

## Set up for Strength Based Training

This training can take place in person during staff training or virtually before the summer.

Before the first session, set up the four Mentimeters that are outlined in the guide (mentimeter is a website utilized to ask questions, polls and more to engage an audience virtually or in person. Typically individuals will use their smartphones to answer questions). There are notes reminding the facilitator to set these up beforehand.

Materials needed:

- Participant packets.
- Print out of VIA Characteristics chart — included in participant packets.
- Smartboard or computer/projector with screen to display Mentimeter results.
- Whiteboard and markers.
- Mentimeters prepared as described in the guide.
  - Word cloud: (Create a [Word Cloud](#) on Mentimeter.)
  - Character strengths we value: (Create a [Word Cloud](#) on Mentimeter.)
  - What I learned about myself: (Create a [live poll on Mentimeter](#).)
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- Link to Encanto: [clip from “Encanto”](#)

Participants need:

- smartphone
- pen.
- Participant packet provided by camp
- \*Suggestion: have fidgets available. Sitting through a session can be challenging for some and fidgets can provide an outlet and help some focus

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## In the City Camps: Strength Based Staff Training

**The Big Idea:** Each of us has character strengths that we can leverage to strengthen ourselves, other people, and the world.

### Goals:

Staff will:

- learn how to identify character strengths in themselves and in others.
- see themselves and others through the lens of strength.
- understand how their strengths can influence their behavior.

### Objectives:

Staff will be able to:

- define character.
- identify their own character strengths.

- look for and identify character strengths in others.
- leverage their own strengths.
- work with others who have different strengths.
- value others' strengths.

### **Sections in Unit 1:**

- What is Character?
- Intro to Character Strengths
- Exploring the VIA Positive Characteristics
- Finding yourself- Identifying your Superpower
- What I learned about myself today
- For the next session

### **Session 1: What Is Character?**

#### **Welcome and Intro to “Character” (10 minutes)**

Facilitator introduces themselves and explains that all the participants will be working together at camp this summer.

Facilitator Script: *Your work matters, and we know that it can be hard. It is important to recognize that hard things are growth opportunities. When you are confronted with challenges, you are also learning things.*

These introductory sessions are designed to help you grow and better navigate challenges. We will look at how knowing your unique character strengths and how to use these strengths will empower you to deal with difficult situations. These strengths can also help us feel good about our selves — flourishing may demand that you know and use your strengths!

Today, we begin by answering the question “What is character?” and we will then consider our own character strengths.

Place participants in their bunk groups<sup>1</sup> (decide groupings ahead of time). Let the groups know they will have 5 minutes to write their own definition for “character” that they all agree on. Instruct them to choose a “scribe” from their group who will post their definition.

After 5 minutes, ask that all “scribes” write their group’s definition on the whiteboard.

Allow participants to read the various definitions.

Ask:

- what they notice about the definitions?
- Are there any similar words or themes?
- Is there something agreed upon in all of the definitions?

Read aloud and write the definition below on the whiteboard: definition.

*Character: "The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual."*

### **Intro to Character Strengths (10 minutes)**

Facilitator Script: *Now that we have a clear picture of what character is, we are going to look more at character strengths. We know that there are parts of us that seem stable over time. Character strengths are one aspect of ourselves that don't change much, unless we intentionally work on building specific strengths. You could probably ask your parents about qualities, such as curiosity or perseverance, that you possessed as a baby or a small child that are still part of your personality today.*

Facilitator Script: *Just as your signature is unique, your character is unique. And just as your signature changes over time, so does your character. Some strengths get more use and grow. Others get less use and diminish. Our character strengths are different in each of us. The chances of two people having the same order of character strengths, with their strongest being #1, are actually one in 620,448,401,733,239,439,360,000 (more than 620 septillion)! This is mathematical evidence that you are truly unique.*

*What are some of your characteristics that you like and feel good about?*

*It may be hard for you to see what makes you uniquely you, especially the good parts.*

Invite participants to post 1-3 characteristics that they like about themselves in a Word Cloud. (Create a [Word Cloud](#) on Mentimeter.)

As a group, look at the Word Cloud. Comment on what you notice about the Word Cloud results. E.g., the most common, the least common.

Facilitator Script: *We can use the strengths for kindness and good, but we must know how to properly harness these strengths if we are going to use them effectively.*

Pose the following questions. You can call on a few volunteers. Invite participants to explain their responses.

- *Can you think of examples of how we use our character strengths for good?*
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- **Exploring the VIA Positive Characteristics (10 minutes)**

Ask participants to turn to page 1 in their packets. Read the description of the 6 virtue categories. Note that a virtue is a behavior that shows high moral standards. Explain that the 24 character strengths are put into these 6 virtue categories.

*There are 24 character strengths, such as humility and curiosity, that have been identified. We each have all 24 of these strengths but to different degrees. Our 5 strongest character strengths are called our signature strengths.*

- Wisdom: Cognitive strengths for the acquisition and use of knowledge.
- Courage: Emotional strengths that exercise will to accomplish goals in opposition.
- Humanity: Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others.
- Justice: Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life.
- Temperance: Strengths that protect against excess.
- Transcendence: Strengths connected to a larger universe and that provide meaning.

Ask participants to turn to the VIA Character Strengths chart. Explain that the VIA Institute on Character is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the science of character strengths to the world.

Explore the chart with them to give them a general overview of the characteristics. You might, for example, begin with the virtue of wisdom and ask participants what they notice about the 5 character strengths that are part of wisdom. Ask an open-ended question about each of the virtue categories.

Possible questions:

- Which of these, in this category, do you value most?
- Are you surprised that any of these are identified as positive character strengths?

### **Finding Yourself — Identifying Your Superpowers (15 minutes)**

Facilitator Script: *Our character strengths are our superpowers.*

Introduce the [clip from “Encanto”](#) about everyone’s unique superpowers. Direct participants to listen for the kinds of superpowers that the different family members possess.

Show the video clip. Call on participants to name the family members’ superpowers.

Facilitator Script: *Think of a good friend or a sibling and list 3 characteristics from the VIA chart that you see in them.*

(Create a [Word Cloud](#) on Mentimeter.)

Direct participants to Menti, telling them that they will have 3 minutes to respond to the prompt. After 3 minutes, share the results of the Menti on your television, computer

screen, or projector. Comment on the results. E.g., “Based on what you wrote, we can see that we value ...”

So, how do you know what your superpowers are? Remember that we each have all of these 24 character strengths, but to different degrees. No one is good at all of these, and our job is to figure out our strengths.

Tell participants that they are going to take some time now to look more carefully at the VIA character strengths. In this next activity they will identify the ones they see as their top 5: the strengths that matter most to them and strengths they value most in their peers.

When all or most of the participants are ready, continue: *We will be moving on to another task. Don't worry if you haven't marked all 5, you can complete this later on at home.*

Repeat the above process, asking participants to mark the values they most value in others. If there is time, participants can share out the differences between the two lists.

### **What I Learned About Myself Today (15 minutes)**

✎ Send participants into their bunk groups, with 3-4 staff in each group.

In the bunk groups, they will discuss:

- What does this exercise tell you about yourself?
- How do you use your top 5 strengths when you're challenged?
- How do you feel when you use these strengths?
- Why do you think you look for these particular strengths in your peers?

Note: Post these questions on the screen or write them on the whiteboard for participants to reference.

### **For the next session:**

Invite participants to turn to page 2 in their packets. Review the page with participants. Ask if they have any questions about what they need to prepare for the next session.

Facilitator Script: *Be sure to keep the worksheet and the chart from today. We will be referencing these in the future.*

*Tasks to be completed before next meeting:*

- Complete the [VIA survey for yourself](#). The survey will identify the order of your character strengths. Note that there are 2 different surveys: one for youth ages 10-17 and one for anyone 18 or older. Complete the survey for your age group. The survey should take you about 15 minutes. We will be focusing on your top 5 superpowers, which we also call your signature strengths.

- *Compare your top 5 that you marked on the VIA Character Strengths chart to the top 5 from the survey.*

Facilitator Script: Thank everyone for their participation and let them know that you are looking forward to meeting with them tomorrow.