



Solution Focused Approach

STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH DEVELOPED BY INSOO KIM BERG, STEVE
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Basic Tenets

- ▶ Positive, solution building approach
- ▶ Replace the focus from problems to client strengths
- ▶ Client is the expert of the problem
- ▶ Basic attending skills are important
- ▶ Focus on the client

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 different
- ▶ Accept what the client wants as valid and reasonable

Getting Started – Con't

- ▶ 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?"

Basic Solution Focused Protocol

- ▶ Role Clarification
- ▶ Problem Description
- ▶ Goal Formulation
- ▶ Miracle Question
- ▶ Moving Toward a Solution
- ▶ Ending

Role Clarification

- ▶ After the paperwork, introductions, & brief 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? (Was it helpful?)

Goal Formulation

- ▶ What would have to be different as a result of our meeting today for you to say that our talking was worthwhile?

Solution – Building Questions

- ▶ Tell me about the times when this problem is a little bit better.
- ▶ Tell me about the most recent times when this happened.
- ▶ How did you do it?
- ▶ What are you doing differently during those times when things are a little bit better?
- ▶ What would your best friend say you do when things are going a little bit better for you?

Scaling Questions

- ▶ What tells you that you are at 6?
- ▶ What would it take to move 1 point higher?
- ▶ How long did it take you to get to 6?
- ▶ What do you need to do to keep your 6?
- ▶ How come it's not -1 ?

Miracle Question

1. (Once asked, focus on what will be different when the miracle happens.)
2. Regarding client: What will you notice that's different? (What will be the first thing that you notice? What else?)
3. Regarding significant others: Who else will notice when the miracle happens?

Moving Toward a Solution

1. (Use when client can answer the miracle question)
2. If you were to pretend that the miracle happened, what would be the first small thing you would do?
3. 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.'
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"
3. Observational tasks are common.

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 # 1 Protocol

- ▶ Role Clarification
- ▶ Problem Description
- ▶ Goal Formulation
- ▶ Miracle Question
- ▶ Moving Toward a Solution
- ▶ Ending

Session # 2 Protocol

- ▶ What's better?
- ▶ Doing more
- ▶ If nothing is better – How are you coping?
- ▶ Scaling Progress
- ▶ Compliments
- ▶ Tasks

Later Sessions

- ▶ Focus is on finding, amplifying, and measuring client progress
- ▶ Opening and sustaining a dialogue around what's better for the client
- ▶ EARS
- ▶ Elicit exceptions
- ▶ Amplify exceptions
- ▶ Reinforce successes
- ▶ Start again

Children's Solution Work

- ▶ Insoo Kim Berg & Therese Steiner
- ▶ Power Hands Activity
 - ▶ Draw an outline of each activity finger
 - ▶ Have the child name an activity that they are good at for each finger.
 - ▶ Have the child color in or write in the activity.
 - ▶ Child should do all 10 fingers.

Resolving Sexual Abuse

- ▶ Yvonne Dolan
- ▶ Letter to the Future
- ▶ Pick a time in the future (5 – 20) years from now.
Date the letter with the imaginary date and write a supportive friend. Imagine that you have resolve or coped with whatever is bothering you at the present time. Describe what helped you. Describe how you are spending your time and the joyous things you are enjoying.

Quotes

- ▶ He that complies against his will is of the same opinion still – Samuel Butler (1612 – 1680)
- ▶ The greatest good you can do for another is not to share your riches, but to reveal to him his own – Benjamin Disraeli

Resources

- ▶ Interviewing for Solutions by Peter DeJong and Insoo Kim Berg.
- ▶ Children's Solution Work by Insoo Kim Berg & Therese Steiner.
- ▶ Resolving Sexual Abuse by Yvonne Dolan.
- ▶ Clue's by Steve deShazer.

More Resources

- ▶ The Therapists's Notebook for Families by Bertolino & Schultheis
- ▶ The Therapist's Notebook for Children & Adolescents by Ford Sori and Hecker
- ▶ Creating Solutions – a Therapeutic Strength-based Counseling game by Trenhaile

More Resources

- ▶ Parenting Toward Solutions by Linda Metcalf
- ▶ One Small Step by Yvonne Dolan
- ▶ Do One Thing Different by Bill O'Hanlon

Other Applications

- ▶ Strength-based Meetings
- ▶ Conflict Resolution
- ▶ Parent-Teacher Conferences
- ▶ Judicial Meetings