

# Solution Focused Strategies for Treating Children, Trauma, and Anxiety

## Pamela King, LMFT

---

### Communicating with children and families

- Child development
  - Cognitive, verbal, physical, and social domains
  - Family connections
  - The importance of pets

### Empirical Support for Family Play Therapy

Most powerful effects when parent is conjointly involved in child's treatment

FPT associated with

- Greater child participation
- Improved quality of child-therapist alliance
- More positive emotional experiences
- Willis (2014)

### Role of the Play or Activities

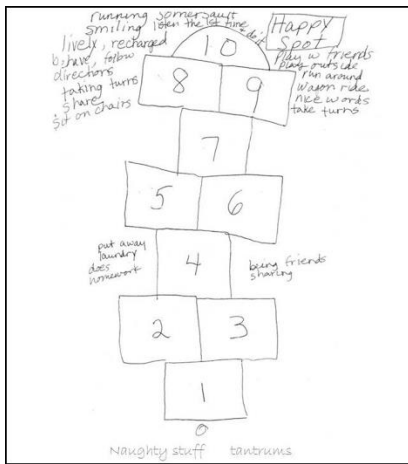
- Conversational tools
- Experiential activities result in more animated conversations
- Client's meaning
- Client's metaphor
- Reflect, clarify, witness

### Specifics of Scaling

- Define the scale "On a scale from 1-10 with 10 being what you want and 1 being the opposite..."
- Where are you now?
  - What helps you to be that high?
  - What else? What else?
- Imagine yourself one step higher, what will be happening then?
  - What else? What else?
  - Who will notice
- Other tips
  - Scale toward what you want
  - Climb up or get bigger
  - Get behavioral descriptions

### Listening with a solution-focused ear

- How to Watch Clip
  - Write down 10-15 compliments
    - Child/Parent
    - Process



A child’s favorite play activity can often be converted into a graphic representation of their preferred future. In this picture, a ‘hopscotch scale’ details best hopes, current ‘score’ and next steps. (King 2017)

**Brief effective encounters: When you only have 15 minutes**

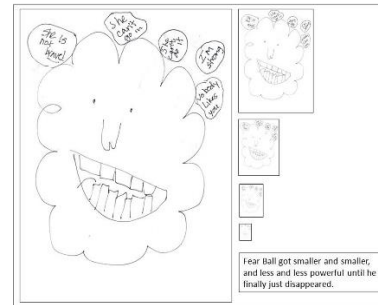
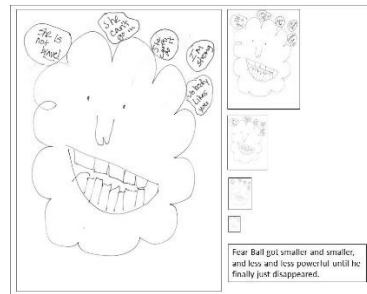
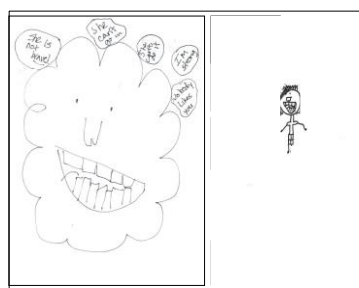
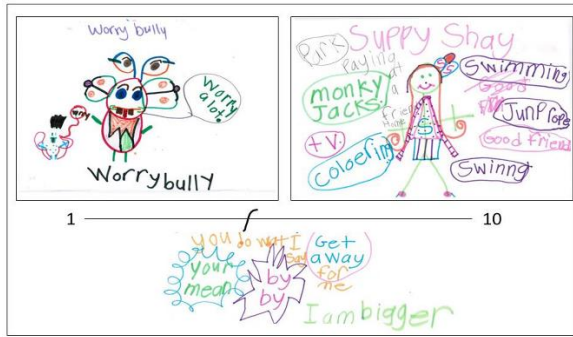
- Quick, effective conversations with children and adolescents
- Collaborative relationships with parents and caregivers
- Applications for schools, hospitals, critical incidents, or crisis
- 10 minute Talk Exercise (Burns, 2008)

**Shrinking Problems & Growing Solutions**

Children and parents often want something gone or reduced in their lives. This reduction can sometimes be achieved simply by helping clients identify what they want instead and working toward that end. Sometimes, however, families need specific ideas to aid them in reducing the problem before they can grow the solution. Exploring ways of shrinking or eliminating some things (behaviors, memories, nightmares, fear, or anxiety) while simultaneously increasing others (strength, calm, safety, or power) is a powerful tool. (King 2017)

**E.A.S.E Anxiety**

<p><b><u>E</u>xternalize</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worries, fears, problems</li> <li>• Name it, draw it, build it</li> <li>• Shrink it, shred it</li> <li>• Bury it, crash it</li> <li>• Ignore it, erase it</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>A</u>mplify &amp; Activate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the instead/solution</li> <li>• Dreams, hopes, wishes</li> <li>• Strengths, abilities</li> <li>• Support system             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Internal</li> <li>○ External</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b><u>S</u>olutions grow</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name it, draw it,</li> <li>• Notice it, feed it</li> <li>• Practice it, play it</li> <li>• Build it</li> <li>• Enlarge it</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>E</u>xpand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successes</li> <li>• Resources</li> <li>• Abilities</li> <li>• Ideas</li> <li>• Helpers</li> </ul>



### Breathing Solutions

- Bubbles
- Balloons
- Cotton Balls
- Dandelions

### Family Anxiety Solutions

#### Interview toys, keeping eye contact on the toy

- Who wants to talk first?
- Hi, what's your name?
- What are you very good at? (Ask follow-up questions.)
- How do you help (child's name) ? (follow-up questions)
- Is there anything else you want to tell me?
- May I speak to the other one please?
- Repeat questions.

### Solution Focused Trauma treatment

It is within the normal responses of human beings to struggle, have a period of adjustment, and even emotional upheaval when they experience a trauma. (King, 2017)

### Solution Focused Trauma treatment

Actions as well as thinking and imagining can change the functioning of the brain.  
Norman Doidge, 2007

## Imagining the future

*Oh, give me a home, Where we can be happy,  
Where parents and children can play. Where parents don't fight, and the children have fun  
and the family has a nice sunny day. Home, home where it's safe. Where hugs are given away,  
Where never is heard a violent word, and happiness is felt every day.*

*Lyrics written by children's group*

## Solution Focused Trauma treatment

- **Flashback**

A thought or a story about something that happened in the past, but it feels like it is happening right now, so it is scary all over again. Our bodies get ready to fight or run or hide, thinking it is dangerous right now. It is a very good thing that our bodies know how to fight, run, and hide when there is real danger. (King, 2017)

## Solution Focused Trauma treatment

- When have you felt this way before?
- Similarities to the past?
- Sights, sounds, sensations, or people
- Differences from the past?
- What action do you want to take?
- Actually unsafe
- Inconsequential

*Resolving Sexual Abuse* (1991, p. 107)

## Reclaiming the Senses in Trauma Treatment

- I like looking at...**waterfalls, flowers**
- I like listening to...**funny jokes, happy music**
- I like tasting...**salty potato chips, oranges**
- I like to touch...**my kitty's fur, soft fabric**
- I like smelling...**roses, bread baking**
- 



**Pamela King**

[www.facebook.com/SolutionPlay.net](https://www.facebook.com/SolutionPlay.net)

[www.SolutionPlay.net](http://www.SolutionPlay.net)

Book Discount code **SS225**

## Strengths and Challenges

Good Stuff	Bad Stuff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know how to take care of my medical disorder.</li> <li>• We lived with my grandparents a couple times.</li> <li>• Grandma always prays for me, my whole life, she prayed.</li> <li>• I am really good at hiding.</li> <li>• I take good care of my brother; we've always got each other.</li> <li>• I'm a big animal lover; they take everything off my mind.</li> <li>• When I was in foster care I would catch up in school.</li> <li>• I got to eat when I was in foster care or with my grandma.</li> <li>• Foster care felt safe; I had some pretty nice ones.</li> <li>• My mom was with this one good guy for a couple of years. He was nice and would take us to the park.</li> <li>• I'm a survivor!</li> <li>• I have my aunt's sense of humor.</li> <li>• This one teacher was like a father to us.</li> <li>• My best friend.</li> <li>• Work in a pet store when I'm old enough.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnosed with a medical disorder.</li> <li>• Mom and the guy we lived with got drunk and high all the time. I was around drugs and sick a lot.</li> <li>• He drugged me too, 'cause my hair follicles had meth in them when I went in foster care once.</li> <li>• Her boyfriend molested me.</li> <li>• My cousin raped me 4 times; I remember he was wearing a pink shirt.</li> <li>• I'd sit by my grandparent's door when my mom was drunk, it was scary.</li> <li>• We were homeless a couple times.</li> <li>• Somebody put a gun to my mom's head and threatened to kill her.</li> <li>• I hardly ever went to school, just in foster care.</li> <li>• My favorite aunt died. We was tight.</li> <li>• We lived on the streets.</li> <li>• I saw a guy get shot. He died.</li> <li>• I got stabbed in a fight.</li> <li>• People lied to me all the time.</li> <li>• I don't trust people.</li> </ul>