



(R)evolution Psychotherapy

Solution Focused Therapy: A Simple Guide

Solution Focused Therapy (SFT), sometimes called Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), is a type of counselling that emphasizes your strengths, resources, and future goals rather than focusing mainly on problems. Developed in the 1980s by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg, this approach is designed to be practical, hopeful, and collaborative (de Shazer, 1985; Berg & de Shazer, 1993).

Instead of spending a lot of time analyzing difficulties, SFT helps you identify what is already working and how you can build on those successes. The goal is to create small, realistic steps toward the life you want.

Focusing on Solutions, Not Problems

In SFT, the therapist works with you to explore your preferred future. This means imagining what life would look like if things were better and then identifying the steps that could move you closer to that vision. The focus is on solutions, strengths, and possibilities rather than on what has gone wrong.

This approach can feel empowering because it recognizes that you already have skills and resources that can help you move forward. Therapy becomes less about “fixing” and more about building.

Key Tools in Solution Focused Therapy

SFT uses several simple but powerful techniques to help you clarify your goals and strengths:

- The Miracle Question  : You are asked to imagine that, overnight, a miracle happened and your problem was solved. What would be different tomorrow? This helps you picture your preferred future in detail (de Shazer, 1985).
- Scaling Questions  : You rate your progress or confidence on a scale (for example, from 0 to 10). This makes change feel measurable and helps identify small steps forward.
- Exception Questions  : You explore times when the problem was less intense or absent. These exceptions show that change is already possible and highlight strategies that work.
- Strengths and Resources  : The therapist helps you notice your abilities, supports, and past successes, reinforcing the idea that you have what it takes to move forward.

SFT is highly collaborative. You are the expert on your own life, and the therapist's role is to guide and support you in identifying solutions that fit your values and circumstances. This person-centered approach means therapy is tailored to your unique goals, not a one-size-fits-all plan.

Clients often find SFT encouraging because it emphasizes hope, agency, and practical steps rather than dwelling on difficulties.

How SFT Can Help

Solution Focused Therapy can be especially helpful when you want short-term support or when you feel stuck and need a fresh perspective. By focusing on what is already working and what you want for the future, SFT can help you build confidence, strengthen relationships, and take meaningful steps toward change.

Even small shifts—like noticing exceptions or setting achievable goals—can create momentum. Over time, these small changes add up to bigger transformations.

References

Berg, I. K., & de Shazer, S. (1993). *Making numbers talk: Language in therapy*. In S. Friedman (Ed.), *The new language of change: Constructive collaboration in psychotherapy* (pp. 5–24). Guilford Press.

de Shazer, S. (1985). *Keys to solution in brief therapy*. W. W. Norton.