

Solution-Focused Group Work Toolkit

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Solution-Focused Counseling Approach

- Strength-based:
 - assist the client to learn more about personal abilities that will help him/her in problem solving independently
- Positive and optimistic
- Be curious
- The client is an expert, and therefore, in charge
- Not insight oriented
- Empowering
- It's the thinking not techniques
- Problem is external
- Stress the importance of small changes

Principles of Solution-Focused group work

- Focusing on change and possibilities
- Creating goals and preferred futures
- Building on strength, skills and resources
- Creating co-operation and collaboration
- Fostering positive interaction
- Goal-oriented group identity not problem-focused
- Being respectfully curious
- Use of humor

The Dynamics of Solution-Focused Groups

- Solution talk
 - what's right and what works
 - goal-oriented
 - assume change
- Group-centered
 - members relate directly to one another rather than via facilitator
 - group is a motivating factor

Types of Groups

- **Single session group**
 - Classroom lessons (e.g., goal setting, readiness for end of year testing, etc.)
 - Parent-teacher conferences
 - CLTs (with teachers)
 - Academic advising
 - Family sessions and meetings
 - Conflict resolution

Types of Groups

- **Planned-short term and topic-focused group**
 - 4 to 8 sessions:
 - Organizational skills
 - Anger management
 - Time management
 - Transition
 - Career exploration

Types of Groups


- **Integrated solution-focused groups:**
 - Combined with CBT, play and art therapy, and narrative approach
 - Anger management
 - Anxiety (e.g. testing)
 - Self-esteem and confidence
 - Divorce
- **Teaching/training groups**
 - Organizational skills
 - Study skills
 - Time management

Language

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Talk • Depressed • Disruptive • Feeling of rejection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solution Talk • Sad • Often forget the rules in class • People forget to notice him/her
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Solution-Focused Questions

- **Miracle questions**
 - Time machine
- **Exception questions**
 - Tell us about the time when *something* did not occur? What do you do differently then?
- **Coping questions**
 - What keeps you going?
- **Scaling questions**
 - Scaling kit
- **Goal-setting questions**
 - What will be the first step towards your goal? What will be the first change that will tell you that you are moving towards your goals?



Goal setting steps

- Pre-test
- Two or three long-term goals based on the pre-test
- Identify mini-goals weekly + scaling
- Post-test



Goal setting

- State goals in a positive language, what he/she will be doing *instead*
- Stated in a process form, using *-ing* endings to elicit the how
- Make a goal as specific as possible
- State the goal in the client's own language
- SMART goal

SMART goals

- **S**mall-measurable-achievable-rewarding-time sensitive
- **S**pecific-measurable-attainable-relevant-time bound
- **S**pecific-measurable-action oriented-realistic and relevant-timely
- **Example:**
My organizational skills grade will improve from 2 to 3 by the end of 3rd quarter

Goal setting

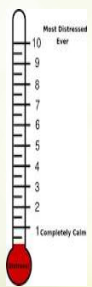
What?	Why?	How?	Reflection
Goal#1			
Goal#2			
Goal#3			

http://www.progressfocused.com/2014/04/a-simple-tool-for-training-design.html#more

Scaling

- Various ways to do scaling:
 - Regular scale
 - Lego
 - Different faces
 - Superhero-scale
 - Pokemon evolution
 - Down-hill and Up-hill
 - Rainbow

Scaling



Weekly meetings

Date _____

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Goal _____

What will help me/what will I be doing differently _____

Date _____

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Goal _____

What will help me/what will I be doing differently _____

Other helpful questions

Narrative approach – externalizing a problem

- My problem
 - What my problem makes me do?
 - How will I win over the problem?

Other helpful questions

- What will help you to work on this goal?
- How can we motivate you to...
- How does X (your problem) help you?
- What helped you?
- What advice would you give others?

Other activities and exercises

- Positive notes to students, parents, and teachers
- Working with anger and using narrative approach
What does your anger make you do?
Problem in control _____ Student in control
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Use of characters/superheroes from favorite stories
– What would X do in this situation?

Other activities and exercises

- Creating stories in the sand, use puppets, etc.
- The Miracle Board (Metcalf, L., 1995)
- Vision Board
- Power Cards

Other activities and exercises

The circle technique

<http://www.progressfocused.com/search?updated-max=2014-03-16T12:46:00%2B01:00&max-results=9&start=9&by-date=false>

Further reading

<http://solutionfocusedchange.blogspot.com/2011/07/21-solution-focused-techniques.html>

<http://www.m-cc.nl/The%20Solution-Focused%20Mindset%20-%20an%20empirical%20test%20of%20solution-focused%20assumptions.pdf>

Bannink, F. (2006). 1001 Solution-Focused Questions: Handbook for Solution-Focused Interviewing

Metcalf, L. (1995). Counseling toward solutions: A practical solution-focused program for working with students, teachers, and parents.