Strengths-based Strategies for Engaging and Retaining Family Planning Staff
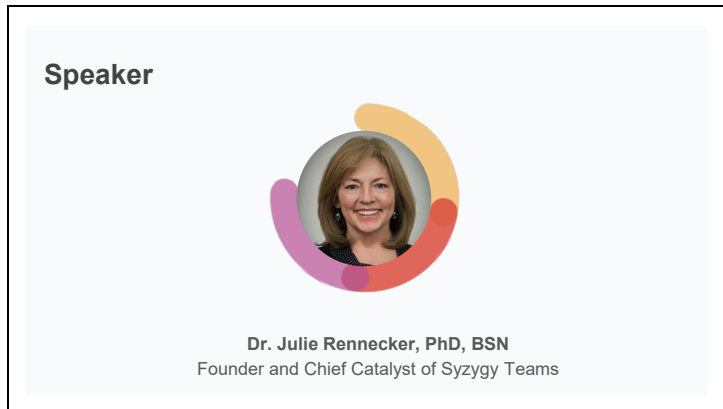## May 19, 2022
Transcript

Slide 1

- [Devon] Good afternoon. This is Devon Brown with the Reproductive Health National Training Center and I am delighted to welcome you all to today's interactive workshop about Strengths-based Strategies for Engaging and Retaining Family Planning Staff. I have a few announcements before we begin today. Everyone on the workshop was muted upon entry, but we would love to hear from you throughout the time together. So, we invite everyone to go ahead and turn on your camera if you feel like it, and please feel free to unmute if you have a question at any point in the session today. We do ask that you just re-mute yourself after asking your question or sharing your comment to avoid any background noise interruptions. We have built in some time for questions at the end of the workshop today as well. You can ask your questions using the chat at any time or as I just said, feel free to raise your hand or unmute to ask a question. One of our intentions with today's workshop is to really foster interaction and engagement and to really get us talking with and learning from each other. One way we'll be doing that is through breakout groups. So, at several points this afternoon, you'll be prompted to move into a breakout room with a handful of other participants. These will be guided by worksheets and activities that were shared with registrants yesterday afternoon via email. These breakout groups will be opportunities to hear from peers and talk through experiences, insights and any challenges that come up. A recording of today's session, the slide deck and a transcript will be available on rhntc.org within the next few days. Closed-captioning has been enabled for this meeting and to view, you can click on the CC icon at the bottom of your screen. Your feedback is extremely important to us and has enabled RHNTC to make quality improvements in our work based on your comments. Please take a moment to open the evaluation link in the chat and consider completing the evaluation real-time. In order to obtain a certificate of completion for attending this workshop, you must be logged into rhntc.org when you complete the evaluation. This presentation was supported by the Office of Population Affairs or OPA and the Office on Women's Health or OWH. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of OPA or OWH or HHS. So, now, I would like to briefly introduce our speaker today, Dr. Julie Rennecker.
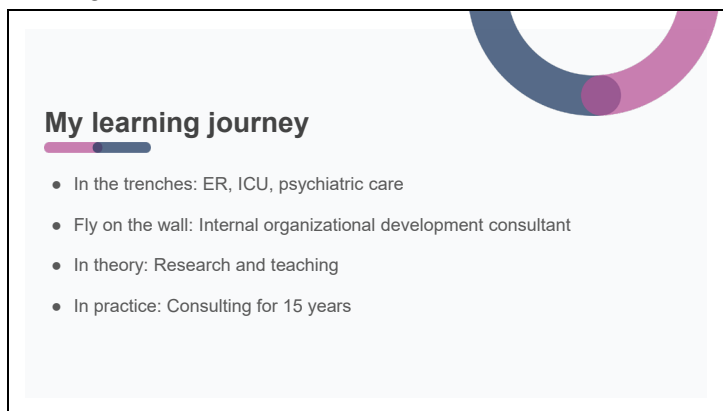
Slide 2

Speaker

Dr. Julie Rennecker, PhD, BSN
Founder and Chief Catalyst of Syzygy Teams

Some of you all will recognize her from last month's webinar about Building a Supportive Climate for Staff Retention. But for those of you who couldn't join last month, I'll just give a brief introduction. Dr. Rennecker is the Founder and Chief Catalyst of Syzygy Teams, which is an independent consultant company that specializes in human friendly leadership and collaboration strategies that foster employee engagement and resilience. Depending on company size and challenges, her services include talent optimization, process redesign and culture building. So, with that, I will turn it over to Dr. Rennecker to get us started.
- [Julie] Oh, thanks, Devon, and thanks to everyone who has made time in your busy day to come and talk about these strengths-based approaches to staff retention, staff engagement. I know that those are ongoing challenges, right? Those are evergreen challenges in the management and leadership area and yet they're usually, on any given day, enough fires to put out that it's hard to prioritize, figure how to do that differently. So, thank all of you for giving that gift to yourself to make time to be here. I, let's, oops, there. My clicker's not working. Now we got it.

Slide 3

My learning journey

- In the trenches: ER, ICU, psychiatric care
- Fly on the wall: Internal organizational development consultant
- In theory: Research and teaching
- In practice: Consulting for 15 years

So, again, some of you, I don't want to bore those of you who made it to the webinar, but for those of you who are new for us today, a little bit of background about me, is I began my career as a bedside nurse in ICU and ER, and then as a trailing spouse, I worked in a psychiatric unit and, also, did like various kinds of intermediate care that involved cardiac monitoring. And as a worker bee in different facilities that were in different states all across the country, I experienced a variety of leadership and management styles and a variety of employee culture kind of things, work team styles and workplace cultures. And you know, there were some places that I worked

that were like fabulous, best job ever, and there were other places that I worked I couldn't wait to get out of, right? So, I've experienced that range of, sort of qualitative experiences of work and know what it's like and what a difference it can make when we invest in creating a positive, supportive kinds of workplace climates. A series of lucky breaks led to my having the opportunity to do an internal organization development role, long before I had the credentials to do that. But I had a really great boss and had a lot of on-the-job training. And in that role I had the opportunity to participate in, but also be a fly on the wall, in a lot of management meetings and leadership team meetings. And I began to better appreciate two things. One, that many of the frustrations I'd experienced as a staff nurse, were not the result of a particularly, bad manager or a bad leader or a single bad decision, but really the products of a complicated system. And the second thing is just how much pressure managers and leaders were under? How many different initiatives and demands and limitations were vying for their attention, their energy, the kinds of things that they were prioritizing. So, it gave me a great deal of empathy, right? For what's going on in the management realm, and I realized, I didn't know enough. And so that's what led me back to graduate school to get a degree in organization behavior. And to just better understand what makes organizations tick and particularly in the areas of culture, teams and change, right? And of course, right now in our current environment, where we're in periods of just seemingly continuous change. For the past 15 years, after doing academia I transitioned back into the industry and doing consulting. For the past 15 years, I've been trying to weave together the theory that I learned in academia with the practices on the ground, coping with an ever changing reality on the ground. 'Cause in academia it may be two years from the time a study is conducted until it's published, but we know in the field, two years is a really long time, things are changing all the time. And so you know what we're going to talk about today is the product of my cumulative experience in education. But the core of it, the beginning of it, really started with that very first organization development role that I'd had, I thought I had found just the ideal job. I had a great boss. I loved what I was doing. I thought I finally had found the role that was going to let me make a difference, right? And so it was going to change healthcare. It was going to make the world a better place for nurses and in that moment, I felt like there was no limit. And I'm still fairly about six weeks into that job, six to eight weeks, the facility went through an unexpected financial crisis. Just revenues plummeted and we had to make a number of hard choices. And while there are no good ways to doing layoffs. I was part of processing where we did six rounds of layoffs in 15 months, right? So, it might go on record being one of the world's worst ways to do layoffs. And saw a lot of people being hurt in that process, but I still had this fundamental belief that the changes were the right thing, we were doing the right thing. And so I was on my way one morning 8:00 a.m, hopped on the elevator, on my way to the first meeting. And also, in the elevator were a couple nurses in their role. I'd worked plenty of night shifts myself and they were on their way home and a couple family members who'd locked their buttons and stared ahead as we do in the elevator. And then the nurses started to kvetching, right? About the changes that were going on and what's up with them and you know just all the things you can imagine when, what we call resistance to change, but it's really sort of negative response to change and not appreciating the change and being negatively impacted by the change. So, instead of going on to my meeting, when the elevator doors opened and the nurse got off the floor to go to the parking garage, I followed her, one of the two nurses who'd been most vocal. And my firm

- [Devon] Dr. Rennecker.
- [Julie] Yes.
- [Devon] I'm so sorry to interrupt you. So, sorry. I think we're having a little bit of a hard time hearing you. The audio sounds like it's coming and going a little bit. So, I'm wondering if you could just get a little closer to your mic and if that might help.
- [Julie] How's that?
- [Devon] Perfect.

- [Julie] Better? Okay.
- [Devon] Excellent.
- [Julie] In Houston Boston.
- [Devon] Thank you so much.
- [Julie] Well, I'm sorry. I saw that things were happening in chat, and so, thank you for interjecting course. 'Cause I wasn't, Didn't you, can't count walking too gum, right? So, this nurse, I hop off the elevator and I'm going, as a champion of the change, I'm going, I'm following this nurse, and excuse me, excuse me, can I talk with you for just a minute? And I'm sure initially she thought that I was, a family member or, somebody needing directions, 'cause people were always stopping the nurses asking how do I get to the cafeteria, whatever. And so she was pleasant, and then I explained, you know, who I was briefly. And then she was a little confused. And then I proceeded to explain to her why her kvetching, right? Was not helpful, and how we would appreciate if she wouldn't do that with an earshot of family members, and how that was bad, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And her face just continued to morph, right? From confusion to anger, like how dare you, right? To fear and then finally fury with tears, and she let me have it, and rightfully so, frankly, right? And she explained it. She said, you don't understand, right? You have no idea what we are going through up there, and the impact these changes are having, I go home every day, feeling like a failure, right? I'm not being the nurse that I was trained to be. I'm cutting corners every day. I'm terrified that I've done something that's going to hurt somebody. I'm going to get a call later, right? That someone is hurt. And to my credit, I had the good sense to shut my mouth, right? At that point. And I don't remember some of the other things, you know, that she said, but that part has always stuck with me and her face. And that was a turning point for me from being this sort of egocentric, oh, you know, I'm on treadmill of my career and finding this new role to really appreciating the impact that management and leadership have on employee wellbeing, and that we have a choice, right? To do it differently. So, there was a shift for me in appreciating, but it wasn't until about 20 years later, when I got exposed to strengths-based management, strengths-based leadership, strengths, a positive psychology more generally, and all of that will make sense shortly. That I understood maybe how I could have done it differently, how we could have done the whole change differently, so that we weren't having these same kind of negative impacts to people who were perceived as resisting the change. And again, in retrospect, I think rightfully so she should have resisted the change. So, what I hope to share with you today is, this approach, this strength-based management approach, that's made so much of a difference for myself and how I approach organizations and how I approach individuals both inside and outside of work. And that I hope will open up some new possibilities for you as well.

Slide 4

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Learning objectives

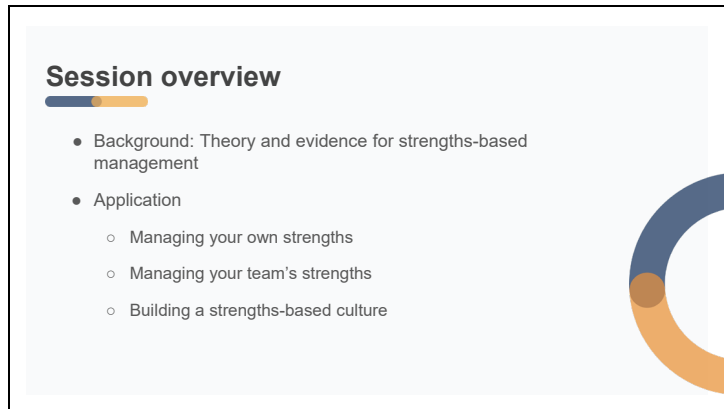By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Differentiate between "strengths" and "competencies" at work.
- Articulate how a strengths-based approach affects staff members' job performance and job satisfaction.
- List three ways to immediately apply strengths-based management in day-to-day employee interactions.
- Identify opportunities for extending strengths-based management into their agency's standard human resources (HR) practices (e.g., performance evaluations, job descriptions).

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So, let's talk about what we hope to accomplish in this session, right? That by the end, each of you will be able to differentiate between strengths and competencies. We'll talk about why those words often are used interchangeably, but in this particular session, we're going to have a slightly different definition of strengths. You talk about how to, you'll be able to articulate, right? How a strengths-based approach affects staff members, job performance and job satisfaction. And list three ways to immediately apply strengths-based management to day-to-day employee interactions. And finally, you'll be able to identify opportunities for extending strengths-based management into your agency's standard, HR, and human resources practices, such as performance evaluations and job descriptions. And let me see. Is there anything else in the chat I need to know about? Are we good on audio?

- [Devon] Good on audio.
- [Julie] Okay. So, I know that before we get into the meat of it, I know that we have people from all over the country here. So, I think it might be interesting for all of you, right? To see as well. I'd got to see the registration list. That might be interesting for all of you to get a sense of who was here, right? And how many, you know, how ever long distance it might be, right? Partners you have on this journey. So, if you want to go into chat and just, say hi, and where you are logging in from today. Texas, Seattle, Boston, Amarillo. Okay, it's more Texas. Oh, my goodness, everywhere, right? New York, Arkansas, Boston, Ohio. I'm just skimming several, Brooklyn, California, right? We've got Coast to Coast, side, Northeast Ohio. So, the north shore in Texas is the Southern Porter Lebanon. Okay. Keep them coming. And I encourage you to take a look at that, right? And just to just appreciate that you've got some fellow travelers here.
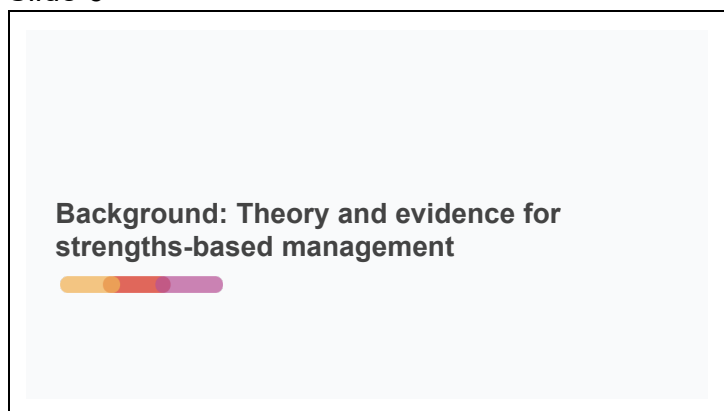
Slide 5

Session overview

- Background: Theory and evidence for strengths-based management
- Application
  - Managing your own strengths
  - Managing your team's strengths
  - Building a strengths-based culture

So, a quick overview of the session. We're going to start with some theory and background for the strengths-based management, just to give you a sense of where I'm coming from, right? And not just pulling this out of the hat, it's not just stick of some sort, but is really grounded in some decades of psychological research. But we're going to spend the bulk of our time on the application, beginning with managing your own strengths, figure out what your strengths are and then managing them. And then some tips on managing your team strengths. And then the next step to building a strengths-based culture. And I know some of you come from agencies, that are very small. So, team-based, using it in your team and the organization culture may be the same thing. But some of you are from larger agencies where maybe two different levels there.

Slide 6

Background: Theory and evidence for strengths-based management

So, beginning with the background, some of the theory and evidence for strengths-based management practice.

Slide 7

Motivator-Hygiene Theory recap

Hygiene factors

Characteristics of the work context that can lead to job dissatisfaction if not well-designed and well-managed

- Policies
- Physical work conditions
- Compensation package
- Relationships with manager, peers, and subordinates

STRENGTHS-BASED MANAGEMENT
Motivators

Qualities of the work itself—job content, process, and outcomes—that activate employees' intrinsic motivation, leading to job satisfaction

- Meaningful work
- Task requirements
- Achievement and recognition
- Responsibility and growth

Frederick Herzberg, 1966/2003
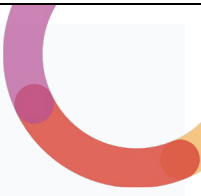
Those of you who were able to attend the webinar last month, you'll will remember that we spent some time, sort of our framework, that was the basis for the whole webinar was Herzberg's, Herzberg, I have trouble saying that, motivator-hygiene theory. And this came out of studying the many reasons why people are dissatisfied and satisfied with work, and debunked the theory that we think if people are dissatisfied and we resolve those different reasons that they're dissatisfied, they will gradually move, right? On a continuum over the being very satisfied. And what Herzberg discovered is that the things that have people be dissatisfied are largely what he called hygiene factors. And these are characteristics of the work context, the environment in which the work takes place that can lead to dissatisfaction if they're not well done, not well managed. But so the absence of them can be a problem, but the presence of them doesn't necessarily lead to job satisfaction, right? So, some examples is listed here on this slide, right policies, the physical work conditions. I know in the webinar, some people are in physical danger going to and from work. A compensation package and then of course the relationship. So, that creates that culture of healing. What also discovered, and this has been, this basic theory has been supported, replicated over and over in a number of studies and different settings with different kinds of professionals. Where is that where satisfaction comes from, is when the work itself, right? The content of the work, the substance, the purpose of it, the execution of the work, taps into the employees, intrinsic motivation. And so examples that meaningful work, and of course what I consider meaningful work and what you consider meaningful work might be very different things. And what's important is it's meaningful to the person. The task requirements, right? Is it requiring big picture thinking or detail? Is it fast moving or slow? If you get achievement and recognition, not just getting any recognition, but are you getting recognition for the things that matter to you? And then opportunities for responsibility and growth? So, the hygiene factors are more, this sort of external context and the motivators are where we tap into that inner sense of our employees. And the strengths-based management approach that we're going to talk about falls into this, how do we get to more of the motivating? It can help repair, some goodwill and engage people if you need some help addressing the hygiene factors. But I think overall looking at it, it would be seen as a strengths-based, and service strengths-based management would be seen as falling into this, you know, motivator camp. So, for those of you who are on the webinar, hopefully that puts it in context for you. And doesn't just feel like one more thing that I have to know.

Slide 8

Strengths-based management

"[T]he best opportunity for individual development lies in investing in people's strengths, not in managing their weaknesses." —Linley et al, 2009

- **Based in positive psychology**: "The study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions"
- **Definition**: Promoting optimal individual and organizational performance through the cultivation of employee strengths
- **Benefits include**: increased work performance, job satisfaction, engagement, enthusiasm, and coworker relationship quality

So, let's look at the definition, right? That strengths-based management is based in positive psychology. So, let's talk about that for one second. Positive psychology, isn't just about, oh, let's only say happy things or let's only say good things. Positive psychology is the active study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions, right? So, that's one of the official definitions. And so I realized that it might seem a little superfluous, right? To be talking about flourishing if right now you're in a lot of pain. And given the changes that have happened over the last several years, I know that there have been lots of struggles, right? There are lots of challenges. I still want to hang onto that idea, right? But it's not superfluous, it's that any given situation, even when painful things are happening, there are usually also often good things happening. And so much of our language and the way we've been trained and the way our brain works, has us over focused on the negative. What's wrong, what's missing, what's broken, what's the problem and problem diagnostics and fixing. And in the process, we can often miss, right? There are also other things that are going right. And even in the most painful situation, there are usually clusters or little nuggets, right? Of life. Things where people are going well, or they do have a good attitude or whatever. And so this whole approach is about finding those points of light and life, right? And learning how to build on those and amplify those. So, then the definition, so that's positive psychology and the definition of strengths-based management is bringing that positive psychology lens and to apply to the organizational context. So, promoting optimal individual and organizational performance through the cultivation of employees strengths. And some of the benefits have been documented in research are increased work performance. And that's both, effectiveness, decreased errors and you know, productivity like rate of work, job satisfaction, engagement, enthusiasm for work and coworker relationship quality. I like this quote that is taken from a summary for about 27 articles. I think that happened over a couple decades that they analyzed at a meta analysis of, and different strengths-based approaches have been tested, right? For their impact on a number of different outcomes, such as, engagement or coworker relationships. And they found that the overall the results were sound and had been, replicated and that this was really a legitimate approach and came to the conclusion that the best opportunity for individual development lies in investing in people's strengths, not in managing their weaknesses. And there have since been a number of approaches built on this, but that's the foundation.

Slide 9

Exercise: You at your best

1. Think of a time at work when you were at your best at work.
2. What were you doing?
3. List 3 words that describe how you felt.
4. How would it impact your job satisfaction, performance, and mental health if you were able to be at your best more often?

The goal of strengths-based management is for you and your employees to do your best work for a greater part of every workday.

So, you've heard enough from me for a few minutes and I want to give you an opportunity to start experiencing this, right? To try it on. And so we're going to do a short exercise and what I'd like for all of you to do wherever it is that you're sitting, is to think of a time when you personally were, not when everybody else is doing great, you personally, right? Were at your best at work. One of those times, you're like, man, I was on fire in a good way, right? It was just happening, right? And I feel like that was just a really great day or a really great moment. So, get that in your head really solid. And then get even more specific, what were you doing? Who else was there? You know, why was it important? Why did it stand out to you? And then list the three words that just list up to three, maybe even more, right? Words to describe how you felt during that time. And if you want to, you can, if you feel comfortable doing so you can put those in chat. Window, open here. Motivated, interested, important, okay? Happy, satisfied, needed. Yeah. Engaged, skilled, confident, efficient, energized. No. Right? And on the one hand, it's like, okay, it was a positive experience, we expected to be kind of positive words, but in even remembering the experience, you notice you're able to remember like the emotional experience that came with it. And I like that several of you mentioned like passionate, energized, right? There's this vitality that comes from remembering, focusing on building on the positive, right? The flip of that is if I would ask you, tell me about your worst day where you really screwed up, right? And then we think about that and get clear about that, and it's like, how did you feel, right? And that's just kind of iffy. So, it detracts energy. It's not that we don't want to ever admit mistakes or be ever be able to focus on that, but just notice that difference in energy that we experience. And so often in our organizations, we're asking people to make significant changes. But right before we asked them to do that, we talked to them about what's wrong. What's not working, what the problems are, what the deficiencies are? What they haven't done enough of, fast enough, well enough, and that we've got to get better. And it's really hard after you've been told about everything that maybe you or collective, the collective, you are doing wrong, to be very excited about like, oh, we now let's make a change. Right? It's hard to get that sense of oomph, that we needed. And so, again, it's not about codling people, but just appreciate, right? That when we have those thoughts, positive and negative in our brain, we end up with a very different physical and emotional response. So, hopefully that gives you a sense of what this is going to look like. So, the goal of this whole process, this whole workshop, is that for you and your employees, to be able to do your best work for a greater part of the workday, right? So, that great feeling that you had, to be able to have that kind of feeling more often, right? More days of the week and a greater portion of each workday.

Slide 10
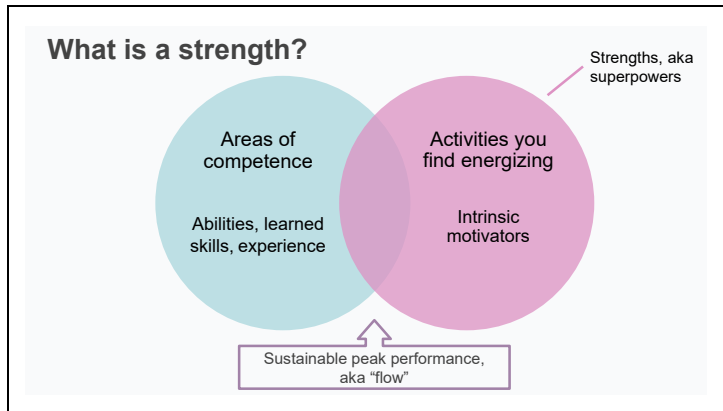
So, the second definition that we need to go into has to do with the strength. And I mentioned when we were talking about the learning objectives, right? That strength is often used interchangeably with competencies. And so we'll say, you know, so and so is really good at X, right? And so they're really strong in this area. And so it might be somebody with your accounting, that might be some aspect of patient care or dealing with the physicians or keeping the supplies working, or keeping the front desk, right? Working, whatever it is. So, those are things that their abilities, they're typically learned skills. They get better with experience and those are all great things. And we need, when we look at resumes, we're often looking for those, right? It's areas of competence that people are bringing into the job. The challenge is that one can be very good at something and really not enjoy it. They're good at it just because they've had the experience over and over again. And so I have reasonably good organizational skills, not great with time, but other things, organizing projects and stuff, I have really good organizational skills, but if all I have to do all day is organize, right? It's just like, it just does not lighten me up, I do it because it has to be done. But it's not the thing that excites me. In contrast, I have friends who are like, oh, let me organize, right? I mean, they really like, they get excited. That's the best thing that could happen to them is to sort of organize a mess. And so I want you to start making that distinction, right? That strengths can be good, things that we're good at, but I'd like to reserve that for competencies, right? Competencies are the things we're good at. Strengths are these things that we find energizing, right? That intrinsically motivating that we'd probably do them. We may do them at home. We're not even being paid to do them but we would do them, right? Because we find it exciting. If we went into a situation, we would start doing it, 'cause it just comes so naturally and easily to us. Where are these two areas overlap? They're in the middle of the diagram. That's where we get our sustainable peak performance, right? That's if we can, the more time we can spend working in that zone, we're going to accomplish more with, but yet it would require less energy, right? To do the same amount of work, as opposed to if it's an area where you're competent in, but not energized.

Slide 11

Flow on the field
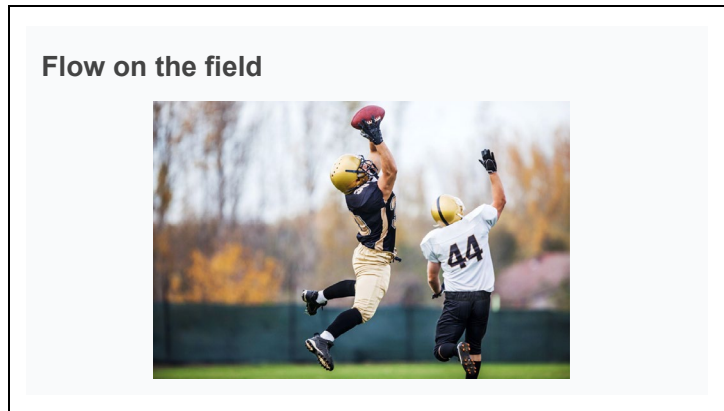
So, the previous one, the concept of flow, there was a book that came out in, it was 1990, it's on one of the footnotes here since, but the idea of flow, when you're in that area where you're great at it and energized by it and love it, time seems to just sort of, you know, disappear. And so that's how the concept was used. And we often use it in reference to athletics. And when athletes are interviewed, right? At the end of a big game, they'll often say, oh, you know, we were in the flow, I was in the flow. And so we were accustomed to it there.

Slide 12
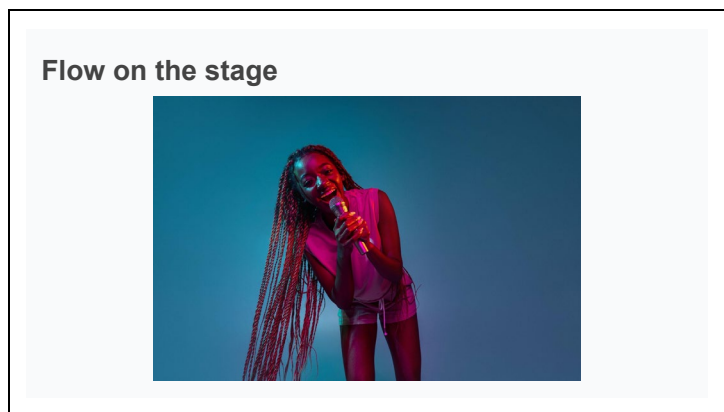
Flow on the stage

Also on the stage, right? We're not surprised to discover that performers spend a great deal of their time in flow. They're getting to do this thing that they really enjoy and they love it. And of course, it's a lot of hard work as well, but it's often hard work that they enjoy, right? Because they're in their zone of genius.

Slide 13

Flow…at work?!

- "Work isn't supposed to be fun. That's why they call it *work*."
- "Every job has parts you won't like."
- "Some things just have to be done, whether you like them or not!"

Work is the one place, right? Where we don't often talk about flow. We were talking before this started that the younger generations, little by little, there's been progression, younger generations have been raised with more of an idea that they should find their work fulfilling, right? And satisfying and meaningful. But we have many generations, right? And a lot of history to overcome where it was more common to hear people say things like work, isn't supposed to be fun, right? That's why I call it work. You shouldn't even expect to have fun. Every job has parts you won't like. So, you'll buck up and do those. Some things just have to be done, whether you like them or not, the sort of rich your teeth and power through.

Slide 14

Deficit language is the workplace norm

CLIENT COMPLAINTS
Poor attitude
Lacks initiative
Missed deadlines
POOR PERFORMANCE
Not a team player
ABSENTEEISM
Non-compliant
UNENGAGED
Poor problem-solving skills
Needs improvement
Lack of critical thinking

"If I don't know my weaknesses, how can I improve?"

And you know, this whole notion of deficit language too, right? Is the workplace norm. There's like a, work's not supposed to be fun. And we're supposed to be trying to reach some level of excellence. And our belief has been that the way to reach that level of excellence is by addressing our deficits, our gaps. You know, we even ask our clients, right? What's your chief complaint, right? That's how we begin a lot of our engagements with the client. But in performance appraisals, we might set say poor attitude. They lack initiative, oh, poor performance. They're not a team player, absenteeism. All the other words that you see there shouldn't be anything surprising, right? On the screen. And even this is so ingrained that even when I am administering a strengths assessment tool, and there are many of them on the market, there's some free ones online and some paid ones. And I use different ones for different groups. But when we administer that, where someone will say, well, but Julie, if I don't know my weaknesses, how can I improve? Right? That's just so ingrained in our mind. But the only way to improve is to shore up our weaknesses.

Slide 15

An epiphany: Reading speed study

- The power of strengths
- 90 words per minute vs. 350 words per minute

So, the beginning of disabusing this, and actually I'll pause there before I go into this example. Does anyone have any questions or is anyone feeling jarred at all by anything that's said so far? Let me look at the chat. Yeah, and Devon I'll trust you to kind of keep your eye out. If everybody raises a hand, I didn't see or anything, okay. Well, the beginning of the transition and thinking about this has been traced back and there were probably many other experiments, but this is the one that really got public attention and made some, at least regional headlines and also started to rattle the thinking of those in education and psychology. And it began with in the 1950s, a high school in Nebraska. And the administrators realized that the students like freshman year, if they didn't have great reading skills, then they were going to struggle with all sorts of subjects. Know, now we know that even earlier and earlier, we start working on reading skills now. But at this point they were like, let's see what we can do with our freshmen. We know we have a wide range of breathing skills and we would like to improve that, to improve our overall performance. And this is long before, right? All these different tests that we have now to grade the schools, just some progressive administrators. And they partnered with researchers at a local university in the education and psychology departments. And they said, you know, can you help us design something? Like it would help our students read better. And so of course the researchers, they do the proper approach where they get a baseline reading on everyone first, right? They administer a reading test, is reading speed and comprehension. We're only going to be talking about the speed. And then they administer a reading speed course. And everyone gets the same course because there was awareness. They didn't want to have a stigma, right? And so when they started and got that baseline data, there were a cluster of slow readers, right around the 90 word per minute range. And the upper end of the scale was right around 350 words per minute. And as you can imagine, there were many, sort of clusters and some scattering in between, but those were sort of the limits, the lower limit and the higher limit. So, then they administer the speed reading course and then they do their follow on data collection, right? And they retest reading speed after the course had concluded. Well, sure enough, the 90 word per minute students, that cluster had moved up to on average, around 150 words per minute. So, from 90 up to 150 is about a 67% improvement rate. And so that's substantial, right? They had accomplished the goal. What they hadn't expected was the 350 word per minute students, had advanced to 2900, two, nine, zero, zero words per minute. And they thought they'd made a measurement error, right? 'Cause it didn't make sense to them. They thought the students who were already good readers would just continue to be good readers. They didn't expect the course to really benefit them. They were already good at it. But they redid the test of the post test and sure enough found that, that it was indeed true. And so that triggered this beginning of where are we putting our resources and how are we thinking about this, right? Are we investing in? And of course we want everybody needs, help and meetings.

Like we said, like these slower readers that was going to benefit them for the rest of their career, that wasn't money or time or energy wasted. But as we think about even individual development, right? In career development, do I, who, I don't like accounting, I really don't like accounting, right? And it makes me tired. And should I spend, like, should I be taking a class every semester to get better at accounting, more enthusiastic about accounting, it's probably not going to happen. Right? And so it's that kind of thinking got triggered. And then they also wanted to try to understand why did they get this result?

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Q: Why did this happen?
A: Neural networks: freeways vs. surface streets

So, I'm going to use the analogy of freeways and surface streets to explain and neurosciences come along in parallel with this. So, we've been able to actually map these things initially was sort of theoretical, but now it's what they believe to be true. That from age zero to about age six, different theorists, different this, but we're developing connections in our brain. Every time we see color, we hear a new sound. We have new experience. We're developing connections between our neurons. Around age 10 to 12, again, people differing the exact number, but in that range, our brains start to prune out connections that we haven't used, at the same time, connections that we have continued to use over and over again, they get wider, they get thicker, they get faster, right? If you think if it's a chemical transmission that it's just, it's faster. And so all of us have these very different neural networks as a result, based on our experience. Again, it's not that with education, we can't improve, but we have these fast networks, the ones that get used more often and we'll call them are freeways, right? And so something that is a freeway for me might take five minutes or kind of happen in a flash. And if that same skill or activity requires surface streets, like imagine going all the way across New York, or all the way across L.A. or Atlanta on surface streets right here, stop sign, stop. It doesn't mean you couldn't do it. It's going to be a lot of work and take a lot of time and probably be really frustrating. And so just appreciating that all of us have this different map, right? Of freeways and surface streets. And it's not that we can't do certain things, it's just some things are going to be easier and some things are going to be more difficult. And I think we know that intuitively, and yet we've set up a lot of systems trying to make everybody reach certain levels on all skills.

Slide 17
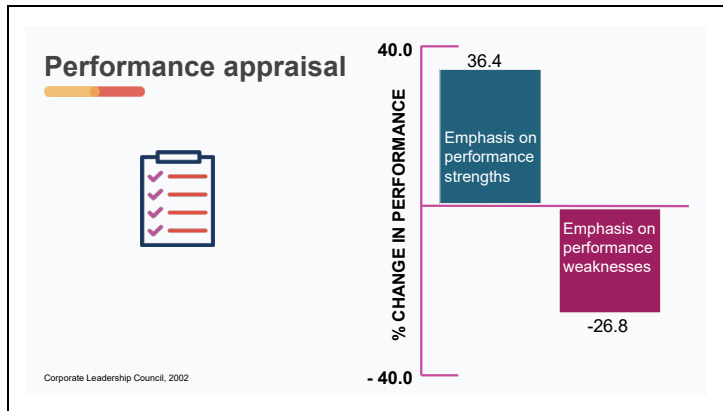
So, that was the reading example, right? And some explanation behind it. Now let's bring it to a workplace example, the performance appraisal, right? Which we done over and over again. So, this was done, the Corporate Leadership Council is a member network of large corporations. And so they did a study in a couple different organizations, where they used this more positive approach to performance appraisals. And what that approach looked like, was that you assess the person, but you only focused on the things that they are good at, and that they did really well that year. And the focus of the appraisal on the development plan, was to acknowledge the strengths, and then to talk about, how can we help you use the strength more and more often, right? But they, good experimental method again in a, so, they ran two groups side by side, and then another group, they did the standard deficit focused method, right? So, here are the areas where you need improvement, and let's come up with the development plan to focus on those areas, and we'll measure again in those six months and in a year, and hopefully you've made some progress. Again, somewhat surprising results. What they expected, was that the people where they focus on the strengths would've had better improvement, but the deficit folks focus people, they had hoped would come up some just not as much. And instead what they discovered, right? Is that we have a drop of 26.8%, almost 27%, in the people where they focused on only on their deficits, right? And often, I know about your experience, but my experience in those situations, is that the strengths are often like, you're good at these things, but, right? That's about all that gets said there's not much attention to them, but then the focus is on all the things that need to be improved. So So, we see here, right? It's not just this 36.4% increase on the positive focus, but we're overcoming, right? This other what would've been a negative impact on performance. And I think if people get enough of that negative impact, that's when they start questioning, this might not be the right job for me, this might not be the right organization for me, right? Might not be a good fit. Let me find a cursor, here we go.

Slide 18
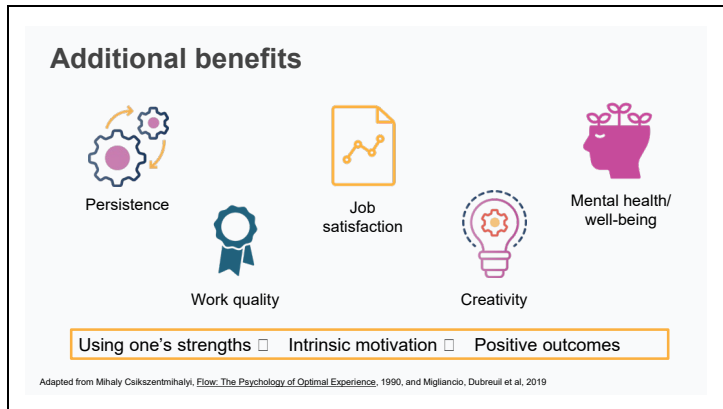
So, performance appraisal will do one of the first most obvious applications and opportunities. And, but there have been a number of other studies since then. And the one that is cited down here, this Migliancio, I don't know if I'm pronouncing that correct. And Dubreuil, and et al, there like six authors on, in 2019 where they looked at, they synthesized and did cross analysis of a number of different studies and repeatedly found that a strengths-based approach correlated strongly or could be shown to be, have a causal relationship with persistence on a task, job satisfaction, work quality, mental wellbeing and creativity. And the mechanism of action that you did a number of other questions to try to figure out why this was the case. And it reinforced what had been written in the book "Flow" that when we use our strengths, that taps into our intrinsic motivation, which then leads to these positive outcomes. So, that's the, I think that wraps up, yeah.

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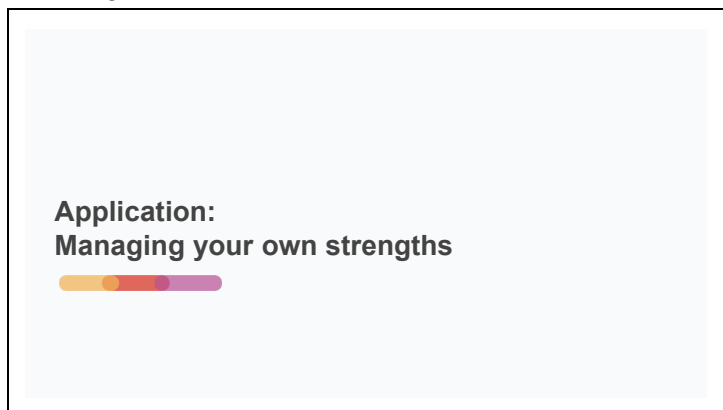
That wraps up the background. And I'll pause there. Just anyone, any questions or doubts or concerns before we go on to making this real for you? Okay. So, onward ho, I hope that wherever you are, whatever you're doing, that you have a pen and paper, or you have a computer screen open, some way that you're going to be able to take notes because this we're going to be engaging a lot. And the exercise is kind of built on one another. Some of the information you use in the first one you'll use in subsequent exercises. So, make sure you've got a way to take notes.

Slide 20

Awareness is the first step

1. Create two columns in your notes.
2. In the left column, list three work tasks you find energizing.
3. In the right column, list three tasks you find draining.

So, the first step of course is awareness, right? We, again, we had so much practice at talking about and thinking about what we're not good at, and you know, where we need to improve and what's missing, in ourselves, but also in other people, right? We think about that. We don't have a lot of practice at thinking about, you know, I really enjoyed this. This makes me feel good. I'm at my best at work when I do this, I'm really energized. So, this is an opportunity to pause and create two columns. And however, you're taking notes. And in the left hand column, list three work activities that you find particularly energizing. You're glad when you see that on your task list, if you happen to rotate assignments and then that's your assignment, you're like, all right. Or if it's on your calendar, if you plan your own work and it's a day you get to do whatever that activity is. Put that on the, and you're like, oh right, my favorite day, I put that on your energizing list. Okay? And hopefully you'll have three, but you can always come back and add to it. And then in the right hand column, list three tasks that you find draining, right? And again, this is like, where you have to take a deep breath beforehand, or you might need like an extra diet Coke or more chocolate, or, you know, whatever your poison of choice, right? This is like, oh yeah, I'm going to need a snack for this. You know, going in to do the scheduling or I'm going in to do the budgeting or I'm, you can hear my bias there, right? Or client callbacks or something. If that's not the thing you enjoy doing whatever its, right? Something you find draining. You want to gimme a thumbs up, when you've got through, I have a couple people gimme thumbs up. If you know how to do that, the bottom of your screen is a little reaction circle. It looks like a smiley place with a plus. If you click on that or hover over it, you can put a thumbs up.
- [Devon] I'm seeing some thumbs up come in.
- [Julie] Okay, perfect. Keep going.
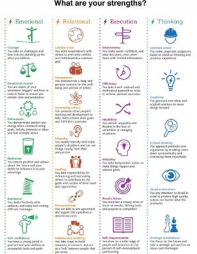
Slide 21

So, that's background, right? Just to get your head in the right space. You're in your workplace. You know the things that energize you and the things that take away. Now and Devon, I may need your help here on the wording. So, we're going to start working with a workbook and how do they receive this?
- [Devon] It was sent to registrants yesterday afternoon in an email. The slides were also the, yeah, the slides were also in that email.
- [Julie] Okay.
- [Devon] If you did not receive that, go ahead and just let us know in the chat.
- [Julie] Okay. And we have amazing Nancy, Caila and Devon, are in the background monitoring chat and stuff. So, if you need help, do reach out, and they'll make sure you get them to those. So, the cover looks like the first little thumbnail over here on the right, right? Strengths-based strategies. What's the title for engaging and retaining family planning staff. And then if you're looking at it in a computer scroll, if you printed, like I still use paper from time to time, right? So, I want to be able to hold it up, go ahead and turn to the first page with content. And you'll see something that looks like the thumbnail, the bottom thumbnail, entitled, what are your strengths? And this is going to take us a couple minutes here, but read the description of each strength and they're 24 of them. And for each strength that resonates with you, right? It describes behavior that you find energizing. And again, this is where we have to keep our mind. Not that you're competent at, 'cause I'm sure everyone, this call right? Could do like almost all. There may be someone like no way, right? But everyone, generally possesses these skills to some degree if you think of them as skills. If there's strengths that energize you, there's probably going to be some that's like, oh yeah, I love that, that really sounds like me. And others where you say, oh, yuck. No, no, no. So, let's mark, for now, let's mark the things that you say, yes, that sounds like me, especially when I'm having fun at work. And again, this is specific having fun at work, like, energized at work. Oh, hi, Jacqueline? Can you, you want to unmute?
- [Jacqueline] Yeah. I'm getting the message chat disabled, I don't know if that's just me, but I was going to flag that, I don't think I ever received the PDF, would love a like if it's possible.
- [Julie] Oh, oh, okay. Let's get that figured out, thank you.
- [Devon] Thanks, Jacqueline. We'll figure out what's going on with the chat.
- [Julie] It's personal, Jacqueline. We knew you were coming and someone said enable chat for everyone but Jacqueline. Okay, let's see if we get some other chats here. Oh and Ruth. Okay, did not receive the email.
- [Ruth] Yeah. I was trying to input that information in a chat too. And I'm like, oh, the chat is disabled.
- [Julie] Oh, is that you, Ruth? I'm sorry, I don't have, I can't see everybody's faces when I'm projecting this.

- [Ruth] Yes, it's me.
- [Julie] And it's nice to hear voices by the way. So, oh, there she is, now I can see. If you have questions I'm not a particularly formal person. And so I really don't mind at all if you interject or if you put something in chat and I don't see it, 'cause I'm looking at a lot of screen here. You feel free to unmute and say you, who. Okay, so I'm seeing some folks looking at me. Does that tell me that you've put all your check marks? You've identified except for folks who don't have it, right? We'll come back, you'll get a second chance to look at this. Let me wait just a minute. See Ruth and Jacqueline get the email. Oh, Kanisha says she has it, okay. So, I see we've got a number there, okay. And so I get that Devon and Nancy and Kayla, are probably working madly on those.
- [Devon] Yeah, we're working on it.
- [Julie] Okay, great.
- [Julie] Ruth, did you have a, I saw Ruth raise.
- [Ruth] Yeah, I was going to ask, do you want me to put my email in the chat? So, that way I can.
- [Julie] If you don't mind making it, sharing it with everyone, hopefully.
- [Ruth] Of course.
- More spam with emails.
- [Devon] Thanks Ruth.
- You're welcome.
- Everybody on this call knows what it's like to get too many emails, right? No one's going to spend. So, those of you who were able, right? Who have gotten the worksheet, can you send me a, if you've identified your strengths, can you gimme a plus in the chat and just see how long it's going to take to read? Perfect. Okay. Got some folks there, thank you. Yeah, back to reading speed, right? And it's hard, like, does that be your, not me. So, of the ones that you've checked, you may have checked seven, you may have checked 12, right? Everybody will be a little different. Look at the ones that you've checked and select the five, that best represent you when you feel like you're at your best at work. And you're enjoying the work again. Energized, not just competent. I see, Sandra gave us a green check mark. Anyone else can give us a green check mark on your reactions or plus in the chat when you got it. Good, starting to come in. Okay, so we were going to do, we're going to get into a breakout group next. For now in our large group, so some of you who might be brave and feel like speaking up, we've already had a couple folks and you see nothing horrible happen to them, right? When they spoke up. I'd just like to pause, to say, to ask, right? Were you surprised to see some of the qualities on the list be considered a strength? Did anybody have that experience? Like, well, yeah, it's there, but didn't That was a strength. No, got a self-aware group, that, of course that's a strength. Okay, maybe more advanced than me. So, I remember some of the things, well, there were two kind of reactions that I had. One, some of the things that were a strength for me, I remember being a little surprised that that was a strength, but it wasn't something that just sort of everybody kind of did. And then there were also things that maybe were other people's strengths and my non-strengths, that I had always found annoying. Right? Or thought of as deficiencies, perhaps, and a coworker that lo and behold were actually a strength, right? But that I hadn't been able to see as a strength. So, I don't know if you had had either of those, but I wanted to normalize that if you found yourself having some of those same kind of reactions in other groups that that comes up.

Slide 22

Exercise: Call on me for…

1. Review your list of personal strengths.
2. For each strength, identify a task or activity that would **benefit from your strength** and that you would **like** to do.
3. In your small group, take turns expressing a desire to be called upon for those tasks that use your strengths:

   "I've been discovering that I have a gift for _____ and would like to do more work that lets me use that gift. For instance, if you need someone to _____, feel free to call on me."

4. Debrief:
   ○ How does it feel to ask?
   ○ As a manager, how does it feel to have someone offer?

So, now we're going to move into breakout groups. But before we do, you need to use that top five list, right? That you just created. And for each of those top five strengths, identify a task or an activity that would be good for your organization. Maybe something that's already happening, but maybe it's not your assignment, but it's something that would benefit from your strength and that you would like to do, or like to do more of, maybe it's something you get to do periodically, but you'd like to do more of it. And so, you know, and you'll see, it's a progressive thing that takes some practice to be connecting our strengths within our actual tasks and activities that work. And so I just wanted to give you some practice doing that. And then we're going to move into the breakout groups and in the breakout groups, and we've got a script here and one of our lovely back office Devon and Caila or someone is going to copy these instructions into chat. So, you'll have access to them in the breakout groups. And the goal there is to take turns, right? Expressing a desire to be called on for one of these tasks that uses your strength. So, here's the script, right? I've been discovering that I have a gift for, blank, whatever the strength is. And I would like to do more work that lets me use that gift. For instance, if you need someone to, blank, whatever the task or activity is, feel free to call on me, right? And so we'll have about five minutes. Everyone will get to take a turn. And if you have a couple minutes in the group, you can start talking about, one, how does it feel to ask, to do more of something you like? And if you're a manager, hold a manager or some sort of leadership role, what does it feel like to have someone offer, right? To do work? Okay? So, I think Nancy, are you doing our breakout groups? If so, we're ready to go.
- [Nancy] Okay, I'm getting ready to open the rooms.
- [Julie] So, welcome back, was five minutes enough?
- Oh, that went by very fast Just to say, I think, one and a half of us got to speak.
- [Julie] Oh, oh, okay, so note for the future. Anyone want to chime in? How did it-
- [Ruth] Oh, I can chime in.
- [Julie] Please.
- [Ruth] It's Ruth.
- [Julie] Okay.
- [Ruth] So, for me, one of the strengths I had said was relationship building. I like to go out and meet new people, just get people from different backgrounds, have so many different conversations. I guess I'm a people person. And also flexibility. Like I explained earlier to Renee, I guess being in the army, it's like, you got to be quick and always adapting. So, I'm like, okay, what's new today. So, I'm like, whatever. So, that's kind of like the two that I reviewed so far from the chat.
- [Julie] How did it feel? Did you get a chance in the group to ask, to say, hey, I'd like to do more?

- [Ruth] Yeah. I like to go out into the community. And I was explaining that we meet, introduce ourselves to new schools and meet with different principals and administration. So, yeah, that's fine. That's a okay task for me to do. Renee is more detail oriented and she's perfect for her role.
- [Julie] Got it. Was anyone a manager, and got to hear someone offer to do work? Do we have anybody in that position, that in your group, you're a manager and someone in the group got to say, hey, I'd like to do more of this kind of work? They don't have to be your direct employee, just hearing that. Is it? I guess the other question is, please, go ahead, is somebody weighing in?
- [Sandra] Yeah. So, this is Sandra. We didn't get a chance to actually sort of discuss that. Like I said, it wasn't a lot enough time, but I am a manager and it feels great when you have staff that wants to do more of something. It just kind of opens up creativity for them. It gives them, I just feel like, they feel like they're part of the team and it almost kind of energizes them. We have, I just gained a new set of employees and I've got two that are just so energized and want to do this, want to do that? And I'm like, go for it.
- [Julie] Right, go for it. Right. As opposed to being the, I'm sorry, didn't mean to interrupt, but as opposed to it being the manager's responsibility, to read the tea leaves, right? And kind of figure out what each person, I mean, you can do some of that, but it's nice. Isn't it right to have someone step up and say, I'm good at this, I'd like to do more of it, how can I help?
- [Sandra] So, sort of like, obviously, follow up to make sure that it's getting that appropriately and you can kind of look at their strengths and you know that they're kind of heading in that right direction. If not, then you can kind of guide them, but don't take away that initiative to sort of try something new.
- [Julie] Nice. Let's see. Anyone, do we have anything check? Anyone else before we zip on? Like anybody off, you're going to have another group opportunity. Let's see.

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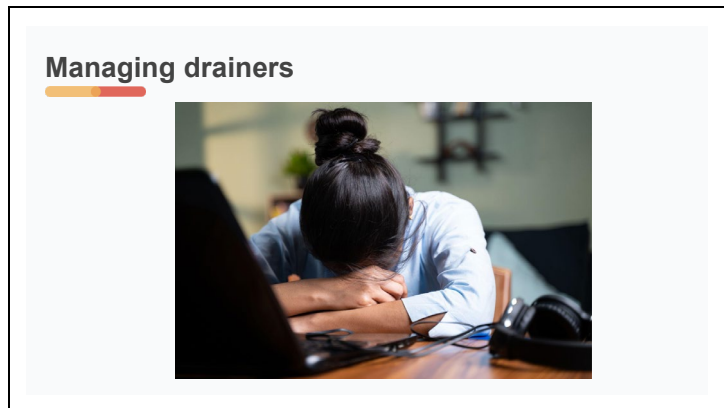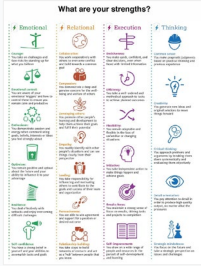
So, again, we're getting a lot, right? In a short period of time, hopefully after this, you'll reflect on the materials, you'll use them again. You'll read through them again and think about whatever notes that you've taken. But you know, one part of strengths is understanding, what am I good at and how do I do more of that? Another part, is understanding the things that do drain you, right? And how can you do less of them or manage them in some way, so they take less out of you when you do have to do them. That's the next section.

Slide 24

So, go back to your list of strengths, right? That's the paper with all the four columns of pictures on it. And this time, put a different mark or highlight in a different color or however it is that you're making marks. Identify everything when you read it, you say, uh-uh, that is not me, right? Or if anything made you go, ooh, yuck, right? That would be, mark those. And then gimme a thumbs up for me. Oh, it's seeing chat, Anjela? Anjela, just joined and needs to know where she can find the strengths lists.

- [Devon] Anjela, if you registered before yesterday afternoon, you should have received it in an email. And if you didn't get that email, go ahead and you can chat your email address to, you can chat it to me directly, if you don't want everyone to see your email and we'll get that to you.

- Of your newly marked items, you might not have gotten them all done But identified the three. The three that are the biggest yuck, right? Or if you had to spend a whole day doing whatever that is, it would make you think, this would be a good day to call in sick. Yeah, this be a good day to use some PTO time. Those that you've just marked, those are your drainers. And in this framework, we don't really use weaknesses so much, right? In this more strengths-based framework, it's an area that's not a strength for you, right? Because the whole idea, we call it a weakness, there's this sense that somehow we should have it, and it's a deficiency. The reality is that all of us have, right? A different mix of freeways and surface streets. And you know, some of these things, they're just not your freeway and that's all right, because it will be a freeway for somebody else generally in your team. I wasn't going to have a share in the chat, how you feel when you have to do that. But I think I've already talked about drainers and we're going to have another exercise where you're good to talk about them more. So, let's move on to that.

Slide 25

Exercise: I'll take your drainer! (aka Task Swap)

1. Imagine you all work in the same department in your organization.
2. Take turns sharing one of your drainers.
3. Team members who are listening can respond with:
   - "I'll take it!"
   - "Don't look at me."
   - "I hate it, too, but maybe if we do it together, it won't be so bad."
1. After everyone takes a turn, discuss what you noticed.

This is well, small groups. I think maybe we'll give you a couple extra minutes this time. In this small group, using that list that you just had, that you just created, right? Of your drainers, the things that make you go, ugh, not me. When you get in your small group, imagine that you all work in the same department, and take turns sharing one of your drainers, right? Again, scheduling front-desk management, patient callbacks, going to schools, right? Luke mentioned like going out to schools, whatever activity, something that is a drainer for you and the strength, the thing that you don't like about it. And then the other people in the group can respond, oh, I'll take that, right? Or don't look at me, that's not my thing either. Or I hate it too, but maybe if we do it together, it won't be so bad, right? So, just, and this is, again, this is like a little mini practice at the whole idea of task swapping. There's so many things in healthcare that regulated that maybe have to be done by a licensed nurse pharmacist, right? Nurse practitioner, whatever. But there's a lot of other stuff that's just stuff, right? That you don't have to have a license to do. And those things can be traded or they can be redesigned. How you do them. Who does them, how you do them and when you do them. And so one of the ways for drainers to take less out of you is to offload them, right? If you can. So, Nancy, are we ready for breakout group number two?
- [Nancy] Yes, I'll go ahead and open the rooms.
- [Julie] What did you notice? What did it feel like to admit that you really hated doing something and offer it to the marketplace of helpers?
- [unidentified] I thought that it was great to know that someone would want that Want what I didn't want. So, I think that's a positive
- [Julie] That's something, isn't it?
- [unidentified] Yeah.
- [Julie] So, back with that whole philosophy, right? That one slide, right? That's like work is hard, or supposed to be things you don't like, yada, yada, yada if we have some part of our job that we hate, right? Or we find difficult, we'll go, that we'll be nicer, right? But that just does not light us up, part of this, if we have a really good work ethic, we don't want to ask somebody else to do that, right? It's like, why would I pawn off my grunge? And it really does take some practice to realize there's somebody out there, that thinks that would be a great time. Yeah. Anyone else?
- [Sandra] This is Sandra. I think it's great to, I don't want to say capitalized, but I guess I can use that word on someone else's strength. I find that one can't do everything and delegation or collaboration really helps to get the task done. I just, you know, I started this new position and I just feel like I have that right now, which is great. It's a good feeling to know, I can go to that person for budget. I can go to that person for operations. I can go to this person for the detail-

oriented people. So, I think it's great to have a team that has all of these different strengths. It makes it for a stronger team, so to speak.

- [Julie] Right. Perfect, that's laying the groundwork for something that will come shortly. Can't-

- [Sandra] Can't do it all exactly.

- [Julie] You can't do it all, right? And the more that everyone gets to work in their zone of genius, they're going to be more efficient, right? So, like when it comes to accountant, right? What takes me two hours, my accountant can do in seven minutes. And so as we spend our time better, that way too, people leave feeling good about the work that they're doing, you get more done, right? So, it really is a win-win, but it does take practice to getting that mindset of being able to trade things.

Slide 26

Exercise: Deal with drainers

1. Choose one of the tasks or activities you listed as a drainer.
2. Write it in the top left box of the worksheet.
3. Refer to the strengths you just identified as drainers. If you can connect your chosen drainer activity to one of your drainer strengths, record that in the upper right box.
4. Walk through the flowchart; consider actions you might take to manage this drainer so it takes less of a toll on you.

So, I'm looking at the clock and there are a couple things that we're going to skip over, but they're in the slide deck and I changed the order of slides. So, you may have already seen this one. That's also in the workbook and, right? So, the worksheet that looks like the picture on the, right hand side of your screen. And this is something that you can do at home. So, excuse me. So, it's the dealing with drainers, just follow the instructions, but it goes through, you know, can you stop one? Are you willing to make a change, right? If you're not willing to make a change, then stop complaining, right? But if you are willing to make a change, then can someone else, can you stop doing it? Can someone else do it? You know, can you barter for something, right? So, it goes through some different steps. And I just offer that and wonder you, make sure you had that in your hands for when you are facing one of these tasks that you realize there are options, it's not just do it or don't do it, right? Or do it or paw it off. But there are some different ways, you can reframe it. You can, you maybe, it's something, like that I'm not great at, but I do like building relationships and I do like learning. And so if I can reframe a task as well, this is helping me learn, right? Either learn from somebody else's perspective, that makes it positive for me. So, you look at your strengths and see is there a way that I can reframe those in terms of something that I do enjoy? And may if it's something I have to do anyway, maybe make it more enjoyable for me. But the goal of all of that, right? It's all these different ways we can use this increased understanding of our strengths to decrease. Sometimes it's actual decrease of the workload and sometimes it's decreased the perceived workload.

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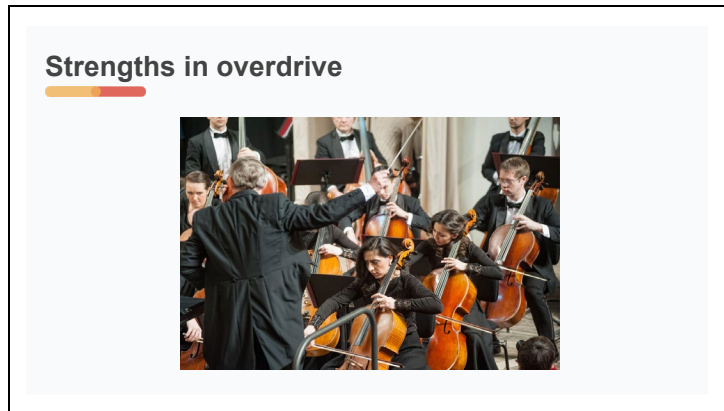
So, the third thing about managing your own strengths is strengths in overdrive, right? So, we've talked about, we need to know our strengths and we apply them more and try to do things that call on them more. We identify our non-strengths and try to find ways to do less of the things that call for those. And then for the more seasoned, like people who have a little gray hair like me, right? In our career, we've often made career choices that have moved us more toward the things that we like and things away from. Our biggest performance risk is strengths in overdrive. So, just like this orchestra, right? That you see here, if everyone played every instrument as loud and as fast as they could all the time, right? We wouldn't have music, right? We have noise. We have cacophony that hurts your ears.

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So, the trick here is to figure out the strengths that make like me at the beginning, when you guys were in the breakout group, Devon and I were talking, I thought I only talked like 15 minutes at the beginning, right? But oh, no, I'd gone on, I'd gone over. When it's the thing that we enjoy, it's like, it's a good thing. You think everybody would want more of it. Right? But sometimes the same way as in music, right? Every instrument is not needed at every time. So, maybe you have creativity as a strength. And what that usually looks like is you're great at generating new ideas. So, there's a problem and you can come up with like 15 different ideas. Well, you come to a point in the problem solving process where you need to make decisions. And when you're at that point, it's not good to have more ideas, right? It's actually detracts from the team. The same way, like optimism is generally helpful, but sometimes it's not always welcome, developing others, right? Is these, so everything on the strengths list is a strength, but it's best if it's used in the proper context. So, we need to have ways to monitor ourselves and

check ourselves a little bit, but that also open up ways for other people to give us a little bit feedback. And I'm looking at the clock, I want to make sure we get to the team part of this and we don't keep you late. So, I'm going to give you this also, what's on this slide and the worksheets that go with it as kind of take home homework. But it has you identify one of your strengths that maybe you think is probably at greatest risk, right? Of going into overdrive, 'cause you feel so great when you're doing it, and enjoy it so much and you think it makes a positive contribution and you work through the first page of that strengths in overdrive worksheet as the title, right? And it has the big blank areas and you just walk through the questions. The second piece is, and it's the page looks like this, right, two columns. You've got the icons and it's got a little script next to each one. And it's the last page in your workbook. It gives you a little script. So, let you know, so for me, for creativity, for instance, where my creativity, okay. I would say my creativity energizer makes me come up with all sorts of new ideas all the time. I can't help it, right? Do we need more fresh thinking here or should we move forward? Or I might even say if I knew the group, right? Or is this a good time for me to be quiet? Right? And that, that's me kind of owning that I might get out of whack sometimes. And it also gives the people around me an easy way, right? To come in and give me a little bit of feedback. And so you can see there's a script there for each of the strengths. You can change the words, make them your own, but that will give you a starting point. And just start to notice in a group, right? When people are glazing over it, it's like, oh, oh, maybe my strengths in overdrive, right? That's often a queue.

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Managing your team's strengths
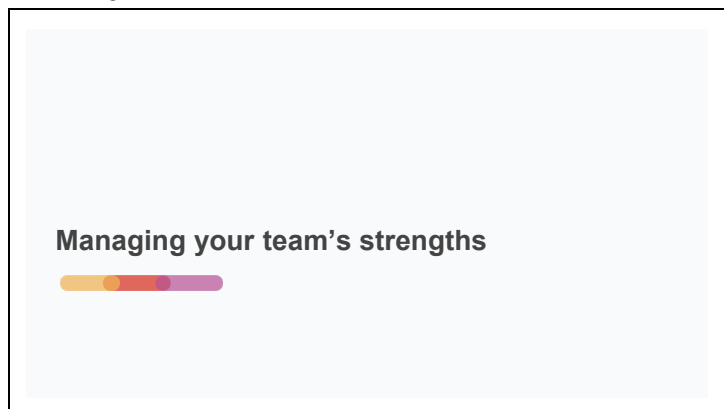
So, now I want to move on to the managing your team's strengths. It's important for you to recognize, right? That we started with managing your own strengths. Because again, the mindset is this critical part. And to start seeing what the strengths lens, and start thinking in terms of strengths instead of competencies, take some practice. And so practicing it with yourself. So, you're able to role model is, and it will change some of the language that you use. And that's an important first step. It can't be something that you hope they, right? It's something you want them to do, if you, yourself, aren't also operating in that space.

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But once you've done some of that work and then you start to look at your team and I think some of you already have, just as we're going through the workshop from some of your comments. The next mindset shift is not just shift from speaking of deficit to strength. Now we start looking at our team and we shift from thinking about, titles or job or position,

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to that thinking of that person as strengths or as a collection of strengths. And I think, I'm sorry, I'm going to forget the name, it might have been Laura. I remember curriculum was making that comment earlier, right? He's new in her position, right? And using these other people's strengths. And so start to think about, just because they're the student, doesn't mean they can't take initiative, right? I've seen, I've so watched so many painful meetings where the manager, because they're the manager, they feel like they have to facilitate the meeting. But the poor thing couldn't facilitate their way out of a bag, right? Is just not their strength. And so everybody sits there politely, you know what? There's somebody who's really good at that. What the heck? Let them do it, right? They're going to thrive, the team's going to do better. So, that's shift number one.

Slide 32

2. Build strengths awareness in the team

- Whiteboard & sticky notes
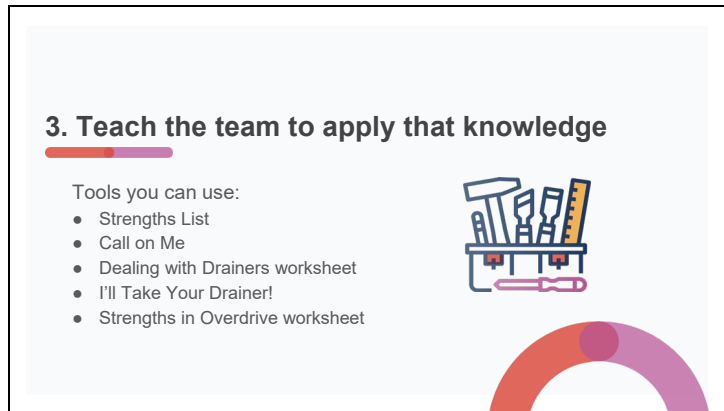
  | Lights me up! | Wears me out! |

- Keeping an "energy journal"
- Peer feedback
- Online assessment tools

The second thing is to build strengths awareness. The same way you had to become aware of your own strengths and of course that will take more practice, start building that in the team. And here are some different options. If you've got the space and you've got the psychological safety, right? In your environment, having a whiteboard or a court board, you can stick things to, and just draw on a line down the middle, right? Lights me up, that's your energizer left column, right? And drains the life out of me, right? Wears me out. Could be the other column, whatever would be funny for you to put at the top. And that people, that let's say they come out of something they're feeling drained, you say, put on the board, right? And you just put them up there, and then it can be part of, one, is just awareness that it's okay to be energized and drained and people can start to read those and see, like some of you here, right? Realizing somebody else, is energized by the thing that drains you. And then you can start taking some of those tasks. It's like, well, let's see what we've got here on the drawing board. Can we reassign these, right? Or what can we do about this? The Energy Journal is just a more private approach to the white board, right? And it's the two-column thing that you've already done yourself. And people just keep a record. Peer feedback is if, you know, once this becomes part of what you talk about, then you can say, hey, you seem really fired up, right? You were looking really energize. What were you doing? I think that's one of your strengths. And it starts to open up that where we can observe one another. 'Cause sometimes we don't even know our strengths. We take them for granted, right? It's things that come easy to us and so we don't even appreciate them. And then there are a number of online assessment tools, via character strength. There's a workplace orientation. There's a free version of disk. I can't, endorse any particular ones, but just search personality type assessments or strengths assessments online. And you'll see that there are lots of options available.

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3. Teach the team to apply that knowledge

Tools you can use:
- Strengths List
- Call on Me
- Dealing with Drainers worksheet
- I'll Take Your Drainer!
- Strengths in Overdrive worksheet

And then finally you can use the same order that we used in this workshop, right? And the same tools use the workbook. It will be available on the RHNTC website, right? Afterwards, when they get the video up, the companion workbook will be there and you can continue to download. And you can use these same tools with your team to just keep building the awareness.

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Building a Strengths-based Culture

Oh, we're barely going to make it, sorry.

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And then the final thing, is I'll stop here is to, as far as making it into the culture, these things we already talked about will certainly start the culture and lays the groundwork, but weaving it into daily practice everywhere you can, right? Something bad happens. It's like, okay, we have to deal with that. Then ask, are there examples? Where do we get it right? When did that happen, right? What are we really good at? Where if you're worried about being out of compliance, well, where are we in compliance and how are we managing that? And it's over time, it becomes a habit, but it does take daily practice.

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I'll leave this with you for homework, right? Ways that you can start integrating strengths-based approaches into your day-to-day interactions. The performance appraisal that we talked about is a good place to start. It just so impactful and completely transforms that experience.

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Takeaways

- Intrinsic motivation is the only sustainable source of employee engagement.
- Doing intrinsically-satisfying work increases productivity, satisfaction, and well-being.
- Strengths-based management enables organizations to simultaneously tap into employees' intrinsic motivation to achieve organizational goals, *and* meet employees' needs for challenge, recognition, and achievement.
- True strengths increase our individual and collective vitality. They also energize individuals and give life to organizational systems.
- Strengths-based management is a learned competence that improves with practice.

And the takeaways. There's so much being written now with all the resignations and such that, you know, okay, pay and yes, that matters. But there will be all these lists of things that you need to do. The reality is the intrinsic motivation is the only sustainable source of employee engagement, right? That keeps people heart and mind engaged. And so the strengths-based approach really helps to build intrinsically satisfying work. And then I think, it's a learned competence, which I've said before, right? So, just keep at it.

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What are *your* takeaways?

And I see some of you jotting and I'm so glad, because I know the second that you log out of here, you probably have 250,000 things to do. So, if you'll make one note to yourself as we're wrapping up.

Slide 39

Case study: Hospital nurse retention

Problem: 10% of new nursing graduate hires left within 8 months

Intervention: Strengths-based job assignments and mentoring

Outcomes: 18 months after beginning the intervention
- New nurse turnover dropped to 1.7%
- Overall nurse retention rose to 94.2%
- The system saved $1M in recruiting, hiring, orienting, and training costs

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Q&A | What questions do you have for us?

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and I'm going to turn it over to Devon to tell how to stay engaged with the RHNTC.
- [Devon] Thank you so much, Dr. Rennecker and feel free to put your takeaways in the chat while I run through just the last few notes here. So, thank you so much for joining us today. And I hope you will join me in thanking our speaker. Dr. Rennecker. As a reminder, we will have the materials from today's session available within the next few days. If you have any questions, 'cause I know we didn't really get a chance to get to Q&A, please don't hesitate to email us at rhntc@jsi.com. Our final ask is that you please complete the evaluation. The link to the evaluation is in the chat and will appear when you leave the workshop and the evaluation link

will also be emailed to you after the workshop ends today. We really love getting your feedback and we use it to inform future sessions. And just another reminder, in order to obtain a certificate of completion for attending the session, you must be logged into rhntc.org. when you complete the evaluation. To stay in touch with RHNTC, you can subscribe to our monthly eNewsletter, by visiting rhntc.org/enewsletter. You can contact us through our website, rhntc.org. You can sign up for an account on our website. You can follow us on Twitter, find us @rh_ntc. And finally you can subscribe to our podcast through podcast.rhntc.org or in your favorite podcast app. So, thank you so much again for joining us today, and that concludes today's workshop.
- [Julie] Thanks everyone, good work.

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