

Message to Social Service Workers

The focal points for many representatives from social services are the community and the family, and you can emphasize the assets that relate to those areas—for example, Family Support (Asset 1), Caring Neighborhood (Asset 4), Community Values Youth (Asset 7), Youth as Resources (Asset 8), and Neighborhood Boundaries (Asset 13). As with other audiences, you can acknowledge that these people already do build assets, and give them a slightly different way to look at their work. You can also point out the role that systems such as social services play in the successful development of young people. Finally, you can point out that adults need assets, too, and when social workers, for example, put the Developmental Assets framework into practice, they're helping change the lives of people of all ages.

Messages specific to this audience:

- Social service workers don't have to choose between providing basic physical needs and building assets; each complements the other.
- Focusing on young people's and their family's strengths may provide social service workers with a more positive view of their own jobs in addition to affirming the potential of their clients.
- Promoting strengths as well as protecting against risks is an effective approach to helping families.

Ways that members of this audience might help build assets:

- Point out the strengths and the positive, caring behaviors of young people and their families, including those with serious problems.
- Assist family members in identifying small changes they could make that would help them feel better about themselves and each other.
- Incorporate strengths and capacities into assessment instruments.
- Try to make personal connections with all families to see their strengths as well as their needs.