

Enneagram Strengths & Blindspots in the Helping Professions

Each of us brings unique strengths to our work supporting others in their growth. Every Enneagram type offers reliable access to particular qualities and perspectives that can powerfully support healing and development. For instance, a type Eight's direct and empowering presence often awakens others to their own inner strength and capacity for self-authority.

While it's natural—and often effective—to lead with our innate strengths, there can be times when our default approach doesn't align well with what our clients truly need. Each type's perspective tends to specialize in certain themes and values, naturally prioritizing those over others. As the saying goes: “where attention goes, energy flows.” We tend to overlook areas outside of our habitual focus, creating predictable blind spots. Interestingly, our strengths and our blind spots are two sides of the same coin—they belong to each other.

When we become aware of the limits of our type's lens, we can begin to tune more closely to what truly serves our clients' growth. Like all meaningful Enneagram work, this requires practice and presence—learning to respond to what's actually needed in the moment, rather than defaulting to our “overused strength.” The more attuned we become, the more satisfying and effective our work becomes—for both our clients and ourselves.

Here are some common strengths and blindspots of helping professionals by enneatype:

Type	Common Strengths as a Helping Professional	Possible Blindspots in Working with Others
1	Focus on improvement Clarity, structure Moral discernment Big picture assessment	Allowing for gray area/indecision Assuming there's “one right way,” Inadvertently encouraging repression
2	Connection, empathy Eager for change Receptivity to client's needs Inspiring, motivating	Working harder than the client Sensing right proximity/contact for client Getting my value from the client's affirming regard or progress (helpfulness)

Type	Common Strengths as a Helping Professional	Possible Blindspots in Working with Others
3	Clear path toward goals Methodical Adaptive to client's state Keen emotional read	Assessing pacing accurately Sidelining feelings Goal/action focus can move client away from deeper layers
4	Compassion Plumbing the depths Emotional perceptivity Inviting soulfulness	Not gauging client's capacity for depth- too much, too soon Under-valuing concrete, practical guidance
5	Cognitive depth Systematic approach Analytical Non-reactive, calming	Sensing the beneficial level of distance, intensity or emotional connection for the client Avoiding risk or self-disclosure
6	Attentive Supportive Probing Structured	Avoiding somatic/emotional channels Over-focusing on safety/danger Prioritizing concrete arenas of life
7	Positive outlook Possibility-oriented Light-hearted Sensitive	Steering away from difficulties that need addressing More conceptual or future oriented than client needs
8	Clarifying what's here Awakening truth Empowering Tender-hearted, protective	Moderating my intensity/confrontation to what the client can tolerate or engage with Not inviting certain emotions Receptivity about what's feels right for the client
9	Unconditional positive regard Undefending effect Empathy Multiple perspectives	Avoiding important confrontations Too loose with process/structure Resisting steering/advising client