

FIRST DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Judicial Education and Training



An Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Solution-Focused Judicial Interviewing

The Principles and Practice of Solution-Focused Interviewing

The mental health court is governed procedurally through the executive function of the district court judge. The district judge presides over and conducts both mental health court staffings and court proceedings. The judicial role in the specialty court functions beyond the traditional adversarial model and operates within the framework of compassionate accountability. Compassionate accountability incorporates the principles of reinforcement and interdependence as the court, in partnership with both clinical and judicial personnel, acts as an agent of change relative to the cognitive, social, behavioral, and functional status of the mentally ill offender. Such a hybrid role requires increased adaptation and flexibility in working with defendants who have serious and persistent mental health issues that may impede compliance with program requirements or retard progress toward program completion.

The conduct of the specialty court proceeding is designed procedurally in favor of a more direct interaction between judge and defendant usually without participation by intermediaries unless some form of intercession by either clinical or legal representatives is specifically requested. Mental health court participants are scheduled for court appearances at a much higher rate of frequency than defendants in other criminal court venues. Each participant on the court docket for the week appears and personally represents their current status relative to their progress and adherence to the judicial as well as clinical activities of the program.

The interactive context of the mental health court hearing provides many opportunities for the District Judge to proceed along various lines or dimensions of therapeutic dialogue. Subsequently, it is advantageous that mental health court judges receive training and education in the principles, tools, and insights of various forms of productive interviewing that will enhance the effectiveness of the judicial officer as an agent of change and further enable the judicial hearing to be used as an added resource in the exercise of therapeutic jurisprudence.

A Brief History of the Development of Solution-Focused Interviewing

The solution-focused model was pioneered primarily through the work of Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg and was stimulated relevant to earlier work involving communication theory by a number of social scientists, including Gregory Bateson and Jay Haley. Both de Shazer and Berg approached their clinical work from a holistic perspective, believing that observation and reflection regarding the

therapeutic process was more valuable than traditional research. In the mid – 1970s, they opened their own clinic and worked inductively by observing individual interviews and simply paying attention to what appeared to be most useful in the interviewing process as they worked specifically in defining the relationship between the nature of problems and solutions. In the process of their work over the years they developed and documented the procedures utilized in their therapeutic work which has become known as solution-focused interviewing.

Defining Solution-Focused Interviewing

The mental health court as a “problem-solving” court is particularly suited to the framework of solution-focused interviewing, which is an alternative perspective to medical and problem-oriented models of interaction with mentally ill individuals. Solution-focused interviews are primarily organized around activities involving (1) the development of well-formed goals consistent with the frame of reference of the mentally ill offender and, (2) the development of solutions based on exceptions, or times in the life of the offender when legal and/or mental health problems could have occurred but either did not occur or were less severe in their occurrence. Although the mental health court judge does not act in the same capacity as a clinical therapist, still the dialogue and structural tools of solution-focused interviewing can enhance the process of change to which the mental health court program is dedicated.

Solution-Focused Interviewing and the Involuntary Participant

Although technically, defendants voluntarily consent to program participation, many may view the choice of incarceration versus probation and mandatory treatment as less than a completely free exercise of personal choice. Consequently, the issues of motivation, compliance, and commitment are important dynamics that will determine the defendant’s success in the mental health court program. The solution-focused model of interaction makes a distinction between compliance and change. Traditional criminal justice, as represented predominately through the systems of fines, prison, and probation, highly values the working relationship between penalty and compliance in the process of criminal deterrence. The mental health court on the other hand favors the concept of restorative justice and subsequently places primary value on the process of change and holds defendants individually responsible for their own change. Although compliance is required in the operation of the program, compliance in and of itself does not equal change. Change is born out of commitment and intention

which occur through the process of contemplation about what the defendant ultimately wants in life and what they are willing to do differently to achieve that goal. Solution-focused interviewing therefore poses questions that challenge defendants to become aware of their own process of change. For example:

“What are you willing to do differently that will prevent you from repeating the offenses that brought you to the court?”

“How do you know that you won’t commit another forgery?”

“What tells you that you are learning something from this program?”

“How can your family tell that you have changed?”

“What is it that you see yourself doing differently that is more likely to result in less conflict with your family?”

Additionally, the court must work in such a way so as to preserve the defendant’s therapeutic relationship with the clinical provider. This may be easily compromised if the defendant is questioned about clinical content instead of clinical process, or the structure of the judicial interview takes the form of a clinical betrayal, such as:

“I hear you’re struggling more with anxiety this week.”

“Your therapist reports that you missed two appointments this week.”

“The group home reports that you are uncooperative and refuse to do your assigned daily chores.”

Care should be taken to elicit from the defendant, information about their progress toward recovery or their adherence to program expectations. Although clinical providers and other court personnel will, as part of the defendant’s orientation to the program, provide information to the defendant that the activities of monitoring and reporting are to be expected, generally this happens external to the therapeutic relationship. The clinician is responsible to work with the defendant in developing a realistic plan for mental health treatment and may involve the court in structuring activities that may strengthen the defendant’s recovery process. However, the clinical provider is not the defendant’s

probation officer and therefore must maintain certain therapeutic boundaries in order to be clinically effective. Therefore, as the judicial interview proceeds, it may be structured in such a way that responsibility is placed on the defendant for disclosure about progress, compliance, success, failure, thought, feeling, and/or situations relevant to the defendant's participation in the mental health court program. For example:

"Tell me about some of your activities during the past week." "What did you have an opportunity to participate in and what did you experience?"

"How did you do this week in keeping your mental health appointments?"

"How do you think you are doing in your treatment program?" "Can you tell me about some of the benefits or differences you see happening?"

"Last week you told me you missed two scheduled appointments, how did it go this week?"

"I notice you're a little tearful today, can you share what you're feeling right now?"

"I think in your last hearing we talked about two assignments you were given to complete, what can you report to us today about those assignments?"

"Tell me about your experience at the group home, how is that living arrangement going for you?"

"Group living can be pretty difficult at times, what are some of your frustrations with living there?" "How are you doing with your assigned chores and responsibilities?"

Basic Solution-focused Activities:

1. Developing well-formed goals:

The characteristics of well-formed goals are that they are small, concrete, important to the individual, and represent the beginning of a difference in the life of the individual and not the end result. The structure of the solution-focused interview process, no matter how brief, is designed to help the defendant develop a sharper vision of what life will be like when the problems that brought them before the court are effectively managed, or in other words, helping the defendant develop a vivid picture or description of a more satisfying life beyond the criminal justice system (however not necessarily beyond the mental health treatment system). Any goal of the defendant represents a good starting point toward a workable solution; however workable solutions will more readily emerge from the defendant's answers to questions about

what has already worked and what might be different as they engage in the activities of the mental health court program. For example:

“What specifically would you like to see different about your life by participating in this program?”

“To make your goals unique to you, help me understand what you think you can work on in this program that will make a real difference in your life.”

“How do you think this program will specifically help you change the behavior that got you in trouble?”

Generally, workable solutions are described as something behavioral, realistic, concrete and measurable, and something that will require a concerted effort to accomplish. At times a series of questions are needed in order to begin to get the defendant to consider a possible workable solution. For example:

Judge: “What specifically would you like to see different about your life by participating in this program?”

Defendant: “I don’t know, not having to come to court I guess.”

Judge: “What would you have to do differently to avoid getting in legal trouble?”

Defendant: “Not take drugs.”

Judge: “You could sit in the corner of a dark room for the rest of your life and fulfill that goal. What specifically would you have to do differently in an active way to keep from repeating this problem?”

Defendant: “Follow through with my substance abuse and mental health treatment program every day.”

Judge: “Now that makes better sense to me. Do you see the difference between doing something passive to achieve a goal and doing something active?”

2. Developing exception-based solutions:

Developing exceptions is the activity of exploring occasions in the life of the defendant when their problems were less severe or absent, and who or what contributed to this difference. The context of those times when the defendant’s problem could have occurred but did not, in terms

of who, what, when, and how, provide the important logistics of the exception and shifts the focus of attention on the positive times in the defendant's life where the defendant's strengths are brought into perspective and then reinforced to create solutions for the here-and-now. Exceptions to the clinical and judicial problems that combined to involve the defendant in the mental health court program may occur throughout the course of the program, and can readily be explored for detail about difference:

“Your report of the past week is that you were successful in keeping all your appointments and you felt better about your treatment progress. What did you do differently from the previous week when you didn't feel as positive?”

“I assume you have had many opportunities to use illegal substances in the past and sometimes you didn't. What was different about the times you could have, but didn't engage in that behavior?”

“You could have taken your Mother's checkbook many other times but didn't, at times when you didn't take it, what prevented you from taking it?”

Stages of Solution Building:

Solution-focused interviewing generally proceeds through several distinct stages designed to assist the defendant in constructing productive solutions that will improve the likelihood of success in the mental health court program specifically, and the defendant's life generally. Solution-building stages include:

1. Problem description:

Defendants may be given an opportunity to describe their problems by asking:

“How can the mental health court be useful to you?” or “What specific issues besides your criminal charges do you want to resolve as you participate in this program?”

However, fewer details are solicited about the nature and severity of the defendant's problems. Instead, the judge may listen carefully to some appropriate portion of the defendant's problem talk and consider ways in which to transition the conversation toward the initiation of a dialogue relevant to how the defendant will build solutions to the problems they describe.

Additionally, seriously mentally ill offenders may engage in conversation that is not based in a shared reality. They may express at times delusional thought content that can be distracting to

the process and goals of the mental health court hearing. In these instances the court may want to limit the amount of such conversation and redirect the defendant to the matters at hand.

“I’m not sure I completely understand your explanation about the chemical connection between our minds, but let’s talk about some of the things that have happened that have you in court today. Let’s see if we can understand that connection a little better.”

2. Developing well-formed goals:

As mentioned above, the initiation of solution-oriented talk proceeds with the work of eliciting descriptions from the defendant about what will be different in their life when the current problems that resulted in their involvement with the court are resolved. Reference to difference is a consistent theme utilized in the solution-focused interview process.

3. Exploring for exceptions:

As mentioned above, it is likely that there are times in the defendant’s experience when the problems that resulted in their involvement with the criminal justice system didn’t exist or didn’t appear to be as pronounced. Finding such periods of exception and determining what the difference was between then and now can be useful in the process of building solutions. Recent exceptions are usually more useful as these experiences can be remembered in greater detail.

4. Providing feedback:

Generally, effective feedback follows a basic structure involving compliments, recommendations or assigned tasks, and a bridge that links the previous two. Compliments emphasize what the defendant is currently doing that is useful toward developing solutions, while recommendations, suggestions, or tasks are directed toward what the defendant could observe, or do, that would further enhance the solution-building process. Since any recommendation or task must make logical sense to the defendant, the interviewer uses some statement that forms a bridge between the compliment and the task which also provides a rationale for the task. Tasks are usually of two categories, observational or behavioral. Feedback is based on information the defendant reveals in conversations about well-formed goals and exceptions, and always focuses, from the defendant’s frame of reference, on what they need to do more of, or do differently, in order to enhance their chances of success in meeting their goals.

5. Evaluating progress:

The solution-building process frequently evaluates the defendant's progress in reaching solutions they see as desirable. Generally, this is accomplished through the tool called "scaling" which asks defendants to rate their progress on a scale of 1 to 10. Once progress has been scaled, the defendant can be helped to examine what work still needs to be done to proceed toward program completion.

Utilizing the Defendant as Expert Witness

The solution-building model in the mental health court program recognizes that the defendant is the expert with respect to their own life and is the only one who can effectively change their life to be something different than what it is now. The court merely functions to help facilitate the solution-building process within the defendant's own frame of reference in the following three ways:

1. Defendants are helped to explore what specifically they would like to see changed in their life. Customarily, they will provide a description of their problems from their perspective. The defendant's problem definition and descriptions are typically accepted and acknowledged.
2. Defendants are helped to explore what will be different in their life when the problems they describe are solved. The interviewer listens carefully for, and works hard to respect, the direction the defendant wants to pursue in the process of change.
3. Defendants are helped to explore the differences at times in their life when there were, or are, exceptions to the problems they describe. These exceptions are recognized as evidence of personal strengths and as sources of information about useful resources that exist within the context of their daily life outside the courtroom.

Skills for Not Knowing

The primary posture for the judicial interviewer is a Socratic position of "not-knowing," meaning a general stance that reflects genuine curiosity and a need to know more about what the defendant says, rather than convey preconceived opinions about what the defendant needs to change. The court, or any

clinical practitioner for that matter, can never completely know *a priori* (independently), the significance of the defendant's experiences and actions without direct interaction and dialogue with the defendant. Maintaining (for the most part) the stance of "being informed" by the defendant allows a greater possibility for solution-focused dialogue that can shape conversations in the direction of change in which the defendant is an active participant rather than a passive recipient.

Types of Relationships between the Defendant and the Court

Although not the same as a therapeutic relationship developed in clinical practice, the relationship between the defendant and judge may still have some similarities as represented in the context of a therapeutic dialogue. In the process of determining what the defendant wants to be different for themselves, solution-focused relationships typically develop according to the following three types:

1. Customer-Type Relationship:

In this relationship, the defendant and the court can jointly identify problems and/or the framework of a solution within which to work. Defendants in this position typically have made a reasoned choice to participate in the program and are motivated in the interest of their own recovery.

2. Complainant-Type Relationship:

In this relationship, the defendant can identify a problem for the mental health court to address but cannot clearly identify their personal role and responsibility in building a solution. The defendant usually does not yet perceive that he or she is part of the solution and instead believes that change is required on the part of someone else.

3. Visitor-Type Relationship:

The visitor-type relationship is likely the most common to the mental health court in which the defendant is not truly able to jointly identify either a problem or a solution and simply participates as a means of release from incarceration or in order to diminish their legal penalty.

The goal here is to recognize the type of relationship the defendant portrays upon entry to the court program and then work to progress that relationship to a higher order that will lead to a successful outcome.

Summary Skills for Solution-Focused Interviewing

Echoing or Asking for Clarification:

Clarification questions attempt to solicit specific detail from the defendant and shift the defendant's frame of reference from the perceptual domain (their experience), to a conceptual domain. The life span of the defendant is a continuum whose only integrator is his or her conceptual faculty. The defendant is working to construct solutions for a better future and the future cannot be grasped perceptually.

"This week was a total waste?"

"Can you tell me what you mean by "total waste?" "What specific things happened that you interpret as wasteful?"

Open-ended questioning:

Open questioning forms an integral part of building rapport with program participants. Interviewers are encouraged to ask questions in such a way that the defendant is given the opportunity to elaborate and provide sufficient detail necessary for the interviewer to properly assess and understand the defendant's current situation.

"Tell me about your treatment compliance this past week" vs "Did you keep your therapy appointments last week?" (A limited choice of response requiring a simple yes or no answer).

Summarizing:

Periodically recounting a brief summary of what the interviewer heard regarding the thoughts, actions, and feelings of the defendant.

"Now let me see if I understand what you just said ..." or "Now if I heard you correctly you said ..."

Tolerating or Using Silence:

Allowing 10, 15, or even 20 seconds if necessary to allow the defendant to produce a response, and resisting the temptation to fill the sometimes awkward gap of silence with advice.

The Interviewer's Non-verbal Behavior:

Research indicates that individuals will rely on a specific set of nonverbal cues to determine whether they feel they are being heard and respected. Tone of voice, eye contact, occasional head nodding and hand gesturing are important contributions to the development of an attentive atmosphere that communicates some level of interest and respect for what the person is saying. Attention and interest

are key ingredients in any interview designed to elicit a useable fund of information in the defendant's process of self-change.

Noticing a Defendant's Non-verbal Behavior:

Part of the process of communication involves the way in which information is expressed. Tone, rate of speech, eye contact, physical proximity, facial expressions, posture, etc., are all elements of process. Noticing discrepancies between the defendant's verbal communication (content) and nonverbal messages (process) provides opportunities for clarification. The defendant's non-verbal behavior also represents the larger context of the defendant's relationship to the court and the program. Once skilled at observing for behavioral nuances the interviewer can choose whether or not to focus the interview on any non-verbal cues that may be incongruent with the defendant's verbal communication.

"I noticed that when you said you would be willing to participate in the program, that you showed some hesitancy, your voice trailed off, and you looked down at your feet. This is a voluntary program, but to be successful you have to have a serious commitment to it, how can I be sure you really want to be involved?"

Self-disclosure:

Familiarity with the interviewer in the court proceeding and familiarity with the personal life of the interviewer are distinctly different. It is not advisable for the interviewer to disclose or foster a personal relationship or provide personal information beyond simple generalizations. For example:

"When I was your age I made a bad decision and I had to enter a drug treatment program too." vs. "Everyone in life faces difficult choices and sometimes we make judgments we regret, the important thing for you to ask yourself is, what could be different in my life by participating in this program?"

Complimenting:

A specific aspect of feedback that directly or indirectly recognizes or acknowledges the defendant's strengths (skills, talents, abilities, and positive attributes) that have contributed to either past or present success. The variety of strengths may include such things as resilience in the face of hardship, a sense of humor, organized thinking, the capacity for hard work, a sense of caring for others, willingness to listen, interest in learning, etc. Compliments can be direct or indirect. Direct compliments are positive statements while indirect compliments are questions that infer something positive about the defendant. Indirect complimenting is preferable to direct complimenting as the question format leads defendant's closer to self-discovery of individual strengths and resources.

Direct Compliments:

"I'm pleased to see that you have been able to maintain your job for the past two months now, you clearly have the ability to focus on responsibility even though you are working through a lot of difficult challenges."

“For you to be able to keep all your treatment appointments, court dates, and still manage time for family and employment shows me that you have some great organizational skills that you are using to make a difference in your life, good job.”

Indirect Compliments:

“How have you been able to maintain your job in the face of all that’s going on in your life right now?”

“What’s made it possible for you to keep all your treatment appointments, court dates, employment schedule, and family time so organized?”

Perceptual Affirmation:

A perception, or what someone perceives about themselves or the world in which they live, their conscious experience, represents an aspect of the person’s overall level of awareness. In order to help build rapport and trust, the interviewer acknowledges the perceptual domain of the defendant as opposed to trivializing or discounting their perceptual experience. Through the process of perceptual affirmation in the court interview the defendant can gain a sense that they are understood, which can function as the gateway toward a transition to the conceptual domain of the defendant where they can formulate solutions for the future. Affirmation of the defendant’s perceptual experience is similar to reflective listening in form, but does not isolate and focus on the feelings of the defendant per se, and instead focuses on the defendant’s larger context of awareness. In essence, affirming the defendant’s perceptions of how they think, feel, or act, is simply an acknowledgement of the ways in which the defendant experiences their life, and regardless of agreement, accuracy, or effectiveness in the opinion of the interviewer, nevertheless such perceptions are recognized as having meaning to the defendant.

“From what you have described, I think we can understand your concern about how much time and effort the program involves as opposed to just doing your time in jail.”

“Based on your experience, I can see how you might think that nothing in your life ever seems to go right.”

Empathy:

Empathy represents an understanding of the defendant’s experience and situation and is distinct from sympathy. Sympathy joins the defendant emotionally and to some degree shares the perceptual experience of the defendant. Sympathy must be avoided in the interview process as it tends to focus on and amplify negative feelings. Empathic affirmation (or perceptual affirmation as described above) may acknowledge perceptual and emotional experience but quickly moves the defendant toward a conceptual exploration of a relevant solution to the problems that brought the defendant before the court.

“I can see that the thought of having a mental illness is troubling to you, as it would be for anyone.”

“I can understand that when you realized you missed your medication appointment you were fearful about coming to court and then just panicked and took off.”

Redirecting the Defendant:

Criminal offenders may tend to project blame and focus the court’s attention on people, situations, or circumstances they view as responsible for their problems. Defendant’s (as is true for most everyone) can be quite skilled at figuring out that if it weren’t for someone else, they wouldn’t be in their current situation. For example:

“I didn’t make my medication appointment last week because the nurse didn’t give me a reminder call the day before.”

“I left the group home and stayed with a friend because there is another resident there that drives me crazy and I just had to get away from them for awhile.”

In a Solution-Focused approach, the judicial interviewer works to redirect the defendant toward personal responsibility and accountability for their own life.

“It’s not the nurse whose responsible to keep the appointment, what can you do differently so that you don’t miss another appointment?”

“Your court approved residence is the group home, what would happen if you sat down with the group home staff and asked for help in working out your differences with the other resident? Now, since you left the residence against the court’s direction, I’m going to have you spend the next three days in jail. During those three days I want you to write a list of things you are going to do differently to solve this problem and you are to bring the list back to court next week.”

Difference Questions:

As is evident from the mock questions in the above material, very often the interviewer is asking the defendant about the concept of difference. Information that the interviewer is looking for is news of difference. The number of potential differences in any defendant is infinite, however very few of these become effective differences in the mental process or behavior of the individual. The information the court is most interested in consist of differences that make an effective difference in the life of the defendant. The news that the defendant missed a medication appointment is news of difference but it is a difference that is detrimental both to the clinical progress of the defendant as well as their judicial progress. News that a defendant took the initiative to calendar his appointments for the week and thereby fulfilled his scheduled treatment is news of an effective difference that has the power to produce positive change for the future.

Subsequently, the interviewer looks for effective difference, defined as a “difference that makes a difference” (Bateson, 1972) and (ds Shazer, 1988, 1991), in the interviewing process and encourages

the defendant to provide specific detail as to what would be different in life if the problems that brought them before the court were effectively solved.

“What have you done differently this past week to make your life better?”

“What specifically do you want to be different in your life over the course of the program?”

“What will we see different in your behavior that will tell us you are ready to advance to the next phase of the program?”

Exception Questions:

Exceptions are defined as occasions in the life of the defendant when problems could have occurred but didn't or at least were less severe. Exceptions are times in the life of the defendant when he could have drunk, lost his temper, got into a fight, heard voices in his head, arrived late for work, missed his therapy appointment, or stopped taking his medication, but somehow managed not to. Exception questions focus on the specifics. Who? What? When? Where? and most important, How?

“It seems like you have been struggling with these problems off and on for a fairly long time. Except when, when in the past month or even the past year did these problems not exist, or at least they didn't seem so bad?”

“What was the difference between then and now?”

“How did you do that?”

“What would your parents say about how you did that?”

“You say you didn't feel like attending group last week but you did anyway, what did you do that made you decide to keep your commitment to the court?”

“Tell me about a time when you wanted to stop taking your medications but you didn't.”

The Miracle Question:

The use of this question strategy often begins the defendant's process of developing well-formed goals. This type of question opens the door for the defendant to conceptualize the unlimited range of possibilities for change and begins to move the defendant's focus of attention away from the problem and toward the conceptualization of a different life.

“Suppose you wake up tomorrow morning and some miracle happens and all the problems you are facing at the moment have disappeared, but because you were sleeping you didn't know that something had happened, what difference would you notice that would tell you that a miracle had occurred?”

“What things would others close to you notice different about you that would tell them that a miracle had happened, that something had changed?”

“What’s something you can do differently that might be a step towards a miracle actually happening in your life?”

The Nightmare Question:

The nightmare question was developed and applicable to defendants who are not particularly motivated through (Berg & Reuss, 1998)

Bridging Questions:

Coping Questions:

Another type of questioning that shifts the defendant away from the perceptual (problem oriented) domain, to the conceptual (solution oriented) domain, are questions about what the defendant does currently or has done historically to manage stressful circumstances.

“While you have been in jail for the past three months, what did you do to help yourself cope with that situation?”

“When you realized that you missed your therapy appointment last week and had violated the requirements of the program, what did you do that gave you some courage to come to court today?”

“How have you managed to get this far in life without killing yourself through drug abuse?”

Scaling:

Scaling questions facilitate the defendant’s ability to conceptualize observations, impressions, experience, and predictions along a numerical continuum of probability usually from 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest). This question format has significant versatility and can be used to help assess the defendant’s perception of almost anything, including investment or motivation for change, willingness to work to bring about change, prioritizing problems to be solved, perception of hopefulness for change, evaluation of progress, etc.

“On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all, how serious are you about participating in the mental health court program?”

“How committed are you to your mental health treatment plan on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being totally uncommitted?”

“On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being totally confident, how confident are you that you will successfully complete the mental health court program?”

Indirect Questions:

This question format focuses directly on someone external to the defendant (therefore indirectly on the defendant) and what the impact of change might have on that person or how that person may relate to the change process.

“What effect do you think this situation has had on your family?”

Goal-Formation Questions:

Goal-formation questions are another variation of exploring for difference by asking court participants to conceptualize what would have to change in order to achieve program completion.

“What will likely be different in your behavior when you have managed to complete this program?”

“What changes do you think you will see in your relationship with your family that will tell you all this has been successful?”

Conclusion

Solution focused interviewing is not a spell or an incantation that magically alters the subject’s thought process, but represents an effective dialogue strategy that over time can impact how the participant thinks about their participation in the program and their own defined goals for success.

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