

It is vital that your Peer Leader team regularly track and evaluate your efforts. We want to touch both minds and hearts with the impact of our efforts, and one of the best ways to touch minds is to have numbers associated with the reach of your campaigns (for example, “We had 350 people engage with this campaign and name 1,100 Trusted Adults in our school and community!”). One of the best ways to touch hearts is to share stories of impact (“A sophomore came to our counselors with one of his friends he was worried about after participating in our Connect campaign; we were able to have a conversation and conduct a suicide risk assessment and get this person the help they deserve. That is because of you all!”) Here, you can note what you did and how many people you helped engage with Strength.

It is also very helpful to keep a record of what went well and what could be improved upon in the coming year. While it can be fun to continually come up with all new ideas, it is not always necessary. Some great campaign ideas can be used again and made fresh with some minor adjustments. This Activities Tracking form is to help Peer Leader teams

work smarter, not harder. A common maxim in the business world is, “You can’t manage what you don’t measure.” Collecting data gives teams insight into what is working and what isn’t; it allows teams to strategize more effectively and efficiently, making them more productive in their mission to create culture change with Hope, Help, and Strength. This helps you capitalize on opportunities for growth, but it is also great for helping celebrate the efforts of your Peer Leaders. How many donuts did we hand out at your “Donut Worry, Be Grateful!” campaign? How many people named a Trusted Adult in a wall display? How many people showed up to interact, engage, and apply Strength to their lives this year? Take some time to thank and celebrate the creativity and hard work of your team. This is powerful stuff!

Finally, stories and numbers can speak to the importance of a Sources of Strength program. It can be powerful for an administration, school board, or local business partner to hear about the great impact students are having in the community. Please take the time to note details about your events and campaigns.

## ACTIVITIES TRACKING FORM EXAMPLE

<i><b>Name of Activity</b></i>	<i><b>Date</b></i>	<i><b># of PLs Involved</b></i>	<i><b># Reached</b></i>	<i><b>Brief Description of Activity</b></i>
School Staff contact	1/17	32	108	Peer Leaders broke into teams of three and gave all teachers, secretaries, administration staff, janitors, cooks, and bus drivers a Sources magnet, thanked them for their support, and explained their program and plans.
School Announcements	9/14	29	800	Peer Leaders gave a two minute school announcement about Healthy Activities. They gave examples of how they helped manage stress and difficult emotions.
Dodge Ball Tournament	11/10	15	200	Peer Leaders partnered with Student Council for a dodge ball tournament during Spirit Week. They wore their Sources t-shirts and gave out humorous prizes.

# ACTIVITIES TRACKING FORM

<i>Name of Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i># of PLs Involved</i>	<i># Reached</i>	<i>Brief Description of Activity</i>







Or as some less creative minds may call it, The Appendix.



CHAPTER FIVE:

# ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Games [112](#) | Frequently Asked Questions [120](#) | Suicide

Intervention Protocol [125](#) | Sources of Strength End of Year Peer

Leader Survey [128](#) | Additional Features: Visuals

and Tear-outs [130](#)

# GAMES

We believe that play is an essential way to learn, connect, create, and build trust alongside others. At Sources, we aim to celebrate our Strengths, and one way we do that is through play. Play fosters connection and relationships, and helps break down barriers among social groups in a low-risk setting, and games can make anyone feel like a champion, regardless of ability. Not all of the games we play require physical activity or acumen. You have a choice of high-activity games or games that depend on luck. For more games, check out [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org)

## 1-2-3 LOOK

**Time:** 2-10 minutes

**Group Size:** Small or Medium

**Buy-In:** Low

**Objective:** A quick game for transitions, or to redirect attention.

**Optional Teaching Point:** Do you ever feel like no one sees you? It can be hard when we try to connect and don't get the result we want/need. It's important to keep looking for help!

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions:

1. Have participants stand in a circle and look down at the ground.
2. Explain that you will count, "1-2-3" and when you say, "LOOK!" they need to look up and look into someone else's eyes.
3. If the person they are looking at is also looking at them, they both are out and they each sit back down in their chair.
4. As participants are eliminated, the remaining people should close in the gaps, and the circle will get smaller.
5. Play a few practice rounds so the group can get the hang of it.

### Rules

- Participants **MUST** look at one other person's eyes each round; they can't look at the wall, above their head, etc.
- Participants **MUST** look at **ONLY ONE** person's eyes each round, and they cannot change their mind.

### Variations

- When two people make eye contact, you can have them shout, or you can have them make animal sounds to signal they are now OUT. If the game has been going on for too long without anyone making eye contact, have the participants move to another place in the circle. Change it up!

## BALL TOSS

**Time:** 5-15 minutes

**Group Size:** Small or Medium

**Buy-In:** Low

**Objective:** Get students to find different solutions to a problem and teach students that our problems can have multiple solutions.

**Optional Teaching Point:** Sometimes we get stuck, but other perspectives can help us solve problems. There are times in life when the simplest solution is the best! Friends who may be depressed or suicidal can get tunnel vision, and sometimes offering a different perspective is helpful.

**Materials Needed:** A small/medium ball or "balled up" paper

### Directions

1. Have the group stand in a circle and raise their hands in front of their chest, indicating they are ready to catch the ball.
2. Explain that each person will throw the ball to someone who hasn't received the ball yet; they need to remember who they threw the ball to, and who threw the ball to them. Put your hands down once you receive the ball so we know who is still in.
3. Once the ball has made it around the entire group and back to you, challenge the group to pass the ball around to each participant in the same order, as fast as they can. Start with a generous time goal (i.e. 45 seconds), and then lower the time challenge after each round.
4. Take suggestions from the group of how they can decrease the amount of time it takes to get the ball into everyone's hands in order (They may suggest taking steps closer together, or raising their hand when it is their turn to catch the ball).
5. For the final round ask if you can get the time under 3 seconds. Help them problem solve until

someone suggests rearranging their place in the circle so the ball can simply be passed around the group in order.

6. The shortest round will occur when a fast player runs in a circle, getting everyone to touch the ball in order...but you didn't hear that from us.

### Rules

- You have to throw the ball to the same person each round.
- Everyone should touch the ball once.

## BLIZZARD

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Group Size:** Any

**Buy-In:** Medium

**Objective:** To get moving and have fun! Middle school groups tend to love this game.

**Optional Teaching Point:** Sometimes, when we have a lot of different things going on, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. When that happens, accomplishing one thing at a time can make us feel better (This game can naturally lead into a stressors/protective factors discussion).

**Materials Needed:** Balls of paper or small soft items (fruit snacks, Hershey Kisses, Sources of Strength sunglasses or popsockets) for everyone in the group. You might include one unique item that can be thrown/caught easily.

### Directions

1. Everyone gets a wadded up piece of paper or small soft item and stands in a circle.
2. Stand in the middle of the circle and ask everyone to "make it snow" by throwing their item up in the air and landing on/near you.
3. Try to catch one or two items.
4. Ask everyone to collect their item and ask if anyone wants to trade places with you and beat your record.
5. Allow them to use their clothing to catch the items, or bring a friend in the circle and use more hands to catch more items.
6. After a few cycles, add a new item (different color, size, etc.) and tell the person in the middle they **MUST** catch it. They can try to catch as many original items as they want, as long as they catch the **ONE** different item.

### Rules

- You're not allowed to throw your ball directly at the person in the middle. That game is called dodgeball.

## CHAIR GAME

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Group Size:** Small/Medium/Large

**Buy-In:** Medium

**Objective:** Get to know names in a fun environment! Give every student the opportunity to use their voice and share in a low key way.

**Materials Needed:** Enough chairs for all participants

### Directions

1. Have the group sit in chairs in a circle. Walk into the circle and ask for volunteers to stand with you in the middle (limit to a fifth of the total group. In a group of 30, limit 6).
2. Have everyone in the middle introduce themselves with their name, their grade, and something fun they've done recently (or if nothing fun comes to mind, their favorite food).
3. Once everyone in that circle has shared, have the group applaud, but don't let them sit back down! Explain that this is a competitive chair game. Have students turn around the empty chairs that once belonged to the group standing with you in the center of the circle.
4. Explain that you'll say a statement ("Get ready to move...IF...") that could apply to most people in this room. If that statement applies to them, they have to move to another chair.

**Example questions** ("Get ready to move... IF..."):

- *You showered in the last three months*
- *You're wearing shoes*
- *You have siblings or pets*
- *You're wearing underwear*
- *You're at school today*
- *It was hard to get out of bed this morning*
- *You have seen a movie or show in the last month*
- *You cannot breathe underwater*
- *You have caught a fish*
- *You have been out of the state*

5. Everyone left without a chair will make up our new center crew. The game is over when everyone has introduced themselves.

## Rules

- One person per chair.
- You **MUST** move to a chair at least 5 chairs away from you.
- If you are on the inside circle, you can choose any chair you want, just **PICK A CHAIR!**
- If you end up in the middle of the circle more than once, change places with someone who has not been in the circle yet.

## Variations

- Change the sharing question based on how familiar the group is with one another. As the group bonds, you can deepen the question. "Who makes you feel like you belong?" or "Which part of the Wheel are you feeling strongest in this week, and why?" You can also use questions from the helpful prompts for group discussion on page [41](#).

## CUPS (HEAD, TOES, CUP!)

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Group Size:** Any

**Buy-In:** Low

**Objective:** Get the energy up and have fun!

**Materials Needed:** Solo cup, or similar small item like markers (one for each pair of partners)

## Directions

1. Ask for two volunteers to demonstrate the game.
2. "When I say 'GET READY!,' I want you to become silent sumo wrestlers, facing each other. Show me what that looks like." Make sure they are squatting down and silent so they can hear the instructions.
3. "Once you're in the ready position, I'll start calling out parts of the body that you need to touch with both hands."
4. Call out a few body parts ("knees... head... ears... elbows...") and then shout the word, "CUP!" (or whatever the item is that you are using as a stand-in).
5. Whoever grabs the cup first is the winner who advances to the next round of the tournament.
6. At this point everyone in the room finds a partner and a cup, and places the cup on the ground, equal distance between partners. And you shout out, "GET READY!" and then various body parts, ending each round by shouting, "CUP!"
7. Those who didn't "win" their round should become

the silent cheering section for those who did, following behind each winner until the finals, shouting and clapping silently, so everyone can still hear the commands.

8. Winners continue to stack their cups with other winners, until there are only two or three who remain in the final round.

## Variation(s)

- Place cups on desks/chairs to increase accessibility for those who may not be able to squat/bend down.

## DANCE MASTER

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Group Size:** Medium/Large

**Buy-In:** High

**Objective:** Get energy up and get people laughing!

**Materials Needed:** Music/Speakers

## Directions

1. Have the group stand in a big circle and ask for a volunteer.
2. Explain that the volunteer will step out of the room while you assign a Dance Master.
3. Play some fun music; the Dance Master will then start dancing and it's everyone else's job to copy their movements exactly (but be sneaky!). The Dance Master can change their sweet moves any time they want to.
4. The volunteer will return to the center of the circle and try to guess who the Dance Master is. The goal for the volunteer is to figure out who the Dance Master is; the goal for everyone else is to keep that information a secret! The volunteer will get three guesses or 90 seconds - whichever happens first.
5. When the person in the middle guesses the Dance Master or runs out of time, the Dance Master becomes the next guesser.
6. Play as many rounds as you see fit.

## Rules

- Make sure your moves are easy to follow.
- No flips, save it for America's Got Talent.



## GOTCHA/HOT HANDS

---

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Group Size:** Any

**Buy-In:** Low

**Objective:** Give yourselves a brain break and have an easy laugh.

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions

1. Have the group stand in a circle (about shoulder to shoulder) and lay their right palm face up in front of the person next to them.
2. Then have them make a pointer with their left hand, and put that pointer in the palm of the person on their left.
3. When you say "Gotcha!" it's their job to grab the finger that's in their palm AND keep their own pointer finger from being grabbed.
4. Play a few rounds and then have the group switch hands (left palm out, right hand pointer).

### Variation(s):

- Get really quiet when you say "gotcha."
- Say words that SOUND like gotcha (Gorilla, Gone with the Wind, Gotta Catch 'Em All, Godzilla, etc.)

## GROUP CHARADES

---

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Group Size:** Medium

**Buy-In:** High

**Objective:** Get a low-energy group moving and have fun!

**Materials Needed:** Charades Prompts

### Directions

1. Set up three chairs side-by-side on one side of the room.
2. Have the group divide into two teams, and give them time to come up with a team name and a team chant.
3. Tell each team to pick the most dramatic (or best actor/loudest/funniest) player and send them to the front. Ask the two team members to take a seat on the two outside chairs.
4. Explain that the groups will be playing competitive charades, but instead of ONE person acting out the prompts, the whole TEAM will be acting them out.

5. The two seated players will be the guessers.
6. You will stand on the middle chair and hold up prompts.
7. Tell teams to cheer when they guess the prompt, so you know who got it first.
8. For each correct guess, tally a team point.

### Rules

- Guessers cannot look at the prompt.
- No words.
- No mouthing words.

### Variation(s):

- Change up your charade items.
- Give a student the job of keeping score.
- Switch guessers after a few rounds.

## HOG CALL

---

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Group Size:** Small/Medium/Large

**Buy-In:** Low

**Objective:** Get the students to find each other in the midst of chaos.

**Optional Teaching Point:** Sometimes there's a lot of "noise" distracting us and finding help can be difficult, but if we listen closely to strong messages, we can get through hard times.

**Materials Needed:** Space for people to walk around with their eyes closed and not be in danger (i.e. not on a stage, or in a room with pillars/poles).

### Directions

1. Have everyone find a partner and choose a team mascot. Their "call" is the noise that animal makes.
2. Ask a few groups to demonstrate their "call."
3. Ask the partners to go to opposite ends of the room.
4. Explain that we're going to find our partners again with our eyes closed, using only our "call."
5. Prompt players to raise their "bumpers" up to ensure they won't run into other players or objects.
6. Ask players to spin three times and say, "Go!"

### Rules

- No peeking!
- Once partners have found each other, prompt them to be quiet while the other pairs meet up.



### Variations

- Instead of animal noises they can choose related words like “HOT” and “DOG” or “HOT” and “COLD.”
- Groups instead of pairs (Four dogs, three cats, five geese)
- This game can also be played in a circle.

## JEDI MIND TRICK

---

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Group Size:** Small

**Buy-In:** Medium

**Objective:** To build team rapport using non-verbal communication.

**Teaching Point:** Sometimes things are happening with our friends that we don't even notice. Communicating with them helps us get a clearer picture of what's going on.

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions

1. Have the group stand in a circle and ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle.
2. Without voices, those who are in the circle will trade places with each other at random and as often as they like.
3. The goal of the person in the middle is to escape the center by filling a hole that another player left.

### Rules

- No voices
- No body-slams
- No throwing elbows

### Variations

- After a few rounds, add the rule that if you move, you HAVE to make a noise when you trade places (Chewbacca, lightsaber, sound effects are encouraged).

## JUMP IN, JUMP OUT

---

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Group Size:** Any

**Buy-In:** Medium

**Objective:** To get the group moving together.

**Teaching Point:** Sometimes our brains can get jumbled, and what used to seem like simple instructions can feel overwhelming. We need to calm down our brains and our bodies in order to listen and

follow directions.

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions

1. Have the group stand up and hold hands in a circle. Tell them that we're going to be jumping in some different ways.
2. Explain that the four ways to jump are “Jump In,” “Jump Out,” “Jump Right,” and “Jump Left.”
3. For the first round, explain that the group will SAY what you say, and DO what you say.
4. Call out 4 or 5 commands, and have the group celebrate their success.
5. For the next round, explain that the group will SAY the opposite of what you say and DO the opposite of what you say (when you say “Jump Out,” the group will say “Jump In” and jump in).
6. Call out a few commands, and encourage laughter in the group.
7. For the next round, explain that the group will SAY what you say, but DO the opposite of what you say (when you say “Jump Out,” the group will say “Jump Out” but jump in).
8. Call out a few commands and watch chaos ensue.
9. For the next round, explain that the group will say the opposite of what you say, but do what you say. So if you say “Jump Out,” the group will say “Jump In” but will jump out.
10. End on a good note! Go back to Step 3.

## PTERODACTYL

---

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Group Size:** Any

**Buy-In:** Medium/High

**Objective:** Get silly and get loud!

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions

1. Have the group stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle.
2. Tell everyone to cover their teeth with their lips (think of dentures), and to lift their arms and bend their wrists in front of their chests (like dinosaur arms).
3. Instruct them to “pass” the word “pterodactyl” around the circle, one at a time, by screeching “PTERODACTYL!” without showing their teeth or dropping their hands.
4. The order of the circle can be reversed when

someone chooses to stop and reverse by screeching, "CAW!" This sends the word "pterodactyl" back in the other direction.

5. People are eliminated if they disrupt the order, if they show their teeth, or if they drop their arms.
6. The circle gets smaller and smaller, and the pterodactyls get sillier and sillier, as the game goes on, until a single dinosaur remains.

### Rules

- If you show your teeth, or drop your hands, you're out!
- If you have some talented actors that are not getting out, feel free to give a one minute warning before you end the game.
- If you have a large group you can start with multiple groups, and then condense when the groups get smaller.

### Variations

- Car "vrooming" in one direction and "honking" to reverse the circle.

## ROCK/PAPER/SCISSORS TOURNAMENT

---

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Group Size:** Any

**Buy-In:** Low

**Teaching Point:** Fun, LOUD way to get the energy up and break down social barriers and isolation.

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions

1. Ask for two volunteers to demonstrate a round of "Rock, Paper, Scissors" for the group (Clarify if players throw their hand on "scissors" or "shoot").
2. Hold up the hand of the victor, and explain that they will go on to battle another winner; the loser becomes the winner's cheering section, shouting their name and clapping behind them.
3. Eventually there will be two finalists; each finalist will have roughly half of the room cheering behind them. Encourage them to get LOUD.

### Rules:

- This is a sudden elimination tournament, not best two out of three.
- Winners battle winners, until only one remains.

- Everyone must play several rounds - don't stand to the side while others are eliminated - No one likes that guy, Scott!

### Variations:

- This game can be just as fun with silent celebrations (fist pumping and muted clapping) to limit the sensory overwhelm that comes with everyone shouting.
- "Full Body Charades" can be played with slightly different moves. Instead of only making motions with their hands, players can jump into "scissors" by crossing their legs, "paper" by sticking their arms and legs out like a star, or "rock" by crouching into a ball.

## THUMPER

---

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Group Size:** Medium/Large

**Buy-In:** Medium

**Teaching Point:** Get the group up and moving! Laughter is encouraged.

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions:

1. Have everyone in the group pick a partner.
2. Have the group form two circles, one small inside circle and one large outside circle; have the partners face each other (one partner in the small circle, and one in the big circle).
3. Explain that the small circle is going to move clockwise, and the big circle will move counter clockwise. You'll call out a command and it's their job to find their partner and follow the command as fast as possible.
4. Have them practice one round and call out something simple like, "Ear to elbow" or "Link arms."
5. After the commotion has died down, explain we'll be playing more rounds, but there will be a few different commands.

### Rules:

- Partners must return to the circles after each round.
- The last group(s) to find their partner and follow commands are OUT!

### Example commands:

**Thumper** - One partner forms the bunny ears above their head, the other is the "foot" by crouching and thumping their foot in front of their partner as fast as possible.

**Barbarian** - One partner lies on the floor, the other will put their foot over their chest (not stepping on them) and hold their hands over their head in victory, shouting, "HUZZAH!"

**Princess/Scooby** - One partner leaps into the other's arms (or one arm around their shoulders and one leg up in their arm).

**Cowboy** - One partner kneels on one knee so their partner can sit on that knee while lassoing and yelling "YEHAW!!"

**Scarlet/Beauty** - One partner will dip the other as seen in ballroom dancing (Beauty and the Beast).

**Moose** - Each partner makes moose antlers, drops their necks, and touches antlers together while shouting, "MOOOOOOSE!"

Have partners reform the circles. Explain that after every command you'll reform the circles, but the last group(s) to find their partner and do the command will be OUT that round.

Play several rounds until only one pair remains.

## WALK AROUND COOL

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Group Size:** Medium/Large

**Buy-In:** Low/Medium

**Objective:** Gets people moving and encourages new partnerships.

**Materials Needed:** None

### Directions:

1. Ask for 5 volunteers to help demonstrate with you in the center of the circle.
2. Start by saying, "This game is called Walk Around Cool; the first thing I need you to do is show off your coolest, swaggiest, silliest walk." Demonstrate different silly ways to walk to encourage them.
3. Next say, "While you're walking around cool, I might say any one of five words. Based on what I say, you need to jump into action."
4. The group will then walk around in whatever style they would like. The leader should shout out the key words, paying attention to which groups form last, which groups form wrongly (i.e., their move is wrong or they have the wrong number in their group), and which individuals do not find a group.

These groups are out and should sit down.

5. Here are the moves for the original version of Walk Around Cool:

**Bicycle:** Five players will stand in a straight line with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them.

**Huddle:** A group of four people pull together, linking arms in a closed circle.

**Tepee:** Three people jump into a group with their arms raised above their heads and hands touching; together, they should form a triangle.

**Knuckles:** Two people will create two fists and hold a "fist bump" position with each other.

**Selfie:** Every player should stop and freeze as if they are taking a photo of themselves.

6. It is helpful to have a couple practice rounds so that people can get the hang of the game.

### Variation(s):

Walk Around Cool can be played in a few other editions that we created or learned from our friends! Feel free to create your own editions. While they all start the same, here are two alternative options groups have enjoyed.

### Pirate Edition:

**Starfish** - A group of five is formed, making peace signs with their right hands and forming a starfish in the middle.

**Octopus** - A group of four is formed, standing back to back and waving the eight octopus arms.

**Row Row Row Your Boat** - A group of three is formed, standing in a line and rowing their imaginary oars.

**Man Overboard** - A group of two is formed with one partner on hands and knees, while the other brings their hand to a salute so they can scan the sea.

**Beached Whale** - Each person drops to their belly, and flops around like a beached whale.

### Walk Around Ghoul Edition: A SPOOKY Halloween variation!

Prompt Players to walk around with their hands in the air, making ghost noises.

5: **Zombie** - Five people in a row with their arms sticking straight out in front of them.

4: **Pumpkin** - Four people linking arms in a circle.

3: **Haunted House** - Two people form a house and one person hides inside.

2: **Spider** - Two people stand back to back, wiggling their arms and legs out in the air.

1: **Werewolf** - Every person stops, raises their hands around their mouths and howls at the moon.

## YARN KNOT

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Group Size:** Any

**Buy-In:** Low

**Teaching Point:** Many of us feel stuck in problems, and sometimes it's hard to see the solution. Sometimes getting unstuck is simple when we have some strategies, techniques, or help.

**Materials Needed:** Three feet of yarn with slipknot loops on each end; one string for each participant.

### Directions:

1. Have one or two Peer Leaders pass out yarn to each participant.
2. Ask for a volunteer to help model the activity with you.
3. Explain "In a moment, everyone will get a partner and become 'linked up' like this," - link yourself to your volunteer. Have the volunteer place their wrists into the loops at each end of their yarn. Place one of your wrists through one of your loops, then pass your string around your partner's yarn and attach the other loop around your remaining wrist.

4. Explain "Your job, once you are linked, is to become unlinked. You cannot pull it off your wrists, break it, bite it, or burn it. There is a way to solve this puzzle. Go!"
5. After some laughter and struggling, show one or two groups how to become unlinked. Encourage them to go teach other groups.
6. Once everyone is unlinked, have the group sit back in the large circle and have one volunteer collect the strings.
7. Ask (with hand raised), "How many of you got unstuck all on your own?"
8. Ask "How many needed a little help from friends?"
9. Explain "Sometimes we feel like we're trying everything to get unstuck, but really we're trying the same thing over and over, and in some cases, we get even MORE tangled. There are times in life when we get stuck. We're here to talk about how to get unstuck."

### Rules:

- You cannot remove the string from your wrists.
- You cannot break the string.
- No biting, flossing, sawing, burning, or cutting the string.
- Seriously, the string shouldn't break.
- If the string broke, something has gone terribly wrong.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our Adult Advisors ask great questions about how to implement Sources of Strength in their areas. Here are some of the most common questions we come across. More questions are addressed elsewhere in this guide (for example, see “Troubleshooting Key Challenges” on page 98). If you don’t see an answer to your question, don’t hesitate to contact the Sources of Strength team!

## **Why can’t we have a training on a Saturday, summer break, or other holiday?**

While we want to be flexible for all of the different communities we serve, we have found that a lot of Peer Leaders (and Adult Advisors, as well) are unable to attend a training that is not during school hours. Things like lack of transportation, individual responsibilities, and other issues impact attendance, or can make someone feel like it is too much of a sacrifice to attend the training. Leaving those people out impacts the diversity (and therefore, the impact) of your Sources of Strength team. If we are only attracting the students who love to be at school (even on a weekend), we are probably missing out on some of the edgier students. Additionally, taking time out of the school day to host the training shows the Peer Leaders that this program is truly important to the Strength of the school and that the administration views them as partners in a public health effort, not simply members of a club.

## **How can we get students to follow through on their ideas for campaigns and activities?**

Students oftentimes come up with amazing ideas that have a lot of moving pieces. Keep in mind that this might be their first time taking a leadership role or managing a project. So, even though we want to encourage student empowerment, we also want to balance that with higher levels of guidance for Peer Leaders, especially as they are starting out. With the help of the students, you can break up the larger campaign idea into some smaller, more manageable pieces, then form small groups based on each person’s Strengths or interests. Set some deadlines, and if there are any students who demonstrate a knack for leadership or project management skills, recruit them to help you weave the different parts into a bigger picture. We want to set Peer Leaders

up for success so don’t commit to huge tasks or goals that are unrealistic or very difficult right off the bat. Instead, focus on quick wins at the beginning and build in momentum as you go. Remember to celebrate small successes as you work towards the larger goal, and it’s often a great morale booster to throw in some smaller, easy-to-complete campaigns, alongside a larger campaign, so students can gain some more “wins” to increase their motivation along the way.

## **Who is Rumpelstiltskin?**

A character with roots in German folklore, made popular by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. A mysterious and magical old man, Rumpelstiltskin promises to turn straw into gold in return for the queen’s first-born child. Seriously, we have no idea why people keep asking us this question.

## **We have an unhealthy adult administrative resistance. What can we do?**

Resistance at the higher levels of school power can be a frustrating challenge, but there are ways to still run a great team. Sometimes, adults fear that time and effort will be put into a program that may not make a lot of difference. We might suggest sitting down with your principal or administrator and presenting the research that has been done with Sources of Strength (available on our website, or by request). Sharing our research shows the overall health of the school level population can be improved - both socially and academically - and this can be a common goal your team has with the administration. They may not be a champion for suicide prevention, but they may have a heart for preventing bullying, increasing mentorship, or leadership opportunities. Talk about how Sources of Strength can address all of these things. This same presentation can be given with some well-prepared Peer Leaders speaking in front of the teaching, administrative, or coaching staff. Asking some enthusiastic Peer Leaders to openly give credit, or write thank you notes to an often resistant principal can pique that administrator’s interest. Inviting them into the room to see the power of a Peer Leader team empowered to work in positive ways can be a powerful tool, as well. However, the most important adult in any Sources school are the Adult Advisors. If they are

caring, connected, and positive people who believe that Peer Leaders truly can effect change, a team can do well. Sources of Strength team members are also happy to have phone calls with your administration if they have questions. Let us know how we can help!

### **Why do we train one time per year?**

The initial training is meant to be a launching point for Sources of Strength teams, giving them a foundation of knowledge, team building, and internalizing their own Strengths, which they can fuse into their messaging to others throughout the year. Sometimes, teams will host a “booster training,” which is an option if you think that it would improve team/school climate. Sources of Strength is not a one-time program but rather a multi-year culture change public health initiative. Culture change like this takes time. Teams become more skilled and sophisticated with a broader impact over multiple years.

### **How do we navigate Peer Leader conflict?**

If at high school, pitch that the middle school Peer Leader team is having a problem and then brainstorm ideas for helping them solve that problem. Peer Leaders might get excited and volunteer ideas and help. Then circle back around whether we should integrate some of these ideas into our own High School team.

### **How do we involve parents?**

Parents can be a great support for a Peer Leader team and there are several ways to get them involved. A school could host a Parent Night for family members to learn about ways they and their family could live healthier lives. A team could set up a few Peer Leaders at parent/teacher conferences to explain Sources of Strength and ask parents to interact with the Wheel, sharing where they are strong. Some schools have chosen to send home a Sources newsletter with discussion topics and activities to do at home. Once a team has had some success inside their school, they can consider hosting a community event where parents and other family members can experience Sources of Strength for themselves.

The truth is, the burden of suicides are experienced by the middle aged population. Our parents and students can actually be a powerful public health arm when they are empowered with a message of

Hope, Help, and Strength.

### **Can new or interested students join mid-year? If yes, how?**

We believe adding new students throughout the year can be very helpful in growing a team and maintaining impact on the whole school. Additionally, adding new voices can help bring in new talents, ideas, and perspectives that a team needs if they are to truly make a school-wide impact.

If a student would like to join, invite them to the next meeting or ask them to participate in an upcoming campaign. When intentionally growing your team, ask your Peer Leaders to invite someone new to a meeting, giving small prizes or candy to each person who brings a potential Peer Leader.

### **Peer Leader ideas are not Hope, Help, and Strength focused! What do we do?**

First, remember that it takes time to learn how to shift paradigms. Peer Leaders usually want to make a positive difference in the lives of their peers, but they may have been exposed to very few examples of positive, Strength-based messaging. As much as you can, speak to them in a supportive way, ask questions and help them see a more positive option within their ideas. State your concerns in a caring and firm way, and ask them to try to frame a message in Strength. Remind them of why we focus on Hope, Help, and Strength and the dangerous and unhelpful outcomes that might result from using sad, shocking, or traumatic messaging. It isn't just rose colored glasses; we can acknowledge and talk about really hard things and still have a hopeful lens. However, if the Peer Leader team never makes a more positive turn, it is your job as the Adult Advisor to stop a campaign that could be unhelpful or dangerous.

### **How the heck do I explain Sources?**

This is a great question with several different options. First, it can be really helpful to have everyone on a Peer Leader team come up with a short “elevator speech” that could sum up a team's mission in 30 seconds. An example of this might sound like, “Sources of Strength is a group of students and adults working together to enact positive change that helps create health and wellness, and prevent negative outcomes like suicide, substance abuse, violence, and other risk factors.”



You can refer people to the Peer Leader Mission Statement, available on our [website](#) as well as in the Peer Leader Guide (page [132](#)). If you have a few minutes, you could share the Upstream Prevention parable on page [16](#), and talk about how we are trying to help individuals practice resilience before a situation feels dire. Positive Psychology is a key engine of success for Sources of Strength, so sharing the Shawn Achor Ted Talk, *The Happy Secret To Better Work* is helpful as well.

**We've lost some of our edgier students. What suggestions do you have to get them back/recruit more?**

See [Troubleshooting Key Challenges](#) on page [98](#).

**How can we partner with other schools doing Sources?**

If you are in the same district/area consider doing a community event at a park, mall, or other community gathering area. Schools who have been using Sources of Strength for a while can meet regularly with other local Sources teams to share lessons learned, ideas, best practices, etc. Contact your local trainer or our national office to get connected if you are not sure where to start.

**We cannot seem to find a time to meet! What should we do?**

See [“Troubleshooting Key Challenges”](#) section, located on page [98](#).

**What do we do with a perception that Sources is lame, ineffective, “not real”, or a counseling program?**

When there is a misconception about Sources of Strength, it can be helpful to refer to the research of its impact within a community. Consider using the Upstream Prevention parable (on page [16](#)) to help others better understand our goals, and speak to how it teaches 21st century skills of social innovation and leadership. Often, people don't understand the difficulty of measuring prevention or the impact that internalized Strength stories can have; helping them understand the underlying theory and impact can help.

Equip every Peer Leader and Adult Advisor with an “elevator speech” to communicate our mission. Consider if your team is truly diverse: if it does not

really represent your school, it can be easy for people to misunderstand our mission or intentions.

Talk to your Peer Leaders: do they feel that these are accurate criticisms? How do their friends see Sources of Strength? Ask them to help you brainstorm solutions to this problem and engage others in these conversations. Sometimes your team may need to be more authentic or Strength focused in their messaging.

**Where can I see what other schools have done?**

We are so glad you asked! There are a few ways you can do this! First, check out our website for photos and explanations of some campaigns. For the most up-to-date ideas, check out our [Instagram](#) @sourcesofstrength for frequent posts and ideas. Additionally, talk to the national team or a local trainer to see if you can get connected to another school with a strong team.

**Why is Physical Health on the Wheel?**

When people are in times of crisis or wrestling with mental illness, having good Physical Health can be incredibly important to help navigate through difficult times. We also stress that Physical Health is not just about healing from injury or sickness, but also about taking intentional steps towards overall body and mind health (consider check ups, nutrition, hydration, etc.).

**How do I share Sources with other staff members?**

Sharing your own stories of how you use the Wheel is a powerful way to spread the word. However, the most powerful way to share Sources of Strength is to get people to interact with the Wheel, applying Strength to their own lives. Make a point to share what Strengths you are using to get through the day, week, or month. Invite a group of Peer Leaders to the next staff meeting and have them teach about the Wheel. A student sharing what Sources means to them can be very impactful. With administrator buy-in you can ask to do a Strength check-in at the beginning of staff meetings and professional development sessions.

**How do I take Sources outside of the school?**

See the section on [“District and Community Level Strategy”](#) on page [95](#).

**What do I do if a student says they don't think they have any Strength?**

Once in a while, this happens. Ask them what some of their favorite things to do are when they're by themselves, with friends, or with their family. What kinds of activities bring them joy, help them feel less anxious, or help them cope with a difficult situation? Big or small, those are all Strengths. Have a conversation about how they might grow or strengthen their Strengths alone or with other people. How might they work on, practice, or grow a Strength? It is also important to remind groups and individuals that the Wheel is not static - it is always changing. This means we can always grow stronger in an area on the Wheel. Knowing this, ask the individual which Strength they might like to start growing in on that day, and help them identify practical steps towards that goal. You or other Adult Advisors should follow up with this individual in the following days and weeks, asking how it is going and offering support.

**Is there funding available for food and swag? How can I fund future fun stuff?**

This is unique to each school and depends on your funding source. Talk to your administration, funder, or Sources support staff to inquire whether there is any funding available for these needs. Many teams run fundraisers or speak to local rotary groups or Chambers of Commerce to raise funds for these needs. Sometimes local businesses enjoy contributing to such efforts as well. You can purchase swag, and campaign materials through the [Sources of Strength store](#).

**How can a team share the Adult Advisor load and not leave one Adult doing all the work?**

It is really important to have strong communication and collaboration between the Adult Advisor team. Consider the best way to communicate with them and update each other. Is that a Slack channel? An email chain? Owl message delivery?

It can be great to have a standing meeting amongst your Adult Advisor team to chat about planning, problem solving, and role sharing. Try to divvy up the load so multiple Adult Advisors are responsible for a portion of a meeting or campaign.

**We had a death: What do we do or say?**

See "[Suicide Intervention Protocol](#)", located on page [125](#). Please also contact your National Staff to discuss next steps.

**What do we do if an adult is upset that they were not named as a Trusted Adult or they were not asked to be a part of Sources?**

This can be a difficult situation. In an ideal world, every school would have Trusted Adults in every classroom. However, this is not always the case. Our most important characteristics of an Adult Advisor is that they are caring, connected, and positive. In the event that an Adult would like to be involved in Sources, we ask that they actively work to embody these characteristics. If a person comes forward saying that they are frustrated they were not recognized, this could be a great time to gently ask them why they got into working with students in the first place. Ask them why they like working with students, and if they believe young people can create a difference in the school and community. Then, encourage them to name one or two students who they could grow in a positive relationship with. Additionally, you might share the Trusted Adult Pledge with them as an invitation for them to work towards being a Trusted Adult for at least one student in their lives.

**How does Sources pair with other programs such as Signs of Suicide or PBIS?**

Sources of Strength is a program that strives to compliment other programs and approaches in your school, not compete with them. We are all working towards a similar goal and mission and can be stronger together. We find that coupling Sources with other programs can help create a more comprehensive approach. You can integrate Sources language and philosophy into these other programs to create common language and help increase the effectiveness and synergy between them. Make sure that they are willing to partner on Hope, Help, and Strength-based messaging.

**Why don't we talk more about Suicide?**

We are certainly not afraid to talk about suicide at Sources of Strength. Research demonstrates that talking about suicide will not increase the chances of someone else dying by suicide. However, we find that the suicide prevention field talks a lot about the risks

and warning signs, but rarely talks about what helps a person grow strong after hard times. We are able to talk about what hurts, but never without also sharing what helps.

### **What if we have the wrong Adult Advisor in charge of Sources?**

This is a tough one! First, we want to make it clear that many different types of people can run amazing and thriving Sources of Strength teams - classroom teachers, coaches, administrators, school resource officers, counselors - you name it! The biggest requirement of a great Sources leader is that they be

caring, connected, and positive and truly believe in the power of a young person to affect positive change. If you truly believe that the person running your team may not be the best option, consider who might be. Is it you? Talk to them about how you may best support them and give them gentle but honest feedback about what you are seeing. Offer to help take on more responsibility on the team, even offering to take it off their hands. If this does not work and you feel that damage is being done, have a kind but firm conversation about what needs to change and make a plan going forward.



# SUICIDE INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

As you are getting started, we know it is important that every school have a suicide intervention protocol in place. If Peer Leader teams are creating effective messaging and shifting culture around help-seeking, you can expect to see an increase in risk referrals after Sources of Strength is implemented. While this can be concerning, it often means that students and staff are watching out for each other and connecting others to help sooner or more often than they previously would have, breaking those codes of secrecy and silence. This is good! If your school already has a protocol in place, we recommend that you review it in staff meetings to ensure it is up to date and that all adults in the school are familiar with the actions they should take if they are concerned about someone in the school. Who should they go to with a concern? What is the plan for follow up after an intervention? These are just some of the important questions that each staff member and volunteer should know the answers to.

Developing or strengthening a protocol for how to respond to distressed or suicidal students is an important part of preparation for Sources of Strength. This protocol review includes basic suggestions to include in your policy and protocols, and in staff and volunteer training. This is not intended to replace or discard effective protocols that already exist, but to be used as a checklist and guide. If you do not currently have an updated document, here are some things to keep in mind.

## **Part 1: Importance of bonding, connectedness, and relational support**

Research has shown that long-term relational support is very effective in preventing young adults from becoming suicidal or acting on suicidal feelings and impulses. It is our policy that all staff and volunteers be intentional about developing caring relationships with students and young adults, especially those who report low levels of trust towards adults, or have few connections to supportive adult relationships. It is important that staff and volunteers have caring conversations with students during life's ups and downs, and not just during a crisis. Anyone working with young people can work towards being a Trusted Adult.

Sources of Strength is designed to help students and young adults develop multiple Strengths and supports in their life, as represented in the Sources of Strength wheel. Our staff and volunteers should play an intentional role in introducing students and young adults to a variety of Strengths.

It is our policy that staff and volunteers support the Peer Leaders trained in the Sources of Strength program as they deliver peer-to-peer Hope, Help, and Strength-based messages. Providing personal encouragement, sharing expertise, allowing access of approved Peer Leader messaging activities, and allowing time for Peer Leaders to participate in scheduled activities are examples of support. Trained Peer Leaders are often aware of suicidal peers much earlier than adult staff or volunteers, and they usually turn first to an adult they trust. They are an important partner in suicide prevention and their efforts should be encouraged and valued.

## **Part 2: Awareness of Warning Signs/Symptoms of Distress for Suicide**

At the beginning of each year, the principal or lead administrator should arrange to have the staff and volunteers briefed on student self-destructive and suicidal behaviors. It is important to remember that suicidal ideation or behavior may be linked with isolating behavior often associated with depression, aggressive or impulsive behavior, substance abuse, trauma, or among friends of a student that has died by suicide or made serious suicide attempts.

## **Part 3: Referral of Suicidal Student to Designated Staff**

Each school or entity should have a person or group of individuals within the organization who are trained in handling a beginning level assessment, conversation, and referral process of a suicidal individual. It is mandatory that all staff and volunteers refer a student they suspect is suicidal or threatens to harm self or others to the

designated staff person(s) that same day.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to talk to young adults they identify as distressed, and in a caring and calm manner ask them if they are thinking of suicide, or of killing themselves. If an adult is not comfortable having this conversation with a student, a referral should be made to a counselor immediately. They should personally bring students to the designated staff and introduce them. If the situation is a medical emergency, 911 should be called immediately.

#### **Part 4: Discussion with Youth/Young Adult**

The student/young adult should be:

- Privately assessed to determine the level of risk.
- Offered immediate support and assistance.
- If the individual is determined to be at risk, they should be kept under constant adult supervision until parents or other protective custody can be arranged.

#### **Part 5: Notifying Parents**

Contact the custodial parent or guardian regardless of the individual's age and ask them to come immediately to the school/agency/entity, or in some cases meet at a hospital or Mental Health clinic/provider. The custodial parent or guardian should leave with the student after being supported and strongly encouraged to take them to a facility/treatment provider of their choice. These recommendations should be put in writing and sent to the parents on formal letterhead. Explain that signing a Release of Information form from the treatment provider is very helpful. If the student is displaying signs and/or symptoms of suicide/homicide, and the parent refuses to have them assessed, it may be necessary to contact your local child welfare or juvenile justice agencies.

#### **Part 6: Mental Health Provider Contacts and Agreement**

Your school or entity should have contracts or agreements in place with Mental Health providers who agree to provide same-day assessment of suicidal individuals. Depending on your region and availability, these providers may be emergency rooms, clinics, Mental Health facilities/centers, or private providers. It is important for parents to be provided with a specific name and number, and it is usually best to assist the parent by making the call and appointment together. Always provide the student and parents with 24-hour phone contacts and hotline numbers to access.

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline:**

**1 - 8 0 0 - 2 7 3 - 8 2 5 5 ( T A L K )**

**Head Counselor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part 7: Follow-up and Providing Long-term Support**

Upon returning from hospitalization, intervention, or treatment, encourage all individuals to use Mental Health and medical resources, but also engage them in conversations regarding other supports and Strengths using the Sources of Strength wheel as a guide. Help the student/young adult identify a supportive, caring adult who can be activated in support. This adult can be within their family system, school, faith community, setting etc. If an adult is mentioned by the student, assist in encouraging regular contact and supports that can last at least two years. Provide the adult with a brief training in suicide warning signs and who to contact if concerns arise. Help the adult understand that they are there as an older friend to walk alongside, not to fix all the student's problems. Also assist them in identifying some other interests around Healthy Activities, Generosity, Positive Friends, or Spirituality. These other supports and Strengths can be sustained over time

and be extremely protective. See the Self Care Card on page [131](#).

**Postvention: Next Steps**

A school should also be aware of appropriate steps to take in the event of a death by suicide. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) has created a Toolkit for Schools in the wake of a tragedy, which can be found for free online.

In general, your school should strive to treat each death within a school community the same way, taking care not to glamorize or memorialize the death. Work quickly to reach out to the young person's family, offering condolences, support, and to identify friends who may be in need of extra support.

Bring your Peer Leader team together, acknowledge the pain of the loss and remind them that the work they do is vital in the wake of a crisis. Ask them to keep their eyes and ears open to identify where there may be unresolved pockets of grief around the school and community that may benefit from extra support. Remind Peer Leaders that they are not junior psychologists or student counselors, but connectors to help and agents of change.

Additional postvention resources and documents can be found at [sourcesofstrength.org](https://sourcesofstrength.org). An Adult Advisor should contact Sources of Strength staff as soon as possible to relay the information and get support.



# SOURCES OF STRENGTH PEER LEADER END OF YEAR SURVEY

1. Do you feel that we have a DIVERSE Peer Leader group?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

2. Do you feel that we have a DIVERSE group of Adult Advisors?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

3. Do you feel that you have CONNECTED with at least 1 Adult Advisor?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

4. Do you feel HEARD?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

5. Do you feel like you have a safe space to SHARE?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

6. Do you feel like you are APPRECIATED for being a part of Sources Of Strength?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

7. Do you feel ACCEPTED as part of the Peer Leader team?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

8. Do you feel like you've made an IMPACT in your school or amongst your peers?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

9. Do you feel APPRECIATED by school staff for your work with Sources Of Strength?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

10. Do you feel like you've grown in your own STRENGTHS this year?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

11. Do you feel like your VOICE has an impact on your peers?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

12. Do you feel like you have made a friend in Sources Of Strength?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

13. Has participating in Sources Of Strength made you feel a greater sense of BELONGING?

**Strongly Disagree**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **Strongly Agree**

14. Is there a question you WISH this survey would have asked you?

---

---

---

---

---

15. What do you think our greatest STRENGTH as a program is?

---

---

---

---

---

16. What is one area where you'd like to see us become STRONGER?

---

---

---

---

---



# ADDITIONAL FEATURES: VISUALS AND TEAR-OUTS



The great ideas that we see from Peer Leader teams are never ending. We could fill many books with amazing handouts, photos, and tips. However, we have collected a few popular items here that we hope your team finds helpful.

Feel free to use them in the way that works best for your school and community!

# MY STRENGTHS - SELF CARE CARD

1. Positive Friends I can talk to (list name and phone number):

- a.
- b.
- c.

2. Trusted Adults I can talk to:

- a. Family:
- b. Community:
- c. School or Church:

3. If I am feeling down or sad, I can do these activities:

a. Physical activities/stress relievers (such as walking, biking, working out, yoga):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

b. Quiet, calming activities (such as taking a nap, writing in my journal, petting my dog):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

c. Concentration activities (such as watching a funny show, reading a novel, writing thank you notes):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4. Some things I can do to help others right now are:

- a.
- b.
- c.

5. Three things that I am grateful for:

- a.
- b.
- c.

6. Something good that has happened today or yesterday even in the midst of tough stuff:

If I am concerned about my thoughts right now, I can call a counselor at \_\_\_\_\_  
or the hotline at **800.273.8255**

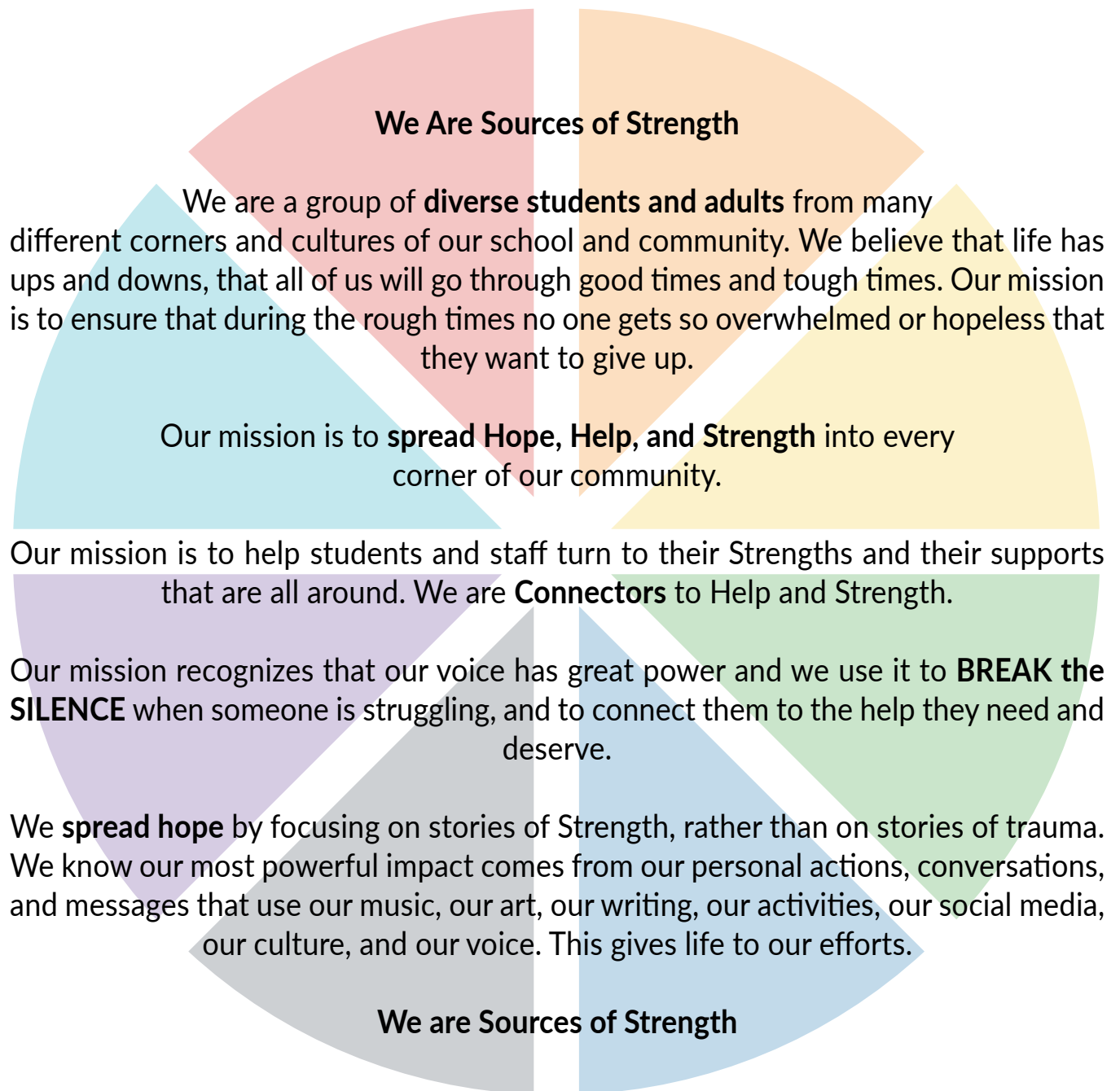
I have Strengths, and I am strong enough to ask for help if I need it.

One adult I can ask is \_\_\_\_\_ and their phone number is \_\_\_\_\_





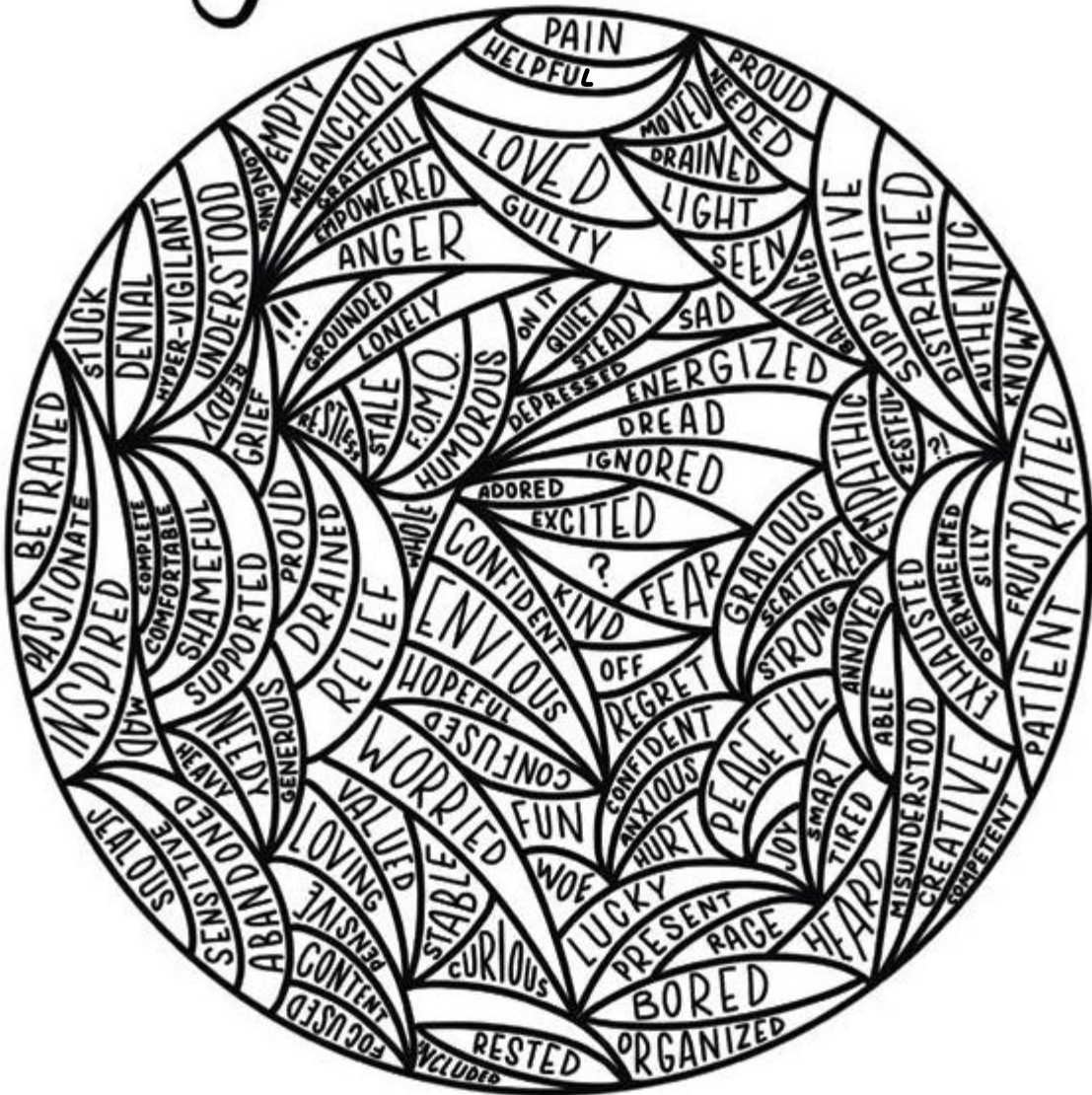
# SOURCES OF STRENGTH PEER LEADER MISSION STATEMENT







the tangled ball of emotions



- ☐ = Emotion I'm feeling right now.
- ☐ = Emotion I've been feeling recently.
- ☐ = Familiar emotion, but not recently.
- ☐ = Emotion I rarely experience.





# CHECK IN!

HOW DO YOU FEEL?



I FEEL AWESOME!



I'M DOING WELL.



NOT GOOD, NOT BAD, I'M FINE.



I FEEL SAD.



I AM ANGRY!



I FEEL WORRIED OR ANXIOUS



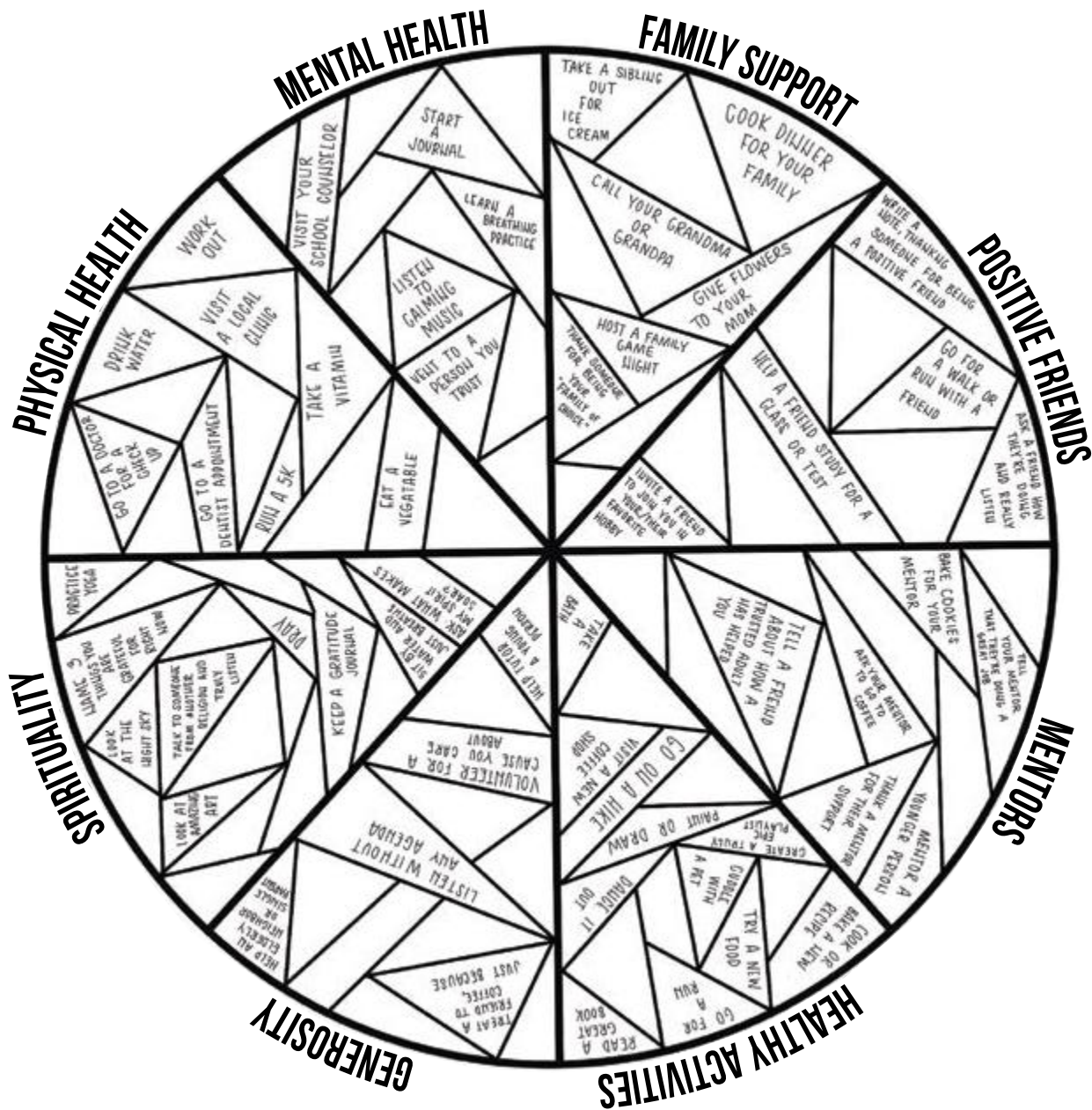
I AM TIRED!

**WHAT'S A STRENGTH  
YOU USED THIS WEEK?**





# strength check in



## DIRECTIONS:

COLOR IN THE ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW.  
FILL IN BLANK SPACES WITH OTHER WAYS TO PRACTICE STRENGTH

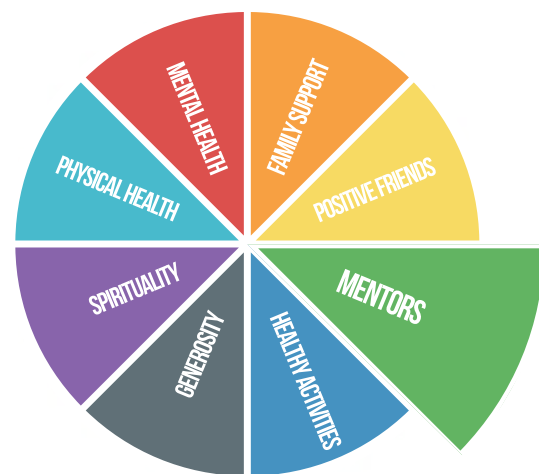
- ☐ = Activity I regularly do
- ☐ = Activity I've done recently
- ☐ = Activity I'd like to try







# I AM A TRUSTED ADULT



**BY DISPLAYING THIS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS TO SEE I PROMISE TO:**

Acknowledge that reaching out for support is a Strength

Listen and react non-judgementally

Respond in a calm and reassuring manner

Reflect back the feelings, Strengths and ideas I hear when listening

Ask how I can be helpful and respond as I am able

Do what I can to other supports if asked

Maintain confidentiality and communicate if exceptions exist.





# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A more complete list of helpful resources may be found on our website at [sourcesofstrength.org](http://sourcesofstrength.org).

**Achor, S. (2013).** *Before Happiness : The 5 Hidden Keys to Achieving Success, Spreading Happiness, and Sustaining Positive Change*. New York, New York: Crown Business.

**Achor, S. (2010).** *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology that Fuel Success and Performance at Work*. New York, New York: Broadway Books.

**Achor, S. (2011, June 11).** TEDx Bloomington: Shawn Achor - *The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance*. Retrieved from [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com).

**Brown, B. (2015).** *Rising Strong*. New York, New York: Spiegel & Grau.

**Joiner, T. E. (2005).** *Why People Die by Suicide*. Boston, Massachusetts: First Harvard University Press.

**Kidder, J.T. (2003).** *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. New York, New York: Random House.

**Mcgonigal, J. (2012, July 9).** *The Game That Can Give You 10 Extra Years of Life*. Retrieved from [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com).

**Palmer, P. (2004).** *A Hidden Wholeness: The journey toward an undivided life*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

**Petrova, Mariya, et. al. (2015).** *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior: Positive-Themed Suicide Prevention Messages Delivered by Adolescent Peer Leaders: Proximal Impact on Classmates' Coping Attitudes and Perceptions of Adult Support*. The Official Journal of the American Association of Suicidology: 1-13.

**Pisani, Anthony R., et. al. (2012).** *Associations Between Suicidal High School Students' Help-Seeking and Their Attitudes and Perceptions of Social Environment*. J Youth Adolescence.

**Pisani, Anthony R., et al.(2012).** *Emotion Regulation Difficulties, Youth-Adult Relationships, and Suicide Attempts Among High School Students in Underserved Communities*. J Youth Adolescence.

**Soloman, A. (2001).** *Noon Day Demon: An Atlas of Depression*. New York, New York: Simon and Schuster.

**Van der Kolk, B. (2015).** *The Body Keeps the Score*. New York, New York: Penguin Books.

**Wyman, Peter A., et. al. (2010).** *The Role and Value of School-Based Health Care: An Outcome Evaluation of the Sources of Strength Suicide Prevention Program Delivered by Adolescent Peer Leaders in High Schools*." American Journal of Public Health: 1-8.