

Analysing Environmental Strengths

📍 Strengths

⌚ 15-30min.

>You

Tool Description

Instructions

Step 1: Identify the problem or goal

Identify a goal that you are currently aiming to achieve or a problem that you are trying to deal with. Briefly describe the goal/problem in the Social Network Analysis Form, on p. 6 under “Goal/Problem Description”.

Step 2: Analyse the supportive social network

Next, try to find out which people in your social network can be considered as environmental strengths: people who can offer emotional, instrumental, informational and/or companionship support. The four types of support are listed below, including a description of each type and possible questions that can be posed to identify people in your network who offer each type of support.

On the Social Network Analysis Form, use Table 1, “Social Support Network Analysis” on p. 7 to list the names of people who can offer one or more types of support.

A. Emotional support

Emotional support are the people in your social network who offer empathy, concern, affection, love, trust, acceptance, intimacy, encouragement, or caring. They provide warmth and nurturance and let you know that you are valued.

- With whom can you share your most private worries and fears?
- With whom can you totally be yourself?
- Who is genuinely interested in you?
- When you feel lonely, who can you talk to?
- Who do you feel really appreciates you as a person?
- Who can you really count on to help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense?
- Who will comfort you when you need it by holding you in their arms?
- Who accepts you totally, including both your worst and your best aspects?
- Who can you count on to listen openly and uncritically to your innermost feelings?
- Who do you feel truly loves you deeply?
- Who can you really count on to care about you, regardless of what is happening to you?

B. Informational support

Informational support are the people who provide advice, guidance, suggestions, or useful information to you. The information they provide can help you to solve your problem or reach your goal.

- Who can you turn to for advice about handling problems?
- Who can you turn to for advice about how to reach your current goals?

- Who can you really count on to give you useful suggestions that help you avoid making mistakes?
- Who may share useful insights that can help you reach your goals? This might, for example, be a person who has already reached this goal.

C. Instrumental support

Instrumental support are the people who provide financial assistance, material goods, or services. This form of social support encompasses the concrete, direct ways in which these people assist you.

In order to achieve your goal or solve your problem, there may be practical things that need to be taken care of. For instance, you may need ride to the hospital or need help fixing your computer or you may need financial assistance to realise a plan.

- Who can you turn to for help with these practical issues?
- Consider the practical issues that you find difficult or burdensome to do yourself. Who can help you with this?

D. Companionship support

Companionship support are the people who give you a sense of social belonging. These people are your companions: you can engage with them in shared social activities.

- Who do you enjoy spending time with?
- Who are the people with whom you (regularly) go out and do things?
- Who are the people you can have fun with?
- Who do you share a passion or interest with?
- Who are the people who enjoy the same things you do?

Step 3: Discuss how the social network may positively contribute to the problem or goal

- Analyse the current problem/goal. Try to identify as many aspects of the problem/goal that you feels need attention.
- List these aspects in the first column of Table 2, "Contributions of the social network to the problem/goal" on p. 8 of the Social Network Analysis Form.
- Next, consider each aspect of the goal/problem and identify what type of support is needed to deal effectively with this aspect. Use the second column of Table 2 for this purpose.
- Then, use the names in Table 1 to select people in your social network to whom you may turn for this type of support. List the names in column 3 of Table 2.
- Finally, briefly discuss how each person may specifically assist you in dealing with each of the aspects of the problem/goal and list the answers in column 4 of Table 2.

Imagine your goal is to start your own business.

An example of step 3 is provided below:

| <i>Aspect of the goal/problem</i> | <i>Type of support needed</i> | <i>Who can help me with this?</i> | <i>How can he/she help me</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| I tend to get stressed easily | Emotional support | Brother | My brother is calm and emotionally stable. I can call him or visit him when stressed. |
| I don't feel I am well informed about the financial risks of running a company | Informational support | Marianna Silsbee | She has been running her own company for years. She can tell me how she managed the financial risks. |

Step 4: Actively involving the social network

Now, take a look at Table 2. Discuss what concrete steps you can take to involve these people more actively in order to deal more effectively with the problem at hand or to reach the goal. List these concrete action steps in the Social Network Analysis Form on p. 9.

The following questions may help to generate these action steps:



Which elements of the problem/goal are most compelling for you to address?

What can you do to involve one or more individuals in your social network in the next week, that will move you (more) towards your goal/help you solve your problem?

What would help making the first step easier?



Appendix: Social Network Analysis Form

Goal/ Problem Description

Client Name:

Goal/ Problem:

Table 1: Social Support Network Analysis

A) Emotional support

People who provide love and care for you.

B) Informational support

People who provide information or advice needed to solve problems or reach goals.

Names:

Names:

C) Instrumental support

People who provide financial assistance, material goods, or services.

D) Companionship support

People who engage in shared social activities.

Names:

Names:

Table 2: Contributions of the social network to the resolution of the problem or to the achievement of the goal



Action Steps:

The following action steps will be taken to actively involve my social network in order to help me resolve my problem/reach my goal: