

### **A strengths-based approach**

In order to maximise the chances of supporting an individual to meet their needs, and improve or maintain their wellbeing, we must focus on working in a strengths-based way. This approach will enable us to look at a person's life holistically, considering their needs in the context of their skills, ambitions and priorities.

It is about supporting an individual to look at the strengths and resources they have, which they often don't see, and supporting them to build on such things in order to provide solutions to the obstacles that they face.

As a Peer Support Worker, you could support a person that uses your services to identify their strengths and resources by exploring the following with them:

- What they have previously enjoyed doing, but might not be able to do now
- What they currently enjoy doing
- What they used to be able to manage
- What they can manage now
- The level of independence they once had
- The level of independence they want
- Their support network, e.g. family, friends, neighbours, professionals, etc.
- What strengths the individuals in the support network bring to the relationship
- What they perceive as barriers to doing what they want now
- What support they feel they need to overcome the barriers

When exploring these areas (bearing in mind the above is not an exhaustive list), it is important to work in a completely person-centred way. This is achieved by placing the individual at the centre of the process and listening to their experiences.

In addition to the above, one can ensure they're recognising a person's strengths by being mindful of the individual's narratives. This is because an individual might not be able to see their accomplishments in the things they have done - only failures. For example, an individual might mention how they have failed certain qualifications a number of times. This can be reframed to the individual, in order to show strength, by recognising how the individual showed determination by undertaking things more than once.

Once an individual's strengths have been recognised, one can then support them to do the following:

- Look at what they can now do with their strengths
- Focus on what is important to the individual
- Link back in with their previous support networks
- Recognise their potential