SOLUTION FOCUSED COUNSELING

Premises

a) It is easier to build on strengths and past successes than to try to correct past failures or mistakes.
b) If we listen closely to a person they will tell us how to cooperate with them.
c) Preconceptions about a person can hamper the counselor and prevent a more flexible approach.
d) Insight or awareness is not always necessary for change to occur; insight may occur before or after a change in behavior.
e) Symptoms are not necessarily the expression of underlying past traumas, problems, or character weaknesses.
f) All parts of a system are interrelated and interconnected.
g) It is difficult to know if there are clear causes and effects in human relationships.
h) Change is constant and inevitable.
i) Small changes lead to bigger changes.
j) Make no attempt to fix what is already working in a person’s life.
k) Complicated problems do not necessarily call for complicated answers.
l) Every problem has a pattern, and every problem includes an exception to its own rule.
m) Thinking, feeling, and behaving differently are part of the process of change; relationships change as individuals change.
n) Patterns of problems and solutions occur in time and space; making a change in these dimensions frequently prompts a solution to a problem.

Basic Principle:

Clients (the family, the couple) are in charge.

Techniques:

1) Looking for Strengths: The Search for Exceptions
Spontaneous Exceptions Deliberate Exceptions

Clue words: every now and then / gradually / most of the time / once in a while / many times / periodically / rarely / likely / sometime / often / seldom / infrequently / frequently / usually / occasionally / almost never or almost always / hardly / probably

2) Scaling Questions
“On a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 represents _________ and 10 being _________, where would you say you are today? What helped you get to a _________? What will you need to do in order to maintain this present level? What would you take as a sign that your rating had moved from a ___ to a ___? What would you be doing then?
3) **Miracle Q’s** – “Suppose that one night while you were asleep, there was a miracle and this problem was solved. How would you know? What would be different? What would be the very first sign that the miracle had happened? What will you notice different about yourself or how will you know it had happened? What will you be able to do after the miracle happens that you could not do before?”

4) **Discovering Person’s, Family’s, or Couple’s resourcefulness Q’s** – “Has there been anything that you have done in the past that worked with some other problem that we may want to use now? Has there been something that you thought about trying but for whatever reason, you didn’t think it would work?”

5) **Client(s)-Counselor Relationship Q’s** – “How can I be helpful to you? What might my role be as a helper during our time together? How can I be doing to best help you in our work together?”

6) **Consolidating Q’s** – “What would you have to do to go backwards? forwards? What would you have to do to prevent a major backslide? What will you have to continue to do to get that (exception behavior) to happen more often?”

7) **Coping Q’s** – “How come things are not worse? What are you (or other family members) doing to keep it from getting worse?”

8) **Relationship Q’s** – “What will close others (other family members, your partner) in your life say about your potential to change? What would ________ say about you if he/she wasn’t told about *the miracle* that happened in your life? Who would be least surprised about the occurrence of *the miracle* in your life?”

9) **Pre-service (treatment) Q’s** – “What have you done since you called for the appointment that has made a difference in how the problem is affecting your life?”

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