

## Handout 2: Strategies for Exploring Family Strengths<sup>3</sup>

### Overview

*Below are some strategies for drawing out strengths in families.*

- Believe that family strengths exist.
- Have conversations or chats with the family, not interviews.
- Ask process questions:
  - How did you do that?
  - Can you tell me about that?
  - Can you say a little bit more about that?
- Talk about everyday things.
- Identify and celebrate the family's successes.
- Tell the family how remarkable it is.
- Keep a focus on learning the good news about the family.
- Relate to the family as people, not as clients or a case.
- Remember that the family is the senior partner.
- Carefully observe verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Listen to stories about the family.
- Meet at times and places that are comfortable to the family (e.g., home, workplace, coffee shop, park).
- Avoid taking notes. If notes are necessary, ask for the family's permission. Before you leave, make a copy of all notes and offer them to the family.

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<sup>3</sup>Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wraparound Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).