



# Solution Focused Case Management

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WATCP 2023

JUSTICE POINT



# Objectives

1. Participants will be able to identify the approach, values, and techniques of Solution Focused Brief Therapy including the 4 primary principles
2. Participants will discuss how to use the concepts of Solution Focused Brief Therapy to enhance their case management and approach to clients
3. Participants will explore specific solution focused questions and techniques they can use with clients





## Presentation Focus

While I will be presenting solution focused techniques and skills, much like motivational interviewing, the solution focused SPIRIT or perspective is really what I want you to look for in the presentation.



# PROGRAMMING INTERVENTIONS AND ROLE

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Therapy	Case Management	Peer Support
Retrospective	Present Focus or Prospective	
Introspective/Intrapersonal	Action/Behavior Oriented	
Expert/Caretaker Role		Guide on the Side
Analytical	Practical	
Goal Based on Diagnosis	Goal Based on Risk Assessment	Goal Based on Client Desire
Goal is to Create Wellness	Goal is to Increase Capacity	
Addresses Root of the Problem	Results Based	



# The Status Quo



## THE STATUS QUO – DEFICITS BASED

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- We are deficits based
  - We tell the client what they can't do
  - We base our case management on correcting deficits
    - We should focus on criminogenic need, but our view of an individual shouldn't be
  - Client strengths are generally given lip service only or recognized but not leveraged
  - We operate under the assumption that the clients need outside help to “fix” them



## STATUS QUO – PAST FOCUS

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- We are past focused
  - We monitor if the client did what we tell them to
  - We investigate violations
  - We report on what the client *has* done
- What percent of your time with clients is focused on what happened between the last meeting and the current meeting?
  - Some is necessary BUT you are only documenting history
  - The client is repeating, reimagining, and retelling the negative event and that just makes it “stick” more
    - More opportunities to lie/shift blame/justification



# Solution Focused Perspective







“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old but on building the new.” - Socrates



## AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE STATUS QUO

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- Solution Focused Case Management
  - Strengths should be leveraged
    - We build upon existing strengths
    - We catch them being good
    - We look for exceptions to the problem
    - The client teaches you how to be their case manager
  - Plan for success
    - Assume success is the default rather than failure
    - Spend more time planning the next step rather than interrogating the past



# SEPARATE THE PERSON AND THE PROBLEM

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- The relationship comes first
  - Unconditional positive regard
  - Frame yourself and the client as allies working to solve a mutual problem
  - Be hard on issues, not people
    - Exception: do not trade substance for relationship
      - The rules and expectations are not negotiable
        - How we get there and how we measure steps toward success are
  - Recognize rising emotions and talk about them
  - Don't make assumptions
  - Communicate clearly and check for understanding




## PROBLEMS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF “BETTER”

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- “Build back better” (regardless of political affiliation)
- The client already knows the problem
  - They are an expert at it
- The client already knows the solution
  - They know what they want to experience instead of the problem
  - They may be in denial or don’t think it’s possible, but they know what it is
- The client already has the tools they need to succeed
  - If they didn’t change wouldn’t be possible in the first place





“We don't solve our problems, we outgrow them.” - Carl Jung



## 3 RULES

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1. If it ain't broke, don't fix it
  - Maintenance is acceptable
2. If it works, do more of it
3. If it doesn't work, don't try harder; try something different



## 4 PRINCIPLES

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1. Clients CAN change
  - Unconditional Positive Regard
  - Our role is NOT to save or fix, our role is to increase capacity and reorient client's perspective
2. Draw on intrinsic qualities, strengths, and relationships
3. Expectancy and Hope
  - Be the voice assuming successful change is inevitable
  - Without this, “questions turn into techniques, not therapy” – Elliot Connie
    - Are they feeling interrogated
4. Focus on ***Desired Outcomes & Best Possible Self***



## DESIRED OUTCOME > UNDERSTANDING PROBLEM

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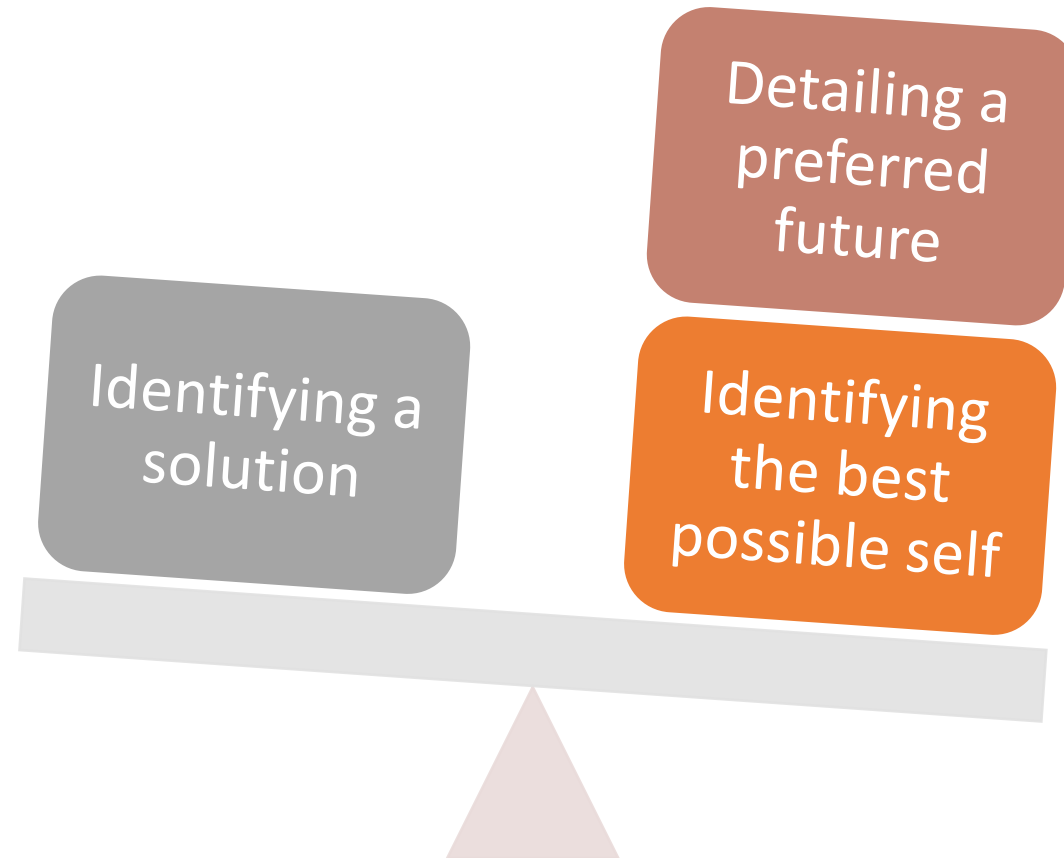
- "When clients search for causes it is useful to ask them how knowing the cause will be helpful for them in solving their problem. They usually say it will help them understand. The question, "If you could solve your problem without understanding, would that be all right?" usually offers another perspective that many clients have never considered." - Eve Lipchik
- "Something in the way of your goals? If you search for it, you'll find it. But, if you focus on the destination instead, nothing will stop you from reaching it." – Jessica Rana





# DESIRED OUTCOME > SOLUTION

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## 10 TENETS (MANY DIFFERENT LISTS OUT THERE)

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1. Change is inevitable and constant
2. Clients have strengths and resources
3. Clients' solution behavior already exists
4. Clients must identify a desired future
5. Clients are the experts
6. Small change leads to big changes
7. Focus on the present and future
  - The future is created and negotiable
8. Find exceptions to the problem
9. Focus on people not problems
10. Solutions fit the person not the problem
  - The solution may not be related to the problem



# COMPARISON

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## Status Quo

- CM is the expert
- Focus on the problem
- Focus on past
- Focus on deficits
- Preventing failure is success

## Solution Focused

- Client is the expert
- Focus on the solution
- Focus on future
- Focus on strengths
- Build success from failure




# COMPARISON


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## Problem Focused

- What's Wrong
- What needs fixing
- Cause in the past
- Blame
- Control
- Deficits
- Weakness
- Complications (Why)
- Definitions

## Solution Focused

- What's wanted
  - What's working
  - "Counters" in the past
  - Progress
  - Influence
  - Resources
  - Strengths
  - Simplicity (Workability)
  - Actions
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“The tragedy story and the hero story are the exact same story. It just depends on how you listen. . . Our responsibility is to listen, with a very specific ear to the hero in the trauma story. If you can train yourself to hear heroes whenever you hear tragedy, now you are doing solution-focused brief therapy at a very high level.” – Elliot Connie



# Solution Focused Techniques



## THE MIRACLE QUESTION

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- Although it is one of the primary identifiers of SFBT I am not going to address it in detail
- The technique requires skill
  - How you present it, and the word choices you make, are critical to having it “land” right
  - Rooted in Ericksonian Hypnosis
- Summary for context:
  - “Imagine you go to sleep and while you sleep a miracle happens. Your problem goes away completely. You were asleep though, so you don’t know the miracle happened. When you wake up, what would be different that let you know the problem was gone?”



# EXCEPTION QUESTIONS

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- Purpose
  - Demonstrate the problem isn't all encompassing
  - Discover previous successes and solutions
  - Identify differences between what is working and not working
  - Amplify Strengths/Resources
- Examples:
  - “When was the last time this wasn't as much of a problem?”
  - “Tell me about the times you've abstained.”
  - “When you aren't feeling that way, what is different?”
  - “Tell me about the times when you are using less.”
  - “What do you like to feel instead of the way you do right now?”
  - “What would you like to be doing right now instead of being angry?”
  - “What is better, even if just a little bit, since last week?”





# INSTEAD/IMAGINE

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- Purpose
  - Flip the script from discussing the problem to discussing a preferred outcome
  - Remember identifying a preferred future > than identifying a solution
- Examples
  - “What would you like to experience instead of being angry?”
  - “What do you like to do instead of using?”
  - “If you didn’t use, what would you be doing instead?”
  - “What do you imagine would be different if you weren’t using?”
  - “What do you imagine the answer might be?”
  - “If you did know what your next step should be, what do you imagine you would say?”
  - “What advice do you imagine your future self would give your present self?”



# PRESUPPOSING QUESTIONS

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- Purpose
  - Orient the clients toward belief in change
  - Elicit the recognition of strengths
- Examples
  - “What is different or better since last time?”
  - “Despite your slip, what stopped total disaster from happening?”
  - “You are here now talking to me about it, what prevented you from falling apart completely?”
  - “What does success look like to you?”
  - “When you start to make these changes, what will you notice that will be different? What might others notice?”
  - “Tomorrow, what will be different that shows you that it is better than today?”



# COPING QUESTIONS

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- Purpose
  - Elicit client strengths and resources
  - Improve self-efficacy
  - Find successes
- Examples
  - “Given what happened, how did you manage to still come in?”
  - “What are you doing so things are not worse?”
  - “How did you learn to cope with such a difficult situation?”
  - “What would it take for you to keep doing what you are doing?”
  - “When you feel hopeless you’ve kept going. How did you keep going?”
  - “What are you doing that makes things better?”



# SCALING QUESTIONS

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- Purpose
  - Reduce black and white thinking
  - Break big problems into smaller pieces
  - Build discretion and discernment
  - Focus on noticing change
- Examples
  - “On a scale of 1-10, with 0 being the least and 10 being the most. . .?”
  - “If you started at a 0 and your goal is a 10, where are you today?”
  - “Last week you said you were [X], on the same scale, where are you today?”
  - “On a scale of 1-10, how hopeful are you that your problem can be solved?”
  - “On a scale of 1-10, how helpful have you found group to be?”



# SCALING QUESTIONS

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- **Important: follow-up questions are always about 1 number lower**
  - “What makes you a [X] instead of a [X-1]?”
  - “What prevented you from being a [X-1] instead?”
- Exception is when you are asking what they will notice or what will change *when* at 1 number higher (future focus)
  - “What will you be doing differently when you get to [X+1]?”
  - “What would have to change for you to be at [X+1]?”
  - “What is the easiest change you could make to start moving from [X] to [X+1]?”
  - With some clients consider asking in half or quarter steps if they perceive change to be difficult
- Use imagery instead of numbers
  - “Here is a picture of a mountain, point to where you are at right now.”
  - “Imagine a staircase. At the bottom is ‘where I was at my worst’ and the top of the stairs is ‘the best possible life I can imagine for myself’, where are you at right now?”

## Notice No “Why” Questions

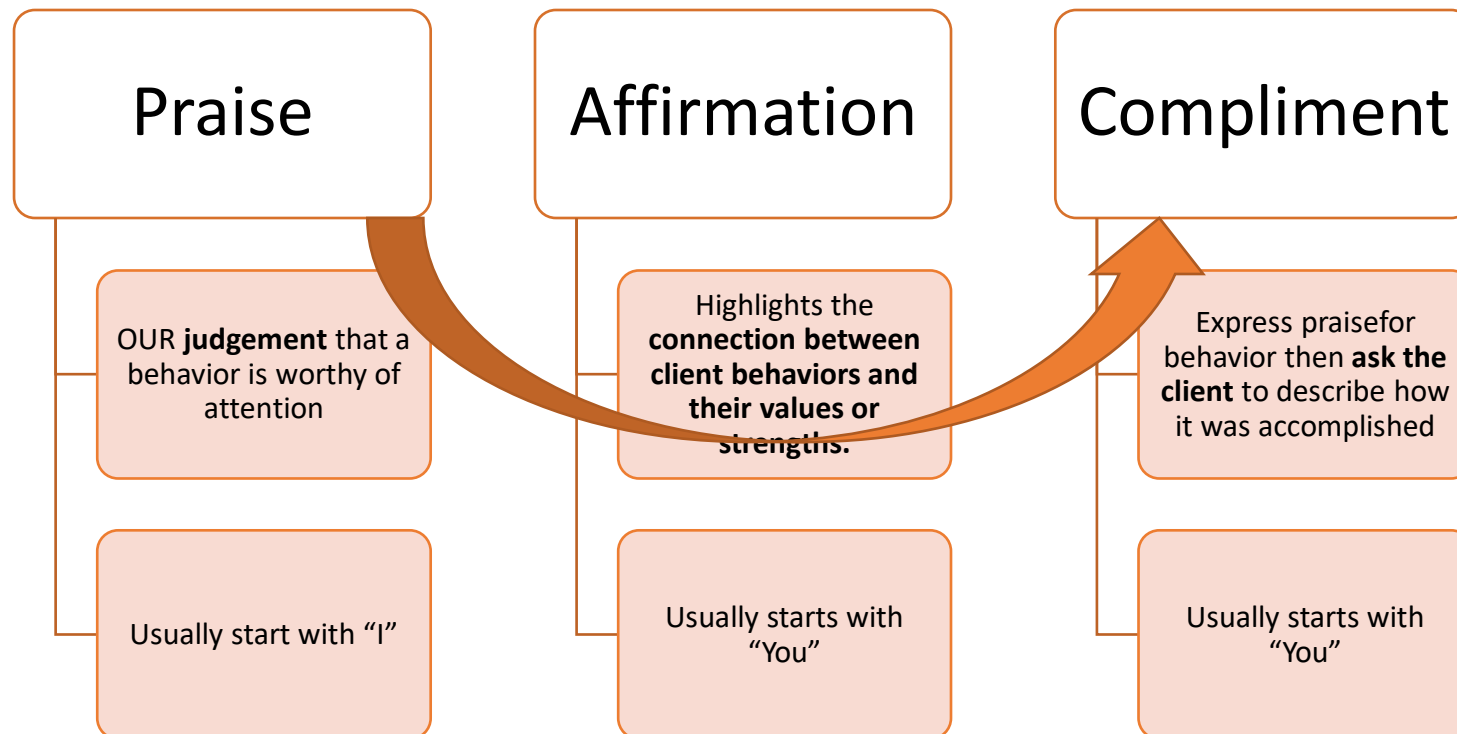
“Too many people ask nothing but “Why” questions. They analyze and analyze problems - but no solution. “you can analyze a glass of water and you’re left with a lot of chemical components, but nothing you can drink”. “Why?” questions can drive us crazy. “What?” questions drive us sane. What questions lead us to practical solutions.” — Peter McWilliams



# COMPLIMENTS

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- Purpose
  - Validate and reinforce self-efficacy
  - Must be genuine and often low-key, direct, and simple



# TASK SETTING

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- Always end with a task
  - Use brainstorming and then pick an option
  - Focus on
    - Doing more of a behavior that is working
    - Expand on exception behavior
    - Leveraging an existing strength
- Set SMART goals

<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Specific</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	<b>Attainable</b>	<b>Realistic</b>	<b>Timely</b>
What <u>specifically</u> do you want to do?	How will you know when you've reached it?	Is it in your power to accomplish it?	Can you realistically achieve it?	<u>When exactly</u> do you want to accomplish it?





# Contact Information

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