

Strengths-Based Strategies for

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY



by **Denise Archie**
CEO of Relationships Matter



CONTENTS

01

INTRODUCTION

02

**IDENTIFYING CLIENT
STRENGTHS**

03

**CREATING RECOVERY PLANS
WITH A POSITIVE FOCUS**

04

**TOOLS AND TEMPLATES FOR
STRENGTHS MAPPING**

05

**REAL CASE STUDIES &
MOVING FORWARD**



+61412921134



denise@relationshipsmatter.com.au



www.relationshipsmatter.com.au



INTRODUCTION: WHY STRENGTHS-BASED PRACTICE MATTERS

WHY STRENGTHS-BASED PRACTICE MATTERS

In mental health recovery, the language we use—and the perspective we hold—can either uplift or disempower.

A strengths-based approach shifts the focus from problems to possibilities. Rather than asking, “What’s wrong with this person?” we ask, “What strengths already exist here that we can build upon?”

This practical guide is designed for support workers, mental health professionals, and emerging recovery coaches who want to bring a more empowering, hope-focused mindset to their work. Whether you're supporting someone through recovery, building a therapeutic alliance, or guiding someone to reconnect with their goals and identity, these strategies will equip you to lead with compassion and capability.

You'll explore:

- How to identify client strengths
- How to build strengths into recovery plans
- How to encourage autonomy
- Tools you can use right away
- Real case examples to apply the theory

IDENTIFYING CLIENT STRENGTHS

Every individual has internal strengths—even if they’re hard to see at first. Your job as a recovery coach or support worker is to help bring these strengths to light.

What counts as a strength?

- Personal qualities (resilience, humour, creativity)
- Lived experience and insight
- Cultural identity and spiritual practices
- Community ties and social supports
- Skills from past jobs, parenting, volunteering, or study

How to uncover them:

- Strengths-based interviewing techniques
- Reflective listening and affirming language
- Using open-ended questions like:
 - “Tell me about a time you handled a difficult situation.”
 - “What helps you feel most like yourself?”
 - “Who or what gives you a sense of strength?”

Clients may be more comfortable talking about their challenges. Gently guide the conversation to show how their past experiences also reveal resilience and inner resources.

CREATING RECOVERY PLANS WITH A POSITIVE FOCUS

Recovery plans don't have to be clinical or deficit-based. When built on strengths, they become empowering roadmaps for action and healing.

Steps to building a strengths-based recovery plan:

1. Start with the person's vision. Ask, *"What does a good life look like for you?"*
2. Link goals to strengths. Instead of saying *"needs help with time management,"* say *"has shown strong interest in organisation—let's build on that."*
3. Break goals into achievable steps. Use their language, not jargon.
4. Celebrate progress regularly. Reflect wins back to the client.
 - Sample strengths-based goal:

"Using my creative strengths, I want to try one new art class this month to help with social connection and wellbeing."

This keeps the person at the centre and recognises their capabilities—not just their struggles.



TOOLS AND TEMPLATES FOR STRENGTHS MAPPING

Here are some easy-to-use tools that you can integrate into coaching or support sessions.

Strengths Mapping Template

- Name three personal strengths you've used recently
- What are your favourite ways to express those strengths?
- What strengths have helped you through hard times?
- Which strength would you like to grow?

Recovery Compass Worksheet

- *"Where am I today?"*
- *"Where would I like to be in 6 months?"*
- *"What strengths can help me get there?"*

Weekly Reflection Prompt

- *"This week, one thing I did well was..."*
- *"I noticed I handled ____ better than before."*
- *"A strength I used was..."*

These tools can be integrated into recovery coaching sessions, group workshops, or solo journaling. They support self-reflection and reinforce autonomy.

REAL CASE STUDIES & MOVING FORWARD

Case Study: Sarah, 32, diagnosed with bipolar disorder

Sarah struggled with self-confidence and had disengaged from support services. Through strength-based conversations, her recovery coach discovered Sarah's love of gardening and leadership skills from managing her household. Together, they built a recovery plan that included volunteering at a community garden, which led to new friendships and a sense of purpose.

Case Study: Jason, 24, recovering from substance use

Jason's strengths included humour, honesty, and strong connections to his local youth group. His coach helped him set goals around mentoring younger peers and re-engaging with his music, leading to improvements in self-worth and emotional regulation.

Final Words: Strengths Change Lives

As a recovery coach or support worker, your role is not to fix—but to illuminate. Strengths-based practice is more than a technique. It's a way of seeing people as whole, capable, and worthy of growth.

Want to deepen your coaching skills?

Explore our [Certificate in Psychosocial Recovery Coaching](#) today.

🌐 relationshipsmatter.com.au

📞 Call: +6142921134

You bring the heart—we'll give you the tools.

HELPING YOU BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST

Our Courses

- [Diploma in E-Counselling and Telephone Counselling](#)
- [Certificate in Psychosocial Recovery Coaching](#)
- [Certificate in Support Coordination](#)
- [Certificate in Recognizing and Responding to Coercive Control](#)



Denise Archie

CEO of Relationships Matter

Connect with Us

Website: relationshipsmatter.com.au

Email: info@relationshipsmatter.com.au

Social Media

Facebook: facebook.com/relationshipsmatterau

Instagram: instagram.com/relationshipsmatterau

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/relationshipsmatterau