

# *Solution Focused Cheat Sheet*

## Solution Focused (SF) Practice Has Three Underlying Principles

1. You are hope builders! Learn it, live it, love it ..., and never destroy it.
2. If you learn SF looking and SF listening, you will find SF language.
3. Once you do, every question is about building the desired outcome.

<b>Solution Focused Trifecta</b>		
<b>3 Tenets</b>	<b>3 Skills</b>	<b>3 Segments</b>
<p>Co-founder of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) Steve de Shazer's three tenets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If it's not broken, don't fix it.</li> <li>● If it works, do more of it.</li> <li>● If it doesn't work, do something different.</li> </ul>	<p>The three skills needed for success at implementing SFBT include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HALO (self-check)</li> <li>● SF Looking (reframing)</li> <li>● SF Listening (not knowing)</li> </ul> <p>To allow for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SF Language</li> </ul>	<p>The three segments of any solution focused conversation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>What's Wanted</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Best Hopes</i> (Now)</li> <li>○ <i>Preferred Future</i> (Later)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <i>What Works</i></li> <li>● <i>What's Next</i></li> </ul>

## Key Strategies / Techniques

- *Miracle Question*: ex. "A miracle happens and when you wake up tomorrow, your best hope has been fulfilled, but you don't know it. What are the first small signs? What is different on this better day?" This is generally used to segue to the Preferred Future (i.e., life *AFTER* the challenge has been overcome).
- *Tomorrow Question*: Modified Miracle Question popularized by BRIEF; takes away fantastical aspects, replacing them with the logical



assumption that progress will naturally take place. This can be used in place of the MQ and/or to help build *What's Next*.

- *Scaling*: Using a number line to help the person gauge where they are, what is working, and where they are going. (Both 1 - 10 or 0 - 10 are acceptable scaling ranges.)
- *DAP360*
  - *Descriptions*: Explanations, details, and descriptions of differences. If a person says something generic, ask, "What does it look like when \_\_\_?", "How is that different?", or "What are the first signs that things are a little better?"
  - *Actions*: Similarly, focus on what people are doing when exceptions and successes happen. "How did you get through it?" or "What are/were you doing when \_\_\_?"
  - *People360*: Explore key stakeholders' opinions. "What does \_\_\_ notice when \_\_\_?" Take a 360-degree view from the perspective of one or more key stakeholders.

## When problem-talk starts to side-track things

- Other person -> Dwells on a problem
- You ...
  1. *Listen*, acknowledge, and validate the concern as you always would.
  2. *Select* → Different / Change / Last time / Strength / Instead?
    - "How have you managed to (*keep going, get this far, be this successful, etc.*) so far?"
  3. *Build*
    - Scale?

- *DAP360?*
- Other? “What are the *first small signs* that \_?”  
 “So *how will you know* that you’ve ...  
 ... gotten on top of that?  
 ... sorted that out?  
 ... made progress in relation to that?”

If a problem needs to be discussed briefly, after some listening, find the strengths that helped the person overcome the challenge:

- Redirect to strengths (positives):  
 “How do you ...  
 ... get through it?”  
 ... keep yourself going?”  
 ... stop things from getting even worse?”  
 ... keep hope alive?”
- “What have you been pleased to notice the last few days even though things have been tough?”

### Other common things heard will often include ...

- (When negative) What will be happening *instead* ...?
- (When bad) What would you *rather see* ...?
- *Signs* (keep it small) -> Doing/happening/look like?
- “*What else? What else? What else?*”