



Myers JDC  
Brookdale

# **The Strengths Perspective: From Theory to Practice**

Ben Alfasi    Yael Sabag    Maayan Sarver  
Yael Bachar    Tal Arazi

Editor: Sigal Ashkenazi

English translation (Abstract): Ami Asher

Graphic design: Efrat Speaker

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**Myers JDC Brookdale Institute**

P.O.B. 3886, Jerusalem 9103702, Israel

Tel: 02-6557400

[brookdale.jdc.org.il/en](http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/en) | [brook@jdc.org](mailto:brook@jdc.org)

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# Abstract

## Background

The strengths perspective is a conceptual and professional approach according to which optimal development and therapeutic intervention require seeking out and focusing on the positive and well-functioning elements in individuals' lives, while minimizing attention to pathologies, distresses, and difficulties. The approach and its practical applications are commonly adopted by help professionals, who in the past decades have developed practices for intervening with various populations, including children and adolescents.

The strengths perspective has been adopted and implemented in 360<sup>o</sup> the National Program for Children and Youth at Risk (hereafter, *The Program*). The program seeks to identify and develop the strengths of children and adolescents, as well as their parents. Accordingly, strengths development is part of the basis for choosing the program's services and intervention strategies, is an interim outcome, and is a component in evaluating the participants.

The program is currently in a process of optimizing its various elements, including updating and developing the use of the strengths perspective in the program and revision of the Strengths Section in its evaluation questionnaire, TAMI (Hebrew acronym of Community-Based Data Infrastructure). All that, as a part of ongoing data monitoring and updating based on the knowledge accumulated in order to improve services for children, youth and their families.

The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute has been consulting to the program since its launch, on various tasks related to its development and operations. Therefore, it has been asked to assist in this process as well.

## Objectives

The objectives of this review are to:

1. Establish the theoretical basis for the Strengths Section in TAMI
2. Optimize and update the Strengths Section in TAMI so it will be aligned with the most recent approaches regarding the measurement and evaluation of strengths among children and youth
3. Promote the application of the strengths perspective in the program based on best practices identified

## **Method**

Theoretical review of the strengths perspective and derivative best practices, as well as recent approaches for conceptualizing strengths in measurement and evaluation processes of children and youth.

The review was carried out in online databases and was based on academic and professional literature on a variety of disciplines and professional theories such as social work, positive psychology, education, and resilience theory.

## **Main Recommendations**

1. Updating the Strengths Section in TAMI according to recent professional conceptualizations found in the literature to reflect a broad view of children and youth in the context of their various life systems. Additionally, adopting organizing principles for mapping individual, interpersonal and environmental strengths.
2. Building a training program based on the revised strengths section. The training will focus on updating and deepening the professional work informed by the strengths perspective in terms of theory, values and practice.
3. Promoting a multidimensional implementation of the strengths perspective in the program at the evaluation stage as a basis for selecting the intervention targets and approaches in order to achieve results. Moreover, use of the strengths perspective on the organizational level, in planning the services offered in the community.