

Family Strengths exercise

This exercise is designed to help you identify your family strengths. It is to be completed together as a family. Family strengths are things that support and protect families, especially during challenging times and times of change.

N.B. This exercise requires all family members to complete the VIA-Inventory of Strengths. Please go to <https://www.viacharacter.org/> before commencing the exercise to complete either the adult or youth version of the VIA.

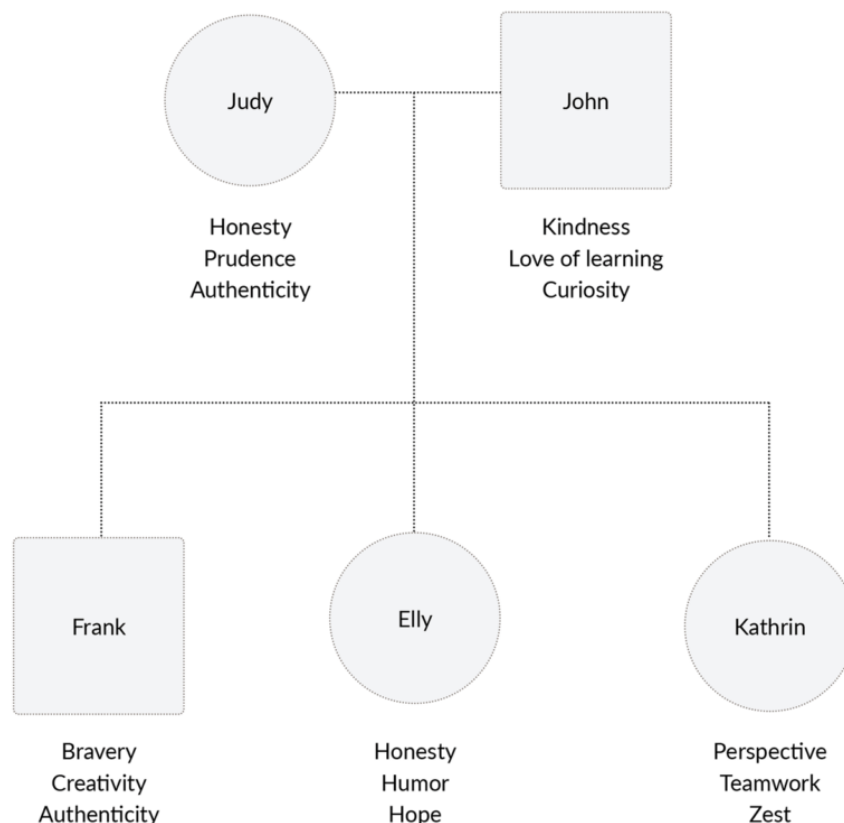
Step 1: Draw your family tree

Using the circles for females and squares for males, draw your family tree on a large piece of paper. Have each family member choose a coloured marker to represent themselves. One family member might like to take the lead, or individual family members might like to take turns to draw themselves. Include, however, all the people you consider to be in your close family.

Step 2: List family member's strengths

Below each person's name in the family tree, list his or her top three strengths, as determined by their VIA strengths questionnaire results. Now you have created a family tree of strengths. An example of a family tree of strengths is shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1. Example of a family tree of strengths



Step 3: Family discussion

As a family, discuss the following:

1. Can you identify any specific patterns of strengths within your family?
2. Who in the family has a character strength that no one else has? How could this person's unique strength be utilized to benefit the family as a whole?
3. Is there an important strength that is missing from the family? If so, does this lack of strength have a negative effect on family functioning? How could this be managed as a family?
4. For each family member, think of a time when he/she used one of his/her strengths to benefit the family unit. Take turns so that each person talks about one other family member's strength.
5. Think of a challenging time you or another family member went through. Can you think of family strengths that helped during this difficult time? If so, which family members and which strengths were involved?
6. Who in your family has helped you to develop your strengths?
7. Have there been times when certain strengths have been used too much or too little? Can you give some examples?
8. How could you use your strengths together to make your family stronger?
9. What did you learn from this exercise?