

The Trait-Based Prevention Information and Funding Guide



Cultivating Resilience, Emotional Intelligence, and Leadership for Our Youth



Overview

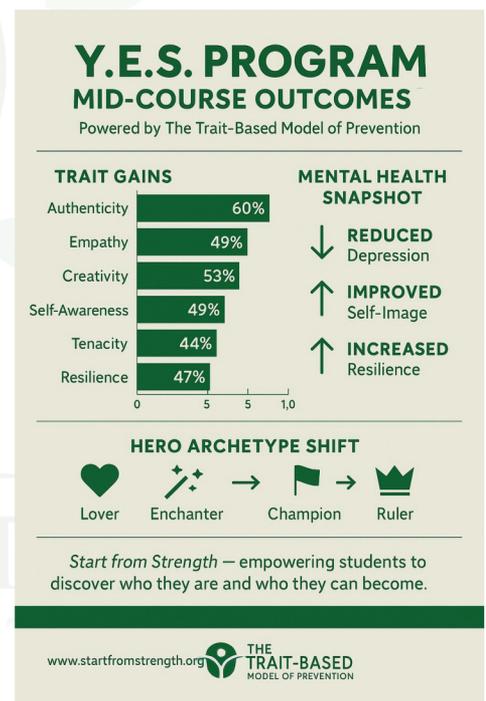
The Trait-Based Model of Prevention helps students discover who they are, build **resilience, emotional intelligence**, and develop **leadership** from within.

Rooted in strengths-based learning and supported by measurable outcomes, this model equips schools and communities to address the social and emotional foundations of prevention before risky behaviors begin.

This guide includes:

- A concise overview of the Trait-Based framework.
- Three sample lessons from the Prevention curriculum.
- Testimonials and outcome data demonstrating program impact.
- Guidance for implementing Trait-Based Prevention in your district.
- Clear, step-by-step guidance for aligning Trait-Based programming with state and federal priorities.

Data collected from the 2025 Community-Based Youth Mentorship Program (Y.E.S.) implementing the Trait-Based Model of Prevention.



Programs end, but culture lasts. Start from Strength – because prevention begins within.

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Overview and How It Works

Overview

The Trait-Based Model of Prevention helps students discover their **strengths**, build **emotional resilience**, and develop **leadership** from within. Rather than focusing on risk or deficits, TBMP gives students the tools to understand who they are and how to use their inherent traits for positive growth, purpose, and connection.

Developed by the Center for Trait-Based Transformation, the model brings together **evidence-based assessments**, **engaging curriculum**, and **measurable outcomes** that **empower** students to build a strong internal foundation for lifelong well-being.

How It Works

The Trait-Based Model of Prevention follows a four-step pathway that guides students from self-discovery to self-leadership.

Student Assessments – Students complete short assessments identifying their core traits and Hero Archetype (Ruler, Champion, Enchanter, or Lover).

Interactive Curriculum – Facilitators lead 30 structured lessons connecting traits to healthy choices and emotional balance.

Strength Spark Digital Companion – Students continue reflection outside class through journaling and leadership challenges.

Measurable Outcomes – Assessments before, during, and after track growth in resilience, self-image, and emotional intelligence.

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Sample Lesson 1 – Building Your Resilience



Lesson Objective

Help students understand what resilience is, where it comes from, and how to strengthen it through their thoughts, actions, and support systems.

Lesson Summary

Resilience is the ability to bounce back after life's challenges. In this lesson, students explore moments when they've struggled – and what helped them rise again. Through guided reflection and group dialogue, they learn that resilience isn't about being tough; it's about staying connected, hopeful, and adaptable. Students identify the supports, mindsets, and personal strengths that keep them grounded during difficult times. They begin to see themselves not as defined by failure, but as strengthened by it.

Trait Focus:

Resilience | Tenacity | Determination

Core Activity:

Students draw a “Resilience Tree,” labeling roots (support systems), trunk (values), and branches (traits that help them keep growing).

Reflection Question:

“What helps me grow through what I go through?”

Badge Earned:  Resilience Builder

“This program provides essential lessons on what it means to be a good human, helping students build a solid foundation regardless of their background. It empowers individuals to transform themselves in ways they may never have imagined. It perfectly addresses the crucial social-emotional learning needs of students, families, and communities.” –Teacher, Taylor County Intermediate

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Sample Lesson 2 – Exploring Empathy



Lesson Objective

Help students understand empathy as the ability to feel with others and to practice seeing the world through another person's perspective.

Lesson Summary

Empathy is more than kindness — it's connection. In this lesson, students learn that empathy means standing in another's shoes, even when it's uncomfortable. Through guided dialogue, reflection, and simple peer exercises, students explore what it means to truly listen to others.

They discuss how empathy builds trust, heals conflict, and strengthens community. As students begin to recognize shared emotions beneath their differences, they discover that empathy isn't weakness — it's courage. It's the bridge between isolation and understanding.

Trait Focus:

Empathy | Appreciation | Motivation

Core Activity:

Students pair up and share short stories about a time they felt misunderstood. Their partner listens carefully, then repeats back what they heard to ensure understanding. Afterwards, the class reflects on what it felt like to be heard and what it means to listen without judgment.

Reflection Question:

"What changes when I listen to understand, not just to respond?"

Badge Earned:  Empathy Builder

"I like how it teaches you to deal with and express complex emotions and feelings. It shows key ways and strategies to calm yourself, and then it helps motivate you to do the right thing."

— Student, Garrard County High School

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Sample Lesson 3 - Solving Problems with the Tree of Traits

Lesson Objective

Teach students how to use their personal traits as tools for problem-solving and finding balance when life feels overwhelming.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students are introduced to the Tree of Traits—a visual map showing how GRIT (**Resilience, Tenacity, Determination**), GRACE (**Empathy, Appreciation, Motivation**), and BALANCE (**Creativity, Authenticity, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness**) work together. Through discussion and reflection, they learn that every challenge is an opportunity to use their strengths more wisely. The lesson helps them identify which part of the Tree they lean on most and which part might need more attention. Students discover that balance doesn't come from perfection but from awareness—the ability to draw from all their traits, not just one.

Trait Focus:

Self-Awareness | Creativity | Emotional Intelligence | Authenticity

Core Activity:

Students complete a *Tree of Traits Reflection*.

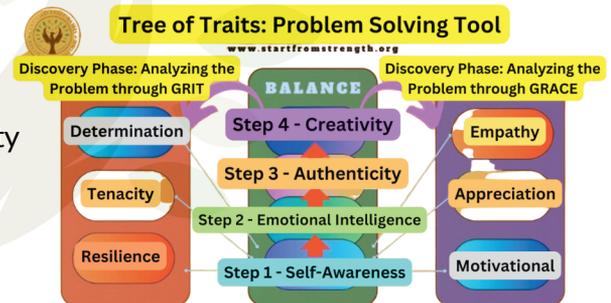
They choose one current challenge or decision they're facing, identify which traits they've been using, and note which additional traits could bring more balance. As a group, they discuss how seeing problems through the Tree model offers new perspective and emotional clarity.

Reflection Question:

"When life feels out of balance, which traits can I lean on to steady myself?"

Badge Earned: 🌱 Balance Keeper

"I like how it helps you use your inner strengths and weaknesses that make you, you. They also help build you up by focusing on your strengths, not weaknesses." — Student, Taylor County Intermediate School



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Trait-Based Recovery in Alternative School Settings

Overview

Alternative schools serve students who often carry the weight of difficult circumstances — trauma, family instability, or early exposure to substance use. These students need more than discipline or remediation; they need a model that helps them rediscover their **identity, strength, and purpose**.

The Trait-Based Model of Recovery (TBMR) offers that framework. Built on the same foundation as the Trait-Based Model of Prevention, it applies the same traits, language, and structure to help students overcome barriers to learning and emotional stability. Where TBMP builds early prevention, TBMR deepens reflection and restores hope.

How It Works

Shared Language, Deeper Focus

Both models use the same core traits — GRIT, GRACE, and BALANCE — so students transitioning between prevention and recovery programs never feel like they're starting over.

Rooted in Transformation

TBMR helps students understand how their past experiences can become catalysts for growth. It teaches that every trait, when brought into balance, can be transformed from shadow to strength.

Alignment with Alternative School Goals

- Supports emotional regulation, behavioral stabilization, and academic re-engagement.
- Complements PBIS, SEL, and trauma-informed care initiatives already used in schools.
- Reduces stigma by shifting language from “broken” to “becoming.”

“When a student heals, the whole community begins to change. That’s what makes this work different — it reaches far beyond the classroom.” — Operation Unite Regional Director

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Measuring what Matters: The Trait-Based Assessments

▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ The Trait-Based Model uses a suite of validated assessments to measure real change—helping individuals, schools, and treatment programs see transformation in action. These assessments provide clear data on growth in traits, well-being, and engagement.

DISCOVER YOUR INNER HERO
Discover Your Strengths. Transform Your Journey.

RULER
A strategic leader, disciplined and structured. You create order, set goals, and thrive on stability.

ENCHANTER
A visionary, full of charisma and adaptability. You reframe challenges, think outside the box, and embrace transformation with creativity.

CHAMPION
A fearless fighter, driven by resilience and tenacity. You push forward, overcome obstacles, and inspire others with determination.

LOVER
A connector, leading with empathy and compassion. You nurture relationships, foster emotional healing, and build deep bonds with others.

TAKE OUR FREE ASSESSMENT

TREE OF TRAITS
GRIT: Determination, Resilience, Tenacity
GRACE: Empathy, Appreciation, Motivational
BALANCE: Creativity, Authenticity, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness

LEARN MORE AT THE CENTER FOR TRAIT-BASED TRANSFORMATION
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Evidence-Based Assessment Suite

PHQ-9 (Depression)
Measures changes in mood and emotional well-being.

GAD-7 (Anxiety)
Tracks reductions in stress, worry, and restlessness.

Resilience Scale
Assesses perseverance, adaptability, and coping ability.

Self-Image Scale
Evaluates self-esteem, authenticity, and personal identity.

CRAFFT Screening Tool
Identifies early behavioral and substance-use risks among youth.

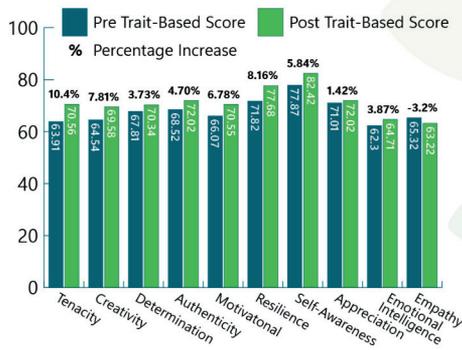
The Trait & Hero Archetype Assessment links personality to leadership, resilience, and emotional balance—serving as the foundation for measuring transformation within the Trait-Based Model.

Trait-Based Is Working, and the Data Proves It

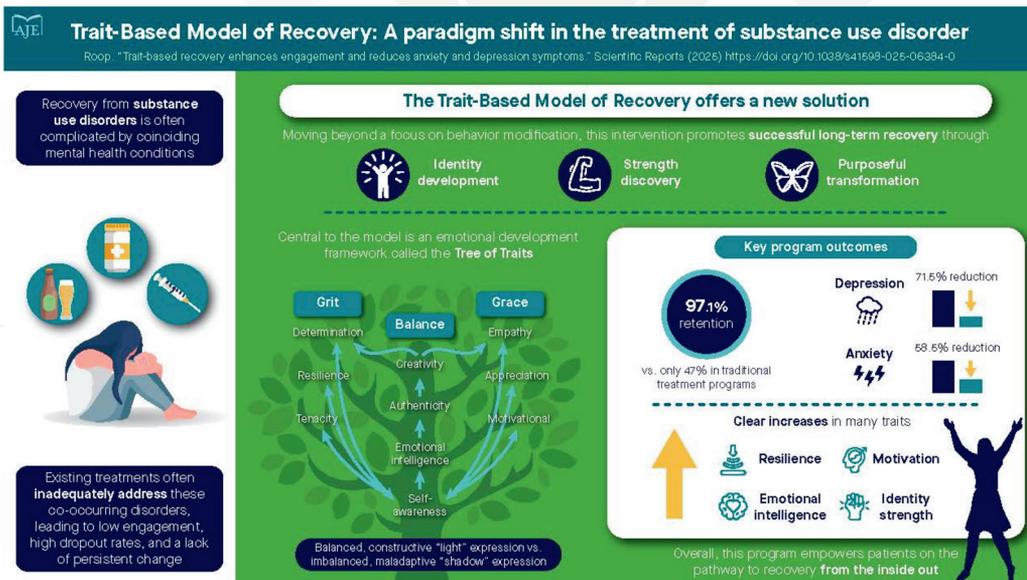
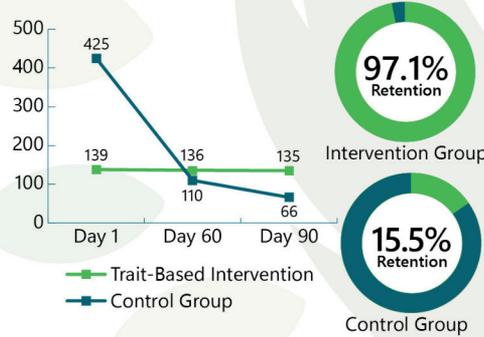
These visuals highlight measurable reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms, increased engagement, and lasting transformation through the Trait-Based Model. The same core traits—**resilience, emotional intelligence, and authenticity**—now anchor our prevention work, strengthening youth before crisis and cultivating purpose from within.

Participants in TBMR experienced significant reductions in depression (71.5%) and anxiety (58.5%), along with notable improvements in resilience, tenacity, and self-awareness. TBMR demonstrated higher retention rates (97.1%) compared to the control group (15.5%), suggesting that a strengths-based, leadership-focused approach enhances engagement and long-term recovery outcomes.

Improvements in Personality Traits Among Participants in the Trait-Based Model of Recovery



Comparison of Retention Rates Between Intervention and Control Groups



Graphical abstract illustrating Trait-Based Recovery's framework and validated outcomes (Scientific Reports, 2025).



Voices of Transformation: Prevention and Beyond

From classrooms to recovery centers, the Trait-Based framework helps people discover who they are—and who they can become. These voices, from students, educators, and recovery graduates, reveal the impact of a model that strengthens identity, fosters purpose, and transforms communities from the inside out.

“Before Trait-Based, I used to think school was just about grades. Now I think about who I’m becoming. I learned that being resilient doesn’t mean pretending everything’s fine—it means trying again.”

– 9th Grade Student, Taylor County

*“Trait-Based gives our students a language for things we’ve never been able to name—**resilience, authenticity, and empathy**. You can see confidence replacing self-doubt. It changes classroom culture.”*

– Teacher, Garrard County High School

*“We talk about our traits now. Like if someone gets upset, they’ll say, ‘I need to work on **balance** today.’ It helps us be more understanding. It’s not just for school—it’s for life.”*

– Trait-Based Peer Mentor Group, Garrard County

“When I learned the Trait-Based Model in treatment, I realized I was never broken—I was just out of balance. The same traits I’m learning to heal through are the ones these students are learning to strengthen before life hits hard. That’s prevention in its purest form.”

– Trait-Based Recovery Graduate, Lexington

*“As a clinician, I’ve seen countless recovery models, but Trait-Based stands out because it focuses on the same traits that help our youth thrive—**resilience, self-awareness, and empathy**. It’s a shared language across generations.”*

– Lynnsey Vandeventer, M.Ed., LPCC-S, NCC, CAIMHP



Funding Alignment and Implementation Support



How to Apply for Grant Funding

The Center for Trait-Based Transformation (CTBT) helps schools, treatment programs, and community organizations secure grant funding for Trait-Based Prevention and Recovery implementation.

This process works for federal, state, and local opportunities – including education, prevention, and community-resilience initiatives.

Step 1: Identify the Right Opportunity

Look for grants focused on:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Social-emotional learning (SEL)
- Family engagement, recovery, and community well-being

Need a quick start?

CTBT can provide proposal templates and support letters upon request.

These priorities align directly with Trait-Based outcomes in **leadership, empathy, and resilience.**

Step 2: Align Your Proposal

CTBT provides adaptable language and measurable outcomes that emphasize:

- Evidence-based design (Scientific Reports, 2025 publication)
- Validated assessment tools (Resilience, Empathy, and Balance)
- Demonstrated reductions in anxiety and depression

Step 3: Prepare and Submit

Include:

- Proposal summary and budget outline
- CTBT letter of collaboration (available upon request)
- Plan for facilitator training and Strength Spark integration

Submit applications through relevant state, federal, or local grant portals.

Start from Strength and let transformation do the rest.



Grant Funding Overview & Program Support

Funding Snapshot

- Aligns with state and federal prevention, SEL, and resilience funding.
- Eligible for schools, nonprofits, and community coalitions.
- CTBT provides grant templates, letters, and measurable outcomes to strengthen proposals.

Program Cost

\$199 per student – includes the complete Trait-Based Model of Prevention package:

- Student guidebooks and workbooks
- Facilitator manual and training
- Built-in assessments and reporting tools
- *Strength Spark* digital access for students and families

Bulk pricing and district-level licensing available upon request.

Tips for a Strong Application

- Emphasize measurable outcomes, prevention impact, and leadership development.
- Highlight collaboration – include a CTBT letter of partnership
- Focus on prevention impact and leadership development
- Add a sustainability plan for facilitator training and *Strength Spark* integration

Need Help Applying?

The Center for Trait-Based Transformation (CTBT) can assist with:

- Program descriptions, budget templates, and data
- Implementation and facilitator training plans
- Proposal and narrative guidance

Start from Strength and let transformation do the rest.

The Center for Trait-Based Transformation

Start from Strength and let transformation do the rest.



The Center for Trait-Based Transformation: Start from Strength



CENTER FOR TRAIT-BASED TRANSFORMATION — *Start From Strength* —

The Center for Trait-Based Transformation develops evidence-based programs that restore identity, resilience, and purpose across prevention, recovery, and education. Through the Trait-Based Model, we are helping individuals and communities start from strength.

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