Brief Solution-Focused Counseling Toolkit for School Counselors

Based on the work of
Insoo Kim Berg and Steve DeShazer

Compiled by Jennifer Parzych, PhD
Provided for Guidance Expo

10/22/2014

Working Assumption about Children

Until proven otherwise we believe that all children want to:

- ❖ have their parents be proud of them

- ❖ please their parents and other adults

- ❖ be accepted as a part of a social group

- ❖ be active and involved in activities with others

- ❖ learn new things

- ❖ be surprised and surprise others

- ❖ voice their opinions and choices

- ❖ make choices when given an opportunity

Working Assumptions about Parents

Until proven otherwise we believe all parents want to:

- ❖ be proud of their child

- ❖ have a positive influence on their child

- ❖ hear good news about their child and what their child is good at

- ❖ give their child a good education and a good chance of success in life (however they define it)

- ❖ see their child's future is better than theirs

- ❖ have a good relationship with their child

- ❖ be hopeful about their child

- ❖ feel that are good parents

20 MINUTE INTERVIEW

1. Referred client

Whose idea was it that you come to see me?

What will convince _____ that you don't need to see me?

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the worse, 10 the best) where would you rate yourself at this time?

Where _____ would rate you on the same scale?

Where _____ would like you to be at?

How important is it for you to make these changes (scale of 1 to 10)?

How willing are you to work at it?

2. Self-Referred Client

What has to be different as a result of your coming and talking to me today?

(Turning complaint into a goal). "All my friends are turning against me" into

"So you would like to have more friends who are on your side?"

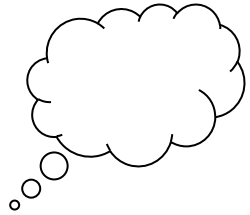When was the last time you did this, even a little bit (or a short time)?

How did you do this? (What would your best friend say you did this?)

What would it take you to do this again?

What needs to happen to move up a single point on the scale?

What would other say you need to do to move up on the scale?

3. Miracle Question

"Suppose a miracle happened while you were sleeping and the problem that brought you here is solved."

- What would you be doing differently?
- Who would be the first to notice you are doing things differently?
- What would he/she notice different about you then?
- When was the last time it happened, even a little bit?
- How did you do that?
- What would it take you to do it again?
- If you were to pretend, even a little while, that a small portion of the miracle had occurred, what one or two things would you be doing differently?

4. Questions for the Referring Person

- Support and agree with the teacher, acknowledge his/her hard work with the child, frustrations and the effort that already has gone into making progress (if true).
- What special qualities do you see in this child that tells you that he can do it?
- How would you rate the potential for this child for change for the better?
- What is the minimum change this child has to make?
- Tell me about the last time when the child was even a little more like he should be.
- How do you suppose that happened?
- On a scale of 1 to 10: Where would you rate the present behavior of the child?
- Where is the highest rating the child has achieved?
- Where would you rate this child's potential for change?
- What is the first small thing I can do to be of help to you?

5. Steps to Homework and Closure of the Session

- Agree with and use client's words and world view
- Compliment whenever possible
- Suggestions toward solutions that can begin with:
    - since you believe (think, feel) that . . .
    - Because (it is not your fault . . .)
    - I agree (I can see it seem like others are picking on you . . .)
- to the referring person:
    - "I appreciate your (concern, frustration, worries . . .) regarding Jimmy, therefore, it would be helpful in my work with Jimmy if you can (think about, watch for signs of, keep track of _____) and tell me what difference it makes for Jimmy. I will (talk with Jimmy, his parents, assess his motivation, check into resources, depending on their idea/view of what I can do to be of assistance to them.)

USEFUL LANGUAGE SKILLS

"Not-Knowing" skills

"Yes" set

Client's key words

Suppose . . .

Different, difference
"What difference would it make?"
"Is (was) it different for you?"
"What would you (he, she, they) do instead?"

Solution negotiation

Good reasons
"You must have a good reason to . . ."

Relationship questions
"How helpful is that? How would that be helpful?"

Tentative language (collaborative stance)

Responsibility for change vs. blame for mistakes

Self-compliments vs. praise

Outcome Studies for SFBT

The following list of references relate to 14 research studies on the effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy with children.

SFBT outcome studies related to child academic and behavior problems:

Cepukine, V., & Pakrosnis, R. (2011). The outcome of solution-focused brief therapy among foster care adolescents: The changes of behavior and perceived somatic and cognitive difficulties. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*, 791-797.

Cook, D. R. (1998). *Solution-focused brief therapy: Its impact on the self-concept of elementary school students* (Unpublished Dissertation). Ohio University, OH.

Corcoran, J. (2006). A comparison group study of solution-focused therapy versus "treatment-as-usual" for behavior problems in children. *Journal of Social Services Research, 33*, 69-81.

Daki, J., & Savage, R. S. (2010). Solution-focused brief therapy: Impacts on academic and emotional difficulties. *Journal of Educational Research, 103*, 309-326.

Fearrington, J. Y., McCallum, R. S., & Skinner, C. H. (2011). Increasing math assignment completion using solution-focused brief counseling. *Education and Treatment of Children, 34,* 61-80.

Franklin, C., Moore, K., & Hopson, L. (2008). Effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy in a school setting. *Children & Schools, 30*, 15-26.

Froeschle, J. G., Smith, R. L., & Ricard, R. (2007). The efficacy of a systematic substance abuse program for adolescent females. *Professional School Counseling, 10,* 498-505.

Kvarme, L. G., Helseth, S., Sorum, R., Luth-Hansen, V., Haugland, S., & natvig, G. N. (2010). The effect of solution-focused approach to improve self-efficacy in socially withdrawn school children: A non-randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 47*, 1389-1396.

Leggett, M. E. S. (2004). *The effects of a solution-focused classroom guidance intervention with elementary school students* (Unpublished Dissertation). Texas A & M University – Corpus Christi, TX.

Littrell, J. M., Malia, J. A., & Vanderwood, M. (1995). *Single-session brief counseling in a high school. Journal of Counseling and Development, 73,* 451-458.

Newsome, W. S. (2004). Solution-focused brief therapy groupwork with at-risk junior high school students" Enhancing the bottom line. *Research on Social Work Practice, 14,* 336-343.

Springer, D. W., Lynch, C., & Rubin, A. (2000). Effects of a solution-focused mutual aid roup for Hispanic children of incarcerated parents. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 17*, 431-442.

Wilmshurst, L. A. (2002). Treatment programs for youth with emotional and behavioral disorders: An outcome study of two alternate approaches. *Mental Health Services Research, 4*, 85-96.

Yarbrough, J. L. (2004). *Efficacy of solution-focused brief counseling on math assignment completion and accuracy in an elementary school* (Unpublished Dissertation). University of Tennessee, TN.