

SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF COUNSELING PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

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HOW YOUR MOM LOOKS AT YOU



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DURING THE PARENT-TEACHER MEETING

AGENDA

1. Identify the key components of solution-focused brief counseling
2. Create a flow chart for effective parent/teacher meetings
3. Discuss best practices

ORIGINS

1. Developed in the late 1970's and early 1980's by Steve de Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg and colleagues at the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee
2. Social Workers
3. Radical departure
4. Influenced by Mental Research Institute (MRI) in Palo Alto, CA
 - a. "The interactional view"
5. Influenced by Milton Erickson
 - a. '*targeted intervention based on clear perception of the current needs of a unique individual*'. He had no rigid protocol other than to pay close attention to the person in front of him and work out what would best suit that person's needs.

THEMES

Problem Focused

How can I help you?

Can you tell me about the problem?

Solution Focused

How will you know when therapy has been helpful?

What would you like to change?

CORE BELIEFS

3 core beliefs of SFBC:

1. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
2. “Once you know what works, do more of it.”
3. “If it doesn’t work, don’t do it again.”

5 assumptions that guide the SFBC model:

1. Counselors should focus on solutions, rather than problems, for change to occur.
2. Every problem has identifiable exceptions that can be discovered and transformed into solutions.
3. Small changes have ripple effects that lead to bigger changes.
4. Student clients have the necessary resources to solve their problem.
5. Constructing goals in positive terms is more effective.

4 concepts that guide the SFBC model:

1. Avoid problem analysis.
2. Be efficient with interventions.
3. Focus on the present and the future, not the past.
4. Focus on actions rather than insights.

CORE RULE-#1

“IF IT AIN’T BROKE DON’T FIX IT”

1. Don’t make an issue out of something that is not an issues for clients.
2. Focus on generating solutions, not additional concerns.
3. The client, not counselors, determines the goals for counseling.

CORE RULE #2

“ONCE YOU KNOW WHAT WORKS, DO MORE OF IT”

1. Recognize which interventions that seemed to help before.
2. Once success is identified, have clients replicate them.
3. Avoid the temptation to try something different to move more quickly.
4. An assignment/intervention that worked before has an excellent chance of succeeding again.

CORE RULE #3

“IF IT DOESN’T WORK, DON’T DO IT AGAIN. DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.”

1. American Work Ethic: “If it at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”
No!!!
2. Use different strategies to yield different results.
3. Clients tend to use the same familiar coping strategies because that is what they know how to do.
 - a. Example: Keys
4. Does not make sense to repeat something that does not work.
5. Note: When clients demonstrate reluctance or appear uncooperative, they may be telling counselors what does not work.

ASSUMPTION #1

1. Focusing on success leads to solutions
 - a. Practice “solution talk” rather than “problem talk”
2. Case Study
 - a. Hosford, Moss and Morrell (1976)
 - b. Inmates who stuttered
 - c. Listened to recording of edited voice without stuttering
 - d. Stuttering significantly reduced as a result of focusing on the positive and the solution rather than the problem
3. School Examples
 - a. Quiz/Test grades
 - b. Free Throwing Shooting/Sports

ASSUMPTIONS #2

“ EVERY PROBLEM HAS IDENTIFIABLE EXCEPTIONS ”

1. Clients view their problems as always happening. There are exceptions.
2. Fail to see when issue isn't present.
3. Example: My older sister and I never communicate.

ASSUMPTION #3

“ SMALL CHANGES HAVE A RIPPLE EFFECT ”

1. These changes expand into larger changes.
2. When clients alter their behaviors ever so slightly, it causes a chain reaction.
 - a. Example: Lack of communication with sister

ASSUMPTION #4

“CLIENTS KNOW THEMSELVES BEST”

1. Clients have what it takes to resolve their difficulties.
2. Highlight client’s strengths rather than focusing on deficits.

ASSUMPTION #5

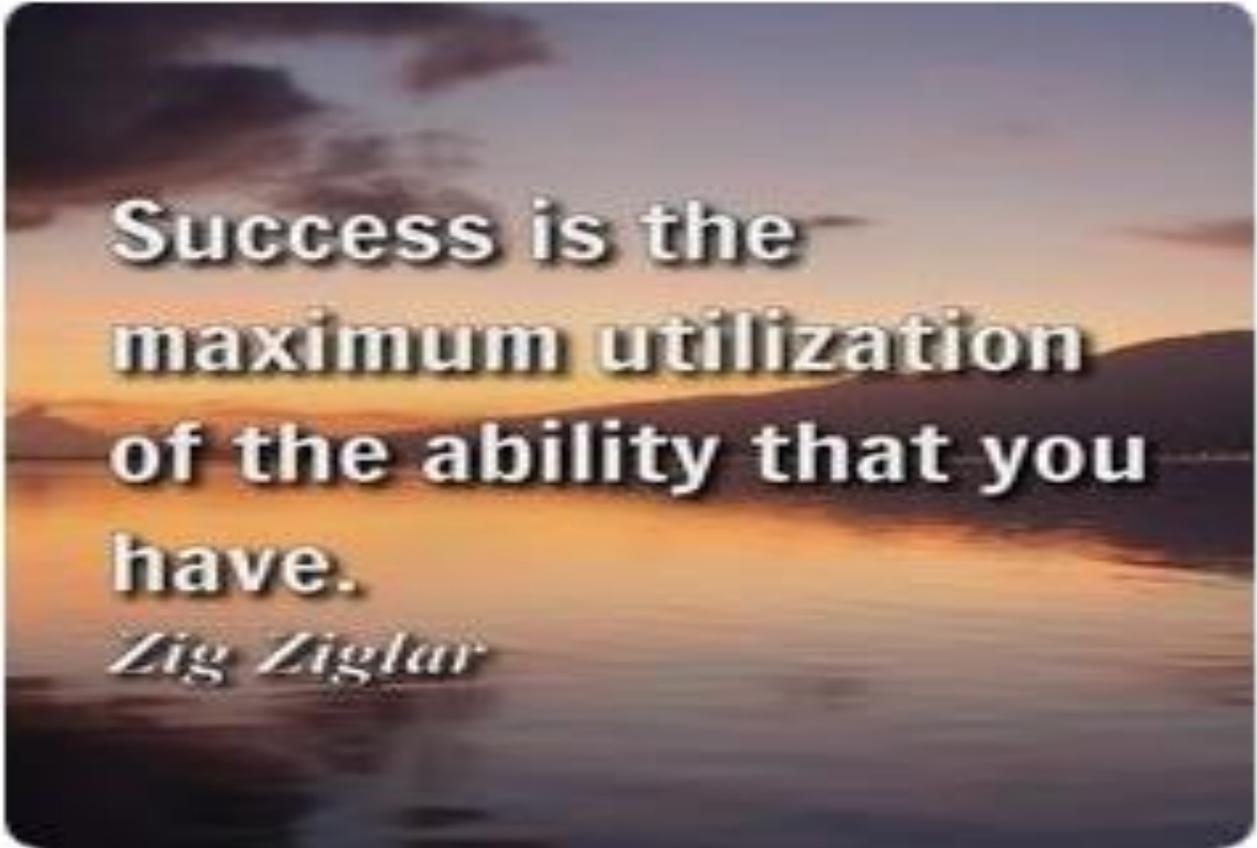
“POSITIVE GOALS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE”

1. View goals in positive terms, reflect on what clients want to do
2. Don't reflect on what they don't want to do.
3. Construct a goal of “doing” something.
4. Difficult to measure a negative goal, does not lead to positive action
5. Don't allow client to relate their goals in negative terms.....Identify positively worded goals
6. Sense of accomplishment

GUIDING CONCEPTS

1. You get more of what you pay attention to.
2. Avoid problem analysis (leaves client feeling hopeless, defensive, negative, less responsible for their behavior)
3. Be efficient with your intervention (Do not make client dependent on you)
4. Focus on the present and future.
5. Focus on actions rather than insights.
 - a. Metcalf (1995) “Knowing why we are the way we are doesn’t offer solutions”
 - b. Client could discover why they are shy, angry etc. They often use the information as a symptom and a reason for not succeeding.
6. Insight is not a precursor to change.

“STRATEGIES/TECHNIQUES”



**Success is the
maximum utilization
of the ability that you
have.**

Zig Ziglar

PRE-MEETING PREPARATION/CONSIDERATIONS

- Do I need to have this meeting?
- Has contact been made with the teacher?
- Find out what the teacher has tried and the perception of the teacher.
- Prepare for any issues (example: teacher not returning emails; Student not attending tutorials)
- Call the student in to get information
- Get the teacher(s) to come prepared (grades, sample work etc.)
- Counselor: Have access to grades as well
- Do you need to invite all teachers?

PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

- Invite the child to the meeting/Secondary Students
- What are the goals of the parent/student for this meeting?
- Who is requesting this meeting?
- What are their motives?
 - Removal from class
 - Concern
 - Time to vent
 - "Get You"/Blame Game

PRE-MEETING TEACHER REFERRAL/CONTACT

1. What is different about this referral form?
2. How would its use prove beneficial?
3. Link: <https://forms.gle/mYGutRiQuL4DHHay5>
4. Personal Use: I either email or speak directly to the teacher.
5. In my district, online communication can be requested to be seen.
6. Disclaimer: Be very careful regarding online communication if you feel it could be detrimental or used against you or the teacher later.
7. Be aware of who you work with.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Language shapes and molds how we make sense of the world.
- No sign-up, no change. Collaboration enhances change.
- Focus on future possibilities and solutions enhance change.
- There are always exceptions to the problem.
- Small changes can lead to bigger changes.
- If it works, do more of it; if it doesn't, do something different.
- The problem is the problem, not the person.

BEST PRACTICE BEFORE MEETING

- Confirm attendance of stakeholders (students, teachers, parents etc)
- Be clear regarding method (online Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Face to Face)

PRE-MEETING CHANGE

1. What change has taken place between the initial request for support and the first meeting?
2. What differences have you noticed occurring between the time that you decided to ask for help and today?
3. What have you already attempted to do to reduce or eradicate the problem?
4. Has any of this worked, even a little?

PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS

- Part 1: Briefly explore any problems or issues. Ex: As a result of us working together, how will we see Johnny doing better in school?”
- Part 2: Refocus on motivations for resolving problems. Ex. Once this issue has been resolved, how will things be better for you and ____ (student?) What would you be doing differently? When are you doing some of those things now?
- Part 3: Explore solutions and/or use scaling (positive goal, detailing, mindmapping, reframing, scaling etc.) Use one of our strategies mentioned.
 - Detail what they would be doing or thinking if the problem were solved and then do at least small parts of those actions

DEVELOPING A POSITIVE GOAL



1. Observable and Measurable
 - a. I want to improve my grades, and I want you to help me figure out how to do that.
 - b. I need to get my teacher off my back so I don't have to come back to this stupid meeting again.
 - c. I want to stop being angry all of the time. (Triggers)
2. Most clients start off general.
 - a. Detailing
 - b. What will your teacher see you doing that will tell her that she will no longer needs to be on your back?
3. Negative
 - a. When clients want others to change
 - b. Concerns expressed as symptoms
 - c. Unrealistic goals
 - d. Harmful goals
 - e. I don't know responses
 - f. I don't care responses

MIRACLE QUESTION

Purpose:

1. To clarify goals in concrete specific terms
2. To create a picture of what the client's life would look like without the problem
3. To provide a “mental rehearsal” of what the client will be doing to reach the goal

MIRACLE QUESTION

Key Question: If things were to get a bit better over the next few days/weeks (at home, in school, in class) what do you (name) think you might be doing differently?

Questions:

If the goal is negative ask “what instead?” – “If you are not shouting out, what will you be doing instead?”.

- What will it look like when you are . . . doing your work, behaving etc.? (Video/fly on the wall).
- How will I know when you have achieved that goal?

Changed Noticed By?

- Who will notice when you . . .?
- How will you know he/she has noticed?
- What will it look like?
- What difference will that make . . . to you/your relationship, in class, at home?

Sign up:

That’s a lot and if you do all of these that would be great... AND . . . even if you were to do a little bit of that even once it would be a real change, wouldn’t it?

- I wonder which one you might be thinking you are going to try first? Maybe you’ve already decided . . . maybe you want me to know now or later . . .?

EXCEPTIONS

1. Times when the problem is not present or less influential in the client's life
2. Identify solutions that have been done in the past or currently being used
3. What they are already doing, or have done, that works

COMPLIMENTS

1. “I can live for two months on a good compliment.”-Mark Twain
 - a. Directly
 - b. Indirectly
 - c. Self-Compliment

SCALING

1. Accessible and flexible tool
2. Shows progress already made
3. Encourage useful conversations

SCALING QUESTIONS

Example: Water Intake

Example: Complete algebra homework

1. What tells you that you are at a 6?
2. What would it take for you to move 1 point higher?
3. How long did it take for you to get to a 6?
4. What do you need to do to keep your 6?
5. How come it's not a -1??



FLAG THE MINEFIELD

- Identifying and overcoming obstacles to success (Ex: Procrastination/Exercise/Water Intake/Homework completion)
- "Your plan sounds great. However, we both know that sometimes, something or some people may get in the way of your accomplishing what you intend to do. How do you think that could happen in your situation?"
- "When that has happened in the past, what have you done that has worked to keep you on track?"
- "What do you think you can do to not let these things get in your way?"

QUESTIONING

What did you do well?

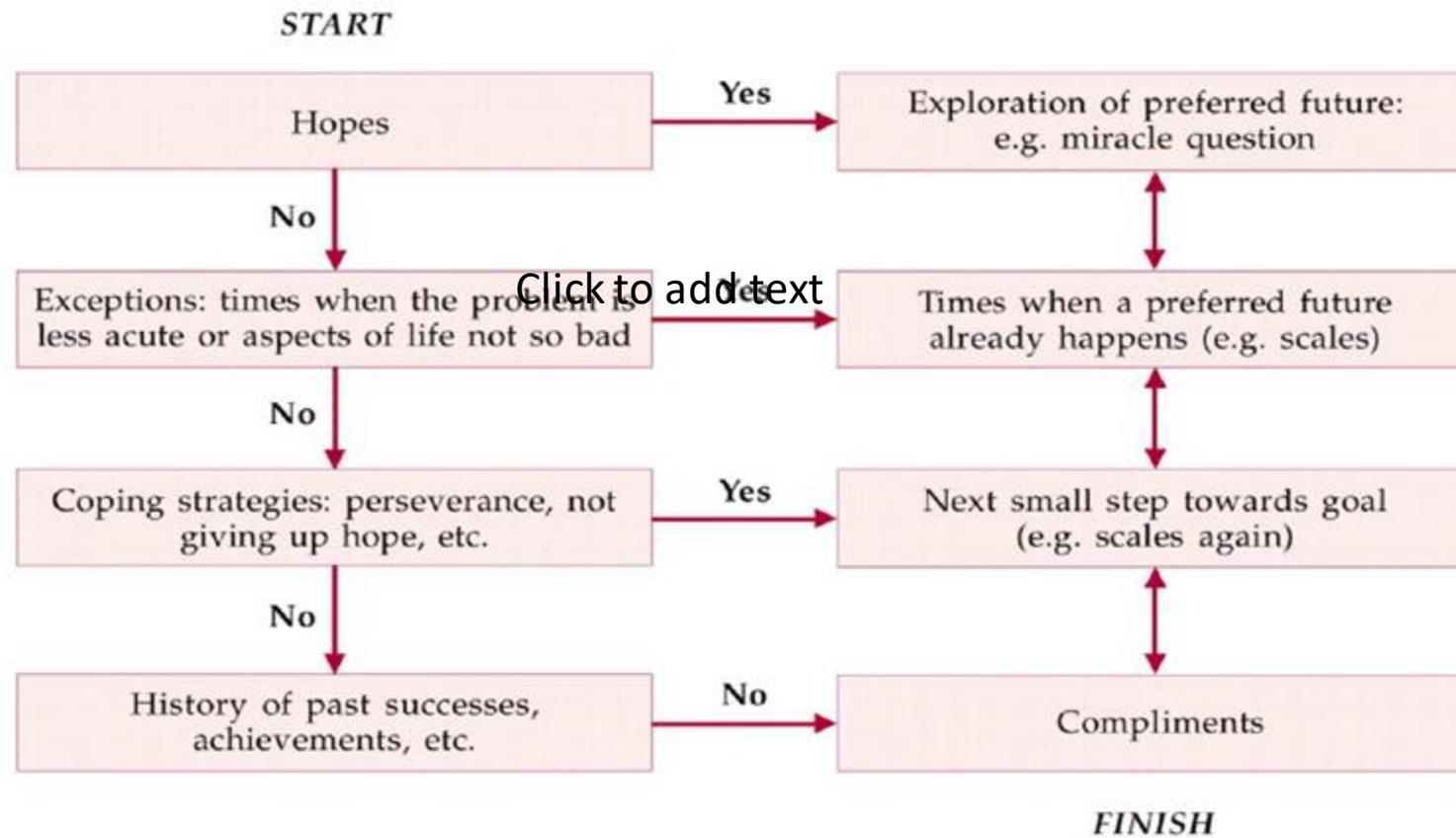
- What are the reasons you did well?
- What strategies did you use to help you succeed?
- What is something you would do differently next time?
- Which skill do you want to develop further?

OPTIONS

- As counselors, steer clear from advice giving.
- Love and Logic: Some people have.....
- Some families have found success by.....
- Puts the ownership back on the child/family
- <https://www.loveandlogic.com>
- Examples: Calendar; Homework Time; Cell Phone Access

GERALD SKLARE: BRIEF COUNSELING THAT WORKS

FLOW OF A SESSION



SFBC Note Sheet for Session 1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Next session: _____

CLIENT'S GOAL:

- State in positive terms.
- Define by behavioral actions.

MIRACLE QUESTION:

If a miracle happened tonight, and you woke up tomorrow and your problem was solved, what would be the first sign that this has occurred?

- What would you be doing differently?
- What else would be different after the miracle?

Relationship Questions:

RIPPLE EFFECT

- Who would notice the change in you?

BRIEF COUNSELING THAT WORKS- SESSION 1

<p>INSTANCES/EXCEPTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When has this miracle already happened, even just a little bit? • How were you able to make this happen? (Help student take ownership and then cheerlead.) 	
<p>SCALING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a scale of 0-10, with 0 being the worst and 10 being the best, where would you rate yourself today? • How did you get to a ____ today? • When you move one number higher, what will you see yourself doing? <p>**Flag the minefield: What will you do if...?</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>
<p>UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Is there anything else I need to know?</p>	
<p>MESSAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliments (3): about current successes. • Bridge: to connect the goal and the task. • Task: general actions or observations client is to carry out. 	

SFBC Note Sheet for Session 2

Name: _____

Date: _____ Next session: _____

CLIENT'S GOAL:

- Identify the goal stated at the last session.

ELICIT:

- What is different or better since the last time we met?
- Identify unrecognized successes.
- How were you able to make this happen?

AMPLIFY:

- Who noticed the change in you?
- What did they notice?
- How did they respond to you?
- How did you then respond to them?

SESSION 2

<p>SCALING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where are you between 0 and 10 in reaching your goal?• How did you get to a ____ today?• When you move one number higher, what will you see yourself doing? <p>**Flag the minefield: What will you do if...?</p>	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<p>ADDITIONAL SESSIONS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you satisfied with our sessions?• How will you know when we no longer need to meet?	
<p>MESSAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliments (3): about current successes.• Bridge: to connect the goal and the task.• Task: general actions or observations client is to carry out.	



KEY RESOURCE

- Dr. Russell Sabella: <https://youtu.be/cKpyVEPd6pc>
- Short 5-minute video that outlines the key components of using Solution Focused mindset
- <https://schoolcounselor.com>
- <http://schoolcounselor.com/professional-development/handouts/>
- Highly recommend anything he puts out!!

BEST PRACTICE AFTER MEETING

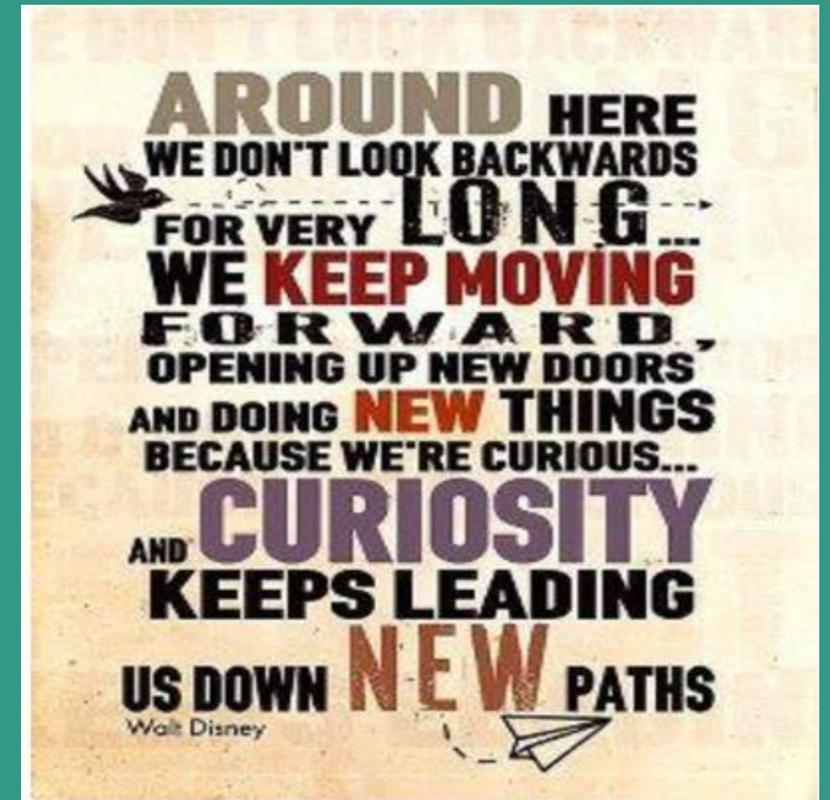
- Check on the progress of the child
- Schedule a follow up meeting/Check In in 2-3 weeks to review progress
- Send an email to attendees and thank them for their attendance and collaboration

PROACTIVE STEPS

- Common Sense: Have parent presentations that demonstrate:
 - Procedure to contact teacher
 - Check online grades
 - Check assignments online
 - Where key items are on your school webpage
 - Tutorial Schedule for Campus
 - Where they should go for specific questions
 - Attendance, anonymous referrals, bullying reporting

FINAL THOUGHTS

1. Solution Focused Brief Therapy mindset has merit.
2. Relatively easy to learn and implement.
3. Gives counselors clear guidelines to follow.
4. Research supports its use.



QUESTIONS



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- Material Request: <https://forms.gle/wJejaJBdhsvxd1th8>

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