

Implementing the EASE Empowerment principle: Facets of Myself

EASE = Education, Awareness, Shift perspective, Empower

You can help people Empower themselves in the face of societal stigma in many ways. Anything that counteracts messages that demean people with mental health problems or reduce them to a diagnosis or symptom can increase empowerment.

The key is that we cannot empower someone else, but we can help them empower themselves. We can help clients gain or re-gain personal power by exercising their personal strengths to serve their health and personal goals.

Some specific examples:

- Using a strengths based approach in all clinical and rehabilitation work encourages clients to notice, value, use, and further develop their personal strengths.
- Being aware of the words we choose in conversation, notes, team meetings, recovery planning, and other activities and the assumptions they convey about the individuals we work with.
- Gently correct clients and co-workers when we hear them using disempowering language or terms that reduce people to their diagnosis, such as if someone introduces himself in group as “a schizophrenic.” He is much more than a diagnostic label. “I am a Veteran with schizophrenia” emphasizes his strengths.
- Encourage clients and staff to set personal growth goals that they value (even if others don’t) and to thoughtfully plan for the stresses and obstacles they may encounter working towards them, so they can be ready for them and weather them on the path to reaching their goal.
- Praise and encourage thoughtful prepared risk taking for personal growth and goals.
- Use the Facets of Myself handout on the reverse of this sheet to help people think about their strengths
 - Just asking a group (or individual) to fill it out and share it with others is empowering
 - Discussing what it feels like to complete the worksheet can also be revealing. Some people find it very hard to complete, an indicator that their strengths may be a bit neglected.
 - Whether individually or in a group, discussing which listed strengths clients want to exercise more, use more to enrich their lives, can be very activating.

Facets of Myself

We are stronger when we keep in mind our positive qualities, and the fact that we each have many parts to who we are. Below, please give as many answers as you wish for each question.

Use the back if you want more room to write.

What are some positive personal qualities that you like most about yourself?

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What are some things you are proud of yourself for?

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What are some things you enjoy doing? Now, or as a child, alone or with others

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What are some values you try to live by?

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What are some additional positive ways you could finish these sentences:

- I am
- I am
- I am