

# SFBT and Questions

Questions are at the heart of Solution Focused practice

## Solution Focused Questions

- “What brings you here today?”
- “Why now?”
- “What would you like to have happen?”
- “How will you know when it has started?”
- “What will you be doing differently?”
- “What has helped so far?”
- “When does it not happen/happen less etc?”
- “What positive changes have happened already?”
- “How will you know this has been useful?”

## To elicit need and create expectation

- “What brings you here today?”
- “How do you want to feel at the end of the session?”
- “What will make this session worthwhile for you?”
- “What will make things better today?”
- “What are you expecting from our session today?”
- “What would you like to do that you can’t do at the moment?”
- “How do we get started?”
- (plus “What else, what else, what else?”)

## More

- “Things don’t seem to be going well between you and (name), how would you like it to be different?”
- “Imagine that things start to improve, what would you have happen?”
- “What is the single, smallest thing you could do to make things easier between you.”
- “How will you respond differently when they begin to change?”
- “How will he/she respond when you do something different?”
- “What will (name) notice different about you when she/he is being different?”
- “How could you find your way into a different kind of conversation with (name)?”
- “What do you not want to change about them?”
- “What do you want to stay the same?”

## Questions are key



*The creative use of questions is the anchor-point of the SFBT session. Remembering to take a one-down position in respect of the client’s expertise in their own life, the practitioner is genuinely curious about the client’s resourcefulness in the search for information that will help him or her develop new perspectives and courses of action.*

*Here are some examples of SFBT questions to get you started or act as prompts. These are not mine, if they ‘belong’ to anyone they belong to the SFBT community which freely shares such information. Please use them to practice and develop your own questioning skills, and remember, one well-placed question can be worth hours of aimless therapy-talk.*

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## Solution Focused questions, continued:

### Responding to objections

Client: "That will never happen"

Therapist: "That bad eh? If we could change one bit of it today, what would it be?"

OR: "OK, so what are your hopes for this call?"

Client: "I'm giving up, I'll drop out next term "

Therapist: "I guess that's a possibility, anything we could do to help in the meantime?"

Client: "I've tried everything"

Therapist: "Sounds like a tough one, how can I help?"

"Client: What's the point, they'll never change"

Therapist: "I see, if one thing could change, what would it be?"

Answer emphatic statements with an acknowledgement, and then a question.

### To elicit need and create expectation

What brings you here today?

How do you want to feel at the end of the session?

What will make this session worthwhile for you?

What will make things better today?

What are you expecting from our session today?

What would you like to do that you can't do at the moment?

(plus "What else, what else, what else?")

### What is already happening?

What has changed since you made the appointment/heard you were coming here?

What are you already doing that helps?

What do you do that makes it easier to talk?

Are there times when you do/don't do that?

Can you think of times when that is already happening?

Have you got a recent example of something you have been successful with?

(plus 'What else, what else, what else?')

### Identifying strengths and resources

What are you good at?

What do you like/enjoy doing?

If I asked X, what would he/she say?

How have you managed to do that?

How can you make that happen again?

Which of these skills do you use in other parts of your life?

When that change is happening, what are you doing?

How do you keep going?

What helps?

(plus 'What else, what else, what else?')

#### The Miracle Question

*"Imagine that tonight, while you are asleep, a miracle happens. When you wake up, the problem that brought you here has gone. Because you were asleep, you will not know that the miracle has happened, but somehow you will know that the problem has gone. How will you know?"*

#### The questions we ask determine the direction of the conversation.

*Solution Focused questions will take the conversation towards solutions, whereas problem focused questions will take the conversation in the opposite direction. While they both have their place, choosing how and when to use each is critical.*