SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Head Teacher Support

Formulation of Weekly "Support Pods"

Principles and Practice Paper

September 2020

It is acknowledged that the job of a Head Teacher is a challenging one and that the post-COVID world we are working in has increased demands further on individuals. There is no doubt that the last few years have seen both an increase of demands alongside a decrease of resources. Added to this the changing expectations of society and the myriad of educational policy changes and you achieve a perfect storm where professionals can feel isolated, out their depth or lacking in the resources and time to tackle issues head on. Head Teachers are not routinely given unallocated time to explore issues with each other and business meetings are often more like information-giving sessions. This initiative is designed to address this need which is crucially important given the new normal in which we are all operating.

Key Concept - Head Teacher 'Support Pods'

It is proposed that each Learning Community is helped to set up a weekly Head Teacher support group, led by CQIS, facilitated by the Lead Officer for the Learning Community and initially assisted (for a period of 4 weeks) by a designated Educational Psychologist. This is part of our commitment to providing pastoral care.

These support groups will operate under the Council values of; –

- focused on people and their needs
- working with and respecting others
- excellent employer

and will be rooted firmly in the Education Resources *Attachment Strategy Pledge* which is as follows;

- see the 'whole person'
- recognise behaviour as communication
- respond with compassion
- act to make a difference
- believe in change

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Key purposes

- To assist reflective practice, provide support and challenge amongst peer groups of Head Teachers.
- To provide a confidential and reflective space for Head Teachers to consider their work and their responses to it.
- To ring-fence a safe and confidential space for the discussion of all aspects of the job of a Head Teacher including explaining feelings, difficulties with relationships and resolving conflicts.
- To provide a vehicle to support connectivity between schools and the centre to help inform organisational thinking
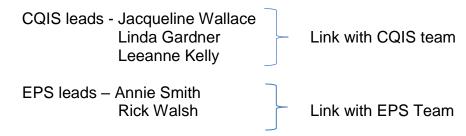
  Confidentiality will be assumed as a core principle and details negotiated with each group.

What the proposal is not
- a forum for exchanging information from the centre to Head Teachers (or vice versa)
- part of the work of the CQIS monitoring of schools
- a platform to solve individual school issues relating to children or staffing that would be better addressed through already established channels.

Roles and responsibilities

Project overseen by Carole McKenzie/Sam March.

> CQIS leads - Jacqueline Wallace
>   Linda Gardner   Link with CQIS team
>   Leeanne Kelly

> EPS leads – Annie Smith
>   Rick Walsh   Link with EPS Team

Each learning community will have Lead Officers and Education Psychologists to support/facilitate. May want to appoint a 'lead' Head Teacher for communication purposes.

Practical arrangements

- Lead Officers will attend training managed by EPS
- EPS will support LO for a 4-week period by attending meetings and then be on hand in an advisory capacity
- Groups meet 1 x weekly – suggested duration one hour
- Headteachers can opt-into these meetings…they are not compulsory, but attendance is encouraged
- During current restrictions to COVID-19 meetings should be held over Microsoft Teams.
- HT's are encouraged to make use of technology to work from home during this time slot if this can be practically managed

APPENDIX 1-HT Support Pod Principles & Practice Paper

- These pods will run initially for a period of 6 weeks Oct-Nov 2020 and then evaluated.

Structure of sessions

Each pod will be encouraged by the L.O./E.P.S. to adapt a similar structure
to the session based on the principles and practices of solution-focussed working.

However, each 'support pod' will establish its own unique protocols, rules of engagement and
boundaries which are to be agreed at the outset. These will reflect local contexts.

A typical session may look like…….

- Welcome and check-in
- Set agenda
- Discussion of current issues and concerns
- Peer support, problem-solving and challenging
- Review and close

Further materials to support the work of the pods can be found in attached appendices.

Recording/Reporting

There is no requirement to keep a formal minute of meetings. However, each Lead Officer should record attendance and keep a brief note of general issues discussed These notes should not identify individual schools, children or staff.

These notes will be sent to Jacqueline Wallace, Quality Improvement Manager and collated. Any issues of that may require follow-up action will be considered by the CQIS and Education Management Team (EMT).

Measuring Success

We will use a variety of concrete and softer measures to evaluate the project. These will include -

- A survey of Head Teacher's wellbeing (baseline and at identified points)
- Feedback from Head Teachers
- Feedback from L.O./E.P.S.

Head Teacher Support

Weekly "Support Pods"

APPENDIX 1-HT Support Pod Principles & Practice Paper

List of appendices

1. Timeline

2. Link Educational Psychologists for Learning Communities

3. HT Pod Meeting Record

4. Solution-focused coaching

5. Ethos, Philosophy, Assumptions and General Structure for SF Coaching Conversations

6. A Suggested Solution Focused Structure for Telephone/Helpline Calls

7. to 15. Coaching Hints and practical suggestions

Appendix 1

South **L**anarkshire **C**ouncil
Supporting **L**earning **C**ommunities #itsSLC
Headteacher Support Pods Plan/Revised Timeline

WB 7th September	• Planning meeting #3 Mon 24th August • Confirmed and finalised approach for launch to schools (summary of HT support offer and guidance)
WB 14th September	• Communication to QLO Team including: - Principles and practice paper - New timeline for roll-out - List of link Ed Psych (with work pattern) - Reporting sheet drafted for QLOs -Agreement details on coaching briefing -Dates for QLO Training Wed 16th September • EMT agenda item for the HT Support Pods discussed at EMT
WB 21st September **to** **Friday 7th October**	• CMcK to email HT's in advance of the virtual LC Meetings • Launch to Head Teachers at virtual LC Meetings • QLO's make individual contact with Ed Psych's – agree date for first meeting to prep for session delivery. • HT support pod meeting times identified (1-hour sessions). The initial four delivered jointly with Ed Psych plus two follow-up sessions facilitated by the QLO. • QLO confirm meeting times and send meeting requests to HT's • New Wellbeing survey issued by Ed Psych as part of the suite of support for HT's
WB 19th October	• **HT Support Pods - Week 1**
WB 26th October	• **HT Support Pods – Week 2**

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WB 2nd November	• **HT Support Pods – Week 3**
WB 9th November	• **HT Support Pods- Week 4** • Discussion on progress at CQIS QLO meeting (Wed 11th Nov)
WB 16th November **to** **Friday 4th December**	• Final 2 weekly sessions facilitated and led by QLO. • SLC Pods Team hold review meeting to discuss progress. • Evaluations to be created by Ed Psych to gather feedback and impact.

Appendix 2

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Link EPs for school Clusters

CLUSTER	EP	WORK PATTERN
CALDERSIDE	Donna Carrigan/ Heather Kyle	Wed. to Fri. / Mon. to Thurs.
UDDINGSTON	Lynsey Bryan	Tues. to Thurs.
LARKHALL	Madeline Hillman	Full-time
HAMILTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL	Kelton Green	Full-time
HOLY CROSS	Carol Cairns	Full-time
ST JOHN OGILVIE	Paul McGill	Alt. Mon. and Tues. to Fri.
CATHKIN	Joanna Gray	Mon to Thurs and alt Fri.
STONELAW	Craig Thomson	Full-time
TRINITY HIGH	Elaine Robertson	Full-time
BIGGAR	Claire McCaughey	Full-time
LESMAHAGOW	Kristen Allan	Wed. to Fri.
LANARK	Mhari Greenwood / Annie Smith	Full-time / Mon., Tues., Thurs.
CARLUKE	Jim Malone	Full-time
ST ANDREW'S AND ST BRIDE'S	Kerrie Campbell	Tues, Wed., Fri. (8.45 till 2.45) Thurs. 8.45 till 4.45)
CALDERGLEN	Rick Walsh	Full-time
DUNCANRIGG	Marie Claire Allan	Full-time
STRATHHAVEN	Julie Kiddie	Tues. to Thurs. and alt Fri.

Appendix 3

HT Pod Meeting Record 2020-21	
QLO-	LC NAME -
ED PSYCH-	MEETING NUMBER-
DATE-	

Suggested Questions

What are your best hopes from this session?

What parts of your life have stayed okay even through such a bad period?

What have you been doing that has prevented it from being even worse?

What are the ways you have managed to cope with such difficulties during this time?

How have you managed to deal with such difficult situations before?

What do you think might be the first sign that you are getting back on track again?

Where, between 0 and 10, would you rate your confidence of getting back on track?

What has prevented you from giving up even though things have been so bad?

Brief outline of meeting

Action Points for QLO	Action Points for HTs

Date of next visit:

Appendix 4

Solution-focused coaching

Set within a relationship of trust and confidence and having a focus on solutions and personal growth, coaching enables improvements in performance to be generated internally.

Asking thought-provoking questions that lead towards positive outcomes, coaching and reflecting are mutually supportive processes: gaining a clearer picture, resolving an issue of concern, exploring new ideas, feeling supported and affirmed in their practice, learning from other people's experience.

Solution- focused coaching questions encourage the thinking of future success: *How will you recognise that is this happening? What are you doing differently that pleases you? What else? Who will notice that things are different and even better? What are you noticing? What else? What do these positive changes tell you about yourself?*

Effective coaching questions should lead the coachee to consider: *WHAT changes they want to make (personal goals and preferred future), HOW they can achieve the change (action plus resources), WHY they want the changes (benefits and motivation. The aim is to find solutions that are meaningful and positive to them. The questions, therefore, must focus on future solutions rather than past.*

In asking effective questions you orientate people's thing toward*: a solution – o, describing successful actions and attitudes, building positive expectations, opening up possibilities for change, focusing on resources to support change.*

Solution-focused coaching seeks to empower peoples to find their own solutions through exploring and then amplifying their own strengths and skills. It looks for examples of success, however slight, and encourages you to do more of what works. It is based on eight key principles:

1. *Moving towards a solution is far more useful than moving away from a problem.*
2. *People are experts in their own world.*
3. *People have preferred futures.*
4. *People have a wealth of strengths and resources. All problem patterns have exceptions (when it is better/more manageable, etc).*
5. *Small changes in the right direction often lead to bigger changes.*
6. *Find what works and do more of it.*
7. *If it is not working, stop doing it and do something differently.*

There are three specific solution-focused approaches:

1. *Exceptions* – are examples (however small) of the preferred future, or something close to the preferred future, already happening. Often provides impetus to the process of change, moves attention towards solutions. Example questions – "Tell me about the times when X happens less?", "What do you suppose keeps you from doing X more often?"

2. *The Miracle Question* – encourages the description of the preferred future. Promotes curiosity. Example – "Imagine when you go to sleep tonight a miracle happens and the difficulties you have been talking about disappear………what would be the first signs that the miracle had happened?"

3. *Scaling* – a very versatile toll and can be applied to many contexts, e.g. confidence, optimism, motivation, commitment, hope etc. It involves asking a deceptively simple question: "Imagine a scale running from 0-10 where 10 represents achieving your outcome or when you've reached your goal, and 0 is the opposite. Where are you right now?". Can ask, "what is working well for you?", "Who or what else is helpful or supportive?", "How did you manage that?", "What does that say about you?" etc. Returning to the initial scale, you can consider tiny steps of progress and acknowledge success.

Appendix 5

APPENDIX 1-HT Support Pod Principles & Practice Paper

Ethos, Philosophy, Assumptions and General Structure for SF Coaching
Conversations

From problem to solution

Building on these two simple ideas led to the development of an approach which
has transformed many long-held beliefs about the change process. Rather than
trying to understand and fix problems the Solution Focused (SF) approach works
by exploring, in detail, a client's preferred future for when their hopes from the
work have been achieved, and then identifying the possible resources and
strengths the client has for attaining that future. Thousands of successful cases,
including many which have involved clients hitherto seen as untreatable, have
confirmed the belief that everyone has the resources to move towards and even
to achieve their preferred futures.

The essence of SF Practice is

- to look for resources rather than deficits;

- to explore possible and preferred futures;

- to explore what is already contributing to those futures.

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The structure of sessions

First session

Opening: The SF worker chooses to assume that clients arrive ready to get down to business and have the resources to handle life and its difficulties. After dealing with whatever practical matters are necessary the worker might begin with an interest in the non-problematic side of the client's life. This indicates from the beginning an interest in the *person* of the client rather than just in the problem that the client brings.

Future focus Best hopes & preferred future: The first focus of the initial SF session is on what the client wants from the work, their 'best hopes'. Until this is established the worker can only be basing questions on what the worker believes to be right for the client. The SF approach discourages the worker from making any such assumptions. Having established what it is that the client wants, the SF worker will invite the client to picture in detail the difference that this will make to their daily living, their 'preferred future'.

Past and present focus: Instances & exceptions: The worker asks questions which allow clients to notice 'instances' of their preferred future already in place, anything that they are doing, or have done in the past, that fits with the achievement of their preferred future, indeed anything that they could usefully 'do more of'. This can include *exceptions* to the usual problem pattern: what the client is doing differently when the problem isn't happening; and *coping questions:* how the client manages to keep going in tough situations.

Highlighting progress: Towards the end of the initial session the SF worker will typically ask questions to establish the progress that the client has already made and what the next tiny signs of further progress might look like. Typically, 0 to 10 rating scales are employed for this purpose.

Closing: Shortly before the end of the meeting the worker might - but this is not essential - take a short 'break' to reflect on what the client has said that is useful. On returning the worker will offer a partial summary of the meeting highlighting whatever the client has said that could be associated with the client making further progress. On some occasions a suggestion might be offered to the client.

Second and subsequent sessions

Exploring change: Follow-up sessions start by exploring what clients have done since the previous meeting that is regarded as 'better', and more generally what clients have done that is useful to them. If the client feels there has been a lack of progress, the worker will want to explore how they have kept going through the tough times.

Next signs of progress: Towards the end of follow-up meetings the worker will ask questions which invite the client to specify what further tiny evidence of change might look like, and again scale questions are useful for this purpose.

Closing: All sessions will usually close in the same way as the first.

Meeting the person, not the problem

Sometimes clients spend so much time talking about themselves and the problems in their lives that they come to believe that they and the problem are one and the same. This of course is not the case. *The client is the client and the problem is the problem.* So it is always useful to remember that the client is more than the sum of the problems that he or she brings to the work. Taking account of this in a disciplined way in our work has the effect of creating more openness in change-focused conversations.

Developing solutions is always easier when the practitioner has the client working alongside. So it is important that they should have a *person* sitting in the room rather than just a *problem.* For the worker therefore it is a priority to meet with the person, not just with the problem, and to aim to build with the client a *context of competence.* Achieving this seems to be associated with the client feeling able to be an active participant in the change process.

One Possible Basic SF Structure

- Connecting with the person

- Problem free talk

- Listening to the problem

- 'Best hopes': Establishing what the client wants

- Preferred futures

- Scales

- Closing sessions

Appendix 6

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION RESOURCES

Psychological Services
Principal Psychologist Sam March

A Suggested Solution Focused Structure for Telephone/Helpline Calls

This document is intended to provide some guidance to aid experienced SF Practitioners' reflections on how best to plan and prepare for Solution Focused conversations via telephone or in a helpline environment. This structure is derived from and should be read in conjunction with, 'BRIEFER: a Solution Focused Practice manual. Evan George, Chris Iveson and Harvey Ratner. BRIEF 2020'

Openings - (Connecting with the person)
- Welcome
- Problem free talk:
    - Discovering areas of competence (resource focused talk)
    - Life before the problem
    - Best Hopes – what would it be helpful to discuss today?
    (this might signpost a simple resource response or might indicate a need for a more detailed Solution Focused response)

Listen to the Problem (The Present Focus)
- Acknowledge what they are going through
- Active Listening
- Listen with a 'constructive Ear' – listen for skills and resources
- Acknowledgement Statements
- Identify Resources in the client - Notice and Name
- Deal with:
    - "Don't Know's"
    - 'Unrealistic' Hopes – Be curious not challenging

Establish Preferred Future (Future Focus) –
- Best Hopes:
    - Establish what the client wants from the contact (NB: this can be done either at the beginning of the conversation or at this point of the process and can always be returned to as required)
- Preferred Future Questions

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- The 'Tomorrow Question' and other variants
- Shifting from the negative - "The Great Instead"
- Building detailed pictures – "What Else?"
- Other person perspective – "Who Else?"

What is Already Working?
- Instances of preferred future already happening
- Getting by, Coping and Survival
- Stopping things getting worse

Scaling
- Construct a scale
- Movement and change
- Resources
- What's Right
- First small signs of progress
- When the client says "0"
- Other Scales

Closing the Call/Session
- Validation and Acknowledgement
- Resources
- What's Right
- Reflective Feedback
- Making suggestions
- Noticing
- Follow-up Contact (If necessary)

Rick Walsh
Senior Educational Psychologist

Appendix 7

Eight questions

1. What are your best hopes from this session?

2. What parts of your life have stayed okay even through such a bad period?

3. What have you been doing that has prevented it from being even worse?

4. What are the ways you have managed to cope with such difficulties during this time?

5. How have you managed to deal with such difficult situations before?

6. What do you think might be the first sign that you are getting back on track again?

7. Where, between 0 and 10, would you rate your confidence of getting back on track?

8. What has prevented you from giving up even though things have been so bad?

Appendix 8

Assumptions

As SF Practice developed a number of assumptions became useful. These were not based on provable 'truths' but, nonetheless, proved useful ideas to hold about clients and the process of change if the work was to be brief. Underlying assumptions associated with SD Practice include:

1. All clients are motivated for *something* and it is the practitioner's job to discover their motivation. In the context of this assumption a client is defined by their presence: if the client is there, not walking away, not slamming the door then there must be a reason and by cooperating with that reason the worker will discover motivation.

2. Attempting to understand the cause of a problem is not a necessary or particularly useful step towards resolution. Indeed, sometimes, discussing the problem can be actively unhelpful to clients.

3. Successful work depends on knowing where the client wants to get to. Once this is established then the task of the work is to find the quickest way there.

4. However fixed the problem pattern may appear to be there are always times when the client is doing some of the solution. The most economical approach involves helping the client do more of 'what already works'.

5. Problems do not represent underlying pathology. They are just things that the client wants to do without. In most cases therefore it is the client who will be the best judge of when the problem is resolved.

6. Sometimes only the smallest of changes is necessary to set in motion a solution to the problem. It is not invariably necessary to see everyone involved in the problem, in fact, it is not always necessary to see the person who is said to have the problem.

7. It is the task of the worker to determine the client's unique way of co-operating with the work and thus to discover the best way to co-operate with the client's way of co-operating. The idea of 'resistance' is not a useful one, impeding the development of co-operation between the worker and the client.

8.

Appendix 9

How brief is brief?

SF Practice is an outcome oriented process. We want to know what the client wants from their work with us and we want to know how we will both know when we have achieved our common purpose. Throughout the work we are constantly monitoring how much progress we are making and how close we are to completion. We do not attempt to anticipate the number of sessions and instead treat each, including the first, as if it could be the last. Though we average only three or four sessions and rarely go beyond eight we have no concern about taking longer if necessary. As Bill O'Hanlon says, we expect the work to be brief and *how* brief is decided by our clients.

Who does it not work with?

Emphasising the power of words is not the same as saying that all problems can be talked out of existence. The limits of any change work may be reached when we move beyond talking about change and possible changes in relationships etc to the possible impact on the client's life of problems of abuse, racism, poverty, disability etc. Clearly there is a limit to what talking alone can achieve. However, we should not underestimate the possibilities for *empowerment* that such talking can engender. There are situations in all our lives that will remain 'givens', things that will never change, but how we respond to these circumstances may be open to many possibilities. There is evidence, for example, that social workers adopting the SF approach find that clients are able to take greater control in their lives (research by Peter Sundman in Finland).

The working relationship

It is not easy to find ways of talking with precision about the nature of the relationship between the client and the worker in any approach. In our work we have found that some ways of thinking about and talking to our clients work better than others. These are some of the ways we have found useful. Naturally the shape of the relationship will also be influenced by a range of other assumptions and beliefs operating not only at the level of the individual, for both the worker and the client, but also, for example, at the level of culture.

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1. The 'problem' is something that the client wishes to change. When clients talk about their problems the worker will seek to acknowledge that these are indeed areas of difficulty for the client and to validate their feelings. If however the worker assumes that there may be underlying meanings to problems then it becomes increasingly difficult to 'listen' to the client.

2. The worker using a SF approach will always work towards the client's hoped-for outcome provided it is ethical, legal and not impossible. In a statutory context these limitations will be more explicit, especially where safeguarding is part of the worker's task: parents might hope to bring up their children without interference but not at the expense of the children's physical and emotional well being.

3. Just as the worker will work towards the client's goal the worker will also trust the client to know when the work is done and whether or not it has been useful.

4. Clients already bring to the work the resources, skills and strengths which they need to resolve the problem. It may be that the client does not know this yet and the worker therefore will be asking herself how she might talk with the client so that the client notices.

5. The worker should attempt to have no view about what the client should/could do to resolve the problem which they bring. It is the job of the worker and the client together, through their talking, to formulate what will be this client's unique way of resolving this situation at this time, whilst allowing space to clarify what is right for the client in the specific context of their values, beliefs and culture.

6. Whatever the client does we assume to be their best way of being helpful to the change process. When the worker reads the client's response as indicative of 'resistance' this is a cue to the worker that they are not listening hard enough to the client and probably need to do something different. There are no 'wrong' answers in SF Practice whatever the client's answer may be.

7. The expertise of the worker lies in having access to ways of talking with and thinking about clients which are associated with the client finding ways of resolving the problem which has brought them to then work.

8. The significant voice in SF conversations is the voice of the client. The practitioner's job is to build questions from the client's answers, usually by literally using their last words, that will lead the client to further self-discovery. In this sense the client's relationship with themselves is more important than their relationship with their worker.

Extracted from BRIEFER: a Solution Focused Practice manual

Evan George, Chris Iveson and Harvey Ratner © BRIEF 2020

Appendix 10

General Principles of SF Working

Effective questioning is central to the solution-focused approach. As the aim of solution-focused approaches is to facilitate purposeful positive change, questions that are truly effective should have the effect of enhancing motivation, increasing positive affect and self-efficacy for change, as well as helping the client to move closer towards their goals or objectives (Grant, 2012, p. 23).

One of the basic assumption concerns the independence of cause and effect, suggesting that solutions are not necessarily linked to the problem (Wehr, 2010). Exploring or analysing the factors that cause or perpetuate a problem does not automatically result in an improvement or alleviation of the problem. Positing a diagnosis is usually considered unimportant in solution-focused interviewing (Bannink, 2006, p. 2).

Principles concerning solution-focused interviewing is referred by Bannink (2006):
• to reach a solution, it is not necessary to analyze problems, but it is necessary to analyze client solutions;
• the client is the expert;
• the professional is not judgmental of what the client experiences as positive (if it works, don't fix it);
• if something works (better), do more of it;
• look for differences that make a difference (describing exceptions to the rule of the problem, which the client often overlooks);
• if something does not work, do something else.
• Selekman (1993) formulated ten assumptions for solution-focused interviewing. The assumptions are pragmatic and provide the professional with a new lens through which to view the client. Bannink (2006, p. 6-12) has added few notes to the assumptions:

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- Resistance is not a useful concept, it implies that client does not want to change; it is better to approach the client from a position of cooperation than from a position of resistance, power, control.
- Cooperation is inevitable, the solution-focused practitioner must adapt to the client's manner of cooperating; together they dance a "solution-focused tango"–the client leads, and the professional follows.
- Change is inevitable, change is a continuous process; stability is an illusion; the question is not whether but when change will occur; also talking about successes in the past, present and future is helpful.
- Only a small change is needed, as soon as clients are encouraged to notice and value small changes, they begin to expect further changes and believe in the snowball effect.
- Most clients already possess the resources they need in order to change, solution focused-questions to invite clients to tell their success stories: *How did you do that? How did you decide to do that? How did you manage to do that?*
- Problems are unsuccessful attempts to resolve difficulties.
- One does not need to know much about the problem in order to solve it, rather it can be examined what the client is doing differently or what is different at those moments when the problem is absent or less of a problem.
- The client defines the goal of the treatment, the goal is to look together with the client for the realistic goal.
- Reality is defined by the observer, what you want to see is what you get; a solution-focused is a co-author who helps the client rewrite his/her story.
- There are many ways of looking at a situation, all equally correct, Emile Chartier, a French philosopher has said that nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it is the only one you have.

Solution-focused approach focuses not on understanding more and more about the problem as a path to change but rather focuses on understanding more and more about how things will be better once the problem is solved (Smock, McCollum, & Stevenson, 2010).

https://sites.google.com/site/solutionfocusedapproach/5-study-materials/5-principles

Appendix 11

The 'Best Hopes' Script(s)

"What are your best hopes from participation in this group?"

"Say coming here today was helpful to you in some way, what would it have been most helpful to talk about?"

"What difference will participation in this group make to you?"

"How will you know if participating in this group has been helpful to you/your team, the wider group?"

The 'True And Positive' Script

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"People think better throughout the meeting if the very first thing they do is to say something true and positive about their work or how the work of the group/team is going"

The 'Pleased To Notice' Script

"What have you been pleased to notice about how you have been going about your work since…?"

"What else have you been pleased to notice?"

"What have you been pleased to notice about how the work of your team/group has been going recently?"

"What else?"

Examples above taken from "Team Coaching: A Solution Focused Approach, Guy Shennan, BRIEF, 2009

Appendix 12
Solution Oriented Coaching Conversation: Guiding Questions
(from the Solution Oriented School Programme)

You may wish to conduct your conversation with the following coaching questions. You can let colleagues know that you'll be asking a set of structured questions if you like. These questions are also useful in different solution oriented situations.

1. Outline the issue as they are affecting you at the moment.

2. Has this happened in the past? If so, have you been able to resolve the same or a similar issue in the past? If so how did you do that? What/who helped?

3. What are you doing at the moment which prevents the situation from becoming any worse?

4. When are the times that things are slightly better (even in a little way)?

5. What 3 things can you think of doing differently maybe, which might help the issue?

Optional Questions

6. How can I best support you?

7. How will I know as a facilitator that the issue has been resolved?

8. Offer feedback as a summary

Appendix 13

Preparation for Solution Oriented Support Session
(adapted from the Solution Oriented School Programme)

Before the Solution Oriented Support Session you may find it helpful to consider the following questions to aid preparation.

A Solution Oriented Support Session could help me to address:

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From my own experience/reading and previous Solution Oriented conversations, I think it might help to focus on:

I believe the Solution Oriented Support group can help by:

I will know if the Solution Oriented Support Session has been helpful because:

Appendix 14

Solution Focused Scales

The scale framework is one of the most flexible of the various questioning frameworks that SF practice offers. It is able to encompass every aspect of the approach from the preferred future at 10, to every skill, resource, achievement and action that is keeping the client from 0. They can form a literal measure of progress from session to session and can therefore indicate how close to closure the work has reached. It is important to remember that the rating is the client's own. The scale does not constitute any sort of objective assessment of how things are going; however, in some situations it may be appropriate for professionals and others to indicate where *they* think things are on the scale.

Scales are generally used numerically, on a 0 to 10 basis. However, the tool can be made as client- friendly as possible. So with young children and adults with learning difficulties numbers can be replaced with ladders or pictures of faces or other diagrams. It is also

extremely helpful to draw (or have the client draw) the scale so that it becomes a visual record.

Constructing a scale

The scale can be framed as follows:

> *'Imagine a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 representing your best hopes are achieved and 0 being the absolute opposite'.*

(If you have used the Miracle Question, 10 could be 'the day after the miracle' and 0 could be the furthest the client has been from it).

Commonly, scales will be introduced after the client has described their preferred future in some detail, so that 10 represents a description of the life that the client wants to move towards. Solution Focused scales always lead to the presence of the desired future rather than the absence of an undesired problem, for example, a totally confident person; the day after the miracle; everything you have described is now happening; you and the school are happy with each other; you have exactly the relationship you are seeking, etc.

0 is usually left vague, like 'the worst you could imagine' or 'the opposite' or even 'when you made the appointment to come here'.

Movement and change

Asking the question:

> *"Where do you see things right now on the scale?"*

invites the client to notice that things are not at rock bottom and may now be better than they were before. (The most typical answer to this question in a first session is 3.) However, if the situation is very bad the client can also let you know. 0, although uncommon, usually lead to questions about the client's coping strategies, qualities of perseverance and determination and about the client's capacity to still get up in the morning despite the difficulties.

Resources

If the practitioner asks the client:

> *"What is it that has helped you to get from 0 to where you are now?"*

the client inevitably begins to identify resources. The proposition inherent in the question is that the client will have done something, which invites a sense of personal agency on the part of the client.

If the client's situation is the worst it has ever been and is deteriorating (e.g. towards suicide, exclusion from school etc) this can be acknowledged while still asking a resource-seeking question. Note: if suicide (for example) seems to be a real risk – perhaps assessed through a safety scale (as on the next page) - then the worker must of course take whatever steps are necessary to help ensure the client's safety.

> *"What is stopping things getting even worse - how are you managing to hold things where they are even though they are so difficult?"*

What's right

Once the client has identified where she is on the scale, assuming that her answer is not 0, then she can be invited to begin to identify what is right in her life:

> *"What is it that tells you that things are at that point on the scale and not at 0?"*

First small signs of progress

Clients can be invited to identify the first small signs of progress by being asked:

> *"What will tell you that you have moved one point up on the scale?"*

> *"How will you know things have moved forward one point?"*

> *"What will you be doing that will tell you/others that you have moved up?"*

Signs or steps

By asking what *signs* the client will notice when they have moved instead of what *steps* they need to take in order to move the worker remains neutral. As Harry Korman has indicated, it is actually none of our business whether the client decides to do anything at all. Instead, we invite them to consider , if they *did* do something, what would be criteria for progress being made. The decision to do something is up to them. We believe that clients will be more likely to take a step once they have thought about how it would be helpful to do that.

APPENDIX 1-HT Support Pod Principles & Practice Paper

It is not always necessary to ask clients about the next point up the scale if sufficient detail has already been obtained about the future they are seeking and what they are already doing that might help them achieve it.

There is always a temptation to turn scales into plans and targets. While there is no rule about this, it is likely to deter those clients who do not like plans and targets. Similarly, those clients who do prefer to chart out a way forward in concrete detail will be well able to convert the scale themselves. In this case the worker might want simply to see the next point up the scale as a collection of possible signs of movement rather than a firm plan of action. The simplest way to avoid pressurising clients into taking action is to ensure that the client is describing at least four things that they *have already* done to every one thing they *might* do!

When the client says '0'

Although this is a relatively rare answer, it is useful to have some ideas of how to respond to the client. The first priority is to ensure that we acknowledge that this means things are very tough for the client, before proceeding to questions such as:

> *"Given how tough things are, how are you coping?"*

> *"How do you keep going?"*

> *"What's stopping it getting even worse?"*

> *"How come it is not minus one?"*

> *"If you began to move a little towards 1 what might be the first small sign?"*

Other scales

Confidence scale

> *"On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing you having no confidence at all that you can reach your 'good enough' point and 10 representing you knowing, tough though it may be, that you definitely will, where do you see your confidence now? "*

Wish to change (motivation) scale

> *"On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing you not being at all bothered about the way things are and 10 representing you knowing that this is the most significant thing facing you at the moment that has got to change, where are you now?"*

Commitment scale:

"On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing you knowing that you would not be willing to do anything different to resolve this situation and 10 you knowing that you would do whatever it takes to sort this out, where do you see yourself right now?"

Coping scale:

"On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing that you can't cope another minute and 10 you knowing that you couldn't be handling it any better, where do you see yourself now?"

Safety scale:

"On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing you knowing that you cannot keep yourself (your child etc.) safe and 10 representing you knowing absolutely, although it might be difficult, that you can, where do you see things on that scale?"

Taken from BRIEFER: A Solution Focused Manual, $^{©}$ BRIEF 2020

Appendix 15

Happy Agreement for HT Pod Meetings:

- **H** – Honour the journey (be respectful of where people are – everyone is in the middle of their lives!)

- **A** – Arrive on time (If something is missing it is probably you! Be 100% present)

- **P** – Participate (the difference between watching and participating) Wait problem: Don't wait for the course to get good

- **P-** Privacy (Confidentiality, let create a safe space here, you not JUST here to look good!)

- **Y** – You. Be selfish, enjoy the journey!

Reality questions:
- Tell me about your situation

- Describe your current reality

- What's your current experience?

- What's happening right now?

- What are the facts in the situation?

- What are you feeling?

- What do you think is the real issue?

Option questions:
- What options do you have?
- How could you resolve this issue?
- If you could do anything without any constraints what would you do?
- If you were a free agent what would you do?

- If you were an expert at this what would you do?
- If you had no fear what would you do?
- What do you think your boss/colleague/partner thinks you should do?
- I know that you don't know the answer, but imagine if you did, what would you do?

Wrap-up suggestions:
- Implications – what could happen?
- Obstacles – what could stop you from following through?
- Action – what will you do?
  - when will you do it?
  - who is involved?

- Support – who can support you?
- Review – how was the session?
what have you achieved?
do you want anything to be
different?

Walking to success

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

S.I. Coaching Tools Success Walk-Thru: 1-10 Scale

The Success Walk-Thru is a powerful 'gap-analysis' exercise that helps your coachee to assess their current reality and also to rehearse future possibilities. It all begins with a very simple question: 'From 0-10 how successful do I feel?'

Props for this exercise are eleven pieces of A4 paper numbered '1', '2'. '3' to '10'. Place these ten numbered papers in a line, about six inches apart. Invite your coachee to stand before the first piece of paper ('1'), and then ask them to close their eyes, take a deep breath, and reflect for a moment on their life (or their work, or both). After a minute or so, you ask your coachee 'From 1-10 how successful do you feel?'

Your client will give you an answer e.g. '5' or '6.5' for instance. You then ask your client to stand on the paper marked '5' or between the papers marked '6' or '7'. Here is where you ask your coachee to tell you why they have chosen this number. Find out as much as possible, e.g. 'Is this a normal number for you?' and 'How long have you felt this way?' and even 'What is the lowest you have ever felt?' and 'What is the highest you have ever felt?'

Think of each number as a position in life, or, a point of view, or, a state of mind. No number is positive or negative. They are simply positions, or, experiences of life. Ask your coachee 'What is great about here?' and 'What is going well?' and 'What are you getting right?' and 'What are your successes here?' Some people score themselves low because they habitually look for what is missing instead of what is already here.

Next, you ask your coachee to move up the scale to a new number. This step could be half a number, one full number, or even a leap of two numbers. Once they have taken the step, invite them to close their eyes and imagine that they now feel they are feeling '7-out-of-10' successful. Give your client a few moments to really feel this. Encourage them to visualize, feel and rehearse this new possibility.

Next, ask them 'Does it feel possible to be here at 7-out-of-10?' for instance. This is important, because if your coachee does not feel this is possible, they will find it difficult to access the necessary wisdom, insight and inspiration needed to complete this exercise. So, if 7-out-of-10 feels impossible, move to 6.5, or 6.3, or 6. If, however, 7-out-of-10 feels possible, then you can proceed with the next step.

So, your coachee is standing on 7-out-of-10. In effect, you are asking them to imagine and rehearse a possible future state. Now you ask your coachee a series of questions that can be stated in either the present or past tense. For example, 'To get to 7-out-of-10, what is the one positive change you need to make?' Or, 'Standing at 7-out-of-10, what was the one positive change you made?' Effective coaching questions for this exercise include:

- What is (was) the positive change you made?
- How have you grown?
- What are you doing differently?
- What are you doing more of or less of?
- What were the obstacles you had to overcome?
- What help and support do you have?
- What are the benefits of being here?

The overall aim of this S.I. coaching exercise is to help your coachee make three positive steps and thereby to identify three positive changes, insights, inspiration, etc. for their journey.