



# Solutions Focused Group Therapy

*“The Doughnut Appreciation Society”*

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# Foundations

- Steve de Shazer
- Insoo Kim Berg
- *There's nothing so wrong with you, that what's right with you can't fix*



# Basic Philosophy

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- Change is constant and inevitable
- Clients are the experts & define goals
- Future orientation – history is not essential
- Emphasis is on what's possible & changeable - do something differently



# Central Constructs

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Exceptions

Change Talk

Solutions & Solution Talk

Goals of therapy

Change what the client is **DOING**

Change how the client is **VIEWING** the problem

Mobilize the client's **RESOURCES** and  
**STRENGTHS**



# Solution Focused Therapy

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- Problems are maintained by
  - Doing More of the Same
  - Expecting no change
- Solution Focused
  - If it isn't broken – don't fix it
  - Once you know what works, do it more
  - If it doesn't work, do something different



# Basic Assumptions

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- Clients have resources and strengths to resolve complaints
- Change is constant
- The therapist's job is to identify and amplify change
- It is usually unnecessary to know much about the complaint in order to resolve it.



# Questioning

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- Be respectfully curious
- Ask questions as part of conversation
- Questions are the main intervention
- Not to gather information
- Constructive questions generate new experience about possible solutions, client strengths and capabilities



# Questioning

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- Problem focused:
  - How long have you been depressed?
- Solution focused:
  - What would your life be like if you weren't depressed?



# Types of Questions

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- Goal setting questions
- Miracle questions
- Exception questions
- Coping questions
- Scaling questions



# Identifying Goals

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- What are your goals?
- How will you continue to accomplish goals?
- How will you know when you got what you wanted from therapy?
- What will be different?
- Who will notice?
- What will they notice?



# Adler's Fundamental Question

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- Dr. Jonathan E Adler:

“What would be different if all your problems were solved?”



# O'Hanlon's Videotape Question

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- Let's say that a few weeks or months of time had elapsed, and your problem had been resolved. If you and I were to watch a videotape of your life in the future, what would you be doing on the tape that would show that things were better? (1987)



# De Shazer's Miracle

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Suppose that one night, while you are asleep, there is a miracle and the problem that brought you here is solved. However, because you are asleep you don't know that the miracle has already happened. When you wake up in the morning, what will be different that will tell you that the miracle has taken place? What else?

(1988)



# The Miracle Question continued

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- What difference would you (& others) notice?
- What are the first things you notice?
- Has any of this ever happened before?
- Would it help to recreate any of these miracles?
- What would need to happen to do this?



# Exceptions

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- **Identify Problems and Exceptions:**
  - When doesn't the problem happen?
  - What's different about those times?
  - What are you doing or thinking differently during the “good” times?
  - What do you want to change about the problem?

# Exception Questions continued

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- Amplifying the exception
  - How do you explain to yourself why these times are different?
  - How do you achieve that?
  - What do you do differently then?
  - Who else is involved that notices the difference? What do they say or do? What else?
  - What would you have to do or see for this to happen more often? What else?



# Coping Questions

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- How do you cope with these difficulties?
- What keeps you going?
- How do you manage day-to-day?
- Who is your greatest support? What do they do that is helpful?
- This problem feels so difficult at the moment, yet you still managed to get here today. What got you here?
- Sometimes problems tend to get worse, what do you do that stops it getting worse?



# Coping Questions – Past problem

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- How did you get through that period?
- Who was your greatest support?
- How did they help?
- How did you manage to solve that problem in the past?
- Other people might have had more difficulty, but you managed to survive and get here today. How did you manage to achieve that?



# Scaling

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- Scale of 1 – 10
  - 1 is the worst it's ever been
  - 10 is the best
- Where are you now?
- Where do you need to be?
- What will help you move up one point?
- How can you keep yourself at that point?



# Scaling Questions – follow up

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- What makes you think you got that far?
- What things have you done already that got you to this point?
- What do you think will move you one step further on?
- What would be the first sign that you had moved one point further on?
- What would other people notice about you?



# De Shazer's Skeleton Keys

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- Between now and next time...observe what works
- Do something different
- Pay attention to when...exception



# Theory of the Person

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Solution-focused therapy is a theory of counseling

Solution-focused therapy does not have a theory of personality development



# SFT at Ticehurst

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- Doughnuts
- Opening question: “What has gone better for you this week?”
- Ice-breaker
- Teaching time
- Self-control Scale



# Demographics

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- Garden Court average of 7 per week
- Upper Court average of 6 per week
- Range of dx: depression, OCD, emerging borderline, PTSD, bipolar, Aspergers, ADHD, psychosis, self-harm, LD, Substance misuse



# Teaching Sandwich

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- Past & Future
- Goal setting
- Experiential/Encounter
- Assertive Communication
- CBT Exercises
- Recovery Model



# Recovery as SFT

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- Recovery Model: Hope, Sense of Self, Safe Base, Supportive Relationships
- Linked to Recovery Folder
- Emphasises therapeutic community



# Teaching Time Questions

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- Goal setting questions
- Miracle questions
- Exception questions
- Coping questions
- Scaling questions

# Goals

<b>1 Week:</b> Mood Self-control Something new	/10  /10
<b>1 Month</b> Mood Self-control	/10  /10
<b>1 Year</b> Education/Career Living arrangements Skills	
<b>10 Years</b> Career Living arrangements Relationship Hobbies	
<b>50 Years</b> What sort of grandparent would you like to be?	

## **Miracles.....**

What good thing that happened in this past week to you want to keep happening this week?

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If the miracle took place, what would you:

Do differently in the day?

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Think about?

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Sing/Hum?

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Eat/drink (preferably non-alcoholic!)

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What would you talk about with a friend?

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What would you like to buy as a present for everyone in the group?

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## Making Lists

List one thing you like about yourself:

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List two things you would like to try in the future

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List three things that you did right this week

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List four things that are good this week and that you would like to keep happening next week

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List five places you would like to visit in your lifetime

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## Recovery Journey - Hope

What is hope?

If you don't have hope now, when did you last have it?

What would you do differently if you had hope?

What do you hope for?

What do you hope for other members of the group today?

Recovery Journey: **Empowerment**

Recovery journey so far:

Hope – safe place – sense of self – supportive relationships

### **Who's in charge of your Recovery?**

How much influence do you think each person/item has on your recovery?

	Score out of 10
Parents/Guardian	
Your illness/condition/reason you were brought onto the unit	
Your psychiatrist	
Your nursing team	
Your therapist	
Friends	
Nobody, this is just a weird freaky accident that I am powerless to stop without large amounts of chocolate	
Yourself	

Who would you like to develop a more supportive relationship with?

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What 3 things could you do differently this week to take more charge and improve your recovery?

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Don't keep trying to fit in: you were born to stand out

## Recovery: Supportive Relationships

People who will listen to me	
People who will stay with me	
People I can trust with my story, my life, my secrets	
People I can contact when I am very distressed	
People who share my distress	
People who make me laugh	
People who validate my distress	
People who can help me clarify the options so that I can choose what to do	
People who will give me access to the information that I need	
People who can give me practical support	
People whose judgement I can trust	
People who can point me in the direction I have chosen to go	
People who will allow me to make mistakes and to try again when things do not work out	
People who can give me professional advice but allow me to make the decision	
People who will leave me alone unless I ask for their support	
People who I can trust to say what I want to say	
People who can hold my hope	
People who can take over temporarily and then hand things back	
People who support me to regain control over my life	



**Change!** (scary stuff.....)

Grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it's me

If nothing ever changed, there'd be no butterflies

Your new name

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Your new hobby

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Your new catchphrase

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New favourite TV programme

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New favourite meal

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New favourite drink

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If you had a tattoo quote, what would it say?

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3 new friends & why you like them:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

If you could change one negative habit what would it be?

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# Thinking about the future

## **Chapter Two – Leaving Ticehurst**

**Characters:**

**Setting:**

**Plot:**

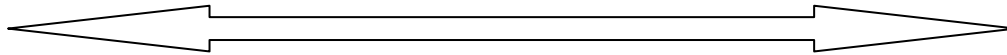
- Past & Future Chairs

**Where the heck am I going and what do I need to do to get things done and when will things be different and how will I know when things are different and why doesn't recovery happen instantly and why am I reading this ridiculously long title for a worksheet?**

*Very Unwell*

*Recovered*

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10



Angry      Annoyed      Worried      Sad      Calm      Hopeful      Happy      Ecstatic

List 5 things that move your mood up

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5

How will you know when you are recovered? – What will you do differently to now?

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# Session Wrap-up

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- Focus on feeling “in control”
- Kept in Recovery Folder

# Homework

- Week \_\_\_\_\_
- *Problem is in control of me* *I am in control of problem*
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

○ Circle your current status on the scale above

○ Where did you move on the scale from last week? \_\_\_\_\_

○ How did you manage to do so?

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○ If you stayed at the same level as last week, list how you were able to stay stable

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○ If you moved down, how have you previously moved forward? What have you done in the past that was successful in a similar situation?

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○ What have others noticed about you this past week?

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# What's not worked

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- Pairing exercises involving ASD
- Use of the word "homework"
- Sugar!



# Positive outcomes

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- Good group dynamic – exponential increase on therapy effectiveness
- Initial reluctance to see positive quickly shaped by group dynamic
- Group adopts solution talk
- Good retention of coping strategies
- Lack of problem talk helps mood
- Very low drop-out rate