

STRENGTH BASED APPROACH IN THE FIELD OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

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The field of Child and Adolescent Mental Health has long been focusing on children's deficits, problem behaviours, and pathologies. However, in the last few decades, researchers and practitioners have now begun to question this deficit-based approach. Rather than focusing on children's and adolescents' weaknesses or deficits, strength-based practitioners collaborate with the children to discover their personal and social strengths. Currently, Strengths based practice in social work is an important area of practice, discussion and debate in many countries. At the heart of the strengths-based approach are social justice principles of 'power with', respect and the 'ownership' by the client of their own process of change. The strength perspective

is based on the belief that every person, family and community has capabilities that can be drawn on to overcome problems, illness and struggle and present opportunities for challenge and growth. Here, the focus is on the person's strengths and potentials, not the pathology, symptoms, weaknesses, problems or deficits. At the foundation of this approach is the belief that every child and family have unique talents, skills, and life events, which needs to be recognised by the therapists. This Symposium presents conceptual and empirical perspectives on the theory and practice in relation to strengths based approach in the field of Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

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