

Solution Focused Brief Therapy Questions

Goal Setting Questions

- What would you like to see happen by the end of our session today? (or when we finish counseling sessions)
- What have you already tried and what has been useful?
- What difference would that make?
- How will you feel when that happens? or What would you like to be feeling?
- What is already working in the right direction?
- What is the least that you would like to achieve?
- What would be different in your life when you have reached your goal?
- How would that change make a difference for you?
- How will you know that your goal has been reached? How will others know your goal has been reached?
- How would I be able to tell that your goal has been reached?
- What else will be different when you have reached your goal?
- What do you want to see instead of the problem?
- Miracle Question/magic wand/crystal ball/dream solution
- What else?

Exception Questions

- What is better?
- Of the things you did, what helped the most?
- What else has helped so far?
- What is different about those times?
- What did you do differently in the past?
- What other successes have you had in the past?
- What do you think you did to make that happen?
- What do you think (other person) would say you could do to make that happen again?
- When is the problem not a problem? What are you doing differently then?

Competency/Coping Questions

- How did you manage that? And how else?
- Tell me about your good qualities.
- How did you know what was needed?
- What gave you the strength to do that?
- That is a great idea. How do you come up with that?
- How did you keep it from getting worse?
- How are you managing to cope with this to the degree that you are?
- How did you manage to get back on the right track?
- Suppose you were to compliment yourself on your effort, what would you say?
- How do you most enjoy spending your time? In what are you most interested?
- What have you achieved that you are most proud of?
- What is your best subject in school?
- What positive things would your parent/teacher/other say about you?

Scaling Questions

- On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is the worst and 10 is the best, where are you today?
- How did you manage to remain at that number?
- What would one step higher look like?
- How would you notice you have gone up one point?
- How would others see that you have taken a small step?
- How do you keep from being at a lower number?

Three Responses to Pre-Session Change

1. Nothing Has Changed

- How can I be helpful to you today?
- What would need to happen today to make this a really useful session?
- How would your best friend notice that this session was helpful to you?
- How did you manage to get out of bed and make it here today?
- (If he/she did not do homework from previous session) What did you do that was more helpful?
- Prediction task: Each day predict what the next day will be and notice what comes true and what does not.

2. Things are about the same

- Is this unusual, that things have not gotten worse?
- How have you managed to keep things from getting worse?
- Amplify efforts in maintaining/coping, and compliment small steps taken
- Ask for more details of previous solutions or exceptions to the problem
- Do something different

3. Things Have Started to Get Better

- Focus on details of how the client made this happen (strengths and resiliencies)
 - How did you make that happen?
 - How did you manage to take such a big step?
 - What did you tell yourself to help you do it that way?
- Emphasize the difference from how things were before
- Pay compliments
- Continue with building goal(s):
 - If this were to continue, would this be what you would like?
 - What will you do to keep this going?
 - What additional changes would you like to see?