

THIS IS A SAMPLE PREVIEW

There is more to discover in the full
Interpretation and Insights Guide.



Introduction

Thank you for choosing the VIA Total 24 Report as a tool in your toolbox when helping others on their strengths journey. Whether you're a coach, manager, counselor, educator, or psychologist, this Interpretations and Insights Guide will give you the inside information on the VIA Total 24 Report. It will provide insights, background, resources as well as tips and ideas for how to use the report.

In this guide you will:

- Discover behind-the-scenes details about the many graphs
- Gain valuable insights about strengths that can increase your confidence
- Understand caveats and clarifications to help you be more precise in your strength interpretations
- Increase your performance, engagement and satisfaction at work and at school
- Learn the research foundations behind the various elements in the report
- Develop practical strategies to advance people on their strengths journey

The emphasis of this guide will be on the VIA Character Strengths Profile which includes signature, middle, and lesser strengths (Section 1) and the four subsections in Section 2, which are optimal strengths use (overuse/underuse), virtues, the expression map, and happiness strengths.



Signature Strengths

The VIA Total 24 Character Strengths Report offers two pages highlighting information on the person's five top strengths, by convention these top 5 are referred to as signature strengths. Five is the cutoff for everyone in this report. A multi-step algorithm is used to break any ties with the fifth strength. Signature strengths are an important subset of the character strengths profile. They are the strengths that are described to be the "most aligned with the real you, most essential to your personal identity". They are likely to be energizing and uplifting for the person to use and easy and natural to express. No doubt many of the person's family, friends, and co-workers would be quick to see these strengths in her/him.

Practical tip: Review clients' profiles to see if there are any strengths that are tied with the strengths listed fifth. If there are, explain to your clients that there is no difference between these ties. As clients reflect on their signature strengths, you must have them consider any strength tied with the one in fifth place. These tied strengths are just as likely to be central (or signature) to the person as the fifth strength..

Identifying and labeling signature strengths is an important endeavor. Several research studies show that the choosing of one signature strength (any signature strength) and using that strength in a new way each day is connected with greater happiness, less depression, and higher flourishing (Schutte & Malouf, 2019).

Practical tip: Have clients take time to look at their full grouping of signature strengths (the five highlighted and any additional ties) and ask themselves: Does this seem like the real me? What does it feel like to see "myself" from the lens of this whole grouping of top strengths?

Section 2 Overview: Character Strengths Profile Perspectives

There are a wide range of lenses one can use to understand, explore, and work with character strengths. Section 2 of the VIA Total 24 Report offers four unique perspectives. These perspectives are optimal use (and overuse/underuse); virtues; expression map; and happiness strengths.

Overuse/Underuse/Optimal Use

This topic is one of the most provocative and interesting in the field of character strengths. It starts with a perspective that the expression of each character strength in any situation can be plotted on a continuum of more or less; too much in one direction is the overuse, too much in the other direction is underuse, and optimal strengths use sits in the center. These ideas are related to concepts that date back thousands of years to the Buddha, Confucius, and Aristotle (although they tended to use words that relate more to virtues that can be expressed in both directions of extremes). Now, modern day character strengths researchers are applying this ancient wisdom with interesting insights. Researchers are beginning to explore how character strengths relate to everyday problems and conflicts as well as more extreme forms of internal adversity (e.g., psychological disorders, Freidlin, Littman-Ovadia, & Niemiec, 2017).

The latest concepts, research, and directions for practical applications in overuse, underuse, and optimal use are outlined in Niemiec (2019) which is where the Optimal Strengths Use chart in this section of the report comes from. In this chart, one can see an emerging "language" to help understand and conceptualize strengths overuse, underuse, and optimal use. People can then explore ways they bring their strengths forward too strongly or too weakly (or not at all) in certain situations. The "language" for optimal use can serve as a guide for finding the strengths zone or balanced strengths use that might be pursued.

Practical tip: How does one know if a person is overusing or underusing a character strength? One clue is whether the person or someone else is being negatively impacted (from mildly to severely) by a strength being used.