

Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Christopher Vazquez

COSC510: Liberty University

Theories of School Counseling

DR. Adrienne Parham

October 10, 2021

Introduction

Solution-focused brief therapy also known as SFBT is a method used in professional counseling. SFBT was created by Insoo Kim Berg, and her husband Steve de Shazer in the 1980s (Corey,2021). Many counselors use this theory because it applies to a wide range of people. The purpose of this paper is to express how solution-focused brief therapy helps people overcome their problems by focusing on their strengths and resiliencies (Corey,2021). This can be achieved through human nature, change, relationship building, and assessment.

Human Nature and Change

People have value in this world no matter who they are or where they come from. Life is never stagnant, it is always moving and changing. When it comes to change in the world there are two types of people, those who enjoy and embrace the change, and those who fear it. Solution-focused brief therapy shows us that all people matter and that those who fear change have the power to overcome it. This is shown through the power of positive thinking and goal setting. McMaster (2016) wrote an article about the power of positive thinking in people with multiple sclerosis. He stated that those who had a positive mindset, and an obtainable goal had less anxiety and stronger motivations to work on their physical therapy. SFBT helps people stay strong and gives them the tools to embrace the change around them.

Personal Background

Solution-focused brief therapy's idea of positive thinking has unknowingly influenced my life. I grew up in a stable home with parents and siblings who loved me. As a kid, my parents took me to church every Sunday. Their teachings along with what I learned in church, helped to shape my world viewed. My parents' parenting style was all about setting goals for myself and positive thinking. I experienced this early on in my life. When I was a young teenager my church

youth group allowed me to go to a third-world country. I was part of a team that went to an orphanage to teach children about God. When we arrived at the orphanage, we found out that the children had very little food to eat. They were eating rotted vegetables that had been given to them by a local food vendor. He could not sell the rotted fruit, so he gave it to the children. I was shaken to my core. Up until this point in my life, I had assumed that the rest of the world lived the same way that I did. I did not realize how blessed I truly am. After I returned home to America, I struggled with sadness for the people I had met. My eyes were opened to the truth about the rest of the world. I learned to overcome my sadness by using principles taught in SFBT. I started with positive thinking. I realized how blessed I am for being able to live in a truly free country and how I had plenty of food to eat. I was truly grateful for my life. Next, I started to make an obtainable goal. How could help those who were less fortunate than me? I began to donate money to programs that built wells of clean water for those in third-world countries. After college, I moved to Honduras and taught kids to learn English. My goal was to give them the skill to help them succeed in this world. I have since moved back to America, but my goals to always help people are still the same. I have had to use SFBT in a relationship. I recently broke up with a girl I had been dating for a while. I was once again moved by great sadness. I had to work on creating a positive solution to help me get through the struggle. I found all the positives in the ending of our relationship such as less stress, lower anxiety levels, and more sleep. I have created a list of things I do and don't want for my next relationship. SFBT has shown me that there is hope for me during this time of change in my life.

Relationship Building and Assessment

Building a respectable and positive relationship with a client is the key to therapeutic success. I have experienced this in my personal life. I have gone to a counselor for some help

on certain life issues and I observed the way I was treated. My counselor listened to what I had to say. He showed me great patience and respect, and never interrupted me. He waited until I was done and calm before asking me questions or giving me advice. I hope to do the same with my future clients. SFBT does this by encouraging counselors to use a technique called positive psychology (Corey, 2021). Corey (2021) talks about how a counselor needs to focus on the positive things that are working a client's life and ignore the negative things. The counselor does listen to the client's past, but he will push his clients to think about a more positive future. Turns (Turns et al., 2016) wrote an article about families and siblings with autism. She goes on to say that the techniques counselors use in SFBT to help connect with their clients can be used to help brothers and sisters connect with their autistic siblings. Having patience and showing respect goes a long way in building a therapeutic relationship with a client and others in your life. The counselor can help build a client's therapeutic progress by assessing a client's needs. Dollarhide and Truelove (2018) give examples of questions a counselor should ask that will help the client be more open in sharing his or her needs. One question they ask is known as the "miracle" question. "Suppose a miracle happened tonight while you were sleeping, and this problem vanished. How would you be able to tell the miracle happened as you were going through the next day?" (Dollarhide and Truelove, 2018). This question allows for the client to process his needs and provides him with insight on how to create a goal to meet that need. A counselor needs to be able to help a client set goals that provide wellness and prevention. Corey (2021) explains that to create a goal that provides wellness and keeps the client moving in the right direction, the goal needs to start small. By starting small the client can reach the goal and create another small obtainable goal. This pattern keeps the client on track and prevents him from falling back into old habits. SFBT does have limitations. Corey (2021) explains how young inexperienced

counselors tend to rely too heavily on techniques such as the “miracle question” and miss out on having a truly positive relationship with the client.

Ethical and Biblical Principles

I am a Christian who is studying to be a counselor. When people hear these two facts, they tend to be either confused or scared. They believe that being a Christian will make for an unethical counselor. This is not true. Evens (2021) talks about how just because a person may have a religious belief does not mean that they will be an unethical counselor. She goes on to say that Christians do have a set of beliefs that may govern their lives, but those beliefs do not govern the people they are trying to help (Evans et al., 2021). I have my theoretical orientations that blend well with my Christian values. I believe in the power of positive thinking and setting goals for oneself in life; however, I do believe in a power and strength outside of myself. Christians refer to it as the holy spirit. The Holy Spirit gives me the strength from outside of myself to carry me through my life’s struggles. I know this is not how others view strength in the world and I am ok with that. My beliefs are mine and mine alone. I hope that I will never impose my beliefs on someone else. My biblical principles may be used in both my private life and in how I counsel others. Luke 6:31 says “Do unto others as would like them to do to you. This is a biblical principle that even non-Christians can apply to their lives. Everyone wants to be love and respected regardless of religion. This is just one of the many ways I can integrate a biblical principle in counseling and still stay ethically above reproach.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as a future school counselor I believe that solution-focused brief therapy will be the theory that I integrate into my counseling approach. I have seen it played out in my own life. I have overcome problems in my life by focusing on my strengths and being resilient. I

have achieved this by working through change, relationship building, and personal assessment.

Based on my research I concluded that solution-focused brief therapy has been beneficial in my life and will be for my future clients.

Reference:

- Corey, G. (2021). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy*. Cengage.
- Dollarhide, C. T., & Lemberger-Truelove, M. E. (2018). *Theories of school counseling for the 21st Century*. Oxford University Press.
- Evans, C., Brown, D., & Davis, J. (2021). Professional counseling from a Christian worldview. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2021.1885004>
- Hall-McMaster, S. M., Treharne, G. J., & Smith, C. M. (2016). ‘the positive feel’: Unpacking the role of positive thinking in people with multiple sclerosis’s thinking aloud about staying physically active. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 21(12), 3026–3036.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105315592047>
- Turns, B., Eddy, B. P., & Jordan, S. S. (2016). Working with siblings of children with autism: A solution-focused approach. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 37(4), 558–571. <https://doi.org/10.1002/anzf.1183>