Solution Focused Creativity in Social Work

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A Project in Creative Studies

by

Emilie Kenneally

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

December 2017
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Date of Approval:

12 Dec 2017

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Abstract

Solution Focused Brief Therapy is a well-known method of therapy used by many clinicians and social workers. There are similarities between this therapy and the creative problem solving process. Creating a workbook that adapts creative problem solving tools to include solution focused language and concepts can make social workers' jobs easier and also help them work more effectively. When social workers are able to do their jobs in a more creative way, they will have less stress and create better outcomes for their clients. Using a framework that already exists (i.e. Solution Focused Brief Therapy) and comparing it to creative problem solving also makes it easier to social workers to see how creativity could benefit them in their everyday practice.

Keywords: Social work, Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Creativity
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my project advisor, Mike Fox, my academic advisor Dr. Cyndi Burnett, and everyone that I have met throughout my journey in creativity. You have all opened my mind to infinite possibilities and I will be forever grateful.

I would like to thank my family for always supporting me and believing that I could do this, even when my belief in myself wavered. A special thanks to my mother for being my constant inspiration, especially as a social worker. You are amazing and everything that I hope to be one day.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my husband. John, you have kept me sane through this crazy journey and I would not have been able to do it without you. Thank you for being my everything (and then some). I love you timelessly!
# Table of Contents

Abstract.........................................................................................................................3

Acknowledgment...............................................................................................................5

Section One: Background to the Project...........................................................................7

Section Two: Comparing Solution Focused Brief Therapy and Creative Problem Solving.......10

Section Three: Process......................................................................................................14

Section Four: Outcomes.....................................................................................................17

Section Five: Key Learnings...............................................................................................20

Section Six: Conclusion.....................................................................................................23

References........................................................................................................................24

Appendices.........................................................................................................................26
Section One: Background to the Project

Purpose

The purpose of this master’s project is to impart the benefits of using creativity tools in social work practice to those working in the field. Creativity is such a useful skill in the workplace, especially in a job like social work where each day looks different than the last. Social workers are easily susceptible to burn out and deal with stressful situations and difficult clients on a daily basis. Social workers are also expected to think creatively on a daily basis while, in my experience, systemic creativity is frowned upon or thought to be unrealistic. This lack of administrative support for creative work can lead to a decrease in social workers’ morale, a more mundane work environment and relationship with clients, and a focus on performance-driven evaluation rather than on the distinct contributions that social workers can make (Lymerby, 2003). Social workers often have limited resources available to them and have to explore ways to work with unique, rapidly changing clients (Walz & Uematsu, 1997). In my current work as a foster care case worker I have experienced these issues firsthand and have seen how social workers struggle to cope. Creativity tools can help social workers work more efficiently while also helping clients engage in finding more effective solutions to the problems that they are facing. My purpose in this master’s project is to show other social workers that using creativity in everyday practice is not difficult and that it can be done without foregoing the mandates and laws that need to be followed.

Background

I decided to first start at the agency at which I currently work. At this agency, all of the staff that are hired (even staff in departments such as human resources) are required to take a training on using Solution Focused methods. Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) was
developed in the 1980s by social workers Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg (Franklin, 2015). De Shazer and Berg, who were married, also created the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee (Franklin, 2015). Lethem (2002) says that SFBT is interactional and can be used in a variety of settings. Specific language is used to help the clients explore their resources and past successes. The therapist helps the client to identify their goals, future hopes, and their own solutions to their problems (Franklin, 2015). After studying creativity, I saw so many similarities between what I had learned about creative problem solving and what I already knew about SFBT. My plan was to create my own versions of creativity tools that would incorporate solution focused language. I was hopeful that by sharing these tools with coworkers, I could convince them that creativity could be useful in their work while also helping them use solution focused language in a more natural way.

**Rationale**

My passion for developing this project comes from the work that I do on a daily basis. Working in foster care can be extremely stressful. Using creativity skills can make this type of work easier for social workers and save them from stress and burn out. If social workers use creativity skills and tools with clients, they will help create more successful outcomes for their clients. Many clients end up having multiple children enter foster care because they have not solved or alleviated the original issue that they were facing. Using creativity tools could help clients come up with more lasting solutions and avoid having multiple children enter foster care.

Another reason that I am so passionate about helping social workers and their clients is because of my personal background. My mother is a social worker who recruits and trains foster parents. She has also been a foster parent for most of my life (I have two biological siblings and five adopted siblings). Our family has become a network of children and families that we have
SOLUTION FOCUSED CREATIVITY IN SOCIAL WORK

helped in the past. I have seen how foster care looks and works from a family’s perspective, and it saddens me that social workers are sometimes unable to do the work they would like to do or the work that a family truly needs (for a variety of reasons).

I wanted to first understand why there is such a lack of emphasis on creative social work practice. Lymbery (2003) says that there has come to be a focus on competency in social work which reduces the complex nature of social work to simply following procedures. In reality, effective social work practice should lay on a continuum of competence and creativity, where a social worker’s response is determined by the level of predictability of the situation as well as by the complexity of the issue at hand (Lymbery, 2003). My goal is to show that social workers can be creative while also drawing on evidence based practice and following guidelines set forth by governments and agencies – that competency and creativity go hand-in-hand.
Section Two: Comparing Solution Focused Brief Therapy and Creative Problem Solving

The main part of my research involved my discovery of all of the ways that SFBT and creativity are already similar and how they can be intertwined. I knew some of the language used in SFBT but needed a more thorough understanding of how it should be used. I also reviewed some of the creativity tools and skills as well as information on facilitating creative problem solving. I incorporated some of my own understandings and knowledge in my comparison as well. My research eventually came to fit into three categories – how SFBT and creative problem solving have similar premises, how the role of the therapist in SFBT and the facilitator role in creative problem solving are similar, and how the two are similar as processes.

Many of the ideas that Solution Focused Brief Therapy is based on are similar to those behind the creative problem solving process. SFBT is a series of specific interventions that help clients explore their resources and their past successes (Franklin, 2015). During this therapy, the therapist uses specific language devices and questions to explore possible solutions to the issue affecting the client. The Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association (2013) states that SFBT is based on solution building and focusing on a positive future for the client. The therapist helps the client find exceptions to his or her problem and solutions that are within the client’s repertoire. There is a focus on small increments of change to build the client’s confidence before moving on to larger changes (Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association, 2013). This is similar to the goal of creative problem solving. Creative problem solving techniques are also based on exploring possible solutions for clients and helping clients build upon the skills and ideas that they already possess. One of the ideas acknowledged in SFBT is that however fixed a problem pattern seems, there are always times that the client is already solution building (Lethem, 2002). In creative
problem solving this is also true, as the focus of this process is on solving complex problems that may seem insurmountable. In SFBT, it is also important to empower the client and acknowledge that he or she is the expert on their life and their problems (Bannink, 2007). The client is more likely to change his or her behavior when the therapist guides him or her to see things in a different way. There is an emphasis on the strengths, resources, and self-determination of the client (Franklin, 2015). SFBT operates on the belief that clients know what is best for them and what is needed to get there (Trepper, Dolan, McCollum, & Nelson, 2006). The client is respected in creative problem solving as well. The facilitator helps guide the client to their own solution and builds upon the strengths and resources that the client already has. In SFBT, as in creative problem solving, the goals are client-directed and emphasize a desired future state (Whitehill Bolton, Lehmann, Jordan, Frank, & Moore, 2016).

The second way that SFBT and creative problem solving are similar are in the way that the therapist and facilitator interact with their clients. In SFBT, the therapist coaches the client to explore his or her own way of handling problems and using his or her existing competence to the greatest extent possible (Bannink, 2007). The therapist maintains a positive, respectful attitude and validates the client’s successes (Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association, 2013). During the creative problem solving process, the facilitator does the same. The facilitator helps clients use their strengths to find solutions and also helps the client achieve success. The SFBT therapist avoids giving advice and helps the client seek new solutions that have not been attempted before (Beyebach, 2009). The creative problem solving facilitator also implores clients to seek novelty and focuses on the process rather than content.

The last area of similarity surrounds the processes of SFBT and creative problem solving. Both processes can be used with a single client or with a group. Many times in SFBT the client’s
family and friends are used as a resource group and support just as the client brings a resource group to a creative problem solving session (Beyebach, 2009). The broad focus in SFBT is on co-construction, meaning that the therapist and client collaborate to produce new information which translates to meanings and social interactions for the client (Franklin, Zhang, Froerer, & Johnson, 2016). The creative problem solving facilitator also helps clients obtain new information that can then translate into solutions. Banks (2017) states that during a SFBT session the explanations of the problem should be productive and that the problem should be reframed so that it “becomes a friend.” In creative problem solving there is also a focus on productivity rather than the negativity that may be associated with the current problem.

The Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association (2013) describes eight steps that should take place in a SFBT session. First the therapist discusses with the client what the problem at hand is. If they have already had a session with the client, the therapist then asks the client what changes have happened since the last session. The therapist then helps the client come up with solution-focused goals. The therapist asks the client the “miracle question” which involves the client describing what their life would look like if their problem was miraculously solved the following day. The therapist can then ask scaling questions so that the client can rate where they currently stand in relation to a solution and would help them move up to a higher level on the scale. The therapist and client co-construct solutions and discuss exceptions to the problem. The therapist asks the client questions about how the client has coped thus far. The therapist and client then take a break so that the therapist can meet with colleagues to discuss progress. When the session reconvenes the therapist and client agree upon some homework assignments and/or experiments for the client to try out before the next session (Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association, 2013). This is similar to the form that a creative problem solving session may take.
SOLUTION FOCUSED CREATIVITY IN SOCIAL WORK

Just as the therapist initially checks in with the client, a facilitator has a pre-session meeting with the client to discuss the problem at hand. The facilitator also assists the client and resource group in clarifying the problem, just as the therapist asks his or her client different questions to get a full picture of the client's issue. The facilitator leads the client and resource group through exercises to help brainstorm solutions and develop them further, just as the therapist helps the client think about solutions and exceptions to the problem. The final step is similar in both processes too, as the clients create some action steps or agree on homework to try in order to make their solutions a reality.
Section Three: Process

My process plan involved multiple steps in order to create my versions of creativity tools and finalize my project. My plan involved the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step Number</th>
<th>What I Will Do</th>
<th>When I Will Do It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>→ Research SFBT and gain a better understanding of techniques and language used.</td>
<td>August-September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Decide which tools I would like to recreate to incorporate solution focused language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Begin working on my concept paper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>→ Finish my concept paper.</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Create POINt worksheets and surveys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Continue to do research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>→ Give the trainings on POINt during a staff meeting.</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Have my coworkers complete surveys after the training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Create other tool worksheets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>→ Begin writing my draft of my master's project.</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Meet with my advisor to go over draft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Finalize my project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating a process plan and following it was actually quite difficult for me. I tend to act first without creating a plan and then make changes as I go along. The longest part of my plan involved my research. It also took me more time than I had initially thought to create my tool worksheets. I was glad that creating a process plan had been part of my project as it did help to keep me on task with what I needed to be completing.

My starting point was researching SFBT and reviewing my knowledge of CPS tools and methods. I also began brainstorming which tool I would use as my first tool worksheet. I decided on POINt because I could already see how it could be applicable in many different aspects of the work that my coworkers and I do. I also began working on my concept paper to help flesh out my ideas and my plan.

After finishing my concept paper, I then began working on the tool worksheets for POINt and surveys for my coworkers to take after my training. Creating the POINt worksheets was an interesting process. I had to work on sharing the essence of the tool with people while also incorporating solution focused language and questions that would be appropriate and useful. Working on this enhanced my understanding of how similar SFBT and CPS can be and validated my belief that they could be used together.

I then gave my training during a staff meeting. I had met with my supervisor earlier to discuss the training and explain what my goal was. My supervisor was intrigued and very supportive of my ideas. During our October staff meeting I gave a ten minute training to my coworkers in the Foster Care Department. I gave them a quick overview of my master’s project and why I believe that creativity can be useful in our work. I then went over the tool with them. After the training I asked them to fill out short, anonymous surveys giving their thoughts on the training, the tool, and incorporating creativity into social work practice.
I then began creating tool worksheets for Targeting that would incorporate solution-focused values and language. It was easier to create these worksheets because I had my first experience with my POINT sheets to draw on. It was also helpful to have feedback from my coworkers’ surveys to guide me in making the other tool sheets. After I had created sheets for Targeting, I began writing my drafts and final project. While writing my draft of my project and speaking with my project advisor, I realized that I needed more than just tool worksheets. I ended up creating a short workbook that I could eventually use to give trainings on creativity to fellow social workers.
Section Four: Outcomes

The first outcome of my project was the workbook that I produced. I began with the tool POINt and incorporated solution focused language. I also created guidelines that could be used during a short (around ten minute) training session with coworkers to introduce the tool to them and give them a basic understanding of how the tool works. I then created these same types of worksheets for other creative problem solving tools (Appendix A). On the worksheets I specifically marked where solution focused language could be used. I hope that one day I can eventually print a version of my workbook and give trainings to social workers at my own agency and other organizations. I was surprised at how natural it felt to be creating something like this, as I have never thought of myself as someone who would create workshops and train others. Seeing how this workbook turned out made me realize that creativity can easily be applied to the field of social work and that I have the tools at my disposal to make that happen.

My second outcome was the training session that I gave to my coworkers, supervisor and the director of foster care at our agency. At a staff meeting I was given around ten minutes to speak to everyone. I decided to use POINt during my training as that was the first tool that I created worksheets for. I began the session by explaining why I was doing this work – namely that I feel creativity can help us be more successful social workers and can also help us use solution focused language more naturally. I then showed the group what the POINt tool looks like and explained how to use it. I gave them examples of times that would be appropriate for using the tool. I also showed them where solution focused language could be incorporated while using the tool.

The last outcome was the results of surveying coworkers after the training session. I wanted to see if this type of session actually made a difference in the way my coworkers viewed
creativity. I also wanted to see if my coworkers found the tool usable and could picture themselves using the tool in their daily practice. I created short surveys that I asked coworkers to complete after I gave them a short training on the POINt tool (Appendix B). There were a total of ten surveys completed. The surveys used a rating scale of 1 to 5 with one meaning “not true” and five meaning “very true.” I have created a chart of the survey responses below.

The responses to these surveys clearly shows that my coworkers saw the value in using creativity tools after participating in my training session. It shows that my coworkers would also be open to learning more tools and using them in their work.

On the surveys there was also space for additional comments. One coworker wrote “This would be a great tool to use when cases get complicated.” Another said that the information was “very useful.” A third coworker said “This tool ties into strategies we already use in the work place, which makes it much easier to implement.” These comments show that the information resonated with those that participated in the training session. The training made it easy for my
coworkers to see the connection between the work that we already do and creative problem solving. I was happy to see that I had accomplished part of what I had set out to do. A true accomplishment would be seeing a coworker actually use the tool in their practice, which has not happened yet to my knowledge. This is something to look into for future learning. I can reevaluate the method of training to see if there would be a way to make it more effective so that those that participate feel comfortable putting the tools into practice.
Section Five: Key Learnings

My key learnings from this project fall under three main categories – things that I learned about SFBT and how to better do my job, things that I learned about teaching people what creativity is and what its benefits are, and what I learned about myself and my journey throughout my studies in creativity.

While doing my research I learned so much about Solution Focused Brief Therapy. At the job I currently hold, we complete a short training about how to be solution focused, but it is not an in depth training. While I am not a mental health clinician or a therapist (and therefore cannot practice the therapy part of the process), I did learn about how to better incorporate solution focused language and ideas into the work that I do on a daily basis. I learned what the Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association recommends as best practice and more about how to be solution focused with an individual client and with a group. I feel that this research better prepared me to do the work that I have been doing and gave me a new passion for being solution focused whenever I can. This knowledge will hopefully translate into better outcomes for my clients and their families.

I also learned concrete ways to show people what creative problem solving is all about and how it can benefit them. This is the part of the project that I initially struggled with the most. I feel that throughout my time studying creativity, I have met with skepticism about how it will be applicable in my field of social work. Many people think that creativity has no place in social work or are so set on doing things a certain way because that is the way that laws and mandates say things should be done. I was worried about how I would show my coworkers (and eventually other social workers in my agency and the field at large) that creativity is beneficial to us and our clients and that it will not take away from our competency and following the rules that are set
SOLUTION FOCUSED CREATIVITY IN SOCIAL WORK

forth for our work. My project advisor was helpful in suggesting that the trainings I develop be limited to around ten minutes so that my coworkers would not be bored or overwhelmed. I decided that if I was able to link creative problem solving to something that my coworkers were already familiar with (SFBT), I was more likely to keep their attention and prove the value of creative problem solving to them. This approach ended up being successful. My coworkers were able to describe instances where they could see the POINt tool being used in our practice and liked the idea of using creative problem solving tools to incorporate more solution focused language into daily practice. I now feel much more confident in describing creativity to other social workers and helping them see that it could realistically be incorporated into their work.

The last area of learning that I experience had to do with my own journey throughout the Creative Studies program. My dream since starting this program has been to run a social service organization or agency and infuse creativity throughout the organization. While working on this project, I realized that it might take more than my degree in creativity for people to take me seriously when I say that I want to bring creativity to social services. It brought me to realize that I would like to continue my education and obtain a Masters in Public Administration. I feel that this degree, in combination with my creativity training, will help me accomplish all of the things that I would like to do in my career.

I also discovered where my passion within creativity lies. I have come to believe that overall, creativity can make people better people. I have focused my learning on creativity through a social justice lens and researched how creativity can help create better outcomes for those that are less fortunate and vulnerable. Creativity has changed my life and I want to use it to change the lives of others. I also want to empower people to use creativity to change their own lives, so that hopefully one day they are solving problems on their own without the assistance of
social workers. I believe that creativity can do huge things – like keep a family intact or help a child return to their parents faster. I want to act on this belief and make those things happen throughout my career.
Section Six: Conclusion

There are strong similarities between the process of creative problem solving and Solution Focused Brief Therapy. Using these similarities has helped me explain to social workers what the benefits of creativity are in social work practice. I learned how to teach people about creativity and how to describe to them what my vision is for using creativity in social work practice. This project stretched my learning and pushed my boundaries. I created my own workbook of tools that combine creative problem solving with SFBT language, which is something that I never thought I would accomplish (or at least not at this point in my life). Using these tools can help social workers do their jobs in a more effective manner, which is something that I am extremely passionate about. I hope that with this project and the things that I have learned I will be able to one day bring creativity skills to more social workers and the social service system as a whole.
SOLUTION FOCUSED CREATIVITY IN SOCIAL WORK

References


Appendix A: Work Book

Solution Focused Creativity

Workbook for Creative Social Work Practice

Emilie Kenneally
What is creativity?

→ Creativity is defined as ideas or products that are both novel and useful.

→ Historically there have been two different views of creativity.
  ○ Some people see creativity as a myth – something that is magical and mysterious or related to madness.
  ○ Others take a productive view of creativity as something that is understandable, natural, and healthy.

→ There are two types of creativity that are usually discussed.
  ○ “Little c” creativity (everyday creativity)
  ○ “Big C” creativity (seminal work, people considered geniuses)

→ The elements that affect creativity are sometimes described as the “Four P’s of Creativity.”
  ○ Person – This includes a person’s skills, knowledge, experiences, and motivation.
  ○ Process – The process includes the stages that a person or group go through while developing creative ideas or products.
  ○ Product – The product is the outcome of the process (theories, ideas, services, inventions, etc.).
  ○ Press – This refers to the environment in which the process takes place.

→ Two kinds of thinking take place during creative problem solving.
  ○ Divergent thinking refers to the broad search for many diverse and novel alternatives. Guidelines for divergent thinking include:
    ▪ Suspend judgment.
    ▪ Strive for quantity.
    ▪ Seek novelty and unusual ideas.
    ▪ Build on other ideas.
  ○ Convergent thinking refers to a focused and affirmative evaluation of novel alternatives. Guidelines for convergent thinking include:
    ▪ Use affirmative judgment.
    ▪ Consider novelty.
    ▪ Be deliberate and stay on course.
    ▪ Work to improve ideas.

Adapted from the International Center for Studies in Creativity and Puccio, Mance, Ranheim Switajski, & Reali (2012).
Why should it matter to me?

→ Those that work in human services or social services usually face:
  ○ Limited resources
  ○ High stress levels leading to burn out
  ○ Complex and difficult clients
  ○ Strict mandates or regulations to follow
  ○ Large case loads

Creativity can help overcome these challenges!
Adapted from Miller, Velch, Firesiden, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
POINT

WHEN TO USE:

- Service Plan Reviews
- Foster parent quarterly visits/recertification
- Supervision

*SF denotes Solution Focused questions/language*

1. Pluses
   → What do you like about your current state?
   → What is going well?
   → What goals have you met?
   → How did you manage to complete ____? SF
   → What would ____ notice about you now? SF
   → What have you noticed about yourself now that you have completed ____? SF

2. Opportunities
   → What opportunities might this open up?
   → What might be potential spin offs for future growth?
   → On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your progress? What would move you up to a ____? SF

3. Issues
   → Express concerns as open ended questions (ex: How might we work on increasing your attendance at visits?)
   → Have you been in this situation before? Who/what was helpful to you then? SF
   → Introduce possibilities (ex: When you complete a substance abuse assessment, not if you complete a substance abuse assessment) SF

4. New Thinking
   → Brainstorm ideas to overcome the issues noted.
   → Miracle question – suppose that one night while you were asleep, the problem that brought you here was solved. How would you know? What would be different? SF
   → Follow up to miracle question – how might we make that a reality? SF
   → Give suggestions with tentative language (ex: “Suppose...” or “I wonder if...”) SF

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Freistien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011)
TARGETING

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
TARGETING

When to use:

- Any time that you need to help clients realize/describe their goal or refocus.
- When clients need to formulate what is helping them reach their goal and keeping them from reaching their goal.

*SF denotes Solution Focused questions/language*

1. Describing the Goal/Idea State
   ➔ Ask the client to describe his/her ideal state.
   ➔ Miracle question – suppose that one night while you were asleep, the problem that brought you here was solved. How would you know? What would be different? SF
   ➔ Show client that this ideal state is in the bullseye space.

2. Describing the Current State
   ➔ Ask the client to make a mark showing where they believe they are on the target in relation to their goal or ideal state.
   ➔ How have you managed to get this far? SF
   ➔ Indirect compliment – use to acknowledge the client’s success thus far. SF

3. Identifying Pulls and Pushes
   ➔ Ask the client what forces (people, resources, systems, etc.) are pulling them closer to their ideal state (helping them) and pushing them away from their ideal state (keeping them from their goal).
   ➔ Exception questions – when is the problem not a problem? What helped you at that time? SF
   ➔ Scaling questions – On a scale from 1 to 10, how much progress toward your ideal state would you say you have made? What would bring your rating up to ___? What is keeping you at your current rating of ___? SF

4. Overcoming Pushes
   ➔ Help the client identify ways to overcome the forces that are pulling them away from their goal.
   ➔ Use tentative language – “Suppose…” “I wonder…” SF
   ➔ Reframing – give a positive connotation to suggestions or pushes. SF

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
Adapted from FourSight Tool Cards (2006).
CARD SORT

When to use:
- Any time that a client needs assistance in prioritizing their goals.
- Any time that a client cannot decide what needs to be done first.

*SF denotes Solution Focused questions/language*

1. Write each of the client's goals on a separate card (the example page uses six cards, but you can create as many as you need). Lay the cards out in front of the client.

2. Have the client pick the goal that they feel is the lowest priority and write a "6" in the corner (or whatever the last number is for the number of cards that you are using).

   → Use scaling questions - which of these goals is the lowest priority for you at this time? SF

3. Of the cards remaining, have the client choose the goal that they feel is the highest priority and write a "1" in the corner.

   → Again, scaling questions can be used - which of these goals would you rate as your highest priority right now? SF

4. Have the client look at the remaining goals and pick the goal that is the lowest priority. Write a "5" in the corner.

5. Out of the remaining cards, have the client pick the goal that is the highest priority and write a "2" in the corner.

6. Continue this process until all goal cards have a number on them. Put the cards in number order and discuss this ranking with the client. When possible, use the results of this tool to help the client create a plan of action.

Adapted from FourSight Tool Cards (2006).
ASSISTERS & RESISTERS

Adapted from FourSight Tool Cards (2006).
ASSISTERS & RESISTERS

When to use:
- Any time that it would be useful to explore the factors that can help a client reach his or her goals and hinder the client in reaching his or her goals.
- During intake when you are exploring the client’s resources and issues.

*SF denotes Solution Focused questions/language*

1. Begin by exploring the assistsers column. Look for all of the factors (people, places, resources, etc.) that could be used to help the client achieve his or her goals.
   → When has the problem not been a problem? What was different at those times? SF
   → You have managed to cope with so much already. How have you managed to do so? SF

2. Next, discuss the resisters column. Identify all of the factors that could keep the client from reaching his or her goals or things that could make it more difficult for the client to be successful.

3. Come up with some ways to overcome the challenges present in the resisters column. Discuss with the client how keeping these factors in mind can help him or her identify helpful people, places, and resources and avoid future resisters.

Adapted from FourSight Tool Cards (2006).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KIND OF GOALS</th>
<th>WHAT WILL YOU DO?</th>
<th>WHEN WILL YOU DO IT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHORT TERM GOALS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LONG TERM GOALS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from FourSight Tool Cards (2006).
ACTION STEPS

When to use:
- When your client is ready to take action and begin working towards their goals.
- When a client may need assistance in understanding what needs to be done in the short-term and what needs to be done in the long-term.

*SF denotes Solution Focused questions/language*

1. Discuss with the client which goals need to be accomplished sooner rather than later and which goals can be done in the future (you can also use Card Sort to help do this). Write these goals in the space under the corresponding time frame, either short-term or long-term.
   → Use the miracle question to understand what would need to change in the immediate future. (If you woke up tomorrow morning and the problem that brought you here was gone, what would be different?)  SF

2. Next to each goal, write what the client will do to accomplish this goal. Think of each step that needs to be done.
   → Introduce possibilities (when you reach this goal, not if you reach this goal).  SF
   → Give suggestions using tentative language (Suppose you tried...).  SF

3. Next to what the client will do, write down when they will have this done by. Discuss realistic time frames with the client.

4. After the client has completed the chart, ask what he or she can do in the next 24 hours to begin working towards his or her goal. Write this down under the chart. You can also have the client sign the paper as a way to show that this is a “contract” they are agreeing to work on. This will also help the client take ownership of his or her plan.

Adapted from FourSight Tool Cards (2006).
Appendix B

SURVEY

Date: 12/25

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1 2 3 4 5
Not True Somewhat True Very True

I found the material easy to understand. 4

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. 4

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 5

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 4

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 4

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestone, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date: 03/23/17

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1  2  3  4  5
Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

I found the material easy to understand.  5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material.  5

My questions were answered by the presenter.  4

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work.  5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients.  4

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work.  5

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work.  4

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SOLUTION FOCUSED CREATIVITY IN SOCIAL WORK

SURVEY

Date: 10/12/17

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1 2 3 4 5
Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

I found the material easy to understand. 5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. 5

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 5

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 5

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 5

Any additional comments or suggestions:
This would be a great tool to use when cases get complicated. Birth parents/foster parents would have a visual kind of like a "vision board" to take home!

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Venar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date 10/23/17

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1  2  3  4  5
Not True Somewhat True Very True

I found the material easy to understand. 5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. 5

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 5

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 4

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 6

Any additional comments or suggestions:
Presented material in an easy to understand explanation.
Very useful

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Fristen, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date 11/23/17

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Not True | Somewhat True | Very True |

I found the material easy to understand. 5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. 5

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 4

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 4

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 4

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 5

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date 10/23/17

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1 2 3 4 5
Not True Somewhat True Very True

I found the material easy to understand. 5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. 5

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 6

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 5

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 5

Any additional comments or suggestions:

This tool ties into strategies we already use in the workplace, which makes it much easier to implement.

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date: 12/31/2017

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1  2  3  4  5
Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

I found the material easy to understand. 5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. 4

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 5

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 5

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 5

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date 11/23

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1 2 3 4 5
Not True Somewhat True Very True

I found the material easy to understand. 5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. 4

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 3

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 4

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 5

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Veher, Fresilien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date: 10/23/17

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1 2 3 4 5
Not True Somewhat True Very True

I found the material easy to understand. 5

The presenter clearly explained the tool/material. 5

My questions were answered by the presenter. N/A

I can see how this tool could be useful in my work. 5

I can see myself using this tool/material with clients. 4

I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 5

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 5

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).
SURVEY

Date 10/23/17

Please rate the following statements using this scale:

1  2  3  4  5
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I would feel comfortable using this tool in my work. 5

I would like to learn more tools like this to use in my work. 5

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your help!

Adapted from Miller, Vehar, Firestien, Thurber, & Nielsen (2011).