

Principles of Good Assessment¹

- Develop an assessment strategy based on an understanding of the decision to be made and the person being assessed.
- Utilize comprehensive and exploratory approach.
- Make assessment an ongoing process.
- Use assessment procedures and instruments that are valid and reliable for the program's participants and related decision-making.
- Administer assessment instruments under conditions that do not adversely affect performance.
- Seek opportunities to link authentic assessments with program activities.

Asset-Based Assessment versus Traditional Assessments

Focuses on strengths	Focuses on problems
Emphasizes personal responsibility and capability to make a difference	Assigns blame
Proactive	Reactive
Focuses on mobilizing individuals, families (nuclear and extended), and all appropriate community resources	Heavy reliance on professionals
Views the consumer as a resource	Views the consumer and problem as the same
Vision-building perspective	Crisis management approach
Cooperation among all stakeholders	Competition among social service providers
Focuses public resources on areas of greatest need	Heavy reliance on public funding
Belief that change is possible and focuses on change goals	Treats problems as unchangeable

¹ Adapted from Peter L. Benson, What's Different About Asset Building? Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN: Uniting Communities for Youth, 1995.