

Developmental Assets

Resource Packet

The Developmental Assets model is a conceptual framework which identifies 40 critical factors for young people's growth and development. While the Assets are powerful shapers of young people's lives and choices, too few young people experience enough of these assets. However, research shows that if you intentionally build assets, you are changing the odds in favor of having young people thrive. Below are a few guiding questions to help CIN training participants think about what role they can play in helping their sites become more Asset rich and developmentally responsive.

- 1. Have you examined your own Asset building interactions with the young people who cross your path? Being grounded in Asset building, starting with yourself first, not only makes you more credible to others, but helps you know in your bones what it is you are trying to accomplish.***
- 2. Which of the 40 Assets directly correspond to the mission of your organization? How can asset building help achieve the mission of your organization? How might you begin to message these connections to youth, staff, mentors, and leadership at your site?***
- 3. Do your organizational goals and practices reflect a commitment to Asset building principles? What are the major strengths and challenges at your site that affect asset building? Consider strengths and challenges as they relate to the following areas: Relationships, Environment/Culture, Policies/Practices.***
- 4. Which Assets do you feel your internship program is strongest in promoting? You can start from a place of strength and build from there.***
- 5. What are a few examples of formal or informal asset building strategies you are aware of mentors already using? How can you highlight these and share with other mentors? Other CIN sites?***
- 6. Which Assets are you interested in intentionally increasing through your work? How can an Asset focus enhance your internship program? What are some ideas for action, i.e. the natural opportunities for asset building in your work with youth and mentors? Where might be a good place to start?***

AWARENESS

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS CHECKLIST

Most people find it helpful to use a simple checklist to reflect on the assets young people experience. This checklist simplifies the asset checklist to help prompt conversation in families, organizations and communities. Try to remember who you were at an earlier age—say 13 or 14. From this perspective, check off each item if it pertained to you at that time in your life.

- 1. I receive high levels of love and support from family members.
- 2. I can go to my parent(s) or guardian(s) for advice and support and have frequent in-depth conversations with them.
- 3. I know some non parent adults I can go to for advice and support.
- 4. My neighbors encourage and support me.
- 5. My school provides a caring, encouraging environment.
- 6. My parent(s) or guardian(s) help me succeed in school.
- 7. I feel valued by adults in my community.
- 8. I am given useful roles in my community.
- 9. I serve in the community one hour or more each week.
- 10. I feel safe at home, in school and in the community.
- 11. My family sets standards for appropriate behavior and monitors my whereabouts.
- 12. My school has clear rules and consequences for behavior.
- 13. Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring my conduct.
- 14. Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
- 15. My best friends model responsible behavior.
- 16. My parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers encourage me to do well.
- 17. I spend three hours or more each week in lessons or practice in music, theater or other arts.
- 18. I spend three hours or more each week in school or community sports, clubs or organizations.
- 19. I spend one hour or more each week in religious services or participating in spiritual activities.
- 20. I go out with friends "with nothing special to do" 2 or fewer nights each week.
- 21. I want to do well in school.
- 22. I am actively engaged in learning.
- 23. I do an hour or more of homework each school day.
- 24. I care about my school.
- 25. I read for pleasure 3 or more hours each week.
- 26. I believe it is very important to help other people.
- 27. I want to help promote equality and reduce world poverty and hunger.
- 28. I can stand up for what I believe.
- 29. I tell the truth even when it's not easy.
- 30. I can accept and take personal responsibility.
- 31. I believe it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
- 32. I am good at planning ahead and making decisions.
- 33. I am good at making and keeping friends.
- 34. I know and am comfortable with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- 35. I can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- 36. I try to resolve conflict nonviolently.
- 37. I believe I have control over many things that happen to me.
- 38. I feel good about myself.
- 39. I believe my life has a purpose.
- 40. I am optimistic about my future.

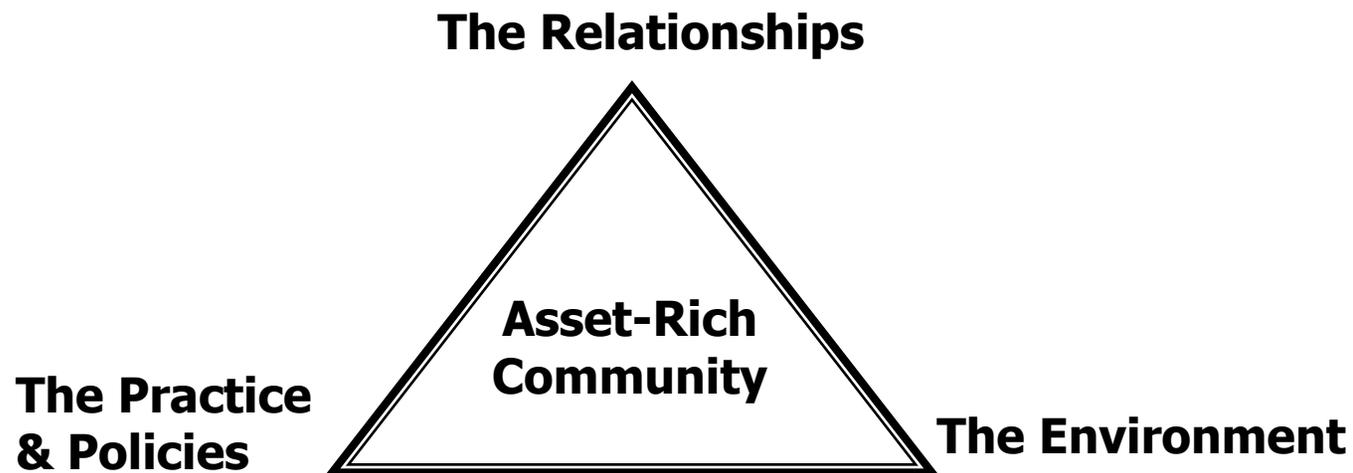
External Assets

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Support | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school. |
| Empowerment | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. |
| Boundaries & Expectations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts. 12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior. 14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive peer influence—Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior. 16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. |
| Constructive Use of Time | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week. |

Internal Assets

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Commitment to Learning | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school. 22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning. 23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school. 25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week. |
| Positive Values | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people. 27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 29. Honesty—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.” 30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs. |
| Social Competencies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently. |
| Positive Identity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.” 38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.” 40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future. |

Increasing Your Asset Building Power



3 Bold Steps for Visioning and Planning

<i>Identify 2-3 Assets you believe foster success for youth in your program</i>	<i>Successes or challenges in growing these Assets...</i>	<i>What does each Asset look like when present?</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		

Choose one! Choose one Asset you believe can be most impactful for your program.

1. _____

3 Bold Steps: Develop a few ideas currently not in use at your site that could help grow this Asset. What are 3 bold steps needed to make this happen? (How can you strengthen relationships? Get supervisors, mentors and parents on board? Provide more training or resources? Create new practices?)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ACTION

10 PRINCIPLES TO CREATING AN ASSET-RICH SITE

1 **Walk the Asset-Talk; Talk the Asset Walk**
 Using the common language of Asset building can bring together and encourage people to “walk the Asset talk” and begin to build Assets.

2 **Plan and Act at the Same Time**
 Planning provides a road map for where you want to go, but you can get trapped spending too much time planning and never advancing. The other extreme is to jump in without planning. The best approach is to do both simultaneously.

3 **Involve Young People**
 Adopt the paradigm shift from working for young people to working with young people. Kids are valuable resources and key participants in building an Asset-rich climate.

4 **Think Purpose; Then Delivery**
 Relationships among people of all ages are what can make organizations unique and special. Remember that Asset building is not a program. And, creating new programs isn't the only way to build Assets. It's about people and the relationships. It's about practice—what we do. It's about environment and creating settings that support and enhance Asset development. It's about being purposeful and deliberate in all these areas.

5 **Engage Everyone**
 Asset building can and should engage everyone within the building (and ideally the community). Each individual, whether a staff person, a volunteer or a young person, can become individual Asset builders.

6 **Focus on Relationship Building**
 Asset building is more about building positive relationships among your young people, staff and volunteers than it is about hiring more professionals and creating new programs.

7 **Be Strategic and Intentional**
 With the systems and programs already in place, be strategic and intentional about infusing Asset building into each one.

8 **Build on What Works**
 Don't overlook the current strengths of your site. There is no need to develop something new, look at what's going well and weave Asset building throughout those strategies.

9 **Focus on All Young People**
 Our society, and frequently many funding sources, tends to focus on problems and helping young people “at risk.” Although the Asset framework is effective with at-risk youth, it also is powerful with young people who are not “at risk”. All young people (and adults) benefit from proactive practices.

10 **Be Inclusive**
 As organizations recognize the importance of engaging everyone in Asset building, they see that they need to be more inclusive and do more outreach to marginalized and casual members. Often, the spirit of Asset building has the effect of bringing more people in and helping them feel more connected to the site.

Sparks

A spark is more than just a passing interest or a talent. It's what you're passionate about. It's what unleashes your energy and joy, gives your life purpose and focus, and allows you to make your own unique contribution to the world.

Sparks in the Classroom

Using Knowledge of Your Students' Sparks to Enliven Their Learning

When you know your students' sparks, you can use that knowledge to connect with and help students as whole persons—something they need in order to bond with, care about, and engage in school. Bringing the concept of sparks into your repertoire of relationship skills will give you a new way of interacting with the students—and maybe even with your colleagues—that can enhance your teaching, enliven their learning, and enrich your school day.

Sparks:

- Are a **way to connect** with your students around their strongest interests or talents
- Are an **avenue you can use to engage** (or re-engage) students in your subject, even if they don't care for or do well at your subject
- Offer the opportunity to increase your job satisfaction by allowing you to **bring your strongest interests or talents into the classroom** and the larger school community

Connect with students

- When you have a few moments to connect with a student, try using the information you now have on their sparks to open a conversation on spark development or spark exploration.
- Use these six essential questions to start a deeper spark conversation:
 - What is your spark?
 - When and where do you live your spark
 - Who knows your spark?
 - Who helps feed your spark?
 - What gets in your way?
 - How can I help?
- Consider helping students in your classes who share the same spark to get to know one another.

Engage your students

Supporting Your Children's Sparks



It's great when young people explore and identify their sparks. But they also need caring adults to support them in their spark discovery and development. We asked hundreds of young people what kind of support they would find helpful, and here is what they said:

- Encourage me
- Talk with me and give me new ideas
- Provide what I need: transportation, money, or equipment
- Go to my shows
- Arrange for music lessons
- Teach me stuff about computers
- Show me how to build things and figure things out
- Listen to me talk about my spark
- Coach me
- Give me rides
- Go to my games
- Discuss fashion and go shopping
- Love me
- Introduce me to caring adults who can help me with my spark
- Get supplies for me
- Help me practice or train
- Help me make appointments
- Challenge me
- Remind me to be positive and optimistic
- Help me get to the library, zoo, or museum
- Tell me your stories
- Read my stories and poetry
- Teach me new ways to draw
- Go with me into nature
- Show me how you work on your spark
- Help me figure out what to do next
- Tell me to keep going and not quit
- Show me people can be really happy about their jobs
- Spend time with me
- Help me not to be bored
- Push me to do and be my best
- Give me useful criticism
- Give me advice on how to improve

15 Thriving Indicators



Theoretical Measurement Markers of Thriving in Adolescence

Search Institute has developed a list of 15 "thriving indicators," or constructive behaviors, postures, and commitments that societies value and need in youth. These indicators serve as a way of evaluating and analyzing program success based on positive outcomes, instead of negative ones; in other words, they allow us to talk about what's *right* with kids, instead of what's "wrong" with them.

Elements of Thriving	Measurement Markers of Thriving
1. YOUNG PERSON	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Spark identification and motivation. Young person can name, describe interests and sparks that give them energy and purpose, and is motivated to develop their sparks.2. Positive emotionality. Young person is positive and optimistic.3. Openness to challenge and discovery. Young person has intrinsic desire to explore new things, and enjoys challenges.4. Hopeful purpose. Young person has a sense of purpose and sees self as on the way to a happy and successful future.5. Moral and prosocial orientation. Young person sees helping others as a personal responsibility, and lives up to values of respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring.6. Spiritual development. Young person affirms importance of a sacred or transcendent force and the role of their faith or spirituality in shaping everyday thoughts and actions.
2. YOUNG PERSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXTS	<p>Opportunities & Supports. Young person experiences chances to grow and develop their sparks, as well as encouragement and support in pursuing their sparks, from multiple life contexts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Family Opportunities & Supports8. Friends Opportunities & Supports9. School Opportunities10. School Supports11. Neighborhood Opportunities & Supports12. Youth Organizations Opportunities & Supports13. Religious Congregations Opportunities & Supports
3. YOUNG PERSON'S ACTIVE ROLE IN SHAPING CONTEXTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">14. Youth Action to develop and pursue sparks. Young person seeks and acts on adult guidance, studies or practices, and takes other actions to develop their sparks and fulfill their potential.
4. DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXTS ACT ON THE YOUNG PERSON	<ol style="list-style-type: none">15. Frequency of Specific Adult Actions. How often adults do concrete things to motivate, enable, and push young people to develop their sparks and connect them to others who can help.

Additional Constructs Measured in Thriving Orientation Survey

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES	<p>Life satisfaction. Young person feels good about their life.</p> <p>Positive health perceptions. Young person feels strong and healthy.</p> <p>Contribution to social good. Young person volunteers or does things to make their world a better place.</p> <p>School success. Young person earns a B or higher average in school.</p> <p>Values diversity. Young person considers it important to know people of different races.</p> <p>Leadership. Young person has been a leader in a group or organization in the last 12 months.</p>
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Table developed from factor analysis reported in Benson, P.L., & Scales, P.C. (2009). The definition and preliminary measurement of thriving in adolescence. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4, 85-104.