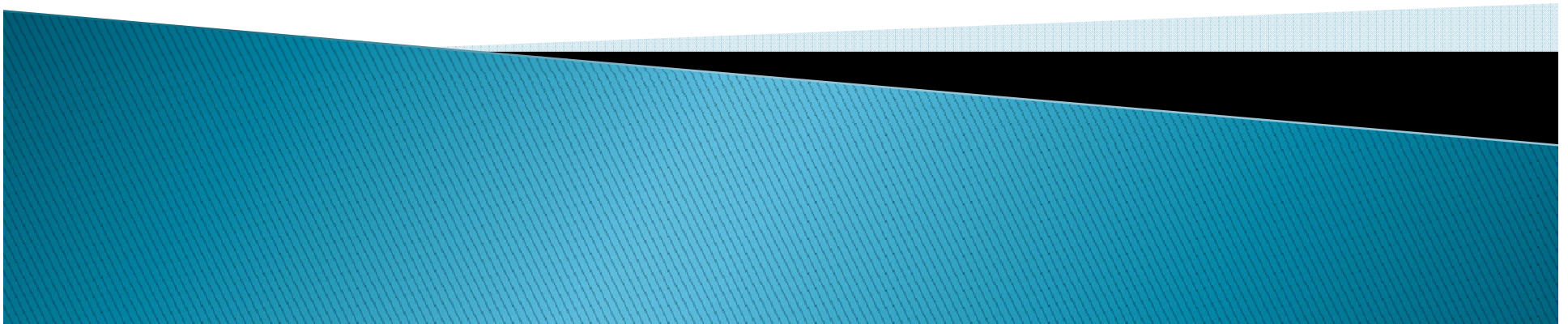


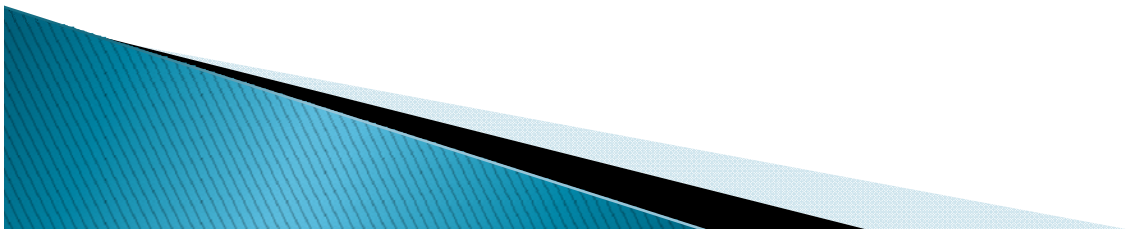
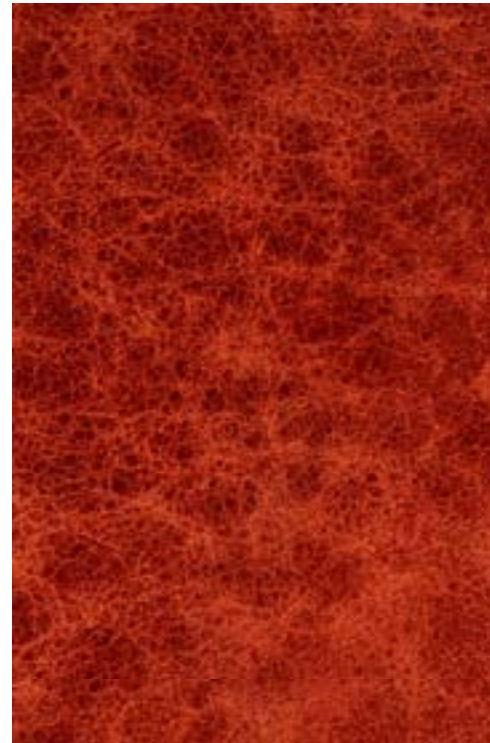
# Strength-Based Approach to Employment Plans

May 22, 2014



## Purpose

- ▶ The Ramsey County WFS vision for ES includes opportunity for participants to increasingly self-determine while setting goals, identifying strengths, and including strengths in plan activities to pursue and achieve the participant's goals. We want to make sure we share with you our perspective on this.
- ▶ We want you to know of this direction, in its informal stages, as we move towards a more formal system for using strength based approach in the EP later in the 2014.
- ▶ We want you to ruminate (meditate, muse over, ponder) and to percolate (become active, lively, or spirited) the strengths based concept in anticipation of a later workshop in October or November.
- ▶ We want to continue to build/clarify shared meaning regarding the counselor and participant roles in the Ramsey County Employment Services system.



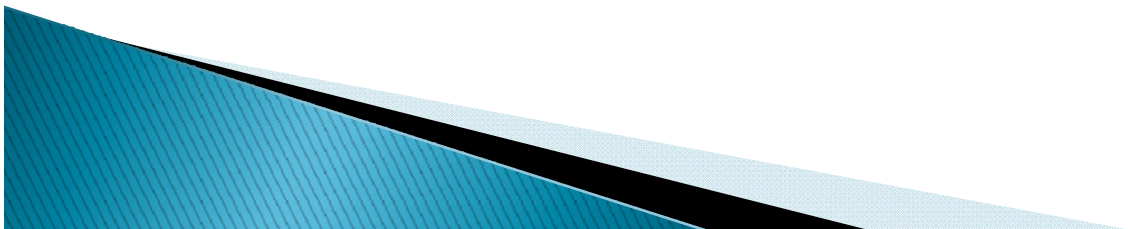
## Objectives

- ▶ Define strengths based approach
- ▶ Describe three legged stool of strengths based approach
- ▶ Describe the role and responsibility of the counselor and participant in creating a strengths based employment plan
- ▶ Describe the challenges for the counselor to shift from being the expert to honoring the experience and expertise of the participant (the participant is the expert in his or her own life)
- ▶ Describe the challenge for the participant to shift to this new EP structure
- ▶ Describe two ways in which the participant will demonstrate control of own life and own employment plan
- ▶ State one result of the informal reviews of employment plans.



## Assemblage

- ▶ Webster says: a sculptural technique of composing into a unified whole a group of unrelated and often fragmentary or discarded objects



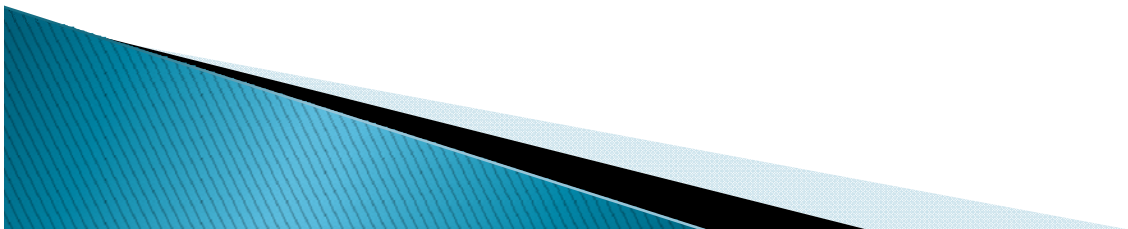


# Assemblage (Wm Skrips)



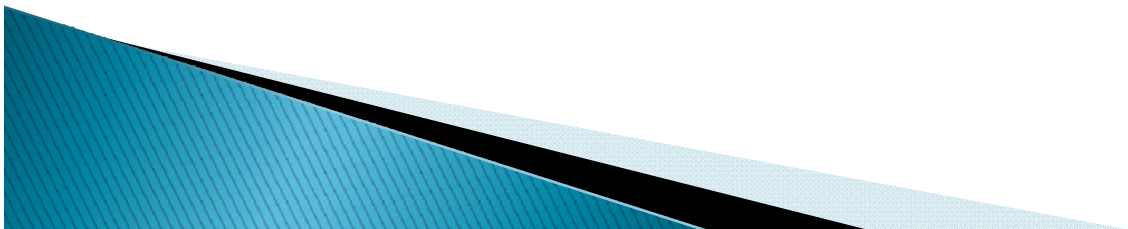
## Content

- ▶ Kelly Sangster Slides on the Strength Based Approach
- ▶ Purpose and Background
- ▶ Hua Moua and Ops Definition
- ▶ Review of Selected Slides From Earlier presentations
- ▶ Definitions
- ▶ ES Manual Description of EP
- ▶ Components of Theoretical Strong EP
- ▶ Current Workforce 1 EP Structure
- ▶ Informal Review of Current EPs
- ▶ Factors to Consider for Linking Strengths Based Approach to Factors of Strong EP
- ▶ Questions/Discussion
- ▶ Adjourn



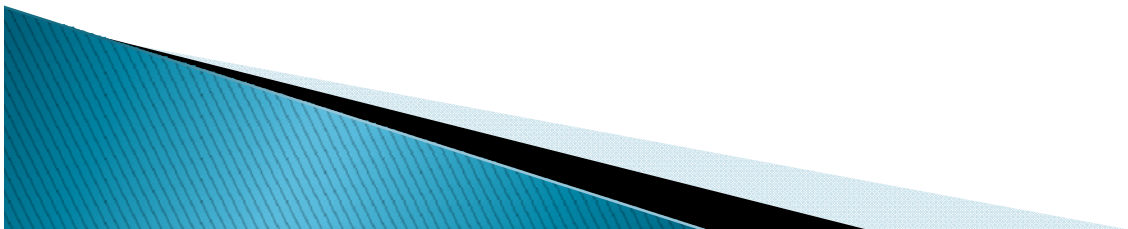
## Roots of Service 2014–2019

- ▶ The 2014 ES contracts require that assessments with participants will “identify strengths, abilities and options, replacing the past practice of identifying barriers and limitations”.



# Coaching and Counseling Distinctions

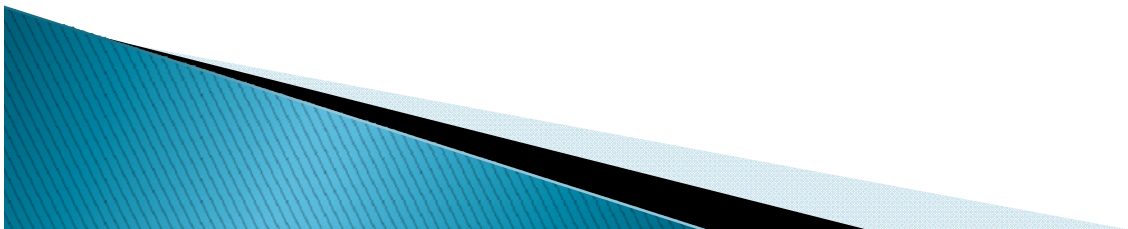
- ▶ Coaching
  - The participant comes to the answers to all of the questions on their own
  - more powerful than being told what to do and given a prescribed course
  - The participant is a subject matter expert of own life
- ▶ Counseling
  - A counselor is a Subject Matter Expert and has expertise to offer
  - Gathers information about participant's skills, abilities, styles, likes and helps them direct their job search and selection of the right career path
  - Has a list of possible career-path and trainings
  - Has a list of different resources for the participant
  - Educates about choices and impact





## ES Role

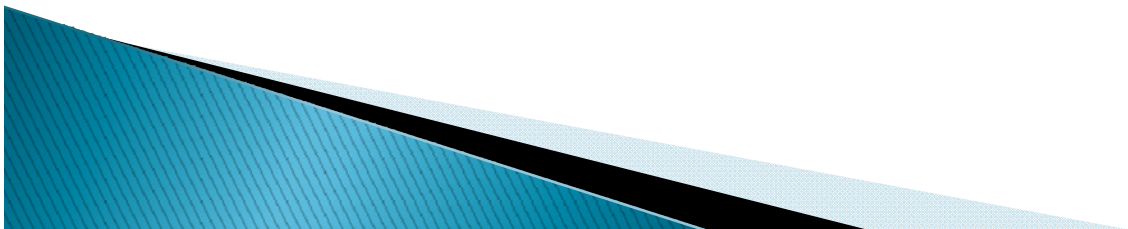
- ▶ To be both– a coach and a counselor, find a balance between giving participant an inspiration to create own path and guide them to be successful on the path
- ▶ Change roles from one to another
- ▶ Coaching and Counseling are philosophy of services, not a physical job description
- ▶ Skills can be developed within the employment counselor



# Ambiguity Tolerance

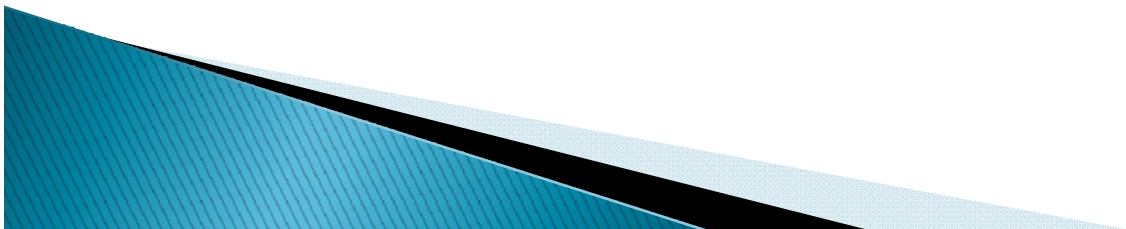
Accepting fact that we're working through a bit of ambiguity during this change process

Some things are clearer now than in January but we have some distance to go



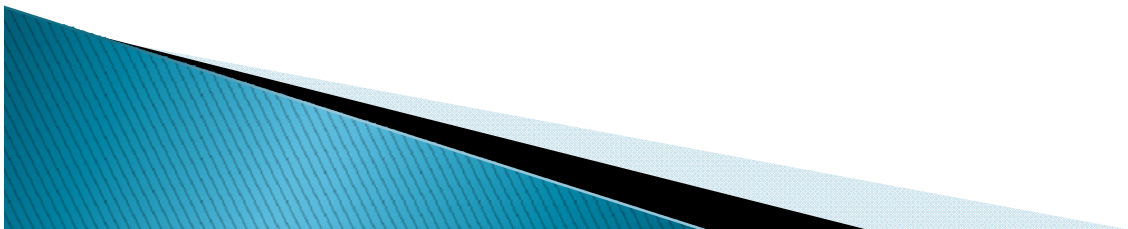
## Activities

- ▶ Put people in activities that matter
  - Employment
  - Self Employment
  - OJT
  - Paid and Unpaid Work Experience
  - Job search
  - Job readiness
  - Social Services
  - Other – including enrollment into the Disparities Reduction Strategy Services (DRS) Program (beginning March)
  - Training and Education
  - GED
  - Post Secondary Training and Education
  - Assessment
  - ESL and Functional Work Literacy
  - Social/Legal/Health Related



From FAST presentation

- ▶ FAST philosophy is to cultivate existing strengths and focus on what people can do; every person is capable of and deserves to participate in the world of work; approach is grounded in respect and dignity





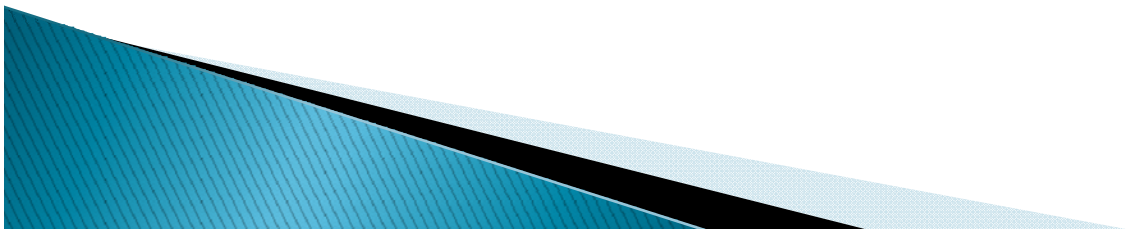
Also, from FAST presentation

- ▶ Sometimes employment specialists unintentionally lead people to “give the right answers.” Sometimes participants try to please employment specialists by saying what they think staff wants to hear. Eventually, everyone’s work will fall apart if it is not built upon the participant’s values, interest and own way of doing things.



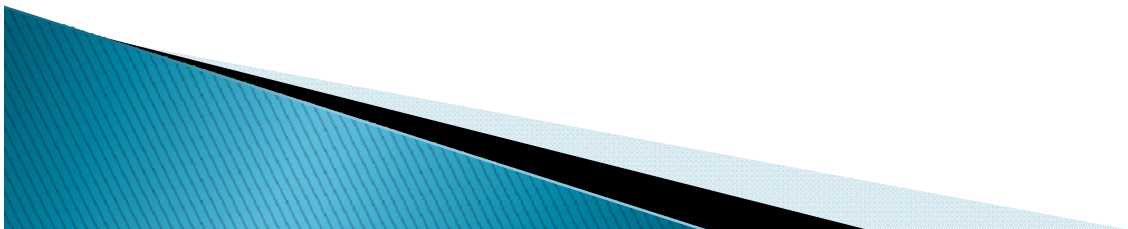
## Definition: Self-Determined

- ▶ the personal decision to do something; the right to decide for self



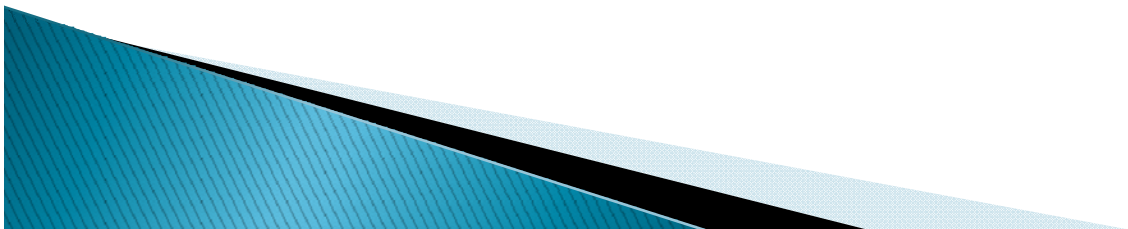
## Definition: Comply

- ▶ Comply: to conform, submit or adapt (as to another's wishes) as required or requested; to do what you been asked or ordered to do.



## Expanded Version: Comply

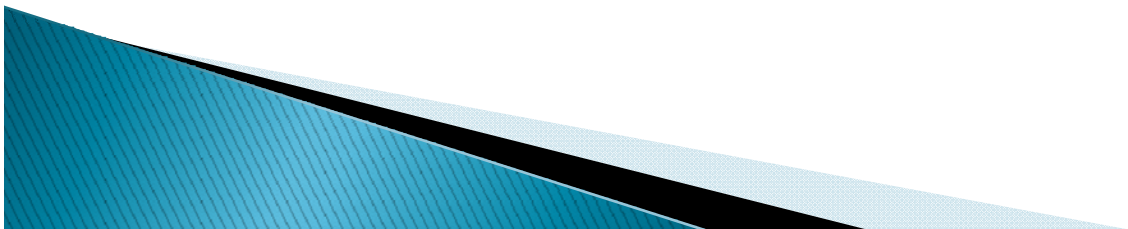
- ▶ submit or adapt (as to another's wishes) as required or requested; to do what you been asked or ordered to do; to do what you've agreed to do.





## Definition: Coins of the Realm

- ▶ Merriam Webster dictionary describes coins of the realm as something valued or used as if it were money in a particular sphere.



# Dreaming the Dream

(Langston Hughes Poems As Voice of Dream)

## Ennui

It's such a  
Bore  
Being always  
Poor.

## Island

Wave of sorrow,  
Do not drown me now:

I see the island  
Still ahead somehow.

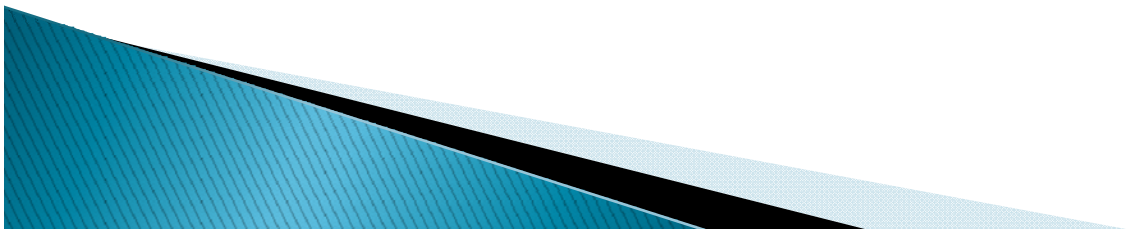
I see the island  
And its sands are fair:

Wave of sorrow,  
Take me there.

## Dreams

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged  
bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.



# Feeding the Dream

(Langston Hughes Poems As Voice of Dream)

- ▶ Dream Dust

- ▶

- ▶ Gather out of star-dust

- ▶       Earth-dust

- ▶       Cloud -dust,

- ▶       Storm-dust,

- ▶ And splinters of hail,

- ▶ One handful of dream-dust

- ▶       Not for sale.

## The Dream Keeper

Bring me all of your dreams,

You dreamers,

Bring me all of your

Heart melodies

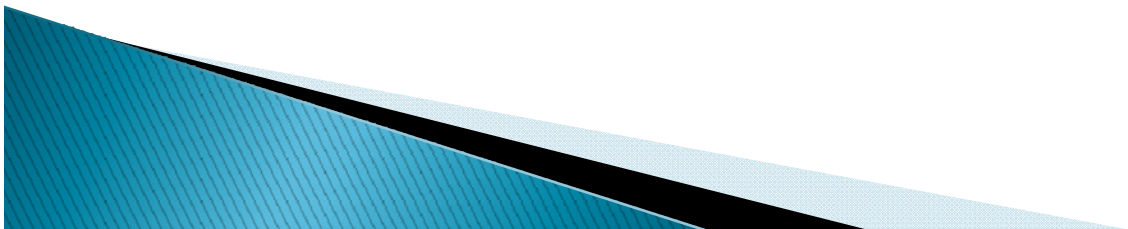
That I may wrap them

In a blue cloud-cloth

Away from the too-rough

fingers

Of the world.

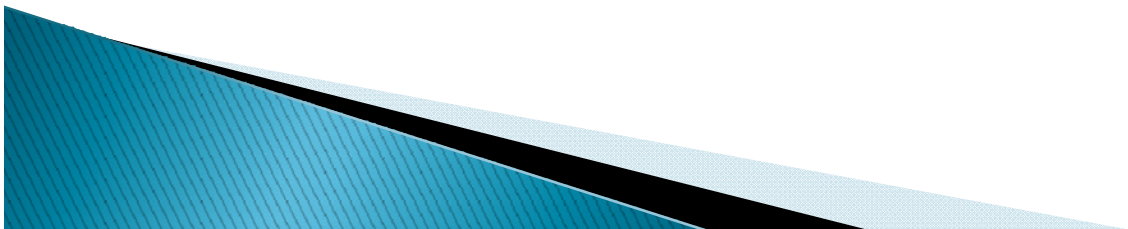


“Cultural resiliency is a term we use to describe the competencies people develop through diverse life experiences.”

“These are competencies that people who have survived have already developed and can transfer to other areas of their lives.”

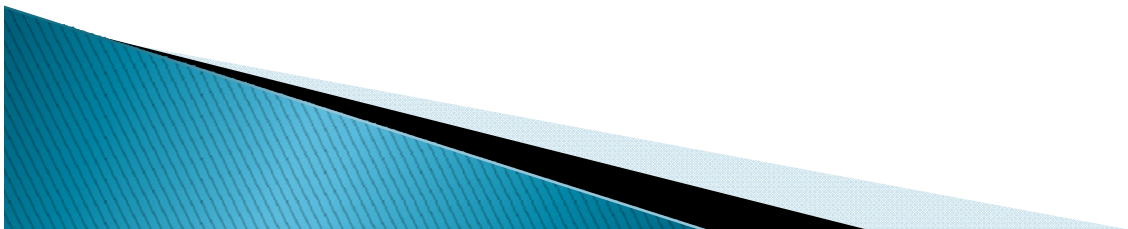
Even if a participant scored a 1 on EM subject area, maybe because they have scored a 1, they indeed have strengths and competences that helped them get to that point (succeed to even that degree).

Use those strengths. Build on them

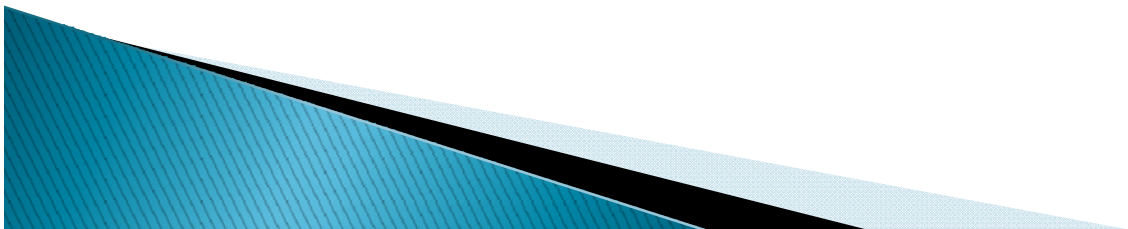




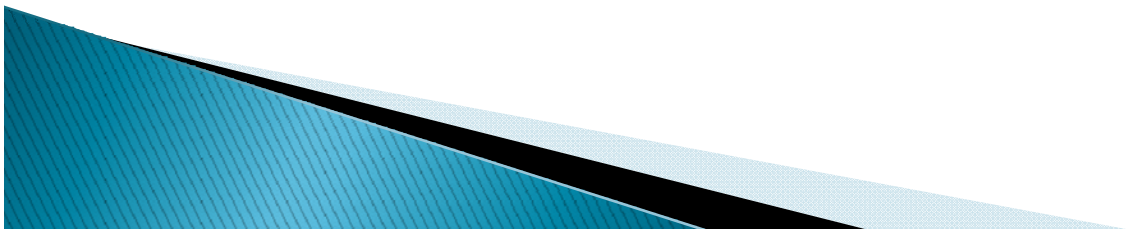
The Shocking  
Things The ES  
Manual says about  
Employment Plan  
behind her back!



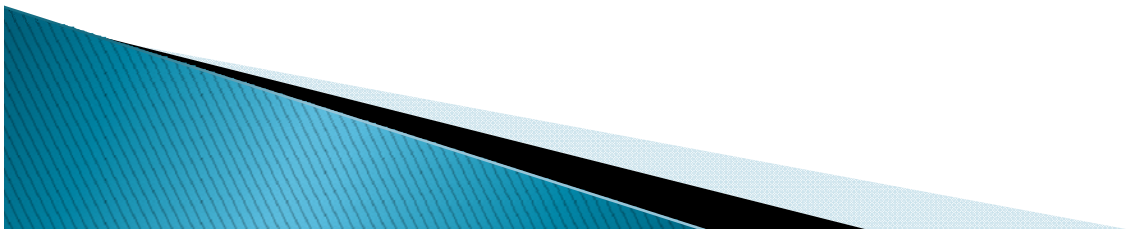
“An employment plan is a social contract between the county/ES provider and each participant.”



“All MFIP (and DWP) participants are mandatory ES participants and must develop an EP (exception regarding taking child under 12 months exemption).”



“The EP must include the participant’s overall employment goal; activities and steps necessary to reach that goal; hours of participation and a time line for each activity; expectations and measure(s) used to determine satisfactory progress; meetings with the counselor; documentation/verification requirements (relative to type of EP being created); and the support services that will be provided.”





“The function of the EP is:

- ▶ Identify the participant’s self-support and employment goals, breaking those goals into smaller objectives, and listing the steps the participant must take to achieve the goals in the shortest time reasonably possible.
- ▶ Document the partnership between the participant and the counselor, specifying what each will do and when each is expected to do it.
- ▶ Help gauge progress; serving as a tool for determining participant progress and compliance with the expectations of MFIP/DWP Employment Services.
- ▶ Identify the parameters that are used to determine non-compliance.”

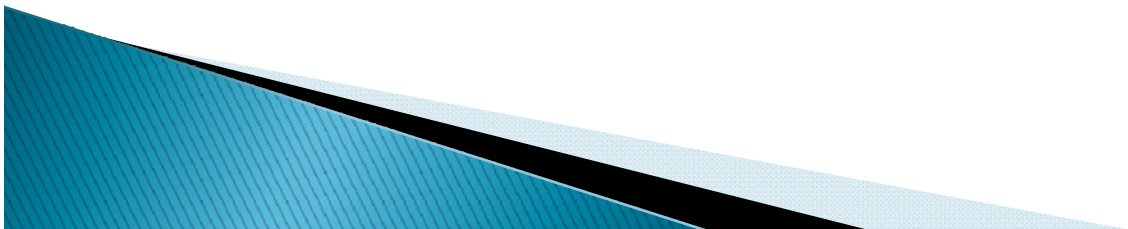


“Participants have two basic requirements:

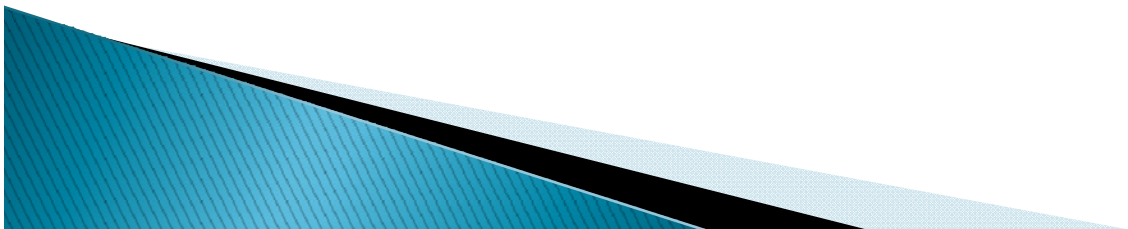
- ▶ Develop a plan
- ▶ Comply with the plan”

(Remember the revised definition?

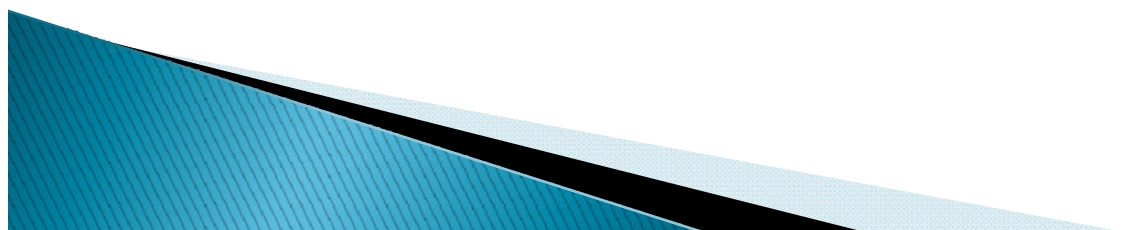
“submit or adapt (as to another’s wishes) as required or requested; to do what you been asked or ordered to do; to do what you’ve agreed to do.”



- ▶ “The number of hours in the Employment Plan must meet the requirements:
- ▶ 87 hours per month of work activities for single-parent families with a child under 6; DHS recommends writing the plans up to the equivalent of full-time work; 130 hours per month of work activities for single-parent families with no children under 6; plans should be written with at least a minimum of 31 hours a week. EP’s should include enough hours to meet participation requirements unless a compelling reason to do less is case-noted in the participant’s file.”

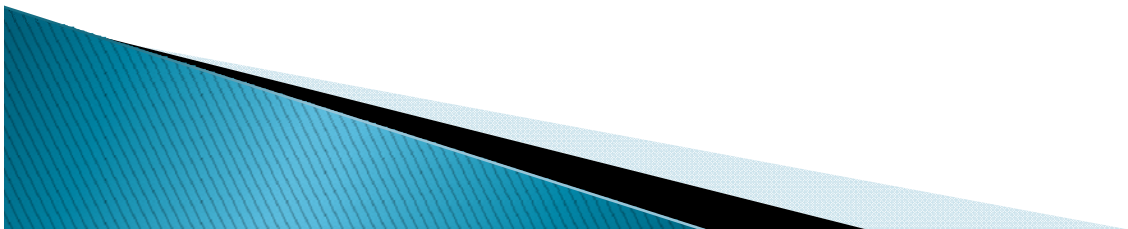


“EPs may include any allowable activity, however, participation in activities that meet core hourly requirements are a primary consideration when developing or revising an EP. Use the information in DHS ES Manual Sections 9.12.3 and 7.9.3 to determine core and non-core activity hours and as a guide to selecting activities.”



# ► Au Contraire!

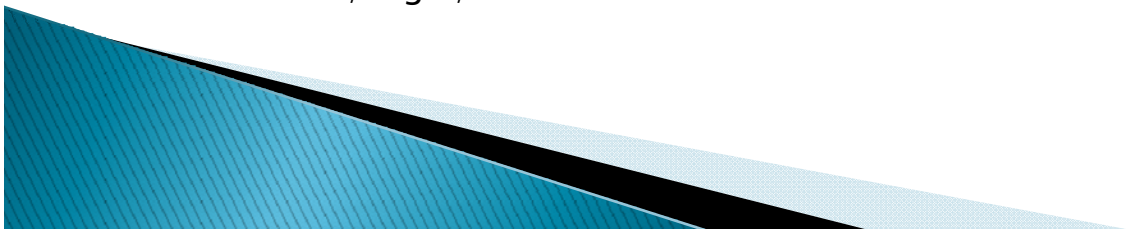
(sort of)



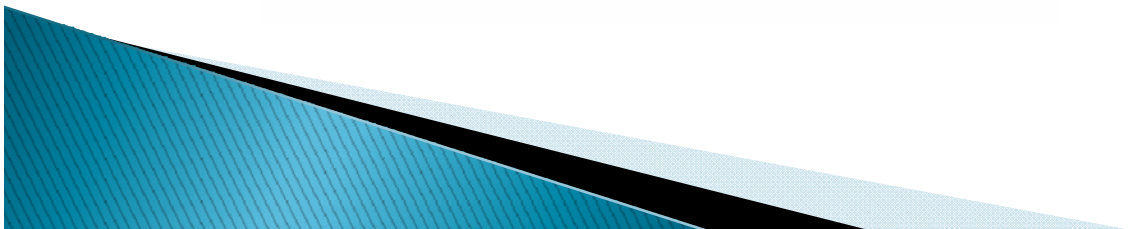


## Splitting Hairs: Activities

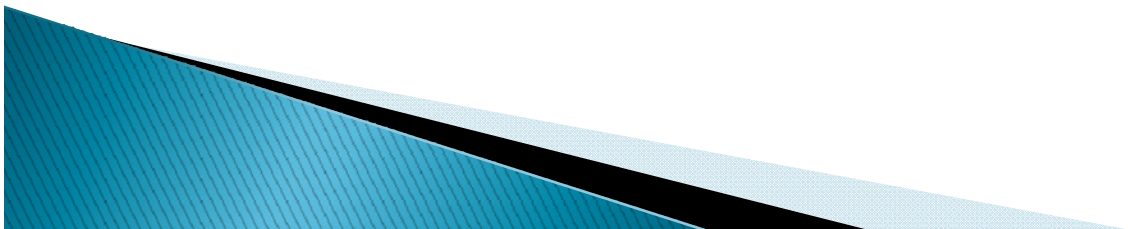
- ▶ Earlier: Put people in activities that matter
- ▶ Now, find out and apply strengths to action plan of things that matter as determined by participant, then fit into corresponding MFIP activity(ies):
  - Employment
  - Self Employment
  - OJT
  - Paid and Unpaid Work Experience
  - Job search
  - Job readiness
  - Social Services
  - Other – including enrollment into the Disparities Reduction Strategy Services (DRS) Program (beginning March)
  - Training and Education
  - GED
  - Post Secondary Training and Education
  - Assessment
  - ESL and Functional Work Literacy
  - Social/Legal/Health Related



This is an upside down MFIP/DWP shoehorn. It is the new way we want to use it.

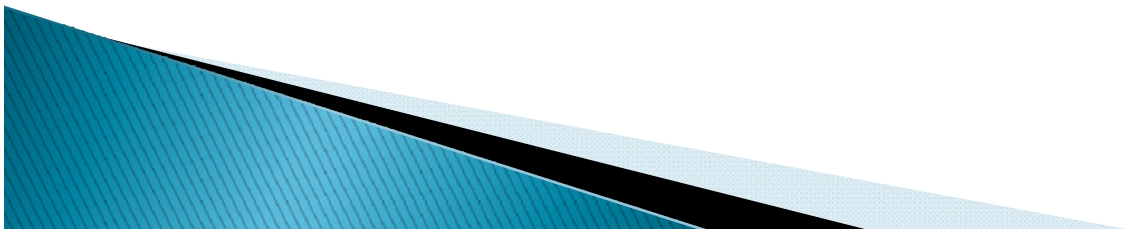


In the direction in which we are heading, we will want to have the participant identify their strengths and goals (and actions steps activities meaningful to meeting the employment plan goals), then the counselor can shoe-horn the MFIP activities to fit the participant.



## What WFS Says About EPs

- ▶ What DHS said, and
- ▶ Should be the tool that participants refer to know what they can do on their own to make things better.
- ▶ Components of a strong EP include participant defined goals, sub-tasks that matter, reliance on/use of self-identified strengths, and participant time investment (hours).



## More DHS Speak About EP: Goals

- ▶ “Goals are:
  - Specific: describe the goal in such a way that you will know when it has been reached.
  - Realistic: the goal must represent a measurable step toward self-sufficiency (or safety for DVW) and must be acceptable to you and participant
  - Achievable: the goal must be within the participant’s abilities – it must not require resources beyond what you can provide.

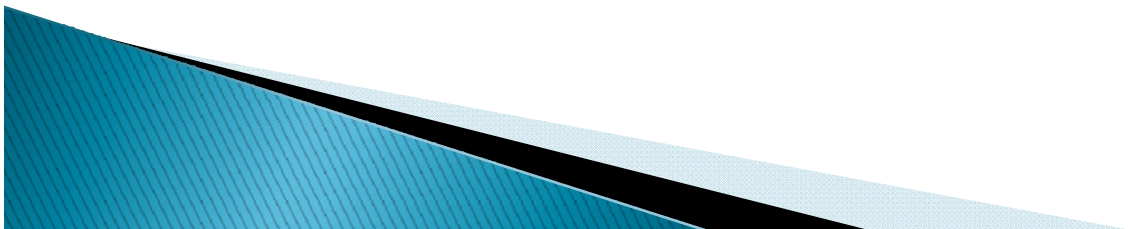




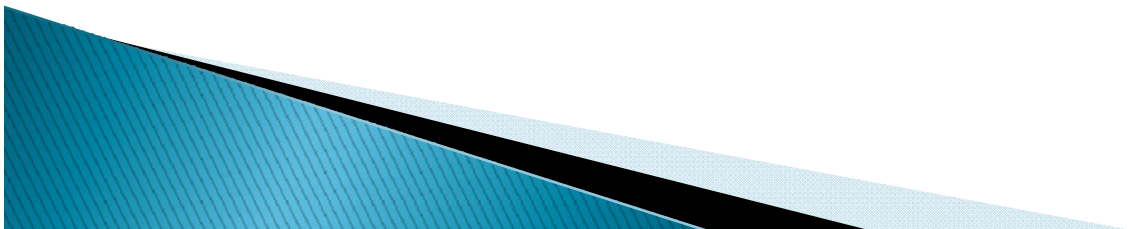
# SMART:

## Another Goal Frame:

- ▶ Goals are:
  - S for Specific
  - M for measureable
  - A for attainable
  - R for realistic
  - T for time bound

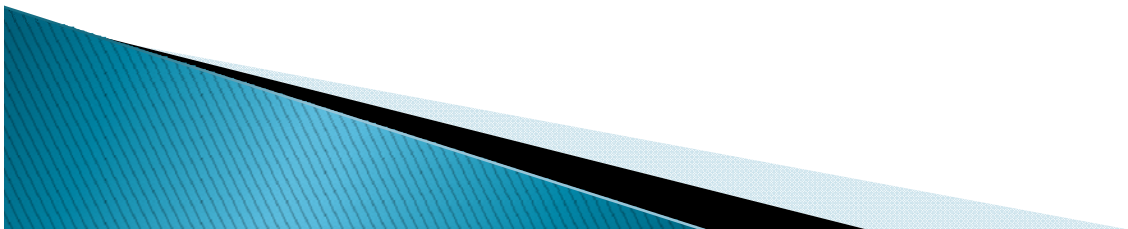


# 10 Minute Break



## WF1 Employment Plans

- ▶ Goals, Interests, Strengths Sections
- ▶ Comment Section on Main page
- ▶ Comment Section With in Each of Nine Plan Sections
- ▶ Drop Down Boxes of the Plan Sections



### Goals

☒ Goals for Family

☒ Job Interests

☒ Strengths

### Active Plan Sections

Add section of plan None Selected

Add Section

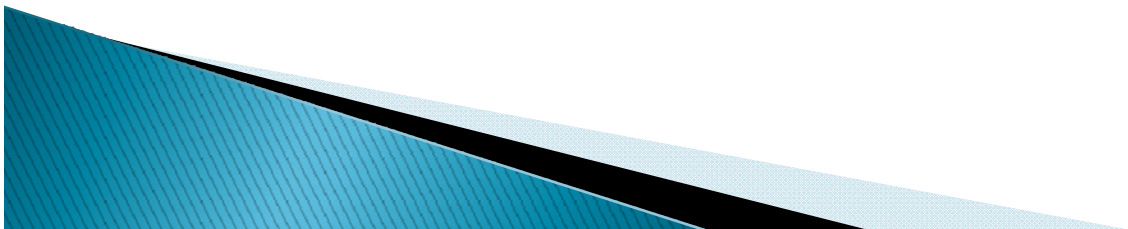
**Note:** Once Employment Plan status is Active, sections may no longer be added, deleted or edited. A new plan must be created.

### Comments

I agree to participate in the following activities

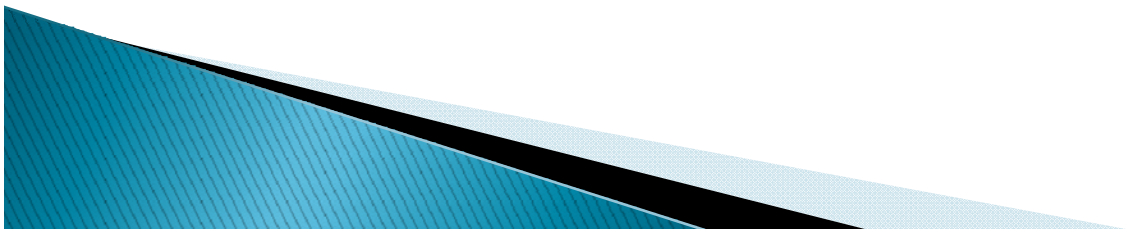
hours per day for a total of

hours per week.



## Review of Employment Plans

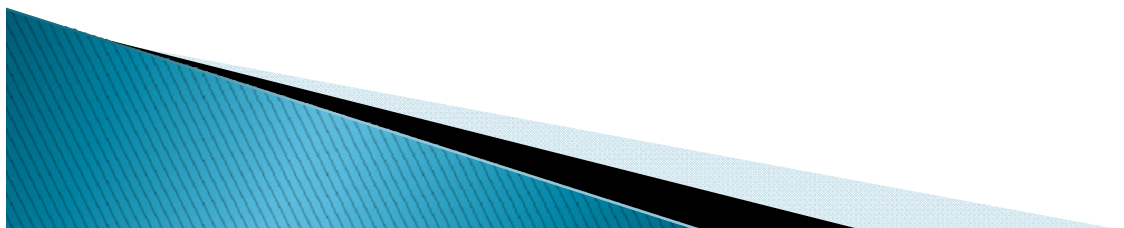
- ▶ All had something in Goal, Interests and Strengths Section
- ▶ 6 % had no plan
- ▶ 40% were FSS
- ▶ 60% were regular
- ▶ FSS hours 1–25
- ▶ Reg hrs 20–35





# Goals

<p>Provide for son Find stable employment to support family. Get off MFIP Working To secure child care by end of month To be self-sufficient with stable job Further education To stabilize health, work FT, earn enough to leave Work FT, have financial stability Continue job searching, become registered as cc provider 1. Gain stable employment. 2. Go school Maintain employment Get custody of child. Find a career. Take care and provide for family, go to school, obtain FT employment, and be self-sufficient Find housing, exploring options, apply housing programs, stabilize health, Find better job and better life for family.</p>	<p>Get driver's license, get GED, get car. Get GED Care for child's health, seek expungement, learn about jobs, learn parenting Continue medical treatment and apply for SSI Maintain PT employment and secure FT job. Learn about stabilizing health and influencing children's enrollment in treatment Secure permanent housing, get job, support family Secure FT work and leave MFIP Finish GED, go to college, help 16 year old finish school Stable employment and higher income. Stabilize employment and get off MFIP.</p>	<p>Maintain health Become a teacher Get assistance to study and prepare for Accuplacer test, research college programs, and network Find bigger housing. Get job for holidays Finish school and get good job Find housing and get income stabilize Stabilize family life To find employment Long term: live with family in own place; short-term finish school, find employment Go to school/college. Start a business. P long-term goal of living w/ family in own place and financially stable; short-term finish school and find employment. Stabilize: get employment, larger home, kids through school, kids prepared for college, then self-employed</p>
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Hours

A few without hours

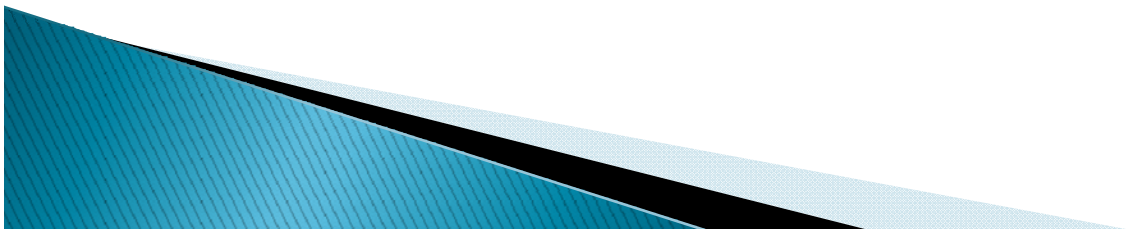
Most regular EPs that should have  
been for 87, were

Not all 130 hour plans were

1 Reduced Hours plan

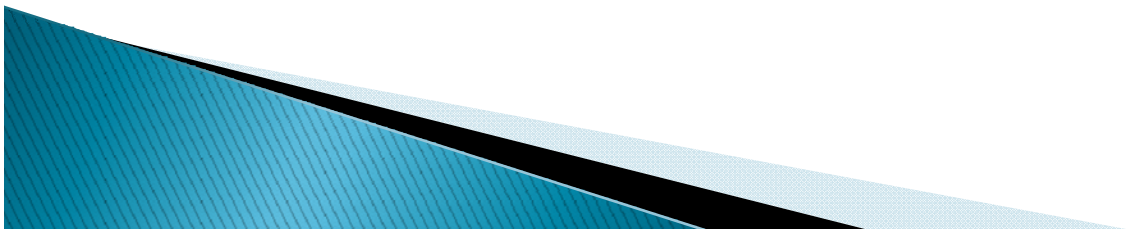
Almost half the FSS had two or less  
hours

Hours did not always add up.



## Comments

- ▶ Many did not use the comments section
- ▶ Most of the time when used it was a reiteration or clarification of the rules.
- ▶ Not surprisingly, none of the EPs linked a strength to a task or goal.
- ▶ About 35% didn't link the action to the goal
- ▶ Not infrequent to see little use (in some case no use) of the power of the drop down boxes or those Other or comment sections



☐ I agree to participate in the following activities  hours per day for a total  
of   
hours per week.

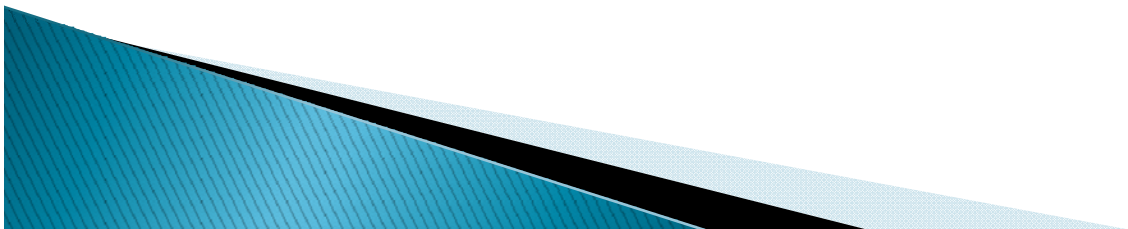
☐ I agree to turn in completed activity log no less frequently than:

☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Bi-weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Other

Comments

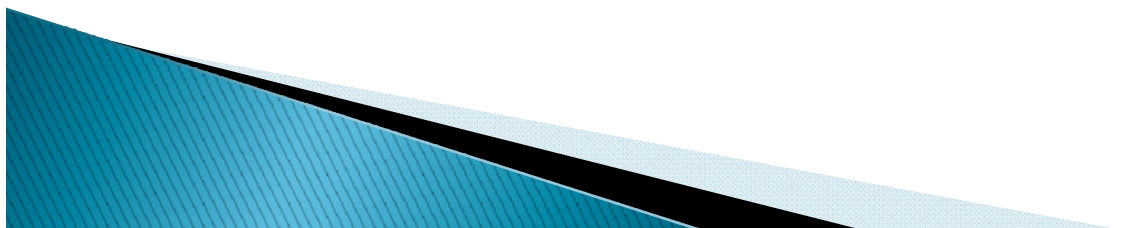
☐ I understand that incomplete activity logs may not be accepted and that my activity log must contain the following information:

- date and time of each employment contact
- type of contact
- position interested in
- status of the contact
- name of employer/business
- contact information of employer/business
- my signature stating that the activity log and hours are accurate



# Strengths

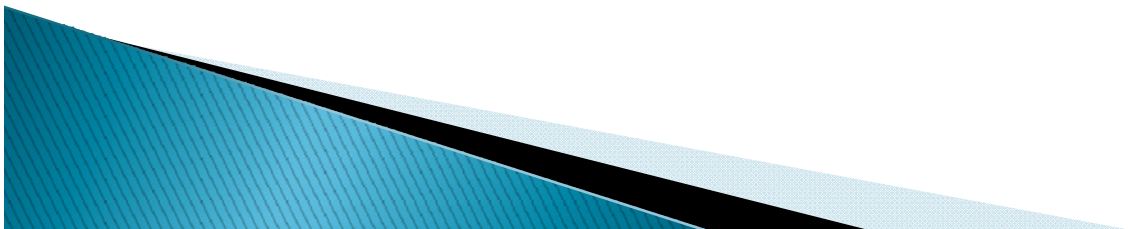
<p>Communication 6          Good with children 2          Hardworker 14          People person 8          Integrity          Motivated 4          On time          Responsible          Leader 3          Reliable 6          Patient 3          Non-judging          Well educated          Dependable 4          Good management skills          Good listener 2          Time management          Fast learner 3          Positive 3          Likes people 2          Soft skills</p>	<p>Assertiveness          Well organized 2          Detailed          Customer service 2          Desire for better days          Artistic          Hand's on          Get along with others 2          Likes to learn          Dealing with stress/copes well 2          Energized to get stuff done          Fast reaction time          Take pride in work          Protective          Supportive          Go extra mile          Planning ahead          Follows instructions          Team player          Goal oriented          Open minded</p>	<p>Dedicated 3          Happy          Healthy          Smart          Honest          Bubbly          Out-going          Determined          Sense of humor          Timely 2          Good mother          Informed          Keeps busy          Cooks          Cleans          Drives          Has certificate          Nursing experience</p>
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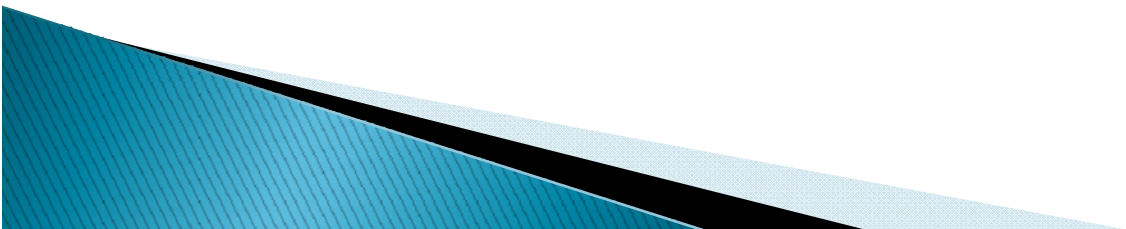


## What About Other Strengths?

- ▶ Accurate
- ▶ Adroit
- ▶ Aggressive
- ▶ Appreciative
- ▶ Convivial
- ▶ Cool-headed
- ▶ Curious
- ▶ Skilled with sharp objects

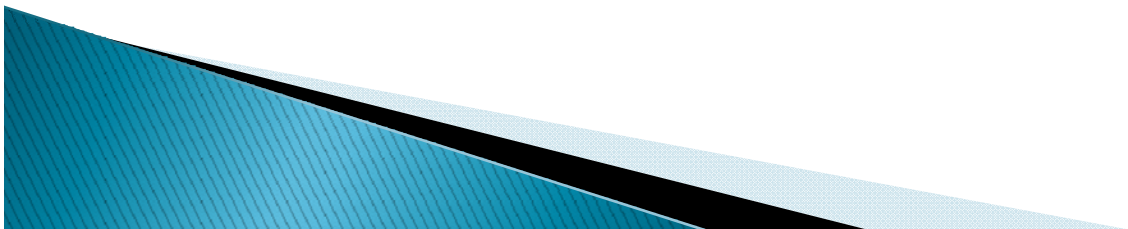


How might we start linking  
strengths to the goals?  
Any assessment but EM  
might work well.  
Goals Plus Strengths



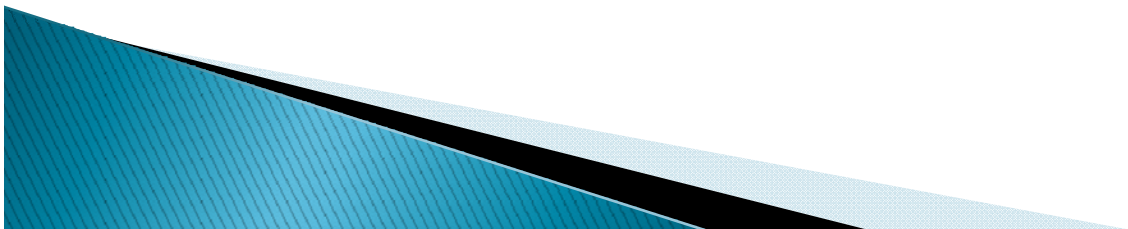
## Two Legs of A Three-legged Stool

- ▶ On slide 16 of his slide set, Kelly pointed out that despite the intention of the ES Manual to link EM and MI, the manual doesn't suggest a way to elicit or capture the participant's description of their strengths. Kelly made a suggestion that is simple and brilliant two step process.



# 1. Ask. Observe.

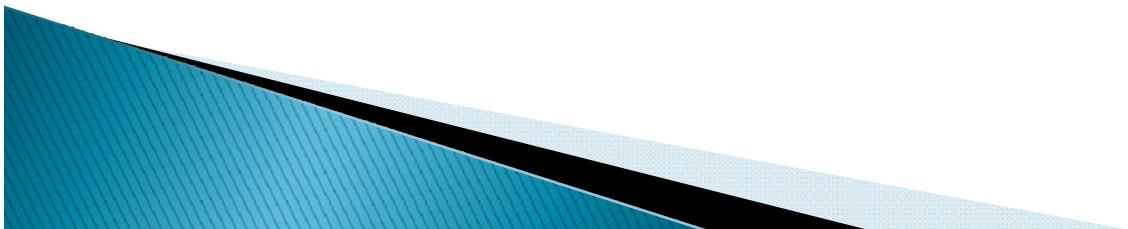
Kelly suggests to use the open ended questioning of MI (or the permission asking and observation stating functions of MI) to draw out the participant's description of their strength.



## 2. Use.

When the participant chooses activities for his or her EP, help them insert the strengths as a strategy of their action steps. Consider a variation of:

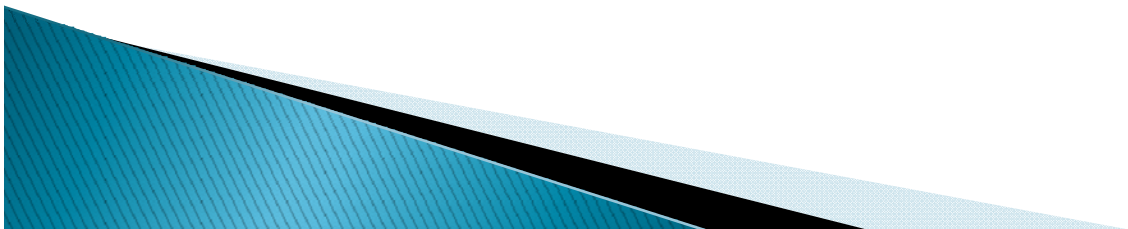
“In order to meet my goal of \_\_\_\_\_, I’ll use my strengths of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”



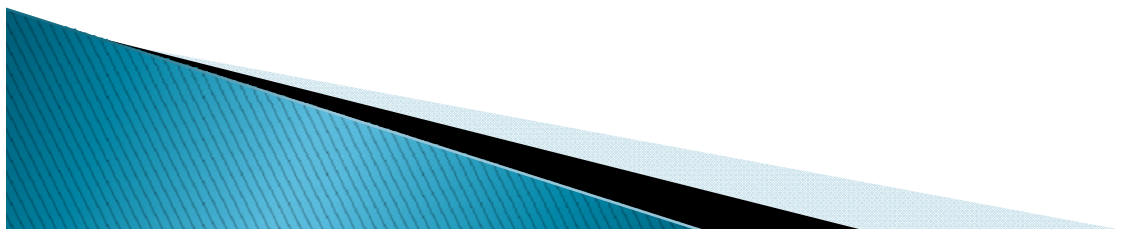
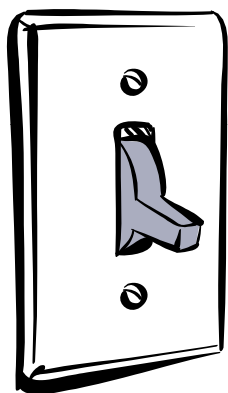


# Exercise:

Using an example from EM, work as a group to identify a reasonable goal to help a participant move from a score of 1 to a score of 2 (or 3). Make sure the goals are clear and follow the principle of either the DHS criteria or SMART criteria. Include at least one strength (several have been provided) into the goal or an action step. List five action steps. The paper on your table will make this exercise clearer. We'll ask for volunteers to share your results.

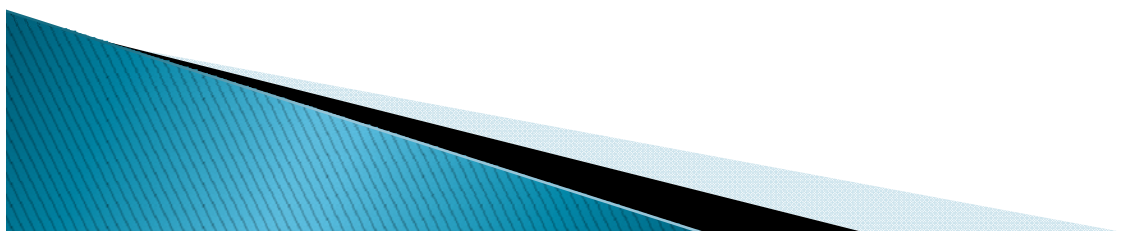
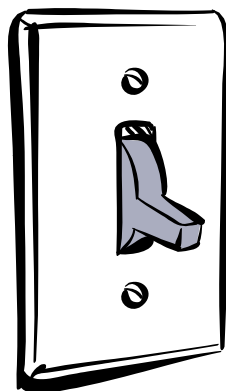


This is a light switch.

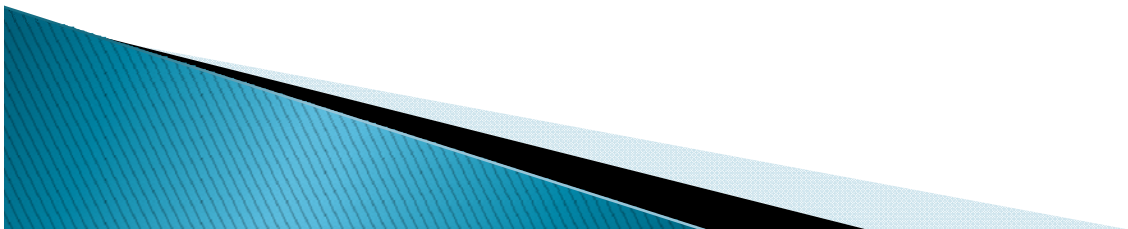




Light's on.



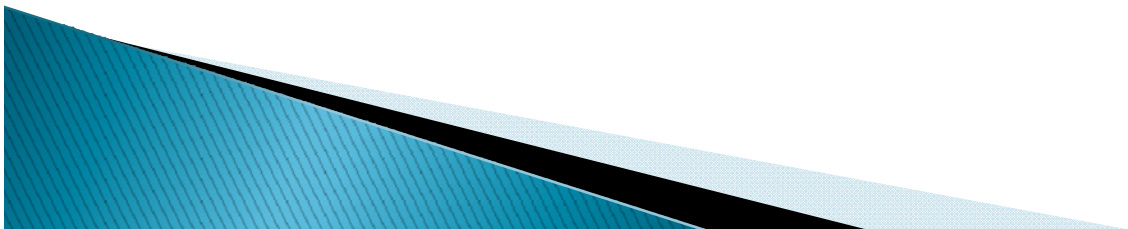
# Start Small





## Now: Pilot Tool in WFS Assisted Services

- ▶ October 30, 2014  
Workshop
- ▶ Until then, consider and experiment with making goals more specific, identifying strengths and tying them to goal steps.
- ▶ Ask. Observe. Use. Know.





# LET'S SUMMARIZE





# STRENGTHS BASED APPROACH

Focuses on the participant's assets, resources and resiliency





# STRENGTHS BASED

- works well with EM and MI
- is one way to support self-determination
- you play a big role, asking, listening, using info



# IN STRENGTHS BASED

- understand and cultivate strengths
- increase vocabularies
- use WF1 EP comments to support
- write down your support/encouragement
- ruminate and percolate





# IN STRENGTHS BASED

- participant pairs strengths and goal
- participant describes actions to goal
- you support in this process







# ASK

"what strengths do you think you used?"







# THEN LISTEN

and use their words



A high-speed photograph of a water droplet hitting a surface, creating a crown-shaped splash. The background is a solid, deep blue. The text 'START OR EXPAND SMALL' is written in a white, serif font across the center of the image, overlaid on a dark blue horizontal band.

# START OR EXPAND SMALL







# MORE THAN SKILLS

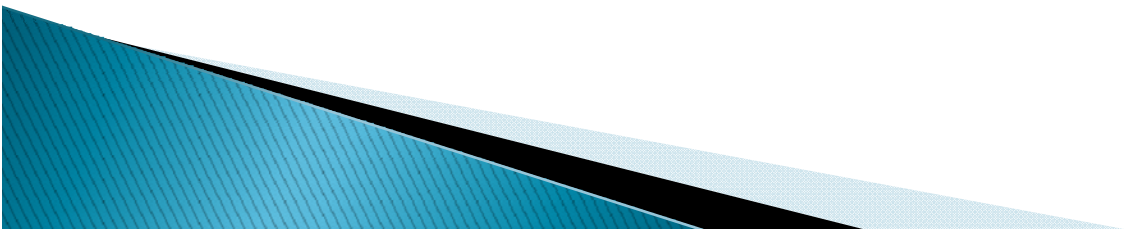
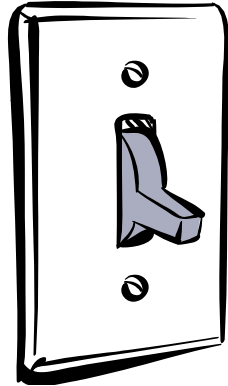
Strengths are biggest



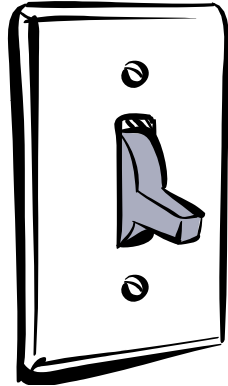
The background of the slide is a dark blue field filled with numerous out-of-focus light circles, known as bokeh. These circles vary in size and color, with shades of light blue, cyan, and a few warmer orange and yellow tones. A semi-transparent dark blue horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the main text.

# QUESTIONS?

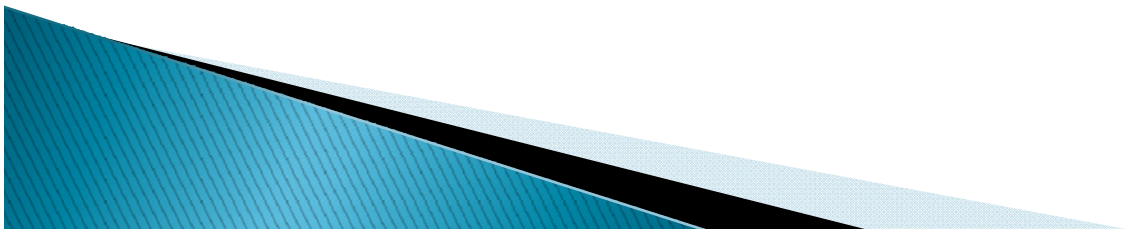
- ▶ This is the light switch, again.



We're done



- ▶ Last one out the room,  
please turn out the lights



# Thank You

- ▶ Questions/suggestions call your agency planner

Kelly Sangster, ~~Planner~~ Volunteer

Bruce Casselton, Planner

MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manager

651-779-5650

[Bruce.casselton@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:Bruce.casselton@co.ramsey.mn.us)

