

Solution Focused session protocol

Basic Tenets

- Positive, solution building approach
- Replace the focus from problems to client strengths
- Client is the expert of the problem
- Change is constant
- Focus on the client, not the problem, nor the theory
- Even with the most difficult problem there are moments of respite (exceptions)

Getting Started

- Be not-knowing
- Use client's language – weave into next questions
- Notice something positive about the client
- Listen for what the client might want to be different
- Accept what the client wants as valid and reasonable
- Assume the client wants to cooperate
- Ask for client's understanding of the situation
- Listen for who and what are important to the client
- If expectations for others seem unrealistic, ask: *“How do you know he/she can do this?” “What do you think your employer's reaction might be to that?”*

Basic Solution Focused session 1

- Problem description
- Goal formulation
- Miracle Question
- Moving towards a solution
- Ending

Role Clarification

After the paperwork, introductions, and initial rapport building, clarify how you work. For example, taking a break after approximately 40 minutes to “think about what you told me.”

Problem Description

“How can I help?”

“How is this a problem for you? (Get problem description; if more than one, which is most important to work on first?)”

“What have you tried? (How did that help?)”

Goal Formulation

“What would have to be different as a result of our conversation today for you to say that our discussion was worthwhile?”

Precede with a compliment

“You’ve given me a lot of information...”

“You’ve obviously given this a lot of thought...”

“Thank you for taking me through that in such detail...”

Then add “...if we could make something happen today, what would it be?”

“What had you hoped might happen as a result of this call?”

and

“How might that help?” etc...

Solution – Building Questions

“Tell me about the times when this problem is a little bit less intense.”

“Tell me about the most recent times when this (exception) happened.”

“How did you do that?”

“What are you doing differently during those times when things are a little bit better?”

“What would your best friend (colleagues) say you do when things are going a little bit better for you? “

Scaling Questions

“On a scale of 0 to 10, if zero was the worst it has been, where is it now?”

“What tells you that you are at (6)?”

“What would have to happen for it to move 1 point higher?”

“What do you need to do to keep your 6?”

“How come it’s not –1?”

Compliment any progress.

The Miracle Question

“Imagine that while you are asleep tonight a miracle happens (or your Fairy Godmother pays you a visit) and the problem that has been preoccupying you disappears. You have been asleep so you don’t know the miracle has happened (or that your FGM has done you a favour). Nevertheless, when you awake in the morning you are problem free. What will you notice that would tell you that things have changed?”

(Once asked, focus on what will be different when the miracle happens.)

Regarding client:

“What will you notice that’s different? (What will be the first thing that you notice? What else?)”

Regarding significant others:

“Who else will notice when the miracle happens?”

Moving towards a solution

(Use when client can answer the Miracle Question)

“If you were to pretend that the miracle happened, what would be the first small thing you would do?”

“How might that be helpful?”

Ending

- 1) If client is concrete, give compliments and suggest: *“In the next week, pick one day and pretend that the miracle has happened and look for what a difference it makes.”*

SFBT download 2 – Sessions

- 2) If the client is not concrete, give compliments and suggest: *"Think about what's happening in your life that tells you that this problem can be solved. And I'll do some thinking too."*

'Noticing' tasks are common.

For example:

"Over the next few days look out for (any improvements, positive changes, the times when...")

Solution Focused crisis counseling

- Most clients stabilize and make progress as they participate in solution-building progress.
- Clients improve by focusing on past successes and strengths.
- Coping questions are helpful including scaling.
- Scaling questions are helpful in assessing crisis situations.

Session 2 Protocol

What is better?

Congratulations (acknowledgement)

Doing more of the same

If nothing is better: *"How are you coping?"*

Scaling Progress

Compliments

Agree task(s).