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## **Positive Psychology**

### **Signature strengths**

Signature strengths are personal characteristics that resonate with us, make us happy, and that we find most useful. They make us who we are. Research on positive psychology provides compelling evidence that we can increase our happiness by identifying and engaging in our signature strengths (Seligman).

Understanding how to identify character strengths takes practice. Here is a checklist of character strengths identified in the Positive Psychology approach described by Martin Seligman in his book Authentic Happiness. It is recommended that DSWs learn about their own signature strengths by taking the free VIA Institute on Character survey online at [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org).

### **Strengths, skills and interests inventory**

The list below provides list to help the DSW identify positive characteristics or strengths in the people we support, along with skills and interests to consider.

#### **List of Strengths/Characteristics**

1. Patience
2. Love
3. Leadership
4. Fairness
5. Perseverance
6. Social intelligence
7. Bravery
8. Honesty
9. Humor
10. Judgment
11. Kindness
12. Curiosity
13. Hope
14. Gratitude
15. Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence
16. Forgiveness
17. Love of learning
18. Teamwork
19. Perspective
20. Humility
21. Self-Regulation
22. Creativity
23. Zest
24. Prudence
25. Spirituality

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### **Talents / Abilities**

**Talents/abilities are things we do well.** They often engage the person's strengths to occur. However, talents and abilities are not the same as strengths because they lack the generalizability of strengths. Talents and abilities are things we do, things we are good at; as opposed to strengths, which define who we are.

There are many so we will only list a few here to demonstrate.

### **A Short Selection of Talents / Abilities**

1. Athleticism
2. Work skills
3. Playing an instrument
4. Singing
5. Painting
6. Dancing
7. Cooking
8. Self-care

### **Recommended practice:**

Think about the difference between signature strengths and ability. One example is creativity. Being creative contributes to you being a good musician, but being a good musician does not necessarily contribute to any other ability or strength. It is signature strength if you love expressing your creativity through playing music. Music is the expression of the strength of creativity, but there are many ways to do this. Musical ability is musical ability. Try this on yourself. Think of a strength that you have and how it contributes to your abilities overall.