Using Solution-Focused Brief Practice for Lasting Change

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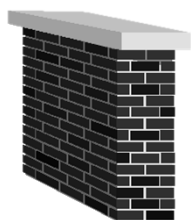tpichot@denversolutions.com

1

Problem Solving

- Evaluate the problem
- Diagnose the problem
- Utilize known information about the diagnosed problem
- Evaluate client resources/strengths
- Determine the best course of treatment
- Implement the treatment

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2

Problem Solving

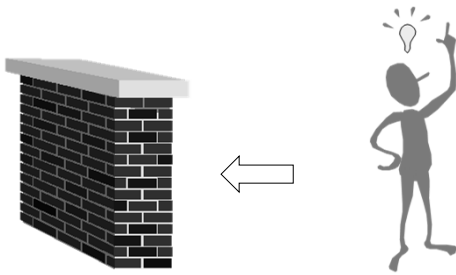

Problem

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3

Solution Building

- Determine the desired goal
- Assist the client in creating a detailed description of the goal
- Assist the client in evaluating where he/she is in relation to the desired goal
- Assist the client in evaluating times in which he/she was successful in moving toward the desired goal
- Work backward to discover keys to success
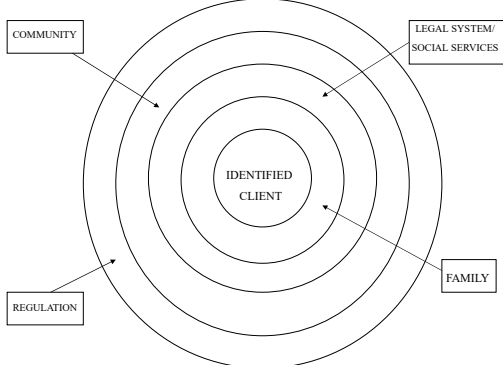
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4

Solution Building

Problem

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5

Definition of a "Client" in SFBT

COMMUNITY

LEGAL SYSTEM/
SOCIAL SERVICES

IDENTIFIED
CLIENT

REGULATION

FAMILY

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6

Solution-Focused Principles

- If it's not broken don't fix it
- If something is working, do more of it
- If it is not working, do something different
- Small steps can lead to large changes
- The solution is not necessarily directly related to the problem

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7

Solution-Focused Principles Continued

- The language requirements for solution development are different than those needed to describe a problem
- No problem happens all the time. There are always exceptions that can be utilized
- The future is both created and negotiable

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8

Common Interventions

- Goal Formation (MQ, Future Oriented)
- Scaling
- Coping Questions
- Difference Questions
- Relational Questions
- Exception Questions
- Compliments

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9

Goal Formation Questions

The Key is to help the client envision the end-point

- Miracle Question
- What would need to happen in this session. . .
- Fast Forward
- Suppose . . .

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Miracle Question

"Imagine that when you go to bed tonight, a miracle happens. The miracle is that the problem that brought you here is gone! However, since you were asleep, you are unaware that a miracle happened. What would be the first things that you notice that let you know that this miracle happened?"

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11

Five Elements of the Miracle Question

- The change is of some significance to the client (unlikely to happen naturally)
- The "Miracle" is typically defined
- It often has the element of immediacy ("tonight while you are sleeping")
- The client is unaware that the miracle occurred
- The client is to discover the clues that the "Miracle has occurred"

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12

Other Helpful Future-Oriented Questions

- Fast Forwarding
  - -Helpful when issue is centered on an event

- Imagine it is the end of our time together…
  - -Helpful when client is overwhelmed and unsure what is needed

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13

Scaling Questions

- Makes concepts measurable
- Provides assessment information
- Provides the tool to measure change
- Neutral tool to explore exceptions and highlight change
- Use 0-10 or 1-10 scales
- The 10 equals the desired goal
- The 1 must be defined

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Coping Questions

- Help to demonstrate empathy
- Effective when client is not ready to take the next steps
- Help client to identify what's working despite pain, loss, trauma, feelings of being overwhelmed

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Exception Questions

- Times in which the problem does not exist or is less severe
- Assists the therapists in exploring if something that a client tried was useful
- Highlights various verbal paths
- Client driven

(Only useful if the client sees them as useful in helping to get to the "Miracle")

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Compliments

- Key Component: Should be client driven

(highlight areas of success that the client has already identified as useful)

- Focuses on aspects within the client's life rather than on behavior during the session

(behavioral reinforcement vs. compliment)

- Must be genuine

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Two Step Compliments

1. Express positive surprise in reaction to one of the client's accomplishments

2. Ask the client how he/she did it

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Difference Questions

- Explores meaning (has a deepening effect)
- Increases hope that change will make a meaningful difference
- Encourages clients to explore if potential changes are realistic, feasible, and worthwhile
- Enhances motivation by making the benefits more "real"

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19

Relationship Questions

- Assists the client in exploring how the changes impact all elements of his/her system
- Assists the client in keeping the plan realistic and inclusive of all factors
- Increases the client's ability to "step into someone else's shoes"

(Increases empathy)

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20