

What is Solution-Focused Therapy?

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), also called Solution-Focused Therapy, Solution-Building Practice therapy was developed by Steve de Shazer (1940-2005), and Insoo Kim Berg (1934-2007) and their colleagues beginning in the late 1970's in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As the name suggests, SFBT is future-focused, goal-directed, and focuses on solutions, rather than on the problems that brought clients to seek therapy.

The entire solution-focused approach was developed inductively in an inner city outpatient mental health service setting in which clients were accepted without previous screening. The developers of SFBT spent hundreds of hours observing therapy sessions over the course several years, carefully noting the therapists' questions, behaviors, and emotions that occurred during the session and how the various activities of the therapists affected the clients and the therapeutic outcome of the sessions. Questions and activities related to clients' report of progress were preserved and incorporated into the SFBT approach.

Since that early development, SFBT has not only become one of the leading schools of brief therapy, it has become a major influence in such diverse fields as business, social policy, education, and criminal justice services, child welfare, domestic violence offenders treatment. Described as a practical, goal-driven model, a hallmark of SFBT is its

emphasis on clear, concise, realistic goal negotiations. The SFBT approach assumes that all clients have some knowledge of what would make their life better, even though they may need some (at times, considerable) help describing the details of their better life and that everyone who seeks help already possesses at least the minimal skills necessary to create solutions.