

Discover Your Family Strengths

All families possess strengths. Here is a fun activity to see where your family is strong and areas to work on. Have each person rate your family on each item listed by placing the number 1, 2, 3, or 4 in the blanks provided. There are no right or wrong answers. Read the item and record the score each family member gives.

1 = Not usually

2 = Sometimes

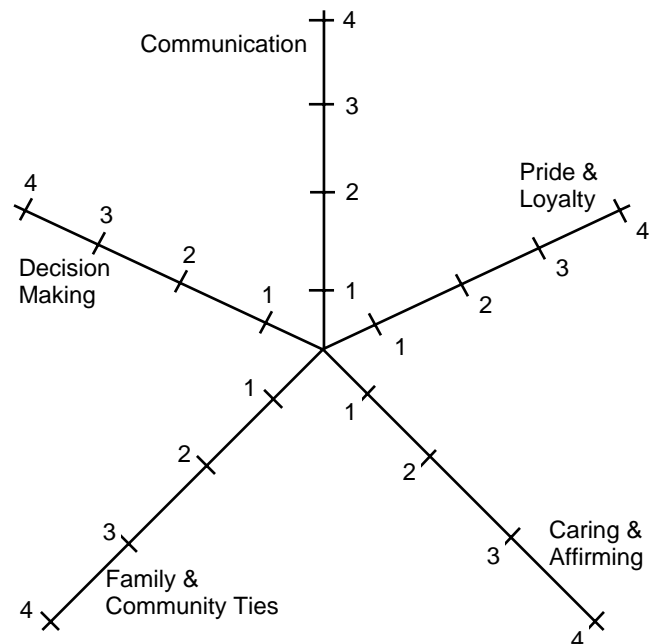
3 = Usually

4 = Always

- ___ 1. Family members feel free to say what is on their minds.
- ___ 2. In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed.
- ___ 3. Family members feel very close to each other.
- ___ 4. Family members talk to each other when making family decisions.
- ___ 5. When problems arise, we compromise.
- ___ 6. Family members ask each other for help.
- ___ 7. I can talk to family members about what I believe without feeling embarrassed.
- ___ 8. Family members feel closer to each other than to people outside the family.
- ___ 9. When we get together for activities, most family members are present.
- ___ 10. We approve of each other's friends.
- ___ 11. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.
- ___ 12. It is hard to know who the leader is in our family.
- ___ 13. I am happy with how members of my family and I talk together.
- ___ 14. We think it's important to stick together as a family.
- ___ 15. Children have a say in their discipline.
- ___ 16. Our family participates in many community or religious groups and activities.
- ___ 17. In our family, it is easy for everyone to say what they think.
- ___ 18. It is easy to keep track of who does household chores.
- ___ 19. Different family members act as leaders in our family.
- ___ 20. There are people outside of our immediate household whom we can depend on if we're having trouble.
- ___ 21. It is easy for us to think of things to do as a family.
- ___ 22. We are proud of our family.
- ___ 23. Rules do change in our family.
- ___ 24. Family members like to spend their free time with each other.

- ___ 25. Parents make most of the decisions.
- ___ 26. We like to do things with just our immediate family.
- ___ 27. Family members feel loyal to the family.
- ___ 28. Parents and children discuss punishment together.
- ___ 29. Being together as a family is very important to us.
- ___ 30. I believe what family members tell me.
- ___ 31. Our family changes its way of handling day to day routines.
- ___ 32. When we talk, we try to understand each other's point of view.
- ___ 33. Our family tries new ways of dealing with problems.

Family Strength Profile



Scoring Your Family Strengths

1. Record scores for each item.
2. Add the column for each characteristic and divide by the number of items related to that characteristic. (The score will always be between 1 and 4.)
3. Plot scores on the Family Strength Profile, putting each person's initials by their score.
4. Talk about your scores. Is there agreement? Do people see things differently?

Communication		Pride & Loyalty		Caring & Affirming		Family & Community Ties		Decision Making	
Question	Number	Question	Number	Question	Number	Question	Number	Question	Number
1	_____	14	_____	3	_____	6	_____	2	_____
7	_____	22	_____	9	_____	8	_____	4	_____
13	_____	27	_____	21	_____	10	_____	5	_____
17	_____	Total	_____	24	_____	16	_____	11	_____
30	_____	Add the number	_____	26	_____	20	_____	12	_____
32	_____	column and divide by	_____	29	_____	Total	_____	18	_____
Total	_____	3 to get your score.	_____	Total	_____	Add the number	_____	19	_____
Add the number	_____	Score	_____	Add the number	_____	column and divide by	_____	23	_____
column and divide by	_____			column and divide by	_____	5 to get your score.	_____	25	_____
6 to get your score.	_____			6 to get your score.	_____	Score	_____	28	_____
Score	_____			Score	_____		_____	31	_____
								33	_____
								Total	_____
								Add the number	_____
								column and divide by	_____
								12 to get your score.	_____
								Score	_____

Strengths of families can be organized around the following five key dimensions.

Communication: Members of strong families communicate their feelings and concerns. They are quick to listen and respond to what others have to say. Family members regularly discuss values and beliefs important to them. Parents consistently encourage and model their own values.

Pride and Loyalty: Healthy families promote each others happiness and welfare and are committed to the family as a group. They are proud to be a part of it. Healthy families honor its elders and welcome its babies.

Caring and Affirming: Strong families affirm, trust, and support one another. They show affection and give praise and encouragement. Support and affection is evenly distributed among family members. Healthy

families spend quality time together but also allow individual family members privacy and time to pursue independent interests and relationships.

Family and Community Ties: Healthy families are connected to other individuals and institutions for emotional and practical support. If difficult problems arise the family seeks outside help. Strong families are involved with community institutions such as schools, churches and local organizations.

Decision Making: Healthy families adapt their power structure, role relationships and rules in response to the situation. Each person has input. Everyone, including children, shares power and decision making. Explanations for family rules and reasons for disciplining children are clearly communicated.

Source: Stephen Small. *Family Times*. (1987). University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension.

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