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Miley, K.K., O'Melia, M., & DuBois, B.L. (2004). *Generalist social work practice: An empowering approach*. Pearson Education.

1. Social work that focuses on strengths and emphasizes collaboration transforms the way that professionals conceptualize their practice of social work. (80)
2. Assumptions of a Strengths Perspective:
 - ◆ Acknowledge that clients have existing reservoirs of resources and competencies to draw upon.
 - ◆ Recognize that each client has a distinct capacity for growth and change.
 - ◆ Define problems as occurring within the transaction between systems rather than residing in deficient system functioning.
 - ◆ Hold that collaboration augments existing strengths to build new resources.
 - ◆ Affirm that clients know their situations best and, given options, can determine the best solutions for their challenges.
 - ◆ Maintain that positive change builds on a vision of future possibilities.
 - ◆ Support a process to magnify mastery and competence rather than correct deficits.
3. Empowerment is a complex concept that has personal and political implications. On a personal level empowerment refers to a state of mind such as feeling worthy and competent, perceiving power and control; on a political level, it refers to the objective reality of opportunities in societal structures and the reallocation of power through a modification of social structures. (85)
4. Personal empowerment embodies our own sense of competence, mastery, strength, and ability to effect change...Essentially, people who experience personal power perceive themselves as competent. Competence is the ability of any human system to fulfill its functions of taking care of itself, to draw resources from effective interaction with other systems, and to contribute to the resource pool of the social and physical environment. (86)
5. Interpersonal empowerment refers to persons' ability to influence others. Our successful interaction with others and the regard others hold for us contribute to our sense of interpersonal empowerment. The social power of positions, roles, communication skills, knowledge, and appearance contribute to a person's feelings of interpersonal empowerment. Therefore, interpersonal power comes from two sources. The first source is power based on social status – for example, power based on race, gender, and class. The second is power achieved through

learning new skills and securing new positions, key features of empowerment. (87)

6. Empowerment also has structural dimensions, meaning that it involves our relationships to social structures.
7. Empowerment as a concept and a process: empowerment as a concept...offers a perspective to assess the interconnections between personal and political realities. As a process, empowerment describes how practitioners actually do their work. (91)
8. The concept of empowerment is widely ascribed to in social work but the particular methods of empowerment as applied in the everyday social work practice differ dramatically from worker to worker and across fields of practice...These recent results support earlier evidence that practitioners were more likely to apply empowerment-based concepts in micro-focused ways. This limited focus on individual or psychological empowerment stands in contrast to the theoretical literature much of which defines empowerment in multi-dimensional terms, as having social, political, and economic components. (92)
9. The idea of empowering others is a fundamental paradox...Even if one could bestow power, bestowing power, in itself, would be disempowering! Empowerment-based social workers actively involve client-partners in collaborative processes to release the resources of change. (93)
10. Empowerment-oriented strategies:
 - ◆ Using group modalities: many practitioners conclude that working with clients in groups enhances their experiences of empowerment;
 - ◆ Developing a critical consciousness: developing a critical consciousness about the interconnections of the personal and political is another essential component...Critical reflection leads to understanding the social origins of individual actions and recognition that institutional forms are changeable. (96)
 - ◆ Reflecting and acting: praxis: building on strengths, social workers and clients collaborate on change at many levels. They form partnerships to increase the client's competence, while simultaneously they work to redress social injustice and create networks of resources that are more responsive to the client's needs. Social workers and clients take actions, then pause to observe and reflect to guide the next step. As the work unfolds, reflection and action intertwine in praxis. (96)
 - ◆ Taking social action: social action is the key to sociopolitical empowerment and a legacy of the social work profession...Collective action strives to

reallocate sociopolitical power so that disenfranchised citizens can access the opportunities and resources of society and, in turn, find meaningful ways to contribute to society as valued citizens. (97)

11. Characteristics of empowerment-centered social workers:
 - ◆ Focus on context: empowerment practice is based on a transactional view of human behavior, one that describes people in continuous interaction with the sociocultural, political, and physical environments. (98)
 - ◆ Affirmation of collaboration: collaboration is at the heart of empowering relationships, reflecting attitudes of mutual respect and modalities of shared power. (98)
 - ◆ Emphasis on strengths and opportunities: a social work process that focuses on strengths activates resources rather than corrects deficits...In dialogue with clients, workers respond in ways to re-center the view to highlight strengths, skills, solutions, and opportunities.
 - ◆ Integration of practice activities at multiple system levels: for maximum impact, workers and clients synthesize simultaneous interventions – in other words, coordinate several forces at multiple levels to achieve a positive change. (98)
 - ◆ Incorporation of a political approach: empowerment-based workers integrate a political perspective into direct practice, mobilize clients through work in groups to initiate social action that addresses organizational, community and social policy issues. (99)
 - ◆ Commitment to reflection: reflection involves a continuous process of thinking, doing, and reflecting – a process that incorporates feedback to garner insight and refine actions. (99)
12. Empowering processes move clients to center stage – positioning them as the authors of their stories as well as the directors and producers of the action. This leaves workers in the roles of accentuating clients' 'unique coping and adaptive patterns, mobilizing their actual or potential strengths, emphasizing the role of natural networks, and using environmental resources' (Maluccio & Libassi, 1984, p.52). 101
13. It applies the ecosystemic perspective, reflects the multiple dimensions of empowerment, and actualizes the strengths orientation through its assumptions of client expertise and consistent on collaborative roles for both clients and practitioners. (101)
14. Infusing an ecosystems perspective: Each phase of this approach accommodates the transactional nature of social work by considering the interaction of client systems and their environments. Informed by an ecosystemic perspective,

workers are able to locate resources for change present in the entire ecosystem in which their relationships with clients exist. (102)

15. Reflecting a social justice commitment: if social workers align with client worldviews, define problems transactionally, and seek solutions in social and political change, they nudge society in the direction of social justice. Processes within this empowerment-oriented approach consistently reveal the requisite client-centeredness and focus on environmental conditions necessary to meet social work's commitment to social and economic justice. (102)
16. Applying a strengths orientation: Strength-oriented social work processes describe methods for clients to discover what might be useful in the present for constructing a more positive future...Activating client strengths is most effective in a socially and economically just environment in which opportunities are accessible to all. (102)
17. Collaborating with clients: recognizing client expertise, social workers work in partnership with clients. Workers and clients collaborate to create a vision of what they hope to accomplish, then concentrate their efforts to search the present situation for resources to reach that goal. Collaboration entrusts clients with rights and responsibilities in each phase of practice. This kind of participation encourages clients to discover their own solutions and remain in charge of their own changes. (102)
18. This empowering approach is organized and deliberate, yet dynamic and flexible, as social workers guide clients through phases of dialogue, discovery, and development. (104)
19. The Dialogue Phase: successful social work requires conversation, an ongoing dialogue with clients about their situations, goals, and strengths. Through this exchange, practitioners define their relationships with clients as a collaborative partnership to which both will contribute. In this phase, social workers and clients clarify the purpose of their relationship and define a preliminary focus for their work together. In the dialogue phase, practitioners and clients collaborate to:
 - ◆ Build partnerships based on acceptance, respect, and trust
 - ◆ Define their respective roles
 - ◆ Discuss clients' experiences with challenging situations
 - ◆ Define the purpose of their together
 - ◆ Activate client motivation for change
 - ◆ Address crisis needs
20. The Discovery Phase: during the discovery phase, clients and social workers continue to assess, systematically exploring resources on which to build

solutions. These resources may be present within client systems or outside in their social and physical environments. Working as partner, social workers and clients also organize the information gathered to develop plans for change.

- ◆ Explore clients' strengths as resources for change
- ◆ Implement a transactional view by examining resource possibilities in clients' environment
- ◆ Collect relevant information from collateral sources
- ◆ Assess capabilities of available resource systems
- ◆ Specify outcome goals and concrete objectives
- ◆ Construct a plan of action
- ◆ Negotiate a contract for change

21. The Development Phase

- ◆ In the development phase, practitioners and clients intervene to activate interpersonal and institutional resources, create alliances with other systems, and expand opportunities through resource development. This approach empowers clients with their own abilities and the resource of their environments. Together, workers and clients
- ◆ Operationalize the plan of action
- ◆ Increase the experience of power within the client systems
- ◆ Access resources necessary to achieve goals
- ◆ Create alliances among persons and organizations to accomplish the plan
- ◆ Enhance opportunities and choices by creating additional resources
- ◆ Evaluate ongoing progress and outcomes
- ◆ Identify and generalize achievements and gains
- ◆ Wrap up the professional relationship