

SOURCES OF STRENGTH

ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

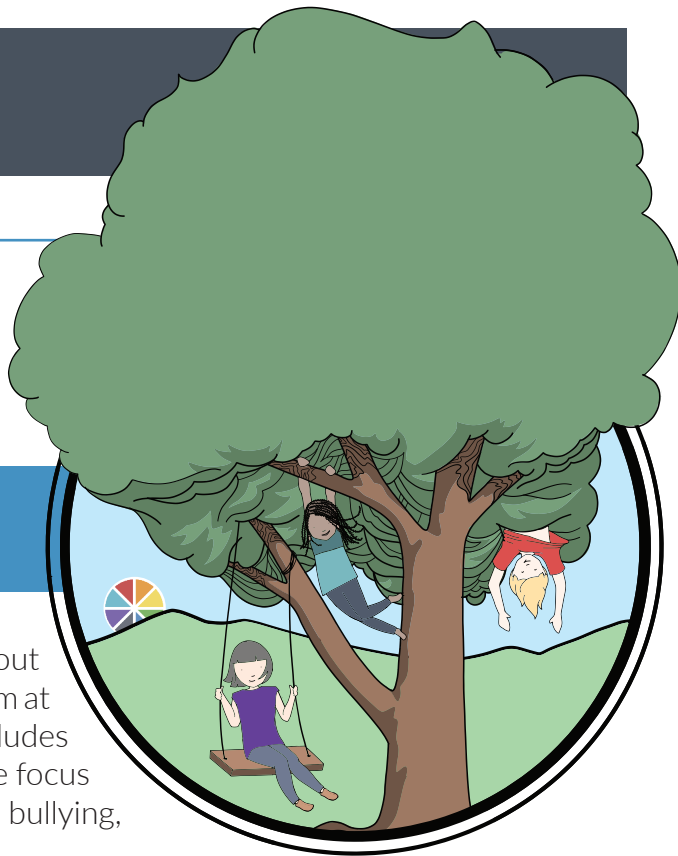
WHY ELEMENTARY?

The work of prevention is not done solely through focusing on risk factors, warning signs, and intervention, but rather involves discovering, teaching and celebrating resilience, help seeking, connection, strength, and belonging.

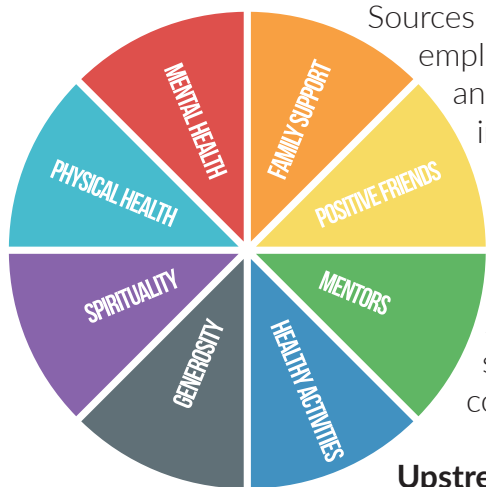
AT SOURCES OF STRENGTH OUR VISION
IS TO EMPOWER A WELL WORLD.

We have heard from our partners across the country about the need for a quality strength-based prevention curriculum at the elementary level. Much of what exists in this space includes solid Social Emotional Learning content but an inadequate focus on mental health or proactive prevention for things like bullying, substance abuse, violence and suicide.

Our elementary model continues our commitment to moving further upstream, increasing health and wellness, and decreasing negative downstream outcomes through empowering individuals and communities full of connection, belonging, and resilience.



WHAT IS SOURCES OF STRENGTH?



Sources of Strength is an evidence-based, upstream prevention program that employs a strength-based wellness approach to improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. This program has been implemented within a variety of settings, cultures, and age groups across the country, and internationally. So, we are thrilled to now offer an elementary curriculum and start sharing the important messages of hope, help, and strength with elementary students.

Sources of Strength works to give students tools to develop their strength, resilience, and help-seeking behaviors. Below are some core components of how and why we do what we do.

Upstream: Our primary focus is to move upstream in the prevention field in order to build resiliency and wellness. We strive to cultivate a healthy culture around early help-seeking and develop internalized strengths at the individual and community levels to prevent the onset of crisis and help people live healthy, thriving lives.

Strength-Based: Sources of Strength cultivates the identification, development, and utilization of eight protective factors, or Strengths. These protective factors are Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, Healthy Activities, Generosity, Spirituality, Physical Health, and Mental Health. Ultimately, these eight Strengths can empower individuals and communities to lean into their own sense of resilience in order to promote health and wellness in themselves and others.

Evidence-Based: The elementary curriculum is currently undergoing numerous evaluation efforts and will be engaged in a randomized control trial soon to establish an evidence-base. The Sources of Strength secondary model is evidence-based and has become one of the nation's most rigorously evaluated and widely disseminated suicide prevention programs. The program has shown outcomes in increasing healthy coping, help-seeking, connection and trust toward adults, and utilization of protective factors associated with reduced risk for suicide, substance misuse, and violence. Sources of Strength Elementary is evidence-informed as it is built upon the evidence base of the secondary model.

CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

A driving principle of Sources of Strength is to empower student voice and active engagement with our teaching practices. We believe that the deepest learning happens as we approach learning from a growth mindset, bringing awareness to our strengths as we participate in active learning. This helps people of all ages fully internalize and apply the concepts to their own lives. Each unit includes the following core elements:

- Active learning components including art, stories, games, activities, etc. that engage different learning centers of the brain for optimal application and growth.
- Talking Circles facilitate a collaborative sharing time that fosters connection and empathy, empowers student voice, and promotes equity.
- Guided reflection exercises include breathing, sensory, and mindfulness activities that support self-regulation and self-awareness.
- Celebrations of growth that highlight students' strength and skill development applying a growth mindset.

Social Emotional Learning Focus

This curriculum integrates well with many of the practices and programs that schools are already using, such as Restorative Practices, Mindfulness, PBIS, etc. The "SEL Focus" section of each unit aligns with the core competencies in the model developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), used by schools nation-wide.



WE AIM TO INCREASE HEALTH
AND WELLNESS AND
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CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

The curriculum consists of 31 lessons across 12 units. The lessons can be implemented within grades three through six. This is not a separate curriculum for each grade but rather one curriculum that can be implemented in all three grade levels. Lessons are designed to be approximately 30 minutes in length and typically facilitated once a week.

INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH:

Introduction to the 8 protective factors, or Strengths; Establishing a routine around Talking Circles and curriculum components.

BRAIN AND BODY SCIENCE:

Developing an understanding of how we process information using our brains and bodies; Promoting reflection and balance when responding to life's ups and downs.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION:

Practicing emotional regulation by utilizing strengths and through the development of healthy coping strategies.

CONNECTING TO HELP:

Normalizing help-seeking and inviting students to identify the helpers within multiple contexts of their lives. Explores how students can be connectors to help when they see someone who is hurting, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally; this includes a lesson option specifically addressing the topic suicide.

FAMILY SUPPORT:

Identifying the people who nurture, support, and care for us whether they are immediate, extended, or chosen family.

POSITIVE FRIENDS:

Identifying and promoting healthy friendships with people who uplift, encourage, and support us. Navigating conflict, increasing empathy, and teaching perspective-taking.

MENTORS:

Developing and connecting with mentors in the school, the home, and the community.

HEALTHY ACTIVITIES:

Drawing strength from a variety of activities that help us navigate life's ups and downs.

GENEROSITY:

Developing practices in service to other people, animals, or the environment in order to make an impact, to gain a more robust sense of purpose and fulfillment, and to strengthen community.

SPIRITUALITY:

Discovering the people, places and practices that lift our spirit and help us feel connected to something larger than ourselves. This can include engaging in kindness, practicing thankfulness, cultivating mindfulness, or participating in faith and cultural traditions.

PHYSICAL HEALTH:

Identifying different methods of caring for and increasing our physical well-being.

MENTAL HEALTH:

Developing greater understanding of how the 8 Strengths integrate into a holistic model for mental health. Promoting help seeking and connecting with mental health supports to care for our overall well-being.

NAVIGATING TRANSITIONS:

Strategically utilizing strengths and coping skills to overcome expected and unexpected changes in life whether big or small in order to practice regulation and build resilience.

*Curriculum for K-2 elementary grade levels will be available Fall 2022.

COACHES TRAINING

Our elementary model is a universal, classroom-based curriculum, able to be led and implemented by:

- classroom teacher,
- social emotional learning specialist
- school mental health professional
- classroom paraprofessional

We believe that to have maximum impact with students, we need adults who are engaging with and modeling strengths and wellness in their own lives. We are just as focused on supporting and empowering adults as we are with students.

To facilitate effective implementation, the model includes a two-day Coaches Training to create district and building level buy-in. This training develops fluency in the content and capacity to coach and support classroom instructors for sustainable implementation over time.

NEXT STEPS

Please visit sourcesofstrength.org to learn more about the curriculum and pricing, to register for upcoming Coaches Trainings, to view a sample lesson, and to discover next steps to bring Sources of Strength to your school.

At Sources of Strength, we wholeheartedly believe in the hope, help, and strength each individual can cultivate in themselves and others. This is as relevant to young children as it is to adolescents and adults. With our elementary curriculum, our goal is to help students better understand themselves, their strengths, and their power to positively influence their world. We are looking forward to collaborating further and are available to answer any questions you might have. We look forward to partnering with you in empowering a well world!

EDUCATION DOES NOT CHANGE THE WORLD. EDUCATION CHANGES
PEOPLE. PEOPLE CHANGE THE WORLD.

Paulo Freire

