


Pastoral Skills Training – Family Life

Lesson 2: Solution-Focused Therapy



Student Guide

Lesson Objectives	
Identify the principles of solution-focused therapy. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Explain how the seven principles of solution-focused therapy support the counselee.○ Define the requirements of describing a problem.○ Identify the qualities of well-formed goals.	
Session 1: Presentation Webinar	
Part 1	Solution-Focused Therapy Principles
Part 2	Guiding Assumptions
Part 3	The Basics - Getting Started
Student Readings	
Orienting Toward Solution: How to Interview for a Change	02-orienting-toward-solution.pdf
Guiding Assumptions: A Way of Thinking	02-guiding-assumptions.pdf
Case Study	02-case-study.pdf
Solution-Focus Worksheet	02-solution-focus-worksheet.pdf
Session 2: Discussion Webinar	
A discussion of assigned case study	

Solution-Focused
Therapy
Lesson 2



Pastoral Skills Training –
Family Life
USACHCS

 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 



Objectives

- Identify the principles of solution-focused therapy.
- Explain how the seven principles of solution-focused therapy support the counselee.
- Define the requirement of describing a problem.
- Identify the qualities of well-formed goals.

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 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 

PART 1:
GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS



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A Way of Thinking

Sometimes our way of thinking limits what we can see. We make assumptions that limit our capabilities – or the capabilities of others.

– Charles Allen Kollar



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Beliefs About Counseling

One's beliefs about counseling are as important as one's knowledge and skills. Learning the difference between a problem-focused approach and a solution-focused approach is a start. When this paradigm shift takes place, a new way of thinking about counseling begins.



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 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 

Presuppositions of Solution-Focused Therapy

- God has given us the ability to create solutions.
- The solutions can be described and clarified.
- More than one outcome to counseling can be created.
- The Chaplain and the counselee can do the creating and clarifying together.
- We create solutions as a joint effort with God's help.
- This process can be taught.



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 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 

Assumptions

- God is already active in the counselee.
- Complex problems do not demand complex solutions.
- Finding exceptions helps create solutions.
- The counselee is always changing.
- The counselee is the expert and defines goals.
- Solutions are co-created.
- The counselee is not the problem, the problem is.
- The counseling relationship is positional.
- The Chaplain's focus is on solutions.



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 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 

God Is Already Active in the Counselee

- God has been, and continues to be, thoroughly involved in the counselee's life before we, as Chaplains, try to help.
- Solution-focused therapy assumes that the counselee is capable of knowing and doing what is necessary to move toward God's intended outcome for his problem and for his life.

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 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 

Complex Problems Do Not Demand Complex Solutions

- Find out what is working and do more of it.
- Formula First Session Task (FFST)



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Finding Exceptions Helps Create Solutions

- Exceptions represent times when the problem is not happening.
- They offer clues to solutions that may be created.

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The Counselor Is Always Changing

"You could not step twice into the same river;
for other waters are ever flowing on to you." – Heraclitus

- If, as a Chaplain, you conduct your sessions with the expectation that change will occur for the counselees, you will influence them in a positive fashion.
- Such Chaplains focus on change talk.
- With a solution-focused approach, it is more helpful to think *how* the change will occur, rather than *when* it will occur.



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The Counselor Is the Expert and Defines Goals

- Many therapy models utilize the Chaplain as the expert setting the course of treatment.
- The solution-focused model places responsibility on the other side of the relationship.
- Clients are the experts on what they want to change, as well as in determining what they want to work on.



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Solutions Are Co-created

- As Chaplains, we walk hand in hand with the counselee and enter into what he is experiencing.
- Then we co-create with him a solution that is more in keeping with faith in God's past preparation and with hope in the future that the Spirit is leading us to.



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The Counselee Is Not the Problem, the Problem Is

In the vast majority of cases, the primary problem is the way both parties are *interacting*. My standard comment to such couples is, "You are not the problem, and you are not the problem; your interaction is the problem." This frees both parties from viewing each other as the problem and makes them a team in dealing with a common problem – the *interaction*. Change the *interaction* in a deliberate way, jointly agreed upon, and the couple is on the way to a potential solution.



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The Counseling Relationship Is Positional

- Customer-type relationship (in a *willing position*),
- Complainant-type relationship (in a *blaming position*)
- Visitor-type relationship (in an *attending position*)



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The Counselor's Focus Is on Solutions

- Name the seven principles of solution-focused therapy.
- How do these principles support the counselee?

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QUESTIONS?

 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 

Check On Learning

- What must Chaplains assume when providing solution-focused therapy?
- What are the possible positions that a client may take during a counseling session?
- In solution-focused therapy, who is responsible for defining goals?

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PART 2:
HOW TO ORGANIZE A COUNSELING SESSION

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Five Useful Questions

- Questions that highlight pre-session change
- Exception-finding questions successes
- Miracle questions
- Scaling questions
- Coping questions

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Questions That Highlight Pre-session Change

- Many people notice that things are better between the time they set up an appointment and the time they come in for the first session.
- Each subsequent session is spent in reviewing and discovering any new changes the client makes, how the family members react to these changes, and what needs to be modified in order to stay on course.

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Exception-Finding Questions: Enhancing Existing and Past Successes

- Magnifies and enhances a client's successes through repeated emphasis on those few, but important, exceptions
- Helps clients to see their successes and recognize that they have actually taken steps to implement it

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Miracle Questions

- Gives clients the power to project into the future and imagine how things would be different if a miracle were to happen and their problems were solved
 - What would you notice that is different?
 - What would you notice different about them?
 - How would you be different?
 - What else would be different?

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Scaling Questions

- Designed to inform the Chaplain
- Used to motivate, encourage, and enhance the change process
- Also used to assess the seriousness of the problem
 - **Example:** On a scale from 1-10, from the time you decided to call being a 1 to the miracle being a 10:
 - Where are you now?
 - What would bring it up?
 - What keeps it from declining?



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Coping Questions

- Successful in gently challenging the client's belief system and her feelings of hopelessness while, at the same time, orienting her toward a sense of a small measure of success
- Useful when treating a client in an acute crisis
- Uncovers and then utilizes what **the client** did to survive the crisis or trauma
- Conveys how the client survived the crisis and managed not to make things worse



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End of Session

- Do more of what works.
- Do one thing different.



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Second Session

- What was better?
- How did you do that?
- How did it affect you?
- Scaling question (from 1-10) after each session?

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QUESTIONS?

 **Solution-Focused Therapy** 

Check On Learning

- What are three requirements for describing a problem?
- What seven qualities are found in a well-formed goal?
- What types of questions are useful in solution-focused therapy?

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