

Personal Tool – Identifying your strengths

As mental health professionals, we recommend that people identify their strengths to improve their wellbeing during COVID-19 as it reduces feelings of stress, anxiety and depression. Those that know their own common ways of behaving, reacting, thinking or feeling – or to put more simply their strengths - feel a greater sense of control and peace of mind. Identifying personal resources and abilities that help us maintain our mental health and wellbeing during a pandemic involves self-knowledge, time and reflection. Research from the University of Pennsylvania has resulted in a tool that allows us to create a life audit of what going well in our lives and what areas we can focus on improving – PERMA. This stands for: Positive Emotion; Engagement; Relationship; Meaning and Accomplishment. More information about Martin Seligman’s PERMA Model can be found at [PositivePsychology.com](https://www.PositvePsychology.com).

Knowing your strengths means that you can:

- **Start to focus** on how you spend your time so that you feel more confidence, happiness and accomplishment.
- **Reduce your stress** levels and feelings of being overwhelmed by allowing you to concentrate on aspects of your life that you are naturally good at.
- **Increase a sense of optimism** because you are looking at what you can control within a positive lens.
- **Create strategies** that you can act on based on what you know you can do well. You can also share with those around you to further enhance a sense of meaning or belonging.
- **Improve your self- talk** because you can start to build your articulation on how you talk to yourself and about yourself (this skill reduces stress, anxiety and depression). This will improve your relationships too.

Here are some practical tips to help you identify your strengths:

- **Past experience** - think about a challenging time from your past. What did you do to help you get through this? Try and use as few words as possible to describe this. This will help you capture the strengths you use to get through tough times.



- **Determine your values.** Those of us who live within our values have a higher level of wellbeing. This will help you understand what focus you have in your life.
- **Connect with those around you** and talk through with them what you think you might be good at.
- **Scientific survey** - there are some fantastic, scientific and clinically accepted strengths identification surveys we recommend. You might choose to complete this to help you identify your strengths. One of our preferred surveys can be found here: <https://www.viacharacter.org/>

The practice of self-reflection and insight can be both challenging and difficult, but both are definitely rewarding. You can help take control of your thoughts and feelings and identify ways to look after your own wellbeing. Talking about these can help and remember that talking about preventative measures is also something that AccessEAP can help you with. If you need support conducting a life audit that starts with your wellbeing, please reach out to us on **1800 818 728**.

