

Exception and Scaling Questions

EXCEPTION QUESTIONS

Exceptions are those occasions in the lives of clients when their problems could have occurred but did not – or at least were less severe. Exception questions focus on who, what, when, and where (the conditions that helped the exception to occur) – NOT WHY. The questions should relate to client goals.

Are there times when the problem does not happen or is less serious? When and how does this happen?

Have there been times in the last couple of weeks when the problem did not happen or was less severe?

How was it that you were able to make this exception happen?

What was different about that day?

If your friend (teacher, relative, spouse, partner, etc.) were here, and I were to ask them what they noticed you did different on that day, what would they say? What else?

SCALING QUESTIONS

Scaling questions invite the clients to put their observations, impressions, and predictions on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no chance, and 10 being every chance. Questions need to be specific, citing specific times and circumstances.

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not serious at all and 10 being the most serious, how serious do you think the problem is now?

On a scale of 0 to 10, what number would it take for you to consider the problem to be sufficiently solved?

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no confidence and 10 being every confidence, how confident are you that this problem can be solved?

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no chance and 10 being every chance, how likely is it that you will be able to say “No” to your boyfriend when he offers you drugs?

What would it take for you to increase that number by just one point to better your likelihood of saying “No”?

What is the most important thing you have to do to keep things at a 7 or 8?