

Solution Focused Brief Counseling

A school-based approach to focusing on solutions
rather than problems

<http://bit.ly/sfbc-handout>

Solution focused brief therapy (SFBT) targets the desired outcome of therapy as a solution rather than focusing on the problem, symptoms, or issues that brought someone to your office

This technique only gives attention to the present and the future desires of the student, rather than focusing on the past experiences. The counselor encourages the student to imagine their future as they want it to be and then the counselor and student collaborate on a series of steps to achieve that goal.

This form of talk therapy involves reviewing and dissecting the student's vision (detailing what has worked), and determining what skills, resources, and abilities the student will develop and use to attain his desired outcome.

What it is...

Advantages of the Solution-Focused Model

- Brief (theory can be applied to any length session and any number of visits)
- Empowering (gives the student more ownership; quits the blame game)
- Reduces the need for confidentiality (because focus is present oriented)
- Research is growing
- Not plagued by diagnostic problems (because it doesn't matter to find solutions)
- Small changes in one area of life trickle over into other areas

Why it works...

Examples of a Solution-Focused Interview (types of questions you might ask)

- What's one way that you've already been successful?
- What did you do to make that happen?
- Who noticed that you succeeded?
- What is one thing you had to overcome to make that happen?
- What will YOU do instead of _____?"
- How will YOU succeed anyway?

What it looks like...

Scaling is one of the most-used SFBC techniques

Scaling...

Solution-Focused Challenges your instincts (this model is deceptively simple)

- Resist the urge to dig deeper into issues and focus on the past
- Action– NOT feelings– oriented (although feelings often come up)
- Force yourself to celebrate tiny accomplishments even when you disagree
- Don't allow FULL credit for change to be external (i.e. this kid's better because of medication)

What will be challenging...

These resources were recommended by Dr. Sabella and will help you to start implementing Solution-Focused theory into your everyday work with students, parents AND teachers:

- <http://bit.ly/sfbc-handout>
- www.schoolcounselor.com
- "Brief counseling that works: A solution-focused approach for school counselors and administrators (2nd Ed.)" by G.B. Sklare
- <http://solutionfocusedchange.blogspot.com/2011/07/21-solution-focused-techniques.html>

Resources to Learn...

INFO ABOUT BOOK REC: Brief Counseling That Works: A Solution-Focused Approach for School Counselors. Practical Skills for Counselors. <Sklare, Gerald B.>

School counselors often face large caseloads of students and cannot spend hours of time addressing each student's problems using traditional approaches. With this in mind, step-by-step instructions on how to use solution-focused brief counseling (SFBC) with elementary and secondary students is provided here. School counselors can utilize this approach for typical student concerns in order to achieve rapid, observable change. School administrators and teachers will also benefit because each component of this approach can be used independently in a variety of situations. School psychologists, social workers, pastoral counselors, and drug counselors should find the case studies especially relevant. The book is intentionally short and theory is discussed briefly; implementation is the main thrust. The reader is led through the material, then practice exercises appear at the end of the first four chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background and rationale for SFBC and its special relevance to school counseling. Chapter 2 discusses ways to prepare students for solution-based counseling and how to facilitate the initial goal-setting phase of the model. Chapter 3 describes how to teach students to recognize success and thus be encouraged. Chapter 4 provides a transcript of a student case; and chapter 5 covers the interventions counselors employ in second and subsequent interviews with students. Chapter 6 describes additional applications of the solution-focused approach. Contains an index. (RJM)

Abstract...