

Solution Focused Ideas



Key assumptions that guide Solution Focused practice

- Understanding the cause of the problem is not necessary to resolve it. Attempting to do so may, unwittingly, lengthen or complicate therapy
- The client's attempted solution (e.g. avoidance in the case of anxiety) eventually becomes part of the problem. Therefore, changing patterns of response - doing something different - is fundamental to the approach
- Change happens anyway. However severe the problem, there are times when it is absent, less severe or intense. The therapist must help identify and amplify this change
- Clients have resources and strengths which can be brought to bear in resolving the complaint. These often go overlooked in problem focused approaches
- Clear, salient and realistic goals are a vital factor in eliciting successful outcomes
- Poorly defined or absent goals can prolong or complicate therapy
- A small change is all that is necessary. Also, clients are frequently able to manage alone if we can 'start the ball rolling'
- The client defines the goals and decides when therapy should end
- Rapid change is possible, even where there is a history of persistent symptoms
- The relationship between therapist and client is critical; collaboration and a 'robust' working relationship are more important than theory and expertise
- Each client is unique in their skills, resources and the way they view their problem. There is therefore no 'one size fits all' solution
- The focus is on the present and the future, on where the client wants to go rather than where they have come from
- SFBT sees 'resistance' or hostility as a function of the relationship rather than the permanent disposition of the client.

Holding the keys

Becoming solution focused requires a shift in thinking; instead of thinking about problems we tend to enquire about solutions.

The keys are:

1. *Maintain a positive focus*
2. *Exceptions are clues to resources and solutions*
3. *There are more solutions than problems*
4. *Well formed goals are a vital starting point*
5. *Change happens all the time*
6. *Small change promotes wider change*
7. *Cooperation is inevitable*
8. *People are resourceful*
9. *The client is the expert on their life.*

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