

PREPARATION FOR CHANGE: THE TOWER OF STRENGTHS AND THE WEEKLY PLANNER

Tiffiny L. Sia, Ph.D.,
Michael Czuchry, Ph.D.,
Donald F. Dansereau, Ph.D.,
and Jason Blankenship, MA,

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For more information, please contact:

Institute of Behavioral Research
Texas Christian University
TCU Box 298740
Fort Worth, TX 76129
(817) 257-7226
(817) 257-7290 FAX
Email: ibr@tcu.edu
Web site: www.ibr.tcu.edu

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PREFACE

This manual introduces two card-sorting activities that counselors can use with their clients to help them enrich self-esteem, maintain motivation (*The Tower of Strengths*), and remember personal goals through quotes (*The Weekly Planner*). Both activities are meant to be used early in treatment to enhance motivation and encourage openness to treatment. These activities are a part of the treatment readiness training program. This program, which has its roots in the NIDA-sponsored Drug Abuse Treatment Assessment and Research (DATAR) and Cognitive Enhancements for the Treatment of Probationers (CETOP) projects, is designed to enhance motivation, self-efficacy, and personal resources for making the most out of drug abuse treatment. Additional information on the TCU treatment readiness training program is presented in a manual edited by Dees and Dansereau (1997).

The Activities

The Tower of Strengths is a card-sorting activity in which people assess the strengths they currently possess and choose ideal strengths they would like to develop. *The Weekly Planner* is a card-sorting activity in which people choose motivational quotes to help remind them of and motivate them toward their personal goals. Both *The Tower of Strengths* and *The Weekly Planner* have been field tested with college students, clients, counselors, and scientists.

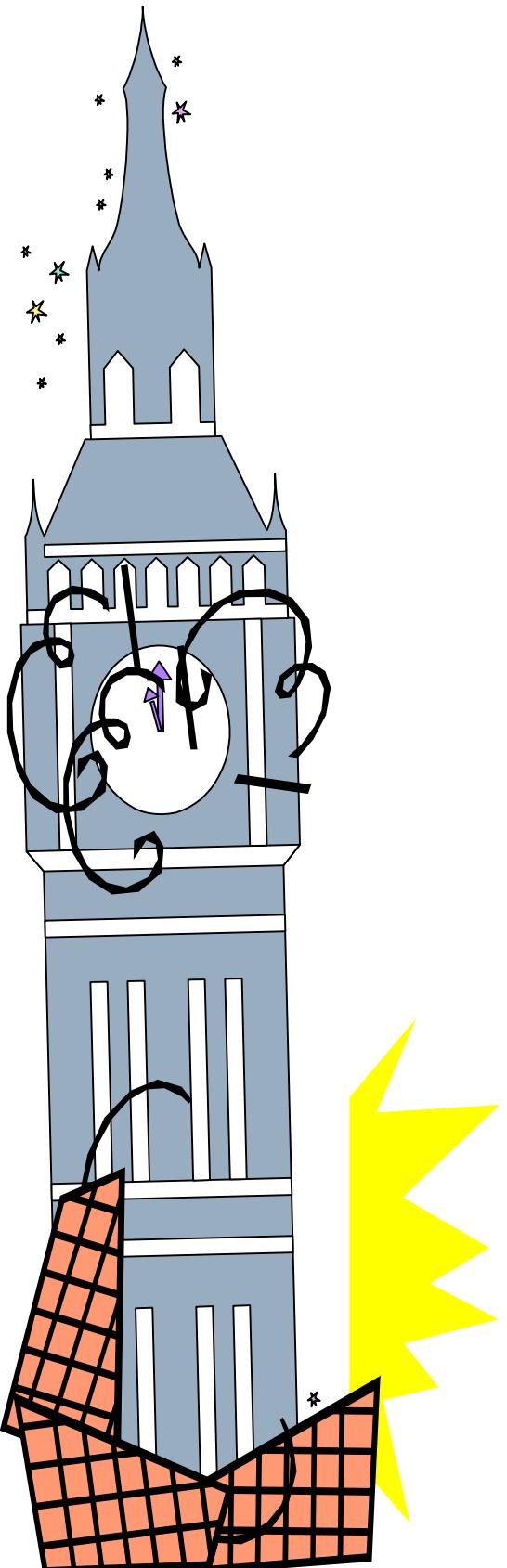
The Manual: In Brief

The manual provides detailed instructions and essential materials for the creation of both activities (some assembly required). The introduction presents the rationale behind using card-sorting activities and how the activities have been tested and used. Section 1 provides detailed instructions on how to set up and use *The Tower of Strengths* activity. Section 2 provides detailed instructions on how to set up and use *The Weekly Planner* activity. The appendices contain the main components of both activities (maps, cards, instructions, and discussion topics).

Additional Manuals

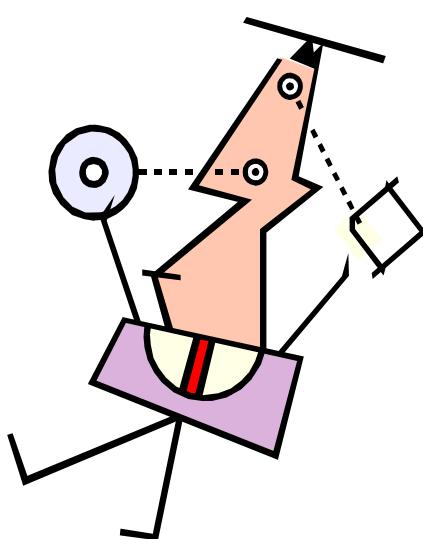
We hope that you find *The Tower of Strengths* and *The Weekly Planner* to be useful adjuncts to your own counseling strategies. We also are developing manuals for *The Downward Spiral*, a board game designed to depict realistic consequences that could occur to an individual who continues to abuse drugs. In addition to health and financial/legal risks associated with continued drug abuse, players learn how drug abuse affects family, friends, and one's sense of self-worth and personal accomplishments. There are two versions of *The Downward Spiral*. *The Original Downward Spiral* is aimed at people who are already involved in substance abuse. This version includes consequences associated with a wide array of drugs (i.e., heroin, crack, cocaine, LSD, crystal meth, inhalants, marijuana, and alcohol). *The Downward Spiral: College Version* deals with substance abuse issues college students may face. The college version focuses more heavily on alcohol abuse, although other drugs also are addressed.

Other activities for motivating clients early in treatment can be found in a manual developed for counselors as part of a grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (see Dees & Dansereau, 1997, for more information). The Institute of Behavioral Research has been involved in developing strategies for improving treatment process and outcomes (For review, see Simpson, Joe, Dansereau, & Chatham, 1997). Additional manuals developed by the Institute of Behavioral Research at Texas Christian University include *Mapping New Roads to Recovery: Cognitive Enhancements to Counseling; Time Out! For me: An Assertiveness/Sexuality Workshop Specially Designed for Women; Time Out! For Me: A Communications Skills/Sexuality Workshop for Men; Approaches to HIV/AIDS Education in Drug Treatment*; and *Straight Ahead: Transition Skills for Recovery*. Copies of these materials are available through Lighthouse Institute, a nonprofit division of Chestnut Health Systems in Bloomington, Illinois. To order call (309) 827-6026, or visit their website at www.chestnut.org.



SECTION 1

HOW TO SET UP AND USE THE TOWER OF *STRENGTHS* **ACTIVITY***



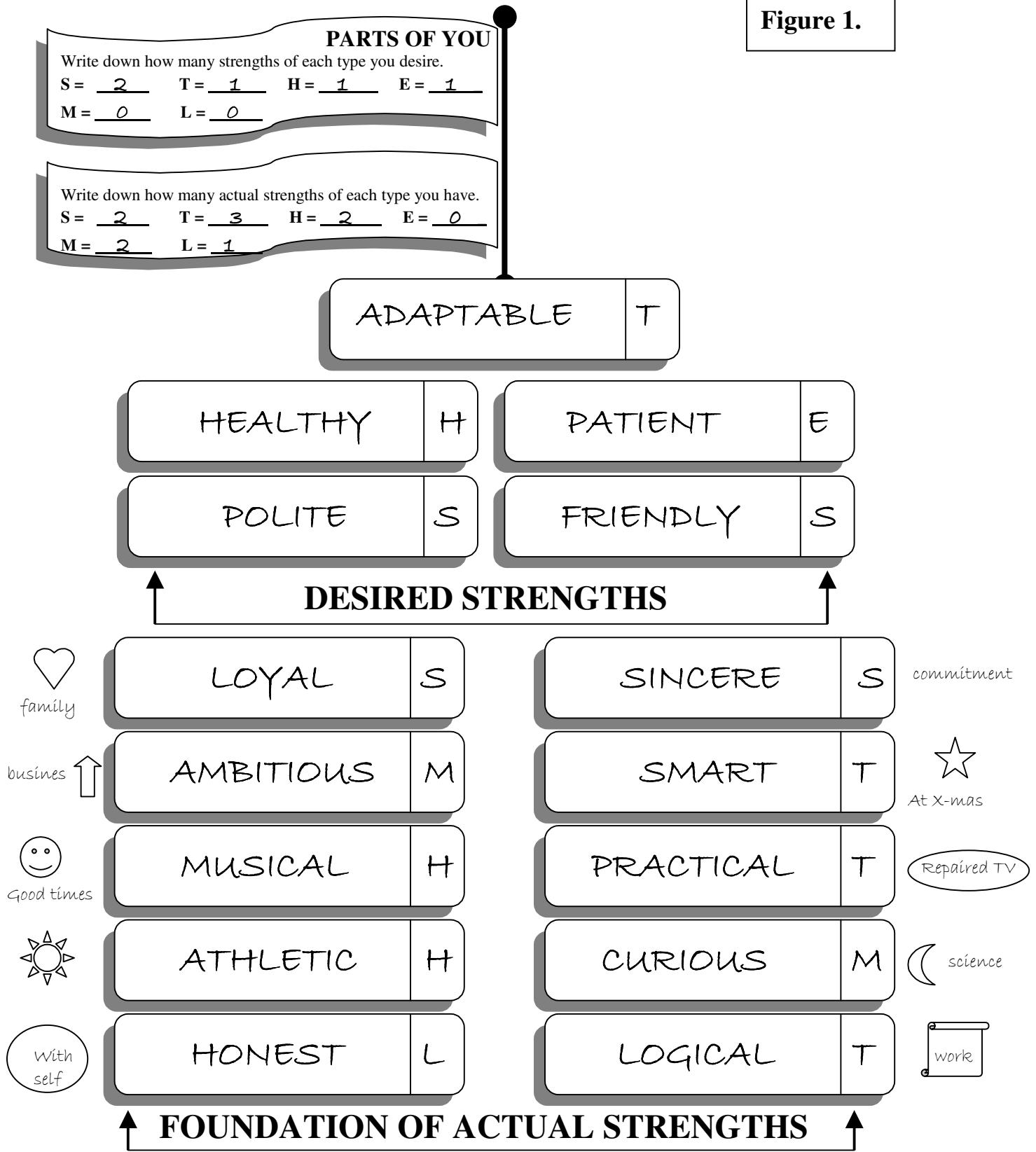
- * Some of our readers may want information on how the activities were developed, tested and used. Feel free to skip ahead to Section 3: Background Information.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITY

The Tower of Strengths (Figure 1) on the next page has been filled out to serve as an example when instructing people how to complete this task. It can be copied and/or made into an overhead. To suit variations in aesthetic tastes, copies of different styles of blank "*Tower*" maps are included in Appendix A (pp. 30-33).

Ten strengths that a person already has are selected from a set of 60 pro-social cards (see pp. 34-41 in Appendix A) and then written into the "Foundation of Actual Strengths" on *The Tower* map along with the associated letters that are found on each card. The letters stand for different parts of the self that the strengths reflect. These are called "parts of you," and are described on an explanation sheet (pg. 29 of Appendix A). After reading the "parts of you" explanation sheet, the existing strength summary is filled in on the bottom flag of *The Tower*. Each participant draws a picture or writes a brief phrase to serve as a personal reminder of when it has been successfully used in the past. Five desired strengths are then selected and written, with their associated letters, on the upper part of *The Tower*. Finally, the "parts of you" summary of desired strengths is written in on the top flag on top of *The Tower*.

Figure 1.



WHAT DO I NEED TO SET UP THE TOWER OF STRENGTHS

Each *Tower of Strengths* set consists of a *Tower of Strengths* map, a strengths card deck, a "parts of you" explanation sheet, an instruction sheet, and something to write with.

The Tower of Strengths Maps (Pages 30-33)

The Tower of Strengths map contains 15 boxes that are to be filled in with personal strengths from the card deck. The bottom 10 boxes are to be filled in with strengths the participant currently has (existing strengths) and the 5 boxes at the top are to be filled in with strengths the participant would like to have (desired strengths). The summary flags on the top of *The Tower of Strengths* are filled in with how many desired and existing strengths from each of the "parts of you" a person has chosen. Strength card types are indicated by the letter on each card and described on the "parts of you" explanation sheet (p. 29). Pages 30-33 of Appendix A have several different *Tower of Strengths* maps to choose from. We include several versions so that each *Tower of Strengths* can be aesthetically appealing and unique.

The Strengths Card Deck (Pages 34-42)

The strengths card deck consists of 60 different strength cards (pp. 34-40). The cards should be printed in different colors to symbolize six different parts of the self (social, thinking, health/performance, emotional, motivational, and life view). We also include a page of blank cards so that more strength cards can be added to the deck if desired (p. 41). A strength list is included also for situations in which using a card deck is not convenient (p. 42).

A "Parts of You" Explanation Sheet (Page 29)

A "parts of you" explanation sheet is included in Appendix A. This explanation sheet explains the parts of self that the strength cards come from (indicated by the letter on each card). Participants can then see in which parts of themselves they are strongest and weakest.

The Instruction Sheets (Page 26-28)

An instruction sheet for participants (p. 27) and a procedure sheet for counselors (p. 28) is included in Appendix A. The instruction sheet should be passed out to each participant. The counselor procedure sheet is helpful if you are doing this activity in a group.

Some additional materials are needed that are not included in the manual. They are:

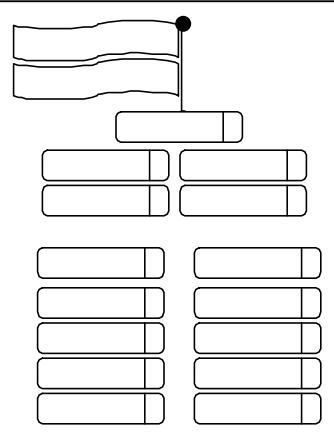
- access to a copy machine *Note: Some copy machines cannot use cardstock. Find out the types of paper your copy machine can handle before buying paper.*
- 8.5" x 11" regular weight paper for *The Tower of Strengths* Map, the "parts of you" explanation sheet, the instruction sheet, and the counselor procedure sheet (3 pieces of paper per *Tower of Strengths* set, plus one for the procedure sheet)
- red, white, green, yellow, blue, and purple cardstock for the strengths cards (1 piece of paper of each color per card set). Plain white can be used for all decks, if colored cardstock is not available.
- scissors to cut out the cards
- a rubber band to hold the deck together
- a pen or pencil *Note: Since participants sometimes like to decorate their Tower maps creatively, providing crayons, felt pens, or calligraphy pens is often useful.*

HOW DO I SET IT UP?

First decide how many *Tower of Strengths* sets you would like to make initially. You will want to multiply "the recipe" by that number. Copy out of the manual the "parts of you" explanation sheet, your *Tower of Strengths* map preference, and the instruction sheet. Copy as many of these as needed on regular 8.5" x 11" paper. Keep the originals in good shape so that new decks can be made whenever needed.

Carefully copy the six pages of strength cards. Each of the pages of strength cards tells you which color cardstock to use. Copy the strengths onto the appropriate color cardstock (e.g., the social strengths page is copied onto red cardstock, the cognitive strengths page is copied onto white cardstock, etc.). If for some reason you cannot use cardstock, regular colored paper can be used. However, we do not recommend regular paper for the cards because the card deck will be rather flimsy and unlikely to last long. If this is an issue, cards made on regular paper can be protected by lamination, using a protective spray, or by covering the cards in transparent shelf paper (make certain you do this before cutting the cards out).

Cut the cards on the dotted lines and assemble the card deck. Shuffle the different colors together. If you are making more than one deck, make certain each deck has all 60 strengths from the different areas of self. Then put a rubber band around each deck, include something to write with, and you are done! A step-by-step checklist is included for your convenience on page 25 of Appendix A.



Tower of Strengths Map

HOW DO I USE THE TOWER OF STRENGTHS?

Give each person who is participating 1) *a Tower of Strengths* map, 2) a strengths card deck, 3) an instruction sheet, 4) the "parts of you" explanation sheet, and 5) something to write with. The counselor procedure sheet gives detailed instructions (p. 28 of Appendix A). Have participants put all of the materials except the strength card deck out of the way. Explain that the purpose of *The Tower of Strengths* is to consider existing strengths and strengths that would be useful to develop. Then have them go through the card deck and choose 10 strengths that describe them. These should be their 10 most important strengths.

Next, have the participants take out *The Tower of Strengths* map. Have them write their 10 strengths and the associated letters (from the right side of each card) in the 10 boxes at the bottom of the page (The Foundation of Actual Strengths). The "parts of you" explanation sheet will tell what each letter stands for. Mention that the flags and the top of *The Tower* (Desired Strengths) should remain blank for now. Have them keep the 10 strength cards separate from the rest of the deck even after they have written them on their map.

In Brief Using the Tower of Strengths

1. Pass out materials: Tower map, card deck, instructions, "parts of you" explanation sheet, and a pencil.
2. Sort through strength deck, choose 10 existing strengths and write into the Tower map.
3. Draw a picture as a reminder of when the strength has been used in the past.
4. Read the "parts of you" explanation sheet.
5. Fill in "parts of you" summary flag.
6. Discuss existing strengths.
7. Sort through deck, choose five desired strengths and write them in.
8. Fill in the desired strengths summary flag.
9. Wrap-up discussion.

Have the participants draw a picture or write a brief description that shows how they have used each of their strengths in the past. This step is especially useful if you are doing the project in a group, because the people who finish early can work on this while others continue to select their 10 strengths.

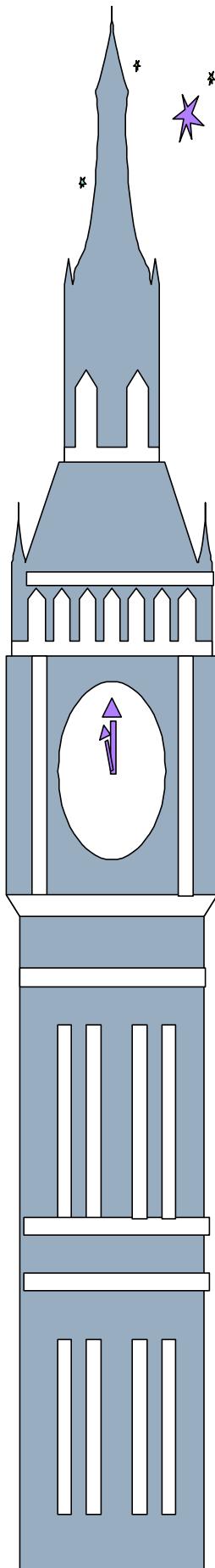
Next, have them take out the "parts of you" explanation sheet. Explain that the letter (and/or color) on the cards indicates the part of the self that strength is from (e.g., s = social).

Explain what the different parts of self represent or let them read about them on the explanation sheet. Then have them fill in the "parts of you" summary flag (on the top of the *Tower*) that refers to actual strengths, indicating how many of their 10 strengths came from the various parts of the self.

After everyone has had a chance to complete these steps, you may want to have a discussion about the strengths selected (see the discussion topics on pp. 43-45 of Appendix A). It is often helpful to have the participants share their strengths and discuss how they have used them in the past and how they may use them in the future. It also may be useful to discuss how certain strengths can become weaknesses. For example, being too adventurous may be problematic for some individuals. Discussions about the strongest and weakest parts of the self also can be helpful.

After the discussion is over, have participants sort through the remaining strengths, and have them choose five strengths they would like to develop. Emphasize that they should choose strengths that are realistic goals for them. They should write the strength that they most want to develop at the very top of *The Tower of Strengths*, along with its code letter indicating the card type. Then, they should write the remaining 4 desired strengths in the blank boxes that remain in the top section of *The Tower of Strengths* map. Have them fill in the remaining flag on *The Tower* with the number of desired strengths from the divisions of self.

A wrap-up discussion can follow (see pp. 43-45 of Appendix A for discussion questions). Participants can keep their completed *Tower of Strength* map for future reference.



WHAT ELSE CAN I DO WITH THIS ACTIVITY?

Tower of Strengths Updates

Although it is not necessary, it may be useful to have a follow-up discussion a few weeks or even months later (see p. 45 of Appendix A for follow-up discussion questions). Participants can discuss progress they have made on developing their desired strengths, as well as difficulties encountered. Participants can also discuss new ways to apply their existing strengths. They can also do a new *Tower of Strengths* to indicate the strengths they may have developed.

How Do Others View You?

Another way to use *The Tower of Strengths* is to use it as a tool to see how other people view the participant. Have the participant give *The Tower of Strengths* tasks to a supportive friend or family member who can indicate what they think the participant's strengths are and which strengths would be useful for him or her to have. Participants could then discuss any discrepancies between their personal *Tower of Strengths* and those that others created for them.



SECTION 2

**HOW TO
SET UP
AND USE**

**THE
WEEKLY
PLANNER**

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITY

The Weekly Planner (Figure 2) on the next page has been filled out and may be used as an example when instructing people in doing this task. It can be copied and/or made into an overhead. To suit different artistic preferences, copies of different styles of blank *Weekly Planner* maps are in Appendix B (pp. 51-56).

The quotes are selected by working with a set of 87 motivational cards (see pp. 57-68 of Appendix B). There are blank quote cards so that the quote deck can be expanded to include additional quotes (p. 69). The quotes are written into the *Weekly Planner* map, one for each day. It may be important to choose motivational quotes that are appropriate for each day of the week. For example, if Mondays are days when it is really hard to concentrate, a quote that reminds a person to stay on task would be appropriate. Discussions on how to apply the quotes to everyday life should follow (see pp. 74-76 of Appendix B).

Figure 2.

WEEKLY PLANNER

Do not bite at the bait of pleasure til you know there is no hook beneath it.

-Thomas Jefferson-

MONDAY

Those who have the most to do and are willing to work will find the most time.

-Samuel Smiles-

TUESDAY

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

-Lao Tzu,-

WEDNESDAY

God gives every bird his worm, but he does not throw it into the nest.

-P. D. James-

THURSDAY

Vitality shows not only the ability to persist but the ability to start over.

-F. Scott Fitzgerald-

FRIDAY

Life is like a bag of snakes, you don't know which ones are poisonous until they bite you.

-Anonymous-

SATURDAY

The coward may die a thousand deaths; the brave but one.

-William Shakespeare-

SUNDAY

WHAT DO I NEED TO SET UP *THE WEEKLY PLANNER*?

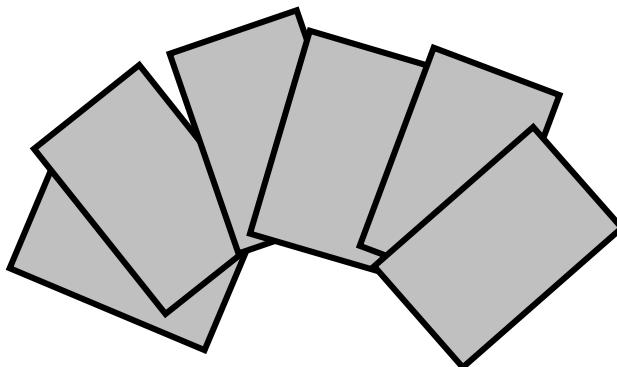
Each Weekly Planner set consists of a *Weekly Planner* map, a quote deck, an instruction sheet, and something to write with.

The Weekly Planner Map (Pages 51-56)

The Weekly Planner map contains seven blank boxes, each labeled with one day of the week. The participant writes one inspirational quote in each box. In Appendix B (pp. 51-56), there are several different *Weekly Planner* maps. Pick one that appeals to you or your client. One reason we include several versions is that we want each *Weekly Planner* to be aesthetically appealing to its creator so that he or she will want to look at it and/or put it on display.

The Quote Deck (Pages 57-73)

The quote decks consist of 87 different motivational quotes. Some are simple quotes, and some are more complex. It is often useful to have participants discuss quotes that seem confusing to help them understand what they mean. We also include a page of blank cards so that additional quotes may be added (p. 69). A quote list is included for situations in which using a card deck is not convenient (pp. 70-73).



The Instruction Sheets (Pages 48-50)

A one-page instruction sheet is included in Appendix B (p. 49). The instruction sheets should be passed out to each participant, especially if *The Weekly Planner* is being done independently. Even if the directions are read out loud, the instruction sheet can be passed out so that participants can read along. A counselor's procedure sheet is also provided (p. 50). It gives detailed instructions on how to use *The Weekly Planner* in group settings.

Additional materials are needed that are not included in the manual. These are:

- access to a copy machine *Note: Some copy machines cannot use cardstock. Find out the types of paper your copy machine can handle before buying paper.*
- 8.5" x 11" regular weight paper for *the Weekly Planner* map, and the instruction sheet (2 pieces of paper per set)
- 8.5" x 11" cardstock in whatever color you prefer (11 pieces of paper per set)
- scissors to cut out the cards
- a rubber band to hold the deck together
- a pen or pencil. *Note: Since participants sometimes like to decorate their Weekly Planner maps creatively, providing crayons, felt pens, or calligraphy pens is often useful.*

HOW DO I SET IT UP?

First decide how many *Weekly Planner* sets you would like to make. You will want to multiply "the recipe" by that number. Copy the preferred version of the *Weekly Planner* map and the instruction sheet out of the manual. Copy as many of these as are needed onto regular 8.5" x 11" paper. Keep the originals in good shape so that new decks can be made whenever needed.

Copy the 11 pages of quote cards onto the color of cardstock that you prefer. If for some reason you cannot use cardstock, regular paper can be used. However, we do not recommend regular paper for the cards because the card deck will be rather flimsy and unlikely to last long. If this is an issue, the cards made on regular paper can be protected by lamination, using a protective spray, or by covering the cards in transparent shelf paper (make certain you do this before cutting the cards out).

Cut the cards on the lines and assemble the card deck. If you are making more than one deck, separate the quote card pages into complete *Weekly Planner* sets before cutting. Then put a rubber band around each deck. Put a pencil or pen with each set. A step-by-step checklist is included on page 47 for your convenience.

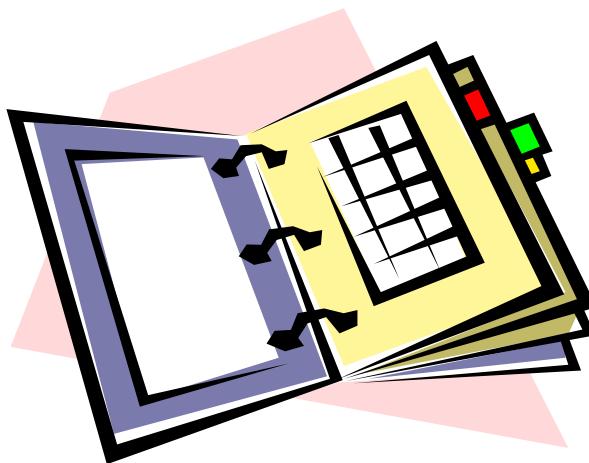
Congratulations!!



You are done!!

HOW DO I USE THE WEEKLY PLANNER?

Give each person who is participating a *Weekly Planner* Map, a quote deck, an instruction sheet, and a pencil. Explain that the purpose of *The Weekly Planner* is to choose a motivational quote to focus on each day of the week. Then have them go through the quote deck and choose seven quotes that appeal to them. Ask them to keep in mind personal goals (existing and desired strengths, if you are using it with *The Tower of Strengths*) that they would like to accomplish. Have them write their chosen quotes into the appropriate days of the week box. The quote chosen represents a goal the participant would like to work on or keep in mind on that day. For example, a person who chose the quote, "God gives every bird his worm, but he does not throw it in the nest," for his or her Monday inspirational quote might want to keep an eye out for new opportunities on Mondays. Then have a discussion with the participants about the quotes (see pp. 74-76 of Appendix B for possible discussion topics). For example, "Describe how one of your quotes can help you achieve a personal goal (desired strength) in your life." Remind participants to take their completed *Weekly Planner* with them and to try to focus on their motivational quotes each day of the week.



WHAT ELSE CAN I DO WITH THIS ACTIVITY?

Weekly Updates

Although it is not necessary, it may be useful to have a follow-up discussion a few weeks later (see p. 76 of Appendix B for follow-up discussion questions). Participants can discuss progress they have made on the goals each quote represents, as well as difficulties encountered. At this point, participants may want to take another look at the quote deck and replace the quotes they feel they have mastered or are no longer useful. Participants can continue to update and change their *Weekly Planner* over time.

Quote Creation

There are blank cards included in case you want to add quotes to the deck (p. 69). In using *The Weekly Planner*, we have found that people often have personal sayings, favorite song lyrics, or movie lines that they want to include in the quote deck. After participants have become familiar with the quote deck, they may want to try their hand at creating quote cards themselves. Have participants take turns describing personal goals to the group and then have the group help them create or select a quote that can help them accomplish this goal.

The Weekly Planner Lottery

Another fun way to use *The Weekly Planner* is to draw the seven cards out of a hat. In this version, it is critical to have a discussion on what the cards mean and how these seemingly random cards can be applied to the person's life.