



# **Solution-Focused Work with Families and Children**

**Kim Slocombe & Pat Pahl**



# Solution-Focused Philosophy

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- # People contain their own resources
    - They need help to access them.
  - # Thinking is in terms of “interrupting the problem.”
  - # The goal is to work **EFFICIENTLY** and **EFFECTIVELY** with clients.
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# Assumptions

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1. Focus on the positive, the solution, and the future facilitates change in the desired direction.
  2. Exceptions to every problem can be **created** and can be used to build solutions.
  3. Change is occurring all the time.
  4. Small change is generative.
  5. Clients are always cooperating.
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# Assumptions

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6. People are resourceful and have all they need to solve their problems.
  7. Meaning and experience are constructed through interactions.
  8. The work is goal- or solution-focused with the *client as expert*.
  9. A change in one part of the system effects change in other parts of the system.
  10. Language forms the basis of our experience.
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# Connecting

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- # Who is important to the client?
  - # What is important to the client?
  - # Use client's words
  - # Use words and phrases that *assume* change will happen
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# The Miracle Question

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- # Suppose that tonight after you go to sleep (pause)
  - # a miracle happens (pause)
  - # and the problems that we've been talking about are solved immediately (pause).
  - # But since you were sleeping at the time you cannot know that this miracle has happened (pause).
  - # Once you wake up tomorrow morning, how will you discover that a miracle has happened?
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# The Miracle Question

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- # Gives client permission to think about an unlimited range of possibilities
  - # Interrupts the problem
  - # Future-focused
  - # Shifts away from a focus on getting rid of the problem to one of creating a more satisfying life
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# Systemic Question

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Without you telling them . . .  
how will other people (use specific  
names) know that this miracle has  
happened?

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# Systemic Questions

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- # SFBT is based in systems theory
  - # Recognizes that problems impact many areas of life, therefore, solutions must also encompass those areas (e.g.: relationships, work, family)
  - # Goal is to begin building expectations for “real world” change
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# Exception-Finding Question

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When was the most recent time that things were sort of like this day after the miracle?

(or the most recent time when you had a piece of this miracle?)

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# Exception Questions

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- # Highlight past times in client's life when the problem might have been expected to occur, but somehow *did not!*
  - # Create hope that the problem can change
  - # Allow client to identify the resources they *already* possess to create that change
  - # Can create an expectation of future success
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# Scaling Questions

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On a scale of 0-10, if 0 is the worst day with this problem and 10 is the day after the miracle, where are you at now?

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# Scaling Questions

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- # Make complex experiences more concrete and accessible
  - # Place problems/solutions on a continuum rather than making them all-or-nothing
  - # Are content-free – can be used for anything
  - # Give us estimates of past and current experiences and help clients define future possibilities
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# Arriving at Well-Defined Goals

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- # What will you be doing *instead*?
  - # How will you be thinking differently?
  - # *How* will you be doing this?
  - # How *specifically* will you be doing this?
  - # What will *you* be doing when that happens?
  - # What will be a small sign that you have accomplished your goal?
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# Using Solutions

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As you leave here today, and you are on track, what will you be doing or saying differently to yourself?

- # Help your client commit to  
**DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT!**
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# Follow Up – “What’s Better?”

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- # Reflects our confidence that clients are competent to have taken steps – no matter how small – in the direction that they said they wanted
  - # Reinforces successes
  - # Opportunity to plan for “relapse”
  - # Rehearse new plans
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# Solution-Focused Goals Are...

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- # A **starting point** rather than an end point
  - # The **presence of something** rather than the absence of something
  - # In the “**here-and-now**” - relevant
  - # **Doable** - specific, small steps
  - # In the client’s **control** & in the client’s **own words**
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# The Desired Outcome Is...

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- # Clear expectations and roles.
  - # Efficient use of time – yours and client's.
  - # Creation of a shared understanding of what the goals are, how they can be achieved, and when we've reached them.
  - # Increased hope and motivation!
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# **Solution-Focused Work with Families and Children**

**Questions?**





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**Thank You!**

**Pat Pahl & Kim Slocombe**

