

# [Psycosocial assessment of the soloist](https://assignbuster.com/psycosocial-assessment-of-the-soloist/)

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Running Head: Strengths Based Assessment 1 Strengths Based Assessment: The Soloist By Colleen Austin SOWK 587a University of Southern California Professor Brittani Morris Strengths Based Assessment2 Character Identification Describe the character you choose as your focus. Include race, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, marital status, living situation, educational level, internal strengths (coping mechanisms, skills, experience, ability to connect to others, resilience, determination, flexibility, commitment, loyalty, etc. ). Mr. Nathanial Anthony Ayers is a middle aged, black African-American man.

He is spiritual but identifies with no specific religion, he does pray in the movie, saying the Our Father. He is unmarried, and is homeless. He displays signs of mental illness, most likely schizophrenic as evidenced by his paranoia and he hears voices. He began to hear voices in adolescence. At one point he thought his sister was trying to poison him, so he forced her to eat thefoodshe brought to him. He lived in the basement of the home he grew up in. It wasn’t obvious, but he must have remained living with his sister after his mother died.

When he went to Juilliard, he got an apartment and the voices became more prominent. There is no evidence that he was ever diagnosed with a mental illness. He has a difficult time maintain relationships with others because he is mentally ill and continually talks to himself. Nathanial has a high schooleducation. He was also accepted and completed some classicalmusictraining from Juilliard, according to ateacherthere, he just stopped showing up. What happened in his life from that point until the present is unknown. Although he is homeless, one of his possessions is a violin, which only has two strings.

In doing this, Nathanial shows determination, because even though he doesn’t have a complete instrument he stills continues to play it. Strengths Based AssessmentPage 3 Nathanial shows loyalty to his music. He is always playing his violin and in fact talks about his loyalty to his music when he states that “ he is holding on to his faith in the power of his music. ” (The Soloist, 2009) Nathanial shows a lot of inner strengths. He has determination, which is evident by the fact that he continues to play the violin, although it only has two strings.

He is resilient, evidenced by the fact that he has been homeless for many years, schizophrenic and yet he is surviving on the streets of L. A. Nathanial shows no flexibility. When Lopez brings him to the apartment, he says that he will play the violin there, but he will not stay there. It was not his apartment he said. II. Significant Relationships Describe 2-3 significant relationships this character has to other characters in the film, both in terms of role and in terms of the resources and/or challenges that this character offers to your focus character.

Nathanial’s most significant relationship is with Steve Lopez, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times newspaper. Lopez is fascinated by Nathanial when he discovers that he is a classically trained musician, who is homeless and writes a column with Nathanial as his subject. It isn’t clear at first what Lopez’s motives are, other than to write a column that is entertaining and widely read by Los Angeles. Initially, it is obvious Lopez is using Nathanial as his focus. Lopez is divorced although he continues to have a relationship with his ex-wife who is also Strengths Based AssessmentPage 4 is boss at the Times. In fact his ex-wife tells him that there is possibly a book that could be written about Nathanial and essentially accuses him at one point in the movie of exploiting Nathanial. This relationship shifts over time. He is single and finds himself thinking about Nathanial’s “ plight. ” He becomes emotionally invested in Nathanial, in that he feels that he can help this homeless, mentally ill man toward a better life. What he doesn’t understand is that Nathanial is comfortable in his life. He has become accustomed to his homeless life.

Lopez, although his latent motives appear to be altruistic, actually causes Nathanial a great deal ofstress. He tries to convince the manager of the Lamp Community that he should force Nathanial to see a psychiatrist and be put on medication. David, the manager of the Lamp Community could be another of Nathanial’s significant relationships. He allowed Lopez to leave the cello that was donated by a reader at the facility, because that was the only place that Lopez would allow him to play it. He didn’t want him to have it on the street.

David was instrumental in helping Lopez to finally learn what the best thing was that he could do for Nathanial. Lopez needed to be his friend, David told him. That was really what Nathanial needed. Someone he could trust. David was, in this sense, an advocate for Nathanial. He made Lopez understand that Nathanial didn’t want to see a psychiatrist and even if he did, there were no guarantees that he would even take his medication. It is possible that Nathanial knew that on medication he would not be the same musician. Strengths Bases AssessmentPage 5

Graham Clayton, the music teacher, was another character whose relationship to Nathanial was significant. He was teaching Nathanial to play music other than Beethoven, Nathanial’s favorite. In fact, there was a statue of Beethoven in a square and that was where Steve Lopez looked to find Nathanial. Not only did Clayton offer music lessons, but he also offered him spiritual guidance. He set up a recital for Nathanial, however when Nathanial showed up to play, he began to hear voices and when Clayton put his hand on his shoulder, Nathanial reacted with such fear that he nearly assaulted Clayton.

Nathanial ran, which was one of his best coping mechanisms, that and playing music III. Community Analysis Describe the two most significant groups/communities that your focus character belongs to and/or aspires to belong to in the film. There is one significant community to which Nathanial belongs. And one community that it appears he would like to belong. The first community is the Lamp Community, a shelter for the homeless and often these homeless people are mentally ill. The other community is the music community. Nathanial wanted to be a classic cellist when he was younger.

He was excited when Lopez brought him the cello and wanted to keep it with his grocery cart full of belongings. The Lamp Community offered Nathanial food, shelter and clothing. However, he spent most of his time sleeping on the streets, going to the facility only when he needed something. They did offer group sessions for the homeless, but it wasn’t clear what the topics of the group discussions were. The music community would have offered Nathanial the opportunity to advance hiscareeras a musician, however because of the schizophrenia; the audience was a Strengths Bases AssessmentPage 6 barrier to Nathanial’s playing his cello.

Lopez found an accomplished music teacher who was willing to teach Nathanial to bring him back to the level he was at when he was at Juilliard, and even brought him new music to play. Playing music and being part of the music community was something that Nathanial desired, however, his illness prevented him from becoming fully invested in pursuing it. I think the Lamp Community was a valuable community resource for Nathanial. It was a safe place for him to go, and in fact the night after the disastrous recital, Lopez found him there having a meal and David told him that he had spent the night in his apartment.

When asked why he spent the night there, Nathanial alluded to the fact that he wasn’t a young man anymore and that his body couldn’t take the streets. I think that if Nathanial wanted to see adoctorand take medication, he could have gotten those resources from the Lamp Community. The music community could have provided a less intimidating arena for a recital. Although it seemed to be a very relaxed outdoor atmosphere, putting Nathanial up on stage was asking for disaster. Perhaps the music community could showcase musicians like Nathanial in a much less intrusive setting.

Analysis of the Symbiotic Relationship. (This wasn’t required but I wanted to add it. ) I think the relationship between Steve Lopez and Nathanial Ayers worked both ways. The scene where Lopez falls off his bike, goes to the hospital where everything is chaotic, then goes into an MRI and is claustrophobic has so many similarities to Ayers’ life it may have been purely coincidental. I think that was an experience that Lopez had to draw upon while he was trying to “ help” Nathanial. Just like Steve Didn’t want the help at the hospital, neither did Nathanial want Strengths Bases AssessmentPage 7

Steve’s help. The mere act of trying to get Nathanial out of his comfort zone was enough to trigger a schizophrenic episode. At the end of the movie, Steve realized that the best thing that he could offer Nathanial was hisfriendship. Nathanial trusted Steve by the end of the movie. When they first met, Nathanial wouldn’t shake Steve’s hand, but at the end of the movie when Steve offered him his hand, Nathanial took it. Strengths Based AssessmentPage 8 Resources Foster. G. , and Krasnoff, R. (Producer), & Wright, J. (Director). (2009). The Soloist [Motion picture]. United States: Dreamworks Pictures.