

Solution - Focused Therapy

The advantages to this method --

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Solution-focused therapy is based on several concepts developed from the work of noted psychiatrist Milton Erickson, MD. Its success as a treatment method is based on several assumptions. These are:

Patients may already have the strengths, inner resources, and skills to solve their presenting problem. The therapist's job is to discover, reinforce, and utilize these assets to help clients discover solutions.

Effective therapy is a collaborative, honest, goal-directed interchange between client and therapist.

The primary focus of therapy should be on changing the client's *present* patterns of thinking and behavior *that are not working*. Little time is spent on dissecting and analyzing formative life situations as a standard part of the therapy process.

The approach is descriptive - the *how, what, when, and where* of the issue are more important than *why* the problem developed.

Therapy need *not* be lengthy (many problems can be solved in one to five sessions) nor complex (using elaborate explanatory models) to be effective. However, solution-focused principles can be useful, even when it takes longer than five sessions to achieve client goals.

Clear and specific goals contribute to the effectiveness of the therapy. Clients and therapists collaborate to define these goals.

A small change at any level of the client's experience can have a "ripple effect" that builds momentum toward eventual goal attainment.

Once strengths and exceptions have been identified, the therapist and client work together to establish specific, measurable, attainable goals for change. The treatment then focuses on achieving solutions to these problems.

At Associated Counseling Professionals, we are continually refining and expanding our version of the solution-focused model. We find that this approach works well with children, adolescents, and adults in individual, couples, and family therapy.