

HISTORY & VALUES

History of Solution-Focused/Solution-Building Model

The Solution-Focused/building approach was pioneered through the work of Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Shazer and Berg and their colleagues, through an inductive process of observing clients in therapy, sought to determine what activities were most helpful to clients. In 1982, de Shazer hit upon the idea that there is not a necessary connection between problem and solution – a significant shift from the medical model which requires that connection. Influenced by research in communication by others, and their own research, they developed the Solution-Focused model. Effective use of questions to help clients recognize, explore and use strengths is a key feature of the Solution-Focused approach.

Value Base for Solution-Focused Intervention (Saleebey, 1992)

1. Despite life's struggles, all persons possess strengths that can be marshaled to improve the quality of their lives. Practitioners need to respect these strengths and the direction clients wish to apply them.
2. Client motivation is increased by a consistent emphasis on client defined strengths.
3. Discovering strengths requires a process of cooperative exploration between clients and helpers.
4. Focusing on strengths turns practitioners away from the temptation to judge or blame clients for their difficulties and toward discovering how clients have managed to survive.
5. All environments – even the most bleak – contain resources.

Solution-Focused Approach Core Principle

*If what you are doing doesn't work, stop doing it
and do something else.
If what you are doing is working, do more of it.*