

## **Structure Decision Making: Strengths and Needs Assessment**

A Strengths and Needs Assessment tool is used to evaluate the presenting strengths and needs of each family and helps plan effective service interventions. The tool identifies priority strengths and needs of caregivers and children to inform service plan development. Priority needs should be reflected in the goals, objectives, and interventions in the service plan. Priority strengths should be incorporated to the greatest extent possible, as a means to address identified needs.

The Strengths and Needs Assessment is required in all Family Assessment track – Child Protection workgroups. It is recommended for all Family Investigation track – Child Protection workgroups and required if the investigation will be opened for ongoing services.

In Family Assessments, the Strengths and Needs Assessment should be completed within the 45-day assessment period. In Family Investigations, the Strengths and Needs Assessment should be completed within the 45-day investigation period, or within 30 days of opening for ongoing services, prior to development of the initial service plan.

After initial assessment, a Strengths and Needs Assessment should be completed again 30 days prior to the required service plan updates.

There are a number of tabs on the Strengths and Needs Assessment; the final number will depend on whether there are one or two caregivers and the number of children.

The Cultural Identity tab allows you to document any information gained from your discussion on culture with the family. Culture is a system of shared actions, values, beliefs, and traditions that guide the behavior of families and communities. Culture may refer to racial, ethnic, religious, or social identity. In recognition of the importance and strength of cultural norms, it is important to have a discussion with the family about how culture influences their family in each of the domains.

The number of Caregiver tab(s) depends on whether there are one or two caregivers. As the primary and secondary caregivers are selected on the tool, a Caregiver tab displays with the caregiver's name. The Caregiver tab allows you to select the strengths or needs of that particular caregiver.

Once the Caregiver tab(s) are completed, the strengths and needs are divided on the Caregiver Priorities tab. Three priority strengths and three priority needs can be selected.

The number of Child tabs depends on how many children are selected in the Children section above the tabs. The Child tabs display with the child's name. The individual Child tabs allows you to select the strengths and needs of that particular child. Once selected, the tool breaks your selections into either strengths or needs. Selections of priority strengths and needs are not limited to three, and should be selected based on discussion with the family and what is determined to be in the best interests of each child.

### Strengths and Needs Assessment

Decision Tool	Assessed By	Tool Status	Tool Version	Assessment Date	Created Date	Finalized Date
Decision Tool: <input type="text" value="Family Strengths and Needs"/> <input type="button" value="Generate Tool"/>						
Assessed By:	<input type="text" value="Laisy, Rebecca"/>	Assessment Date:	<input type="text" value="4/12/2012"/>	Tool Status:	<input type="text"/>	Finalize Date:
Primary Caregiver:	<input type="text" value="Practice, Arianna"/>	Secondary Caregiver:	<input type="text" value="Practice, Robert"/>			
Children <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Practice, Tiffany <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Practice, Jacob						
Cultural Identity   Caregiver - Practice, Arianna   Caregiver - Practice, Robert   Caregiver Priorities   Child - Practice, Tiffany   Child - Practice, Jacob						
Family's perspective on culture and cultural identity <input type="text"/>						
<input type="button" value="Action"/>						

***To complete a Strengths and Needs Assessment:***



1. Select the **Decision Tools** folder in the Tree View of the desired workgroup.
2. From an **Action** menu, select **New Decision Tool**.
3. Select **Strengths and Needs** in the **Decision Tool** field using the drop-down menu.
4. Select **Generate Tool**. The tool displays.
5. The **Assessed by** field autofills with the user logged on to SSIS. Select a different assessor if the Strengths and Needs Assessment was completed by another worker.
6. Select the date of assessment in the **Assessment Date** field.
7. Select a caregiver in the **Primary Caregiver** field.
8. Select a caregiver in the **Secondary Caregiver** field, if applicable.
9. Uncheck any children who do not apply to the household the tool is assessing, if applicable.
10. Type any information gained from your discussion on culture with the family into the **Family's perspectives on culture and cultural identity** field on the **Cultural Identity** tab.
11. Select the **Caregiver** tab.
12. Select answers in **SN1-7**.
13. If there are two caregivers, select the second caregiver tab and repeat step 12. Once step 12 is complete, proceed to step 14.
14. Select the **Caregiver Priorities** tab.
15. Review the scored lists under **Priority Needs** and **Priority Strengths** sections. Note: If there is a primary and secondary caregiver, there will be two columns on the right to consider.
16. Select up to three **Priority Needs** and three **Priority Strengths**.
17. Select the **Child** tab.
18. Select answers in **CSN1-7** and in the **Referral to early childhood developmental screening** field.
19. As selections are made in **CSN1-7**, the **Priority Strengths** and **Priority Needs** sections populate. Review the lists.
20. Select **Priority Strengths** and **Priority Needs** as identified.
21. If there are additional children, continue following steps 17-20 until all children are completed.
22. Select **Save**.
23. A dialog displays indicating that the tool is complete. Select **OK**.



*Hint: N/A displays on the Caregiver Priorities tab when there is a Primary and Secondary caregiver column where one caregiver has a need but the other caregiver has a strength in the same area. For instance, the primary caregiver may have need in SN4:Mental health/coping, but the secondary caregiver has SN4 as a strength. Therefore, under Priority Needs, the primary caregiver would display a need and the secondary caregiver would display N/A. Under Priority Strengths, the primary caregiver would display N/A and the secondary caregiver would display a strength.*



*Hint: If fields are not completed, the tool is saved as Incomplete. You must complete all required fields before the tool is complete.*



*References: Find the following resources under Structured Decision Making at:*

[http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_DYNAMIC\\_CONVESSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id\\_000477](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVESSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_000477)

- *Structured Decision Making: Policy and Procedures Manual*
- *Printing Blank Tools and Definitions*
- *SDM Safety Assessment*
- *SDM Risk Assessment*
- *SDM Risk Reassessment*
- *SDM Reunification Assessment.*