

A Stigma Free Road to Decreasing Suicide Risk & Other Mental Health Concerns

Presented by: Kindra Edmonson M.S., M.S.T.I.
support from Elaine Akers & Natalie Chavez

What We Are Doing

What is StrengthsQuest?: The StrengthsQuest assessment has helped more than 9 million people around the world discover their talents. It is used at more than 600 schools and universities in North America and more than 1 million people have used StrengthsQuest to gain insight into how to use their talents to achieve academic success, explore careers and develop leadership.

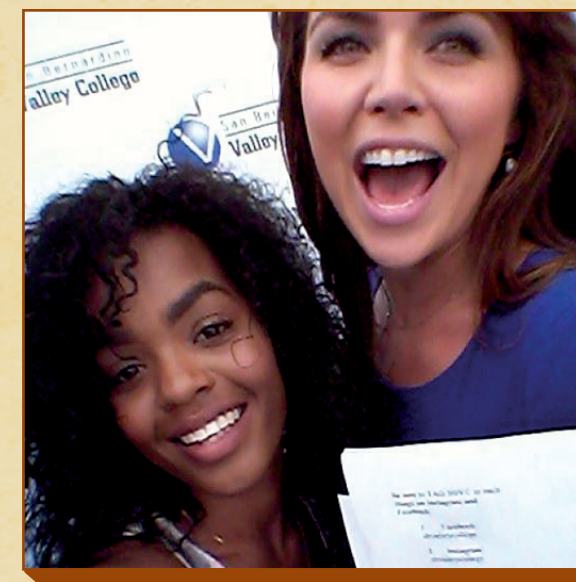
Why We Are Doing It

Why the Strengths Approach: The strengths approach is congruent with our college's mission to provide a quality education and services to a diverse community of learners. Furthermore, this approach has also provided a stigma-free road to decreasing suicide risk, which is one of the primary objectives under the CalMHSA grant. The strengths approach develops each student at the personal level focusing on his or her diverse and unique combination of talents and developing them into strengths. Identification of each student's personal top five talents increases that student's understanding of self and fosters self-esteem, which results in greater confidence and a better-defined life direction. The way each person's top five talents are combined can also lead to a very individual expression of those talents. Each talent can be applied in many areas including relationships, learning, academics, leadership, service, and careers (Chip Anderson, 2004). As talents are developed into strengths, achievements increase and successes become more significant and frequent. In our implementation of strengths on the San Bernardino Valley College Campus we have noticed that students are very enthusiastic and engaged in this approach.



How We Are Doing It

The intervention provided to students at SBVC includes a brief educational introduction to the strengths based approach, the strengths assessment and four follow-up sessions where students are further developed and directed, based on their unique combination of strengths. Given the stigma associated with depression, suicide and other mental health concerns, the Strengths intervention provides a stigma free road for us to be able to successfully access our identified "at risk" populations and address some of their academic and mental health related concerns.



- Strengths**
- Achiever
 - Activator
 - Adaptability
 - Analytical
 - Arranger
 - Belief
 - Command
 - Communication
 - Competition
 - Connectedness
 - Consistency/Fairness
 - Context
 - Deliberative
 - Developer
 - Discipline
 - Empathy
 - Focus
 - Futuristic
 - Harmony
 - Ideation
 - Inclusiveness/Includer
 - Individualization
 - Input
 - Intellection
 - Learner
 - Maximizer
 - Positivity
 - Relator
 - Responsibility
 - Restorative
 - Self-Assurance
 - Significance
 - Strategic
 - Woo

What Our Outcomes Have Been

The Effectiveness of this Approach in Reducing Risk for Suicide and Other Mental Health Concerns: Several pilot studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness of the strengths-based intervention in our college population. Using The Rosenbergs' Self-Esteem Inventory, The Hope Scale, The GAD-7, and PHQ-9 we have been able to measure improvements in self-esteem and hope as well as improved mood. Scores on the GAD-7 and PHQ-9 have decreased, which is consistent with lower depression and anxiety. Additionally, scores on The Rosenbergs' Self-Esteem Inventory & The Hope Scale have increased, indicating improved self-esteem and hope. Increasing hope and self-esteem and lowering symptoms of depression and anxiety are known protective factors against suicide.

The Hope Scale

Statement	Definitely True (4)	True (3)	False (2)	Definitely False (1)
1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam. (Pathways)				
2. I energetically pursue my goals. (Agency)				
3. There are lots of ways around any problem. (Pathways)				
4. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me. (Pathways)				
5. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem. (Pathways)				
6. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future. (Agency)				
7. I've been pretty successful in life. (Agency)				
8. I meet the goals that I set for myself. (Agency)				

Measuring Your Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem can lead to low performance expectations. In turn, low performance expectations can produce reduced effort and high anxiety, both of which can lead to failure—and ultimately reinforce the low self-esteem that started the cycle. In contrast those with high self-esteem expect success, and that expectation leads to greater effort and lower anxiety, thereby increasing the likelihood of actual success. Ultimately, this success boosts self-esteem.

To get an informal estimate of your self-esteem, complete the following scale.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.				
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.				
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.				
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.				
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.				
6. I certainly feel useless at times.				
7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least the equal of others.				
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.				
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.				
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.				

Scoring: For statement 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10 score as follows:
Strongly agree = 4 points
Agree = 3 points
Disagree = 2 points
Strongly disagree = 1 point

For statements 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 score as follows:
Strongly agree = 1 point
Agree = 2 points
Disagree = 3 points
Strongly disagree = 4 point

POWER Learning Strategies for Success in College and Life, Feldman, Robert S. McGraw Hill, New York, 2007

PHQ-9

Depression Inventory

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?	Not at All	Several Days	More than Half the Days	Nearly Everyday
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way	0	1	2	3
10. If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things, or get along with other people?	Not difficult at all	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Extremely difficult
11. I made plans to end my life in the last 2 weeks?	Yes	No		
PHQ-9 Total Score: <input type="text"/>				

GAD-7

Anxiety Inventory

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?	Not at All	Several Days	More than Half the Days	Nearly Everyday
1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
4. Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3
8. If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things, or get along with other people?	Not difficult at all	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Extremely difficult
GAD-7 Total Score: <input type="text"/>				

Project Funding by

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Compassion. Action. Change.