

301: Engaging Clients from a Strength-Based, Solution-Focused Perspective Content (6 hours)

Section Name	Est. Time	Key Concepts	Resources Used
Section I - Brief Introductions and Workshop overview	30 minutes	<p>Method: Lecture/Large Group Discussion/Walk-around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief introductions & workshop overview. • Identification of participant needs/expectations and practice challenges using walk-around posters. 	<p>Handout # 1: Learning Objectives & Competencies (1 page) Handout # 2: Agenda (1 page) Idea Catcher Overhead #1 – Learning Objectives Overhead #2 – Competencies Overhead #3-Agenda Newsprint posters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Best Outcome for me from this training would be.. • A Challenge I face in working with clients is... • To feel comfortable and actively participate I need the trainer to be/do... • To feel comfortable and actively participate I need group members to be/do..
Section II – Engagement in the Context of Strength-based Child Welfare Practice	60 minutes	<p>Method: Lecture/Individual and small group activity/Large group discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the relevance of the strength-based, solution-focused approach (SBSF) to ASFA/CFSR, NASW Code of Ethics, PA Standards, and professional practice • Defining strengths in general and by type (mitigating safety threats; reducing risk; enhancing well-being; neutral) • Defining engagement in the context of strength-based child welfare practice • Establishing the conditions for effective engagement • Connecting engagement with the effective use of protective authority 	<p>Handout #3: What are Strengths (1 page) Handout#4: Promoting Effective Engagement (1 page) Handout #5 Protective Authority (2 pages) Overhead#4:Professional Practice Overhead #5-Strengths Overhead #6-Types of Strengths Overhead #7-Engagement Overhead #8 - Promoting Effective Engagement</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant self-assessment of strengths/needs in using protective authority effectively. <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal, state and professional social work standards support a collaborative partnership with clients through strength-based, solution-focused casework practice. ▪ The strength-based, solution-focused approach helps to professionalize child welfare practice through the consistent use of proven models and skills. ▪ The strength-based, solution-focused approach complements and enhances the CYS assessment and treatment processes. ▪ When defining strengths, note that some strengths may mitigate safety threats, some act to reduce risk or enhance well-being; other strengths may be neutral for CYS purposes. ▪ Identifying client strengths promotes engagement, reduces client resistance, and helps to identify client resources useful in building solutions. ▪ Engagement is the essential connection between the worker and the client in the process of assuring safety and promoting permanence and well-being. ▪ List the conditions for effective engagement and connect these conditions to the effective use of protective authority. ▪ Effective use of protective authority requires use of a variety of skills and the management our own work style in adapting to the requirements of the case situation. ▪ Participants identify their own personal strengths and needs among the elements in the protective authority continuum. ▪ Among those elements identified as weak or in need of improvement in the protective authority continuum, ask participants to identify and share one instance when they achieved some small success in regard to that element and what actions or conditions contributed to 	<p>Overhead #9-Protective Authority Overhead #10 - Protective Authority Continuum. Overhead #11 - Avoiding Authority Extremes</p> <p>Adoption and Safe Families Act, PL-105-89, issued November 19, 1997.</p> <p>NASW Code of Ethics, Revised 1999.</p> <p>CFSR Outcomes.</p> <p>PA Standards for Child Welfare Practice.</p>
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		<p>that success. Participants share experiences first in small groups. Trainer asks for volunteers to share a few examples of partial successes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer note: refer to back to this activity later when discussing the skills of exception finding and scaling. 	
Section III – Engagement Practice	60 minutes	<p>Method: Video critique; small group activity; large group discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show video clip illustrating engagement. • Participants working in small groups identify client strengths and possible usefulness of the strengths in working with the client about the resolution of the presenting problem. • Participants working in small groups and using scaling technique assess the effectiveness of the practitioner’s engagement attempt. • Participants identify ways to improve practitioner’s engagement attempt. • Trainer supplements participant input. <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Client demonstrated strengths include protecting family boundaries, appropriate assertiveness, concern for children, confidence in the ability of the family to solve problems, employment, adequate housing. ▪ The practitioner in the video clip utilizes the skills of clarifying purpose, paraphrasing/reflecting client feelings and showing respect. ▪ Practitioner in the video overuses paraphrasing or reflecting client feelings skill; fails to answer client questions clearly or to adequately acknowledge the importance to the client of protecting family boundaries; practitioner also fails to ask the client how best to elicit cooperation. ▪ Worker briefly mentions availability of agency services; this is premature, but a typical practice by workers who equate the client’s agreement to accept some agency 	<p>Handout #6 : Engagement Demonstration Feedback Form</p> <p>Video: “Safety Planning in Children’s Protective Services: Building Solutions with Clients 0 to 13:35 (stop at Scaling Safety)</p>

		<p>offered service as a collaborative partnership and successful intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practitioner achieves only minimal engagement demonstrated by the client’s cautious agreement to allow the worker to enter the home and discuss the allegations further. ▪ Reinforce the understanding that engagement is a continuous process that must be initiated, maintained and adjusted as necessary throughout the life of the case. 	
Section IV- Introduction to the Solution-focused Approach	30 minutes	<p>Method: Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical development of the solution-focused model. • Principles and values of the solution-focused approach. • Contribution of the Solution-focused approach to culturally competent practice. • 7 Key strategies <p>Key Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SBSF approach was developed by practitioners from the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee, WI (Steve DeShazer, Insoo Kim Berg) who identified those strategies, questions and linguistic factors that tended to promote positive change in clients more quickly and consistently than other treatment models. These findings were organized and incorporated into the Solution-focused model. ▪ The Solution-focused approach combines the identification of client strengths, a positive vision of the future, inclusion of client goals, building on exceptions to the problem, optimism about client potential, and connecting client behavior to outcomes into a cohesive model for change. ▪ One linguistic element is the elimination of the word “why” which has connotations of parental authority and blame. Substitute phrases like “How come?”, “How is it that you...?” “What tells you that ...?” (Write on flip 	<p>Handout #7 : History and Values (1 page).</p> <p>Handout #8 : Seven Key Solution-Focused Strategies (1 page)</p> <p>Overhead #12 - Solution-focused Core Principles</p> <p>Overhead #13 – Seven Key Solution-Focused Strategies</p>

		<p>chart)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SBSF approach lends itself to culturally competent practice because it emphasizes client generated solutions which reduces the likelihood of cultural bias by over use of worker imposed solutions. ▪ Briefly review the 7 key strategies; these strategies and the solution-focused questions and skills will be presented in more detail later. 	
LUNCH	60 minutes		
Section V- The Key Elements of the Solution-focused Approach to Child Welfare Practice	60 minutes	<p>Method: Dyad activity/Large group discussion/Lecture/Video observation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will experience the difference between their current interviewing approach and the use of SBSF approach skills in two brief (5 minute) interviews followed by large group discussion of the experience. • Compare and contrast the traditional medical model of problem solving with the SBSF model. ▪ Define and Identify the appropriate use of SBSF skills and questions. Trainer notes that this is a brief overview of the model and skills. Participants will be able to observe these skills in use by a skilled solution-focused practitioner in a video taped interview. <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of exception questions may produce more client cooperation and useful information than the participant's typical interviewing strategies. ▪ In the traditional problem solving model the worker is the expert who diagnoses the problem, identifies the corresponding treatment approach. The role and duty of the client is to comply with the treatment plan. ▪ In the SBSF model, the client is the expert about his/her life. The practitioner's job is to identify client strengths and exceptions to the problem, develop well-formed client driven goals and promote change through small steps while striving to increase client motivation and 	<p>Handout #9 : Solution-focused Interviewing Skills (5 pages)</p> <p>Overhead #14 –Solution Building Questions</p> <p>Overhead #15 –Traditional Problem Solving Model vs. The Solution-Focused Model</p> <p>Overhead #16 – Exception Questions</p> <p>Overhead #17 – Scaling questions</p> <p>Overhead #18 – The Miracle Question</p> <p>Overhead #19 – Follow-Up Questions</p> <p>Overhead #20-Indirect Questions</p>

		<p>commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SBSF approach is analogous to the process of completing a jigsaw puzzle, i.e. the coming together of related pieces and sections in a non-linear way. ▪ Using handouts and overheads, define and describe the appropriate use of the following key SBSF skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General interviewing skills ○ Exception & Coping questions ○ Scaling questions ○ Miracle question ○ Amplifying questions ○ Indirect questions ▪ Remind participants that they used the skills of scaling and exception finding earlier when assessing the elements of protective authority. 	
Section VI- Video Demonstration Of the SBSF Strategies and Skills	60 minutes	<p>Methods: Video demonstration/Individual and small group activity/Large group discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the video demonstration. • Participants identify the use and the effect of the SBSF skills as demonstrated in a video. • Participants identify their comfort level in utilizing the skills in their practice and any philosophical or practical obstacles to using the strategies and skills. <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SBSF practitioner is Peter DeJong from the <i>Brief Family Therapy Center</i>. The CYS agency (Wisconsin) contracts with <i>the Brief Family Therapy Center</i> to work with families whose children have come into CYS care. ▪ Participants should pay special attention to the use of engagement skills, negotiating goals, identifying and building on client strengths, promoting a positive vision of the future, scaling and exception questions, difference questions, tone of voice and body language. ▪ Participants should also identify any observed client strengths. 	<p>Handout #10 : Solution Focused Demonstration Feedback Form</p> <p>Video accompanying “Interviewing for Solutions” – 2nd Edition”, DeJong/Berg. Clip 8 (24:05) Getting Started with Involuntary Clients. End after clip 12 (50:00).</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants may identify in this demonstration conflicts with their own approach, style and/or previous education, training or beliefs about clients and change. Conflicts or obstacles may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The approach is too soft and may seem weak. ○ The participants' clients wouldn't respond as positively to this approach. ○ The practitioner should challenge the client's apparently faulty perceptions and denial. ○ The client can't change unless he admits to his faults and acknowledges he has a problem and needs help. ○ The model doesn't fit all of the various CYS casework functions. ▪ In responding to obstacles volunteered by participants, attempt to model the SBSF strategies and skills rather than directly contesting the participants concerns. Examples might include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "How would you respond to the client's perception of events, CYS actions and his drinking?" ○ "What tells you that approach would be more effective?" ○ "How do you think the client might respond to that approach?" ○ "How would that approach foster engagement, client cooperation and movement toward the desired goals?" ○ "If you were the client, what approach would you prefer the worker to take?" ○ Note that the full model is most useful in the ongoing phase of casework service. However, the skills of identifying strengths, exception questions and scaling are useful at the intake investigative phase and in foster/adoptive services work; the approach and skills are also useful in and compatible with the Family-Based 	
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		<p>Decision-making model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reinforce the connection between the practitioners SBSF strategies and the positive results produced in a relatively short time, i.e. the fact that the client was able to accept the practitioners intervention, offer comment on his own negative experiences in “the system”, describe his attachment to his children, identify his goals for himself and his children and agree to the conditions established by CYS and the court as part of the service plan. ▪ Encourage the participants to try out the SBSF strategies and skills for themselves with their clients to see how they might be useful. 	
<p>Section VII – Creating a Positive Vision of the Future & Transfer of Learning.</p>	<p>45 min</p>	<p>Method: Trainer guided large group activity/ Large group discussion; trainer will ask participants to volunteer responses; trainer notes them on a flip chart (participants should also record their responses on the appropriate handout for future reference).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer refers participants back to the challenges they identified in the walk-around activity in Section I. • Trainer then asks the group to volunteer information about their attempts to deal with the challenges and the measure of success or lack thereof. • Trainer asks participants to identify any partial success and what may have helped to produce the success or partial success (finding exceptions). • Trainer then poses the “Miracle Question”. The “Miracle” is that the participants will be skilled in the SBSF approach as well as performing at an effective level with other skills they possess, and they are capable of effectively managing the challenges that their clients present. • The trainer then asks miracle follow-up questions, i.e. what the participants, others and clients will notice about what is different after the miracle. • Trainer asks participants to identify several initial steps 	<p>Handout #11 : Creating a Positive Vision of the Future Overhead #21 – Creating a Positive Vision of the Future</p>

		<p>that each can take to begin to move toward making the miracle a reality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer uses scaling questions to assess confidence and commitment to pursuing the miracle and to move confidence and commitment forward by one point. • Trainer comments on participant responses and suggests tasks or activities that the participants might undertake to move their skill development forward. • Trainer summarizes the activity noting how the group has moved through the phases of the solution-building process and any useful information and solution options the group has identified in addressing their respective challenges. <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The participants experience represents parallel process and some of the same steps they can be used in working with clients. ▪ Solution-finding is driven by a positive, concrete client-created vision of a positive future which helps to make more real and desirable the goal of the solution-finding process. ▪ Identification of client strengths and partial successes helps to create a reality based hope that the envisioned goal may indeed be attainable. ▪ Scaling question is a strategy to create a baseline for assessing confidence/commitment and for generating ideas for increasing confidence/commitment. ▪ Next steps begins the process of concrete movement toward achieving the positive vision of the future. 	
Section VIII – Evaluation and closing	15 minutes	<p>Method: Large group discussion//Individual activity.</p> <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the degree to which participant learning needs have been met. ▪ Trainer reminds participants that the SBSF approach is 	HO #12: Bibliography Standard PACWTP Evaluation Form

		<p>simple in its basic structure. However, it takes practice to use it consistently and effectively, and manage our normal tendency to revert back to less effective, but more familiar ways of conducting our work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Complete the Competency-based Training evaluation form.	
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