

Solution Focused Brief Therapy



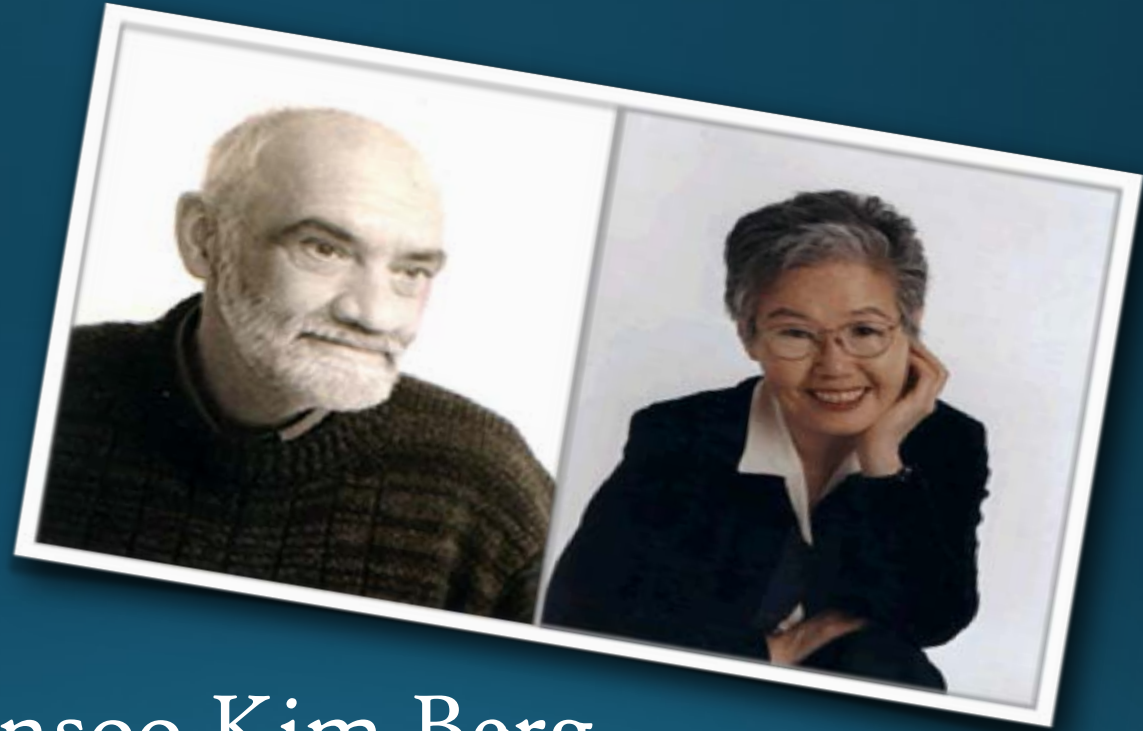
Dr. Stephen Finzo
Psychologist

My Objectives

1. Provide some education about SFBT.
2. For you to leave here with some skills or interventions you can implement immediately.

Solution Focused Brief Therapy

1980s USA



Steve de Shazer & Insoo Kim Berg

Solution Behavior not Problem Behavior

Solution:

Near future oriented What is wanted?

Focused:

Directive but not directed

Brief:

Agreed upon and plan driven

Therapy:

Dialogue, engaged

Basic Tenets

It looks at the positive side of problems and what works.

Water the flowers, not the weeds!
“Tend the garden”

It can be used in a variety of settings with a variety of problems.

Basic Tenets cont.

Places emphasis on the future rather than the present or past.

All people are free to make choices.

Clients are their own experts who know what is best for them.

The therapist accepts the client's view of reality, but remember “you cannot fix what is in your head with what is in your head”

To borrow some from Reality Therapy

What do you do when the patient's reality is:

“maladaptive”, “irresponsible”, “abusive”

First, why are they in your office?

Irresponsible doesn't equate to a negative personality characteristic

Substitute *responsible* for mental health, and *irresponsible* for mental illness.

Second, *responsibility* – the ability to fulfill one's needs, and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs

Responsibility:

Builds self-worth

Builds integrity

Values others

How Brief a Therapy?

Aim for 5 sessions

45 mins each session

Rarely beyond 8 sessions

Sometimes 1 session is enough

Any improvements after 3 sessions?

Increase gap between sessions as time goes on

Plan of Care

Especially helpful with SFBT

Drives the treatment

Keeps the focus and direction

Is alive

Modify as needed

Assists with termination

Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Assumptions

Uniqueness of the client

No problem happens all the time

Client is the expert-they choose the solution

What can "exceptions" tell us

Change is happening

The epiphany

Current actions are an asset

Goals direct change

Do more of what worked.

Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Guiding Principles

Knowing the desired ending makes getting there easier

Problems cloud our view of future

Don't lose sight of what you want

Clarify the solution

Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Ask questions about. . . “the client’s life”

Client's story

Client's strengths

Client's resources

Client's exceptions

Relationships

Self-esteem issues



Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Uses "Respectful Curiosity"

Requires client to see their preferred future

Begin steps to change
"IMMEDIATELY"

First session goal?



Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Sees change as a constant & natural entity

Help people identify things they wish to change

Utilize lists

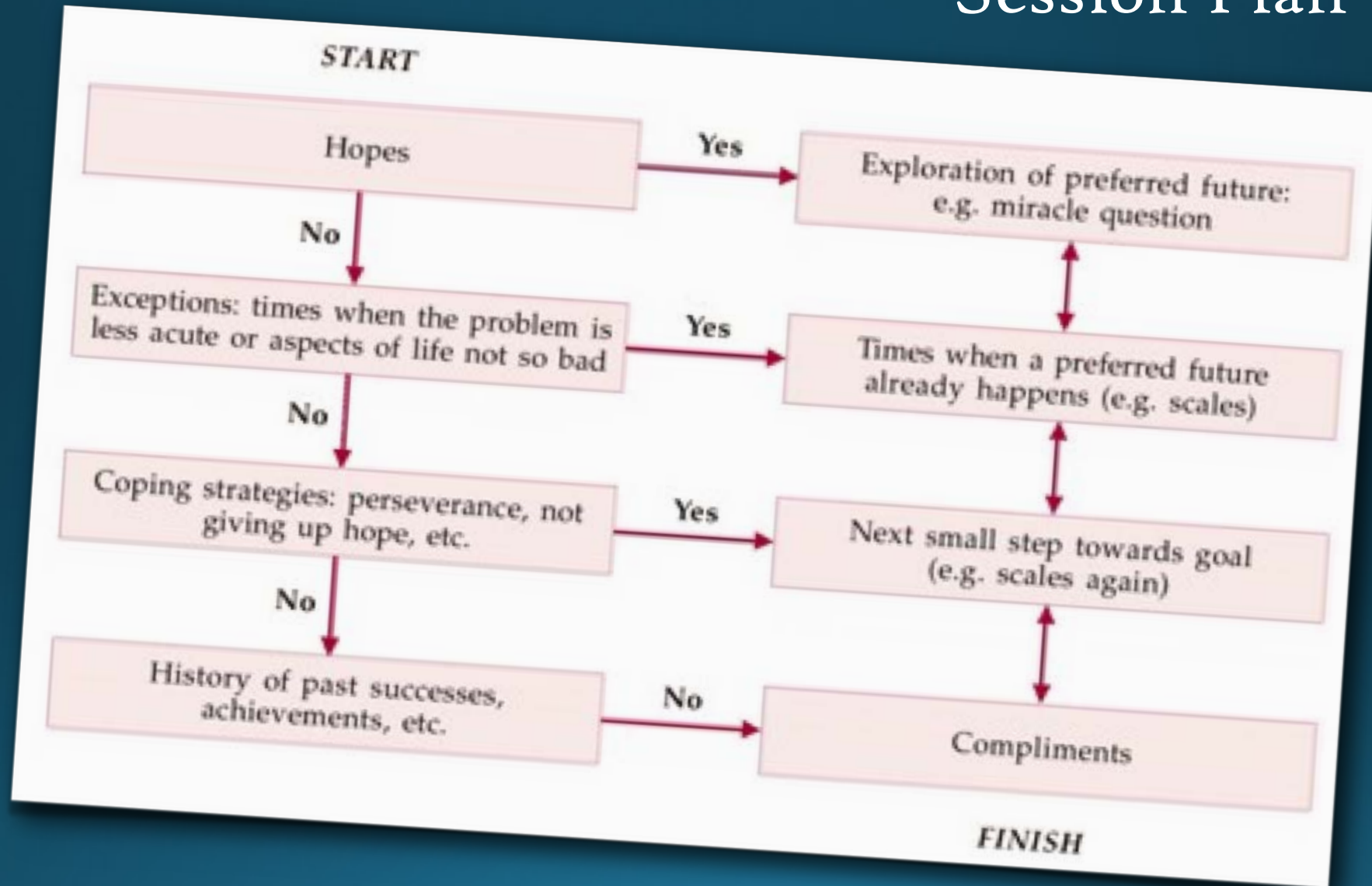
Help people attend to what is currently happening

“Now” focused ^D

Help people attend to what they want to continue happening (reinforce what is wanted)

Create a **concrete** version of their preferred future

Session Plan



A Preferred Future

Therapist identifies times in current life that are close to the preferred future.

Focus on what is different on such occasions

Bring small successes to client's awareness

Help client repeat successful things

Enabling the Preferred Future

Focus on. . .

- a) Support to explore preferred future
- b) Explore (when, where, with whom, how) bits of it already happen

Attainable and Explainable Solutions

Theoretical

Similar to Reality Therapy, the SFBT therapist is more involved and active in the therapy than the traditional therapist who offers guidance down the path of healing and health.

Beware of “transference”.

Need fulfillment is paramount in life success.

Need fulfillment drives most actions and behaviors.

Meeting our needs in a meaningful and realistic way:

Define meaningful

Define realistic

Core Needs:

1. Connection
others who care, affirmation
2. Meaning
significance, important
3. Assurance
consistency

Core Needs cont.

4. Variety

healthy, safe, calculated

5. Growth

productivity, accomplishment

6. Impact

contribution, adding to life

Priming Your Day:

1. Identify 3 things you are grateful for.
Gratitude cancels out anger and fear
2. Identify 3 things you will accomplish that
will further your purpose or goals.
3. Set your emotional tone:
How will you respond to situations,
frustrations, crises

Miracle Question

How the future may be

Helps establish goals

Ask slowly

Pay attention to NVCs

Give time to answer

Ignore "Don't knows" and encourage an answer



Mind Jogging Questions

How long will you give a child to learn to walk before you give up?

What is the key factor in your future?

At what point do you give up?

Self-defining Exercise

Tell me who you are without telling me what you have or what you can do!

I am...

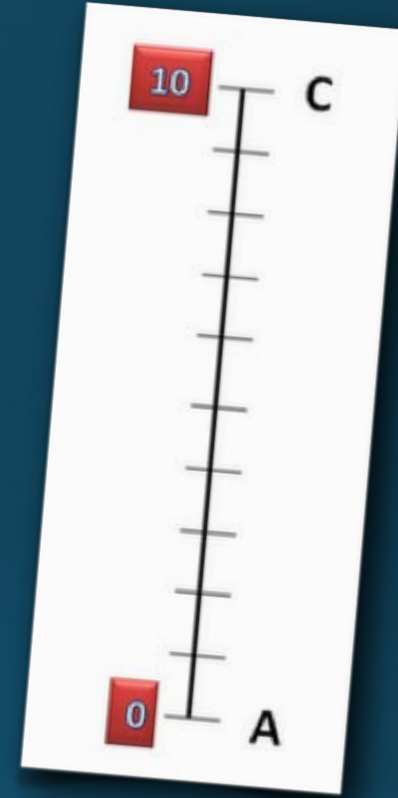
Scaling Question

Identify differences for client

Usually range 0 - 10

Helps client identify resources

Helps identify preferred future



"How would you improve things by 1 point?"

"Where on the scale would you be if...?"

Coping Question

Identify client resources they don't even acknowledge,
generalize for them, interpret/clarify

Can be used even in most pessimistic situations

Genuine curiosity helps

Genuine admiration for client helps

Helps identify preferred future

Ensure client doesn't feel you're contradicting them

"Despite all the problems you still work. How do you do it?"



Problem-free Talk

Identify client resources helping them relax or be effective

Talk about mundane life or irrelevant experiences

All probes - leisure, friends, relaxing, conflict resolution

Can use **strengths and resources** to move forward

Ordinary achievements & Everyday responsibilities

“You describe you're successful at work dealing with conflicts. Could the skills be used at home with your child?”

Playful ideas: Time Machine

“If you had a time machine which time would you go to?”

“Flossie’s story”

Playful ideas:

Super sleuth

Imagine you are a Solution Detective – you could invoke your favorite sleuth to find a solution to your problem, builds objectivity

Do something different for 5 minutes a day

Doesn't matter what it is (as long as legal and safe) – it is the regularity of the practice that is important.

Give someone a pleasant surprise

Practice random acts of kindness

The Compliments box

A special box is set up in the home and members are encouraged to deposit compliments about each other.

Internal Resources

Helps clients attend to their resources, skills and abilities

Helps make a narrative of a competent individual

Empowers client in identifying their own strengths

Skills

Beliefs

Qualities

Sense of Humor

Tenacity

Capacity

Strengths

External Resources

Supportive Relationships

Friends

Spouse

Faith

Partners

Social

Family

Workplace

Organizations

Compliments

End sessions with a compliment of client abilities

Set tasks using those abilities

Focus on positive points

Ordinary achievements & responsibilities

“I can live for two months on a good compliment”

Mark Twain

Disadvantages of SFBT

Critics say it is too simplistic and does not have enough empirical research to support it.

It may be contraindicated with dependent clients.

It may not adequately address clients with serious mental issues.

It may not develop the counselor/client relationship in enough depth to be therapeutic.

Stephen Finzo, Psy.D.

stephenfinzo@gmail.com

stephen@drstephenfinzo.com