

Strength Based Assessment

Michael H. Epstein
Center for At-Risk Children's Services
University of Nebraska

mepstein1@unl.edu
www.unl.edu/cacs
<http://secd.unl.edu/~mepstein/StrengthBasedAssessment.ppt>

Don: Deficit-Based	Don: Strength-Based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Suicidal ideation ■ Major depression ■ Personality disorder ■ Soft neurological signs ■ Auditory processing problems ■ Dependency seeking level ■ Fear of growing up ■ Immature ■ Fragmented and disorganized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ B student ■ Works 25 hours a week ■ Highest-rated employee ■ Attends church ■ Pastor is a team member ■ Mother attends meetings level

Karl: Deficit-Based	Karl: Strength-Based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Failed four classes ■ Acting out in class ■ Physically abusive ■ Attention deficit disorder ■ Truant ■ Juvenile court involvement ■ Illicit substance use ■ Depressed affect ■ Psychomotorically retarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ B+ student ■ Perfect attendance ■ Works 20 hours a week ■ Auto mechanic classes ■ Junior college plans ■ Mother attends meetings ■ Grandparents supportive ■ Community sports league

“If we ask people to look for deficits, they will usually find them, and their view of the situation will be colored by this. If we ask people to look for successes, they will usually find them, and their view of the situation will be color by this.”
(p. 32) Kral (1992)

Strength-based assessment is defined as the measurement of those emotional and behavioral skills, competencies and characteristics that create a sense of personal accomplishment, contribute to satisfying relationships with family members, peers, and adults, enhance one's ability to deal with adversity and stress, and promote one's personal, social and academic development.

- ### Strength-Based Perspective: Beliefs
1. All children have strengths.
 2. A child can be motivated by how teachers, parents, and others respond to them.
 3. Failure of a child to demonstrate a strength does not mean a deficit on the part of the child.
 4. Education, mental health, and social service treatment plans and services for children need to be based on strengths.

Advantages to Strength-Based Assessment

1. Leads to positively engaging children in receiving services.
2. Identifies what is going well in the life of the child.
3. Reminds us of the competencies that can establish positive expectations for the child.
4. Leads to a positive parent professional relationship which becomes an important asset.
5. Helps identify resources for an IEP or services plan.
6. Empowers the family and, in some cases, the child to take responsibility.
7. Documents the strengths or competencies that the child has mastered.

Purpose of Strength Based Assessment

1. CREATE A VISION FOR THE FAMILY
2. IDENTIFY SERVICE GOALS
3. WRITE SHORT AND LONG TERM OBJECTIVES
4. IDENTIFY SPECIFIC STRENGTHS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES
5. MEASURE CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES

Types of Strength Based Assessment

1. INFORMAL (STRENGTH CHATS OR INTERVIEWS)
2. FORMAL
 - a. Standardized
 - b. Norm Referenced

Strengths, Culture and Informal Resources Discovery Strength “Chat”

The **purpose** of a strength chat is to get to know the child and family well enough so that strength oriented goals and plans can be developed.

Strength “Chat” For Children:

1. If you said one good thing about yourself, what would it be?
2. I like your (hair, clothes, make-up, etc.). Did you come up with that yourself?
3. What is your favorite color? Musician? Sport? Person?
4. What do you like most about your friends? Why?
5. Tell me about your classes? What is your favorite class?
6. Name two good things about your parents (or school).
7. What is your favorite hobby?
8. Name your favorite older person. Why do you like him/her?

Strength “Chat” for Adults:

1. What do you do for fun?
2. Who are your close friends? Why are they so special?
3. What is your life like when you feel most at peace with the world?
4. What was your life as a kid?
5. Who has been the biggest influence in your life?
6. What was the best vacation you ever took?
7. What do you do to “blow off steam”?
8. How do you picture your life five years from now?
9. What are the best things about yourself? Your family?

21st Annual RTC Conference Presented in Tampa, February 2008

Strengths, Culture, Informal Resources Directory

Name of family: _____ Respondent: _____ Date: _____

1. The things I like most about my child(ren) are:

2. My life would really be better six months from now if:

3. My child's/children's life would really be better six months from now if:

4. The most important thing I have ever done is:

5. I am happiest when:

6. The best times we have had as a family are:

7. My best qualities as a parent are:

Strengths, Culture, Informal Resources Directory, cont.

8. Name some special rules that your family has:

9. Who are persons you call when you need and want to talk?

10. What activities does your family enjoy?

11. What are your family traditions or important cultural events?

12. Are there any special values or beliefs that were taught to you by your parents or others who are or have been important to you?

13. Does your family belong to any part of the faith community? In what way?

Notes/additions:

Case Study: John

Nine-year-old John, who has a history of hyperactivity, disruptiveness, and learning problems, has just been placed in a special class for children with disabilities. For as long as his parents can remember, John has been very active and difficult to manage: As a young child, he often climbed to get forbidden objects; switched activities frequently; turned special events into disasters; seldom remained seated through a meal; and otherwise was a discipline problem. Because John was not skilled at games, tried to be bossy, and often got into arguments and minor fights, few children would play with him and he had no friends.

John's situation in school has not been much different. His teachers all noted how poor he was in remaining at his desk, persisting with a task until completion, waiting his turn in classroom or playground groups, and listening and looking appropriately. Academically, he was behind his peers in the first grade and has gradually fallen further behind. When responding in class to book problems or the teacher's questions, John usually answers immediately and thoughtlessly. Other times he may have a tantrum, start an argument or fight with a classmate, and remain noncompliant and impolite to the teacher for the rest of the day. Paradoxically, John sometimes comes to class early to talk with his teacher, and is always respectful and friendly. Sometimes John talks about his social and academic problems, and is plainly concerned.

John's parents have sought medical help. The family physician placed 4-year-old John on 10 milligrams of dextroamphetamine per day. Mother detected some decrease in John's uncontrolled activity, but it disturbed her that he had trouble getting to sleep and often ate very little at meals, so this drug was discontinued after about 7 months. At age 8 John was seen by a psychiatrist, who placed him 50 milligrams of methylphenidate daily and provided his parents with weekly counseling and therapy for several months. The parents noticed some improvement in John's behaviors at home and he remains on this drug therapy. Because of continuing educational maladjustment, however, a decision was reached to provide John with intensive school intervention within the special education class.

- ## FACTORS IN SELECTING A SCALE
1. CONTENT VALIDITY
 2. NORMS (Representative)
 3. RELIABILITY
 - a. Internal consistency
 - b. Inter-rater reliability
 - c. Test-retest reliability
 4. VALIDITY
 - a. Concurrent validity
 - b. Predictive validity
 5. PURPOSES
 - a. Planning
 - b. Outcomes

Behavioral and Emotional Strengths Scale

State: _____ City: _____ School: _____

Student Name: _____ ID #: _____

Grade: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

DOB: _____

Parent Name: _____ Phone: _____

Teacher Name: _____

DIRECTIONS

The Behavioral and Emotional Strengths Scale consists of 67 statements that you are to rate a student's behaviors and attitudes in a particular way. Read each statement and mark the rating that best describes the student's behavior over the past 3 months. If the statement is *not* applicable to the student, mark the 5. If the statement is like the student, mark the 2. If the statement is *very* much like the student, mark the 1. If the statement is *not* at all like the student, mark the 3. Rate each statement to the best of your ability.

1 = very much like the student
2 = like the student
3 = not at all like the student
4 = not applicable
5 = not at all like the student

09240

ITEM	Not at All Like	Not Much Like	Like	Very Much Like
1. Anxious or shy				
2. Anxious or shy				
3. Anxious or shy				
4. Anxious or shy				
5. Anxious or shy				
6. Anxious or shy				
7. Anxious or shy				
8. Anxious or shy				
9. Anxious or shy				
10. Anxious or shy				
11. Anxious or shy				
12. Anxious or shy				
13. Anxious or shy				
14. Anxious or shy				
15. Anxious or shy				
16. Anxious or shy				
17. Anxious or shy				
18. Anxious or shy				
19. Anxious or shy				
20. Anxious or shy				
21. Anxious or shy				
22. Anxious or shy				
23. Anxious or shy				
24. Anxious or shy				
25. Anxious or shy				
26. Anxious or shy				
27. Anxious or shy				
28. Anxious or shy				
29. Anxious or shy				
30. Anxious or shy				
31. Anxious or shy				
32. Anxious or shy				
33. Anxious or shy				
34. Anxious or shy				
35. Anxious or shy				
36. Anxious or shy				
37. Anxious or shy				
38. Anxious or shy				
39. Anxious or shy				
40. Anxious or shy				
41. Anxious or shy				
42. Anxious or shy				
43. Anxious or shy				
44. Anxious or shy				
45. Anxious or shy				
46. Anxious or shy				
47. Anxious or shy				
48. Anxious or shy				
49. Anxious or shy				
50. Anxious or shy				
51. Anxious or shy				
52. Anxious or shy				
53. Anxious or shy				
54. Anxious or shy				
55. Anxious or shy				
56. Anxious or shy				
57. Anxious or shy				
58. Anxious or shy				
59. Anxious or shy				
60. Anxious or shy				
61. Anxious or shy				
62. Anxious or shy				
63. Anxious or shy				
64. Anxious or shy				
65. Anxious or shy				
66. Anxious or shy				
67. Anxious or shy				

21st Annual RTC Conference
Presented in Tampa, February 2008

Demographic Characteristics of the Normative Sample (N=2,176)

Characteristics	Percentage of Sample	Percentage of School-Age Population
Geographic Area		
Northeast	19	19
Midwest	24	24
South	35	36
West	22	21
Gender		
Male	54	51
Female	46	49
Race		
White	80	80
Black	12	15
Other	8	5
Residence		
Urban	74	78
Rural	26	22
Ethnicity		
Native American	1	1
Hispanic	8	12
Asian	5	3
African American	12	15
Other	74	69

Demographic Characteristics of the Normative Sample (N=2,176), cont.

Characteristics	Percentage of Sample	Percentage of School-Age Population
Family Income		
Under 15,000	19	16
15,000-24,999	21	16
25,000-34,999	19	15
35,000-49,999	17	19
50,000-74,999	15	20
75,000 and over	9	14
Educational Attainment of Parents		
Less than Bachelor's degree	75	76
Bachelor's degree	19	15
Graduate degrees	6	9
Disability Status		
No Disability	89	89
Disabilities	11	11

Scale	Norms
Teacher Rating Scale	2,176
Teacher Rating Scale	861
Parent Rating Scale	927
Youth Rating Scale	1,301

Factors & Loadings of the Items of BERS by Subscale

Interpersonal Strength	
Item	Loading
10. Uses anger management skills	.83
12. Expresses remorse for behavior that hurts or upsets others	.79
16. Reacts to disappointment in a calm manner	.78
17. Considers consequences of own behavior	.84
18. Accepts criticism	.76
28. Accepts responsibility for own actions	.83
30. Loses a game gracefully	.75
33. Listens to others	.80
35. Admits mistakes	.80
37. Accepts "no" for an answer	.78
43. Respects the rights of others	.86
44. Shares with others	.74
46. Apologizes to others when wrong	.78
49. Is kind toward others	.81
50. Uses appropriate language	.71
Eigenvalues	27.01

Family Involvement	
Item	Loading
1. Demonstrates a sense of belonging to family	.79
2. Trusts a significant person with his or her life	.71
4. Participates in community activities	.66
7. Maintains positive family relationships	.86
11. Communicates with parents about behavior at home	.69
15. Interacts positively with parents	.86
19. Participates in church activities	.58
29. Interacts positively with siblings	.69
36. Participates in family activities	.82
45. Complies with rules at home	.70
Eigenvalues	2.43

Intrapersonal Strength	
Item	Loading
5. Is self-confident	.78
8. Demonstrates a sense of humor	.58
20. Demonstrates age-appropriate hygiene skills	.53
21. Requests support from peers and friends	.62
22. Enjoys a hobby	.58
26. Identifies own feelings	.70
27. Identifies personal strengths	.80
32. Is popular with peers	.68
38. Smiles often	.74
42. Is enthusiastic about life	.74
48. Talks about the positive aspects of life	.72
Eigenvalues	2.15

School Functioning	
Item	Loading
14. Completes a task on first request	.81
24. Completes school tasks on time	.86
31. Completes homework regularly	.82
39. Pays attention in class	.76
40. Computes math problems at or above grade level	.62
41. Reads at or above grade level	.57
47. Studies for tests	.79
51. Attends school regularly	.50
52. Uses note-taking and listening skills in school	.76
Eigenvalues	1.67

Affective Strength	
Item	Loading
3. Accept a hug	.74
6. Acknowledges painful feelings	.64
9. Asks for help	.57
13. Shows concern for the feelings of others	.66
23. Discusses problems with others	.60
25. Accepts the closeness and intimacy of others	.78
34. Expresses affection for others	.79
Eigenvalues	1.29

Reliability of the BERS-2

Coefficient Alphas for Selected Subgroups of the BERS-2 by Scale

BERS-2 Value	Entire Normative Sample	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Emotional Disturbance
Teacher Rating Scale							
Interpersonal Strength	.96	.96	.96	.96	.96	.96	.92
Family Involvement	.92	.93	.93	.93	.91	.94	.89
Intrapersonal Strength	.91	.91	.91	.91	.89	.91	.85
School Functioning	.92	.92	.92	.92	.89	.91	.85
Affective Strength	.87	.95	.85	.87	.86	.90	.84
Strength Index	.98	.98	.98	.98	.98	.98	.97

Teacher Rating Scale: Interrater Reliability for the BERS-2

BERS-2 Value	First Rater		Second Rater		r
	M	SD	M	SD	
Subscales					
Interpersonal Strengths	6.55	2.38	7.10	2.23	.83
Family Involvement	4.87	3.40	6.38	4.12	.96
Intrapersonal Strengths	6.69	2.21	6.97	2.65	.92
School Functioning	6.63	0.26	6.57	2.56	.89
Affective Strength	7.57	3.58	7.38	2.88	.85
Composite					
Strength Index	78.09	17.69	86.47	19.95	.98

Youth Rating Scale: Test-Retest Reliability

BERS-2 Scores	First Testing		Second Testing		r ^a	PVE
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Subscales						
Interpersonal Strength	9.98	1.92	10.45	2.83	.89	.79
Family Involvement	11.12	2.47	11.17	2.77	.85	.72
Intrapersonal Strength	10.95	2.00	11.10	2.55	.91	.83
School Functioning	11.52	2.13	11.48	2.53	.89	.79
Affective Strength	10.02	2.30	10.43	2.61	.84	.71
Career Strength	10.69	1.98	10.61	2.14	.87	.76
Strength Index	104.69	11.09	106.05	14.96	.91	.83

Note: Means are reported as standard scores.
^ap < .0001

Validity of the BERS-2

BERS-2 Standard Score Means for Three Subgroups on the Teacher Rating Scale

BERS-2 Value	Subgroup		
	No Disability	Learning Disability	Behavioral Disability
Subscales			
Interpersonal Strengths	11	9	7
Family Involvement	11	9	7
Intrapersonal Strengths	11	9	7
School Functioning	11	8	7
Affective Strength	11	9	9
Composite			
Strength Index	107	92	82

Correlations Between the BERS-2 Parent Rating Scale and the Child Behavior Checklist (N=55)

	Interpersonal Strength	Family Involvement	Intrapersonal Strength	School Functioning	Affective Strength	Career Strength	Strength Index
CBCL Scores							
Withdrawn	-.30*	-.43**	-.81**	-.30*	-.44**	-.14	-.48**
Somatic Complaints	-.12	-.42**	-.56**	-.33*	-.12	-.09	-.33*
Anxious/Depressed	-.21	-.38**	-.64**	-.44**	-.54**	-.35*	-.48**
Social Problems	-.60**	-.55**	-.75**	-.46**	-.53**	-.30*	-.61**
Thought Problems	-.32*	.45**	-.70**	-.46**	-.63**	-.32*	-.56**
Attention Problems	-.46**	-.46**	-.73**	-.53**	-.68**	-.34*	-.62**
Delinquent Behavior	-.62**	-.78**	-.55**	-.91**	-.77**	-.75**	-.78**
Aggressive Behavior	-.69**	-.54**	-.49**	-.71**	-.53**	-.29*	-.62**
Dimension Scores							
Internalizing	-.83**	-.31*	-.42**	-.16	-.25	-.17	-.26
Externalizing	-.50**	-.49**	-.43**	-.64**	-.55**	-.38**	-.57**
Composite Score							
Total Problems	-.33*	-.45**	-.50**	-.43**	-.48**	-.61**	-.51**

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.

Parent Rating Scale

BERS-2 Value	Total Normative Sample	Subgroup				
		Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic
Interpersonal Strength	10	10	10	10	9	10
Family Involvement	10	10	10	10	9	9
Intrapersonal Strength	10	10	10	10	9	10
School Functioning	10	10	10	10	9	10
Affective Strength	10	10	10	10	9	10
Career Strength	10	10	10	10	10	11
Strength Index	100	100	100	100	93	98

Characteristics of the BERS

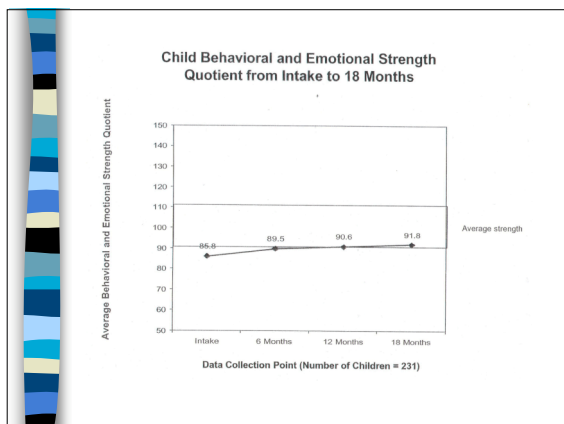
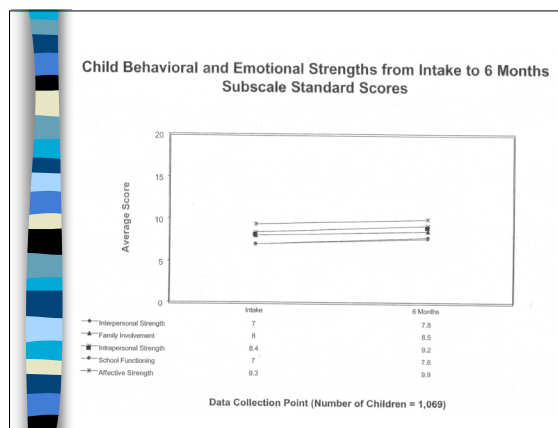
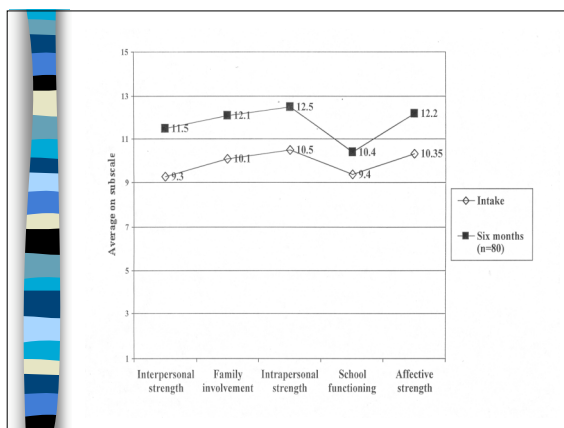
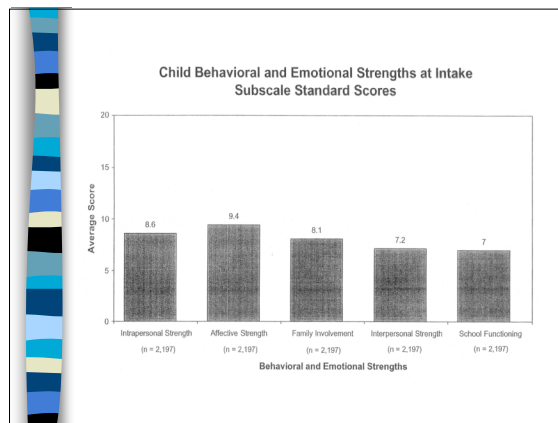
- ✓ A total of 52 clearly stated items
- ✓ Eight open-ended questions so that respondents can note the child's strengths.
- ✓ The scale includes five subscales: Interpersonal Strengths, Family Involvement, School Functioning, and Affective Strengths.
- ✓ Scale is designed for use by parents, youth and professionals.
- ✓ Norms based on national samples of children
- ✓ Validity and reliability clearly established.
- ✓ Designed for use with children 15-18
- ✓ Scale can be completed in less than ten minutes
- ✓ Standard scores are provided for comparing children.

USES FOR THE BERS

- ✓ To identify the emotional and behavioral strengths of children.
- ✓ To identify children with limited strengths.
- ✓ To target goals for an IEP or individual treatment plan.
- ✓ To document progress in a strength area as a consequence of specialized services.
- ✓ To measure strengths in research and evaluation projects.

Guidelines for Interpreting BERS Scores

Behavioral and Emotional Strength	Normal Distribution		Probability Student has EBD	EBD Distribution		Behavioral and Emotional Strength
	Subscale Standard Score	Strength Quotient		Subscale Standard Score	Strength Quotient	
Very Superior	17-20	>130	Extremely Low	17-20	>130	Very Superior
Superior	15-16	121-130	Very low	15-16	121-130	Superior
Above Average	13-14	111-120		13-14	111-120	Above Average
Average	8-12	90-110	Low	8-12	90-110	Average
Below Average	6-7	80-89	High	6-7	80-89	Below Average
Poor	4-5	70-79	Very High	4-5	70-79	Poor
Very Poor	1-3	<70	Extremely High	1-3	<70	Very Poor



BERS-2 Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale—Second Edition Teacher Rating Scale

Section 1. Identifying Information

Name: Karl Washington Gender: Male Female Grade: 11
 Date Rated: 2/1/07 School: Northwest H.S.
 Date of Birth: 11/24/89 Rater's Name: Kim Kency
 Age: 17 years Rater's Relationship to Individual: Social Worker

Section 2. Score Summary

Subscale	Raw Score	Scale Score	Subtest Score
I. Intrapersonal Strength (IS)	7	5	5
II. Family Involvement (FI)	25	84	13
III. Intrapersonal Strength (IS)	23	63	11
IV. School Functioning (SF)	24	84	13
V. Affective Strength (AS)	6	9	6
Sum of Scaled Scores		42	97
BERS-2 Strength Index		42	97

Section 3. Interpretation and Recommendations

Section 4. Other Pertinent Information

Who referred the student? Teacher
 What was the reason for the referral? conduct problems, truancy, substance abuse
 Parental permission obtained on (Date): 2/1/07
 BERS-2 results included in writing or planning conference? Yes No

21st Annual RTC Conference Presented in Tampa, February 2008

Section 5. Teacher Rating Items

Directions: This scale contains a series of statements that are used to rate a student's behaviors and emotions in a positive way. Read each statement and mark the number that corresponds to the rating that best describes the student's status over the past 3 months. Rate each statement to the best of your knowledge of the student. Rate all 52 items by the following criteria:

3 = If the statement is very much like the student
2 = If the statement is like the student
1 = If the statement is not much like the student
0 = If the statement is not at all like the student

Statement	IS	FI	LS	SF	AS
1. Demonstrates a sense of belonging to family	0	2			
2. Talks a significant person with his or her life	0	2			
3. Accepts a hug	1	0			1
4. Participates in community activities	0	1	2		
5. Is self-confident	0	1	2		
6. Acknowledges painful feelings	2	0			0
7. Maintains positive family relationships	0	1	2		
8. Demonstrates a sense of humor	0	1	2		
9. Asks for help	2	0			1
10. Uses anger management skills	1	0			
11. Communicates with parents about behavior at home	1	2			
12. Expresses remorse for behavior that hurts or upsets others	1	2			
13. Shows concern for the feelings of others	2	0			0
14. Completes a task on first request	0	1	2		
15. Interacts positively with parents	0	1	2		
16. Reacts to disappointments in a calm manner	0	1	2		
17. Considers consequences of own behavior	2	0			
18. Accepts criticism	2	0			
19. Participates in leisure activities	0	1	2		
20. Demonstrates age-appropriate hygiene skills	0	1	2		
21. Requests support from peers and friends	0	1	2		
22. Expresses a hobby	0	1	2		
23. Discusses problems with others	1	0			1
24. Completes school tasks on time	1	0			1
25. Accepts the consequences and necessity of others	1	0			1
26. Identifies own feelings	2	0			1
Column Subtotal	2	77	10	6	3

3 = If the statement is very much like the student
2 = If the statement is like the student
1 = If the statement is not much like the student
0 = If the statement is not at all like the student

Statement	IS	FI	LS	SF	AS
27. Identifies personal strengths	0	1	2		
28. Accepts responsibility for own actions	1	0			
29. Interacts positively with siblings	1	0			
30. Loses a game gracefully	1	0			
31. Completes homework regularly	1	0			
32. Is popular with peers	0	1	2		
33. Listens to others	1	0			
34. Expresses affection for others	1	0			2
35. Admits mistakes	0	1	2		
36. Participates in family activities	0	1	2		
37. Accepts "no" for an answer	1	0			
38. Smiles often	1	0			
39. Pays attention in class	0	1	2		
40. Computes math problems at or above grade level	1	0			2
41. Reads at or above grade level	0	1			2
42. Is enthusiastic about life	1	0			
43. Respects the rights of others	0	1	2		
44. Shares with others	1	0			
45. Complies with rules at home	1	0			
46. Apologizes to others when wrong	0	1	2		
47. Studies for tests	1	0			2
48. Talks about the positive aspects of life	1	0			2
49. Is kind toward others	1	0			
50. Uses appropriate language	1	0			
51. Attends school regularly	0	1	2		
52. Uses note-taking and listening skills in school	0	1	2		
Column Subtotal	5	8	13	18	3
Previous Page Column Subtotal	2	77	10	6	3
Total Row Score for YRS	7	25	23	24	6

Section 6. Key Questions

- The student's favorite hobby or activity is Karl works on automobiles. He is very talented and will probably go to trade school for auto mechanics.
- The student's favorite sport(s) is (are) Weight lifting, softball
- The student's best school subject(s) is (are) overall good student, does best in math and science classes
- The student's best friend(s) is (are) Tim Holland, who is his next-door neighbor, and Larry Fucates, who works with him at a garage.
- The student's favorite teacher(s) is (are) Mr. Joe Pappas, his homeroom teacher for the past 2 years
- In the community, this student has worked or volunteered at Karl has worked part-time at Oil Pro for the past 2 years.
- The most important people in this student's life are Karl's grandparents, are very important in his life.
- The best thing about this student is Intelligent, friendly, helpful to others. Realistic view of self.

BERS-2
Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale—Second Edition
Summary Form

Section 1. Identifying Information

Name: Karl Washington School: Northwest H.S.
 Ethnicity: Male Female Male Grade: 11 Examiner's Name: Kim Keehey
 Date of Interview: 3/25/07 Examiner's Title: Social Worker
 Date of Birth: 1/12/87 in 11/25/86

Section 2. Score Summary

Scale	Number Rating Scale (NRS)		Percent Rating Scale (PRS)		T-Score Rating Scale (T-S)	
	Raw Score	Percent Score	Raw Score	Percent Score	Raw Score	Percent Score
I. Interpersonal Strength (IS)	7	52	15	55	7	16
II. Family Involvement (FI)	25	84	28	91	28	84
III. Intrapersonal Strength (IS)	23	63	27	85	28	76
IV. School Functioning (SF)	24	80	28	78	28	78
V. Affectional Strength (AS)	6	9	12	16	11	25
Total of Scaled Scores	63	82	102	45	84	84
BERS-2 Strength Index	23	87	32	92	30	82

Supplemental for PRS and YRS

Scale	Raw Score	Percent Score	Raw Score	Percent Score
VI. Cover Strength (CS)	12	75	18	15

Section 3. Other Pertinent Information

Who referred the student? Teacher

What was the reason for the referral? Conduct problems, truancy, substance abuse

Parental permission obtained or denied? 3/15/07

BERS-2 results included in staffing or planning conference? Yes No

Section 4. Profile of Standard Scores

Component Score	BERS-2 Subscores		
	YRS	PRS	YRS
100			
140			
180			
220			
260			
300			
340			
380			
420			
460			
500			
540			
580			
620			
660			
700			
740			
780			
820			
860			
900			
940			
980			
1000			

Section 5. Interpretation and Recommendations

Across the 3 respondents, Family Involvement and School Functioning are seen as major strengths. Also, Career Strengths are seen by Karl and his mother as a primary asset as well. These areas need to be included in his overall treatment as major areas to build upon and reinforce.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

NAME Washington Karl DISTRICT BIRTHDATE 10/12/82
 Last Name First Name

IEP CONFERENCE DATE: <u>3/18/07</u>	Date of last Case Study MDC: <u>1/1/07</u>
PARTICIPANTS	
Principal/Coordinator/Designer: <u>Colleen Reardon</u>	Speech Lang. Path
Admin. Rep./Designer: <u> </u>	Occupational Therapist
Parent/Coordinator/Case Manager/Program Manager: <u>Ralph and Sandra Washington</u>	Physical Therapist
Student: <u>Karl Washington</u>	Other: <u>(Name/Title/Agency)</u>
Psychologist: <u> </u>	Pastor: <u>Nedermeyer</u>
Social Worker: <u>Kimberly Keehey</u>	Joseph Holland (neighbor)
Name: <u> </u>	John Bernard (employer)
Teacher: <u>Joe Pappas</u>	

ACADEMIC FUNCTIONING

- Reading at grade level.
- Language skills appropriate for age.
- Math performance above grade level. Works independently in this area.
- Attends auto mechanics classes. Highly motivated in classes.
- Motor skills excellent. Plays sports in community league.
- Homework needs to be completed more consistently. Needs to be reminded about upcoming tests and major assignments.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

BEHAVIORAL FUNCTIONING

- Needs to learn to control temper, accept criticism, and use anger management skills. Needs to accept responsibility of behavior.
- Has difficulty expressing feelings for others. Does not appear to trust many individuals. Rarely asks for assistance.
- Has a good, positive relationship with parents and family. Active in family and community activities. Relates well with co-workers and employer. Gets along with peers in school and in community.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

EDUCATION GOAL AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE PLAN

Name of Student Washington Karl
Last Name First Name

Goal Statement						Goal #
To Complete Auto Mechanic Classes						1
SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES (Condition and Behavior)	Monitoring Schedule	Evaluation Procedures	Criteria for Mastery	Projected Completion Date	Dates Progress Reviewed	Extent Objectives Met
1. Complete and pass all necessary tests to enroll in advanced auto mechanics classes.	Quarterly	Tests	91-100% Accuracy			
2. Study and practice auto skills at Oil Pro. Receive regular feedback from school supervisor and employer at Oil Pro.	Monthly	Observational Log	81-90% Accuracy			
3. Regularly attend auto classes at Nipper School.	Weekly	Charting	91-100% Accuracy			
4. Receive B or better in all auto mechanic classes in coming year.	Quarterly	Tests	81-90% Accuracy			

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

EDUCATION GOAL AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE PLAN

Name of Student Washington Karl
Last Name First Name

Goal Statement						Goal #
To integrate Karl in all regular high school classes.						2
SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES (Condition and Behavior)	Monitoring Schedule	Evaluation Procedures	Criteria for Mastery	Projected Completion Date	Dates Progress Reviewed	Extent Objectives Met
1. Enroll Karl at Elk Grove High School and contact regular education teachers about his placement.	Quarterly	Anecdotal Record	91-100% Accuracy			
2. Place Karl in reading and math classes that match his skill and grade level.	Quarterly	Observational Log	91-100% Accuracy			
3. Establish weekly report card to special education coordinator and daily homework assignment book.	Weekly	Charting	91-100% Accuracy			
4. Have Karl join 1 intramural sports team.	Monthly	Observational Log	91-100% Accuracy			

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

EDUCATION GOAL AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE PLAN

Name of Student Washington Karl
Last Name First Name

Goal Statement						Goal #
To develop anger control skills.						3
SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES (Condition and Behavior)	Monitoring Schedule	Evaluation Procedures	Criteria for Mastery	Projected Completion Date	Dates Progress Reviewed	Extent Objectives Met
1. Join and attend anger management classes taught by high school special education teacher.	Weekly	Charting	81-90%			
2. Every Friday night provide mother with 3 examples of where Karl controlled anger.	Weekly	Charting	91-100%			
3. Every Friday provide Mr. Pappas 3 examples of where Karl accepted criticism.	Weekly	Charting	91-100% Accuracy			

Research on Strengths Using the BERS -2

Strength Based vs. Traditional Reports

Participants

- Special Education Teachers
- Mental Health Professionals
- School Administrators

Findings

- Respondents who read the strength based reports predicted better:
 - short-term academic functioning
 - short-term social functioning
- But no differences in predicting long-term functioning

Donovan, S. A., & Nickerson, A. B. (2007). Strength-based versus traditional social-emotional reports: Impact on MDT members perceptions. *Behavioral Disorders*, 32, 228-237.

21st Annual RTC Conference Presented in Tampa, February 2008

Impact of Strength-Based Assessment

Participants
84 youth receiving mental health service and their families

Treatment
Experimental group therapist received information on child and family's strengths and resources, and encouraged to share results with participants

Findings

1. Overall no group differences
2. High versus low strength oriented therapists
 - Greater improvements in behavioral functioning (i.e., CBCL)
 - Higher parent satisfaction
 - Lower termination rates
 - Fewer missed appointments

Cox, K. F. (2006). Investigating the impact of Strength-Based assessment on youth with emotional or behavioral disorders. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 15, 287-301.

Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Published Research

Epstein, M.H. (1999). Development and validation of a scale to assess the emotional and behavioral strengths of children and adolescents. *Remedial and Special Education*, 20, 258-262.

Epstein, M.H. (1999). Using strength based assessment in programs for children with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Beyond Behavior*, 9, 25-27.

Epstein, M.H., Harniss, M.K., Pearson, N., & Ryser, G. (1999). The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Test-retest and inter-rater reliability. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 8, 369-377.

Harniss, M.K., Epstein, M.H., Ryser, G., & Pearson, N. (1999). The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Criterion-related validity. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 17, 4-14.

Epstein, M.H., Ruddleigh, S., & Epstein, A.A. (2000). Using strength-based assessment in transition planning. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 32(8), 50-54.

Reid, R., Epstein, M.H., Pastor, D.A., & Ryser, G.R. (2000). Strengths-based assessment differences across students with LD and EBD. *Remedial and Special Education*, 21, 346-355.

Rudolph, S.M., & Epstein, M.H. (2000). Empowering children and families through strength-based assessment. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 8, 207-209.

Epstein, M.H. (2001). The behavioral and emotional rating scale: A strength based approach to assessment. *Diagnostic*, 25, 249-256.

Epstein, M.H., Hertzog, M.A., & Reid, R. (2001). The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Long-term test-retest reliability. *Behavioral Disorders*, 26, 314-321.

Harniss, M.K., Epstein, M.H., Bursuch, W.D., Nelson, J., & Jayanthi, M. (2001). Resolving homework-related communication problems: Recommendations of parents of children with and without disabilities. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 17, 205-225.

Epstein, M.H., Nordness, P.D., Nelson, J.R., & Hertzog, M. (2002). Convergent validity of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale with primary grade students. *Topics in Early Childhood Education*, 23, 141-148.

Epstein, M.H., Ryser, G., & Pearson, N. (2002). Standardization of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Factor structure, reliability, and criterion validity. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 29, 208-216.

Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Published Research, cont.

Trout, A.L., Ryan, J.B., LaVigne, S.B., & Epstein, M.H. (2003). Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Tow students of convergent validity. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 12, 399-410.

Epstein, M.H., Mooney, P., Ryser, G., & Pierce, C.D. (2004). Validity and reliability of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: Youth Rating Form. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 14, 358-367.

Buckley, J.A., & Epstein, M.H. (2004). The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-2 (BERS-2): Providing a comprehensive approach to strength based assessment. *The California School Psychologist*, 9, 21-27.

Farmer, T.W., Clemmer, J.T., Leung, M., Goforth, J.B., Thompson, J.H., Keagy, K., & Boucher, S. (2005). Strength based assessment of rural African American early adolescents: Characteristics of students in high and low groups of the Behavioral and Emotional rating Scale. 14, 57-69.

Mooney, P., Epstein, M.H., Ryser, G., & Pierce, C.D. (2005). Reliability and validity of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-2: Parent Rating Scale. *Children and Schools*, 27, 147-155.

Synhorst, L., Buckley, J., Reid, B., Epstein, M.H. & Ryser, G. (2005). Cross informant reliability of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-2 (BERS-2). *Child and Family Behavior Therapy*, 27(3), 1-11.

Buckley, J.A., Ryser, G., Reid, R., & Epstein, M.H. (2005). Confirmatory factor analysis of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-2 Parent and Youth Rating Scales. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 15, 27-37.

Cox, K.F. (2006). Investigating the impact of strength-based assessment on youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 15, 287-301.

Gonzales, J.E., Ryser, G., Epstein, M.H., & Shwery, C.S. (2006). The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-second edition: Parent Rating Scale: A Hispanic cross-cultural reliability study. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 31, 33-43.

Furlong, M.J., Sharkey, J.D., Boman, P., & Caldwell, R. (in press). Cross-validation of the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-2 Youth Version: An exploration of strength based latent traits. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*.

Donovan, S. A., & Nickerson, A. B. (2007). Strength-based versus traditional social-emotional reports: Impact on MDT members perceptions. *Behavioral Disorders*, 32, 228-237.

Thank you!

Michael H. Epstein
Center for At-Risk Children's Services
University of Nebraska

mepstein1@unl.edu
www.unl.edu/cacs