



# **SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF COUNSELING**

# BACKGROUND



- ❖ **Founders: Steve de Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg and Brief Therapy Center in Milwaukee.**
- ❖ **Influenced by Milton Erickson who believed that:**
  - ❖ **everyone possess the skills and abilities to solve their own problems,**
  - ❖ **Small changes can lead to bigger changes.**

# Basic Philosophy



- ❖ **Optimist – power of the language to create and define reality, thus, no absolute truths**
- ❖ **Constructivist theory – new ways of viewing their lives**



# Assumptions



- ❖ **Clients have resources and strengths to resolve complaints.**
- ❖ **Change is constant.**
- ❖ **The counselor's job is to identify and amplify change.**
- ❖ **Do not need to know a great deal about the complaint.**
- ❖ **Not necessary to know the cause or function of the complaint to resolve it.**



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# Assumptions



- ❖ **A small change is all that is necessary because it impacts the system.**
- ❖ **Clients define the goal.**
- ❖ **Rapid change or resolution of problem is possible.**
- ❖ **There is no one “right” way to view things.**
- ❖ **Focus on what is possible and changeable rather than on what is impossible and intractable.**



# CORE BELIEF



- ❖ ***Solution-Focused Brief Counseling is a future focused, goal-directed approach to brief counseling that uses questions designed to identify exceptions, solutions, and scales, which are both used to measure clients'/students' progress towards a solution and reveal the behaviors needed to achieve or maintain further progress.***

# Human Motivation



- ❖ **SF counselors do not care what motivates people in general.**
- ❖ **Observe what clients want to achieve, identify their strengths and resources to assist them to reach a solution.**
- ❖ **Positive and Negative Motivations**
- ❖ **Tendencies to move towards things we want and away from those we wish to avoid.**
- ❖ **Behavior can be informed by our past or future.**



# Central Constructs

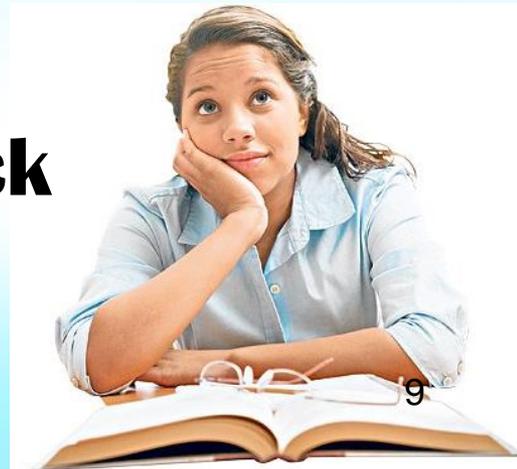


- ❖ **Exceptions:** *always a time when the problem doesn't happen.*
- ❖ **Change talk:** *converse in ways that bring about change.*
- ❖ **Solutions:** *concentrate on acceptable solutions to the problem.*
- ❖ **Strengths and resources:** *accessibility to strengths and resources.*

# Health and Dysfunction



- ❖ ***Diagnosis***: a customer has come with a complaint
- ❖ Don't care about health or dysfunction
- ❖ ***Focus on client's construction***, look for exceptions, and construct solutions
- ❖ Client determines the goals and what is healthy
- ❖ ***Dysfunction*** is the client is stuck



# Nature of Therapy/Counseling



## ❖ **Assessment:**

❖ *do not believe in traditional assessment – interview for solutions.*

## ❖ **Overview of the Therapeutic Atmosphere:**

❖ *Team-assisted approach*

❖ *Complete 4-5 sessions*

❖ *Collaborative: establish a working cooperating relationship*

❖ *Respect for each other's world view*

# Structural Components



## ❖ Roles of Counselor and Client/Student:

❖ *Counselor is energetic, responsible for the sessions, and expert in change.*

❖ *Client is expert on self and his/her situation.*

## ❖ Types of clients

❖ *Visitors, complainants, and customers.*

❖ *Miracle group, so-so group, and same or worse group.*



# Structural Components



## ❖ Goals

- ❖ *Works to develop the specific, attainable, and concrete goals that are essential.*
- ❖ *Should be observable.*
- ❖ *Replaces the unwanted behaviors.*
- ❖ *Change the Doing.*
- ❖ *Change the Viewing.*
- ❖ *Evoking resources, strengths, and solutions.*



# Process of Therapy



- **Want, action and now!**
- **Define the problem and establish goal/s.**
  - *“Co-constructing a problem and goal”*
- **Adopting the client’s lingo.**
- **Utilize change talk – change labels**



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# Techniques



## ❖ To identify exceptions

- ❖ ***Questions***: pre-suppositional question, open ended, and assumes success.
- ❖ ***Normalizing the problem***: commending the client's strength in handling a very difficult situation.
- ❖ ***Compliments***: be real and based on information provided by the client.
- ❖ ***Miracle question***: “what if...” followed by a scaling question.
- ❖ ***Scaling questions***: “on a scale of 1 – 10...”



# Techniques

- ❖ *Fast-forward questions*
- ❖ *Asking about the problem*
- ❖ *Externalizing*
- ❖ *First session formula task*
- ❖ *Breaking patterns*
- ❖ *Surprise task*
- ❖ *Do something different*
- ❖ *Solution-oriented hypnosis*



# Evaluation of the Theory



- ❖ **Relatively new**
- ❖ **Attractive due to its brevity**
- ❖ **Superficial**

## ❖ **Qualities of the theory**

- ❖ **Difficult to operationalize due to very little actual theory.**
- ❖ **Some support for the effectiveness evident**

## ❖ **Research Support**

- ❖ **Overall, data is relatively small, focused more on outcome than theory testing**

