

# Western Australian Solution Focused Interest Group (WASFIG) Meeting 11



## **WASFIG Best Hopes: Share, Connect, Grow, Learn, Develop**

1. Share SF knowledge and update our SF knowledge since original training;
2. Connect and network with like-minded SF practitioners to enhance community and reduce isolation;
3. Grow interest in the SFBT approach in Perth and WA to do our bit to change the world one SF step at a time;
4. Learn where and with whom SF might be best applied in our practices;
5. Develop our clinical effectiveness and efficiency (we may only have a set number of sessions so how do we do the very best with each session as though it may be the only one or the last).

**When: Saturday 25 February 2023 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (VIC/NSW = 12:30pm-2:30pm, QLD= 11:30am-1:30pm, SA = 12pm-2pm and NT = 11am-1pm)**

**Where:** Zoom

**Attendees:** Michele Thomas, Theresa Acutt, Magdaline Wendot, Nadia Troung, Fiona Skahill, Johanna Saltis, Ruth Leveson, Sara Ristovska, Katy Hunt, Lilian Figueira, Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond (Co-coordinators).

**Apologies:** Yvette Strawbridge, Kym Madden, Janet Lim, Amy O-Brien, Lisa Cregan, and Shona Scallan.

**Group Facilitator:** Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond

**Group Presenter:** All Attendees!

## **Topic: Solution Focused Toolbox**

Throughout our previous meetings, Steve and Kerry have identified clearly that our greatest meeting resource is the knowledge and experience of our attendees! For this reason our February 2023 meeting opened the floor to hear more about the SF experiences and knowledge of attendees which could have included:

- a favourite Solution Focused technique;
- a key idea from a Solution Focused training workshop you attended;
- a title of an interesting Solution Focused book or article you read and what you got out of it;
- a sparkling moment of some good Solution Focused work you did with your clients and what you did that contributed to the good outcomes; or
- some other creative practice or idea, however small it might seem to you.

Our attendees gifted us with two hours of rich discussion sharing pieces of SF tools and techniques for working with clients across the lifespan, drawn from SFBT 1.0 and SFBT 2.0 and shared with great passion and insight. The importance of 'finding your tribe' to connect with like-minded Solution Focused practitioners was highlighted.

Solution Focused practitioners who adopt the 'radical' ideas of believing in our clients' capacity for success, and knowing that not only do our clients not need to be taught what to do to 'solve their problems', but that with some useful SF questioning and activities to evoke the customer/hero version of the client, our clients will come to realise that they have already started creating some of their own solutions and can build on this. Our Best Hopes of a WA SFBT Interest Group were realised!

Steve Runicman shared a Solution Focused tool by Guy Shennan (2017) which we used for our break out room exercise in trios.

"What have you been pleased to notice about how you've been working recently?" This can be separate things in your life you are pleased to notice yourself doing or a few good things you saw yourself do in working with a client in session.

Ask what else 5x. Keep going until you have come up with 5 answers or for five minutes, whichever comes first.

Listener: Give feedback to speaker about what you appreciated hearing, what you were impressed by.

*Shennan, G. (2017) Solution Focused Practice (Second edition). London: Bloomsbury*

**Solution Focused Practice: A Toolkit for working with Children and Young People by the NSPCC** was recommended – including some useful charts which transform SF ideas into visual images – helpful for both children and adult clients alike to make the SF conversation more tangible. Some examples from this toolkit are attached with the summary.

**Russell Sabella**, a SF practitioner, has provided some charts for working with young people in a solution focused way in schools. Some of these useful charts have been attached. Have a look at his website [www.schoolcounselor.com](http://www.schoolcounselor.com)

**Joe George** is another SF practitioner who has a Facebook Group called **Solution Focused Future** and has also provided some helpful SF questions from BRIEF in London which are attached.

**Solution Focused Scaling** – how to increase the efficiency of SF scaling was considered and Johanna kindly demonstrated the scaling technique on the screen during our meeting. The importance of identifying the ends of the scale where 10 is the client's Best Hopes realised, 0 is the opposite of this, the worst the situation has been; identifying where the client currently is on the scale and how come they are that high and not lower, identifying what might be happening if the client was higher on the scale or even at 10, and what might let the client and others know they had moved a point up the scale from where they currently are. A few ideas are attached with this summary for examples of scaling questions.

**SF ListServ:** <https://www.sikt.nu/sft-l/> - sign up to the SF List Serv and tap into emails sent and responded to by international SF experts in the field, and feel welcome to send around your own questions.

**Elliott Connie** – founder of the Solution Focused Universe in the USA has released a 1 page example of SF questions to ask clients, **101 Solution Focused Questions**. Elliott and his team offer a variety of free trainings during the year as well as more in depth online training you can sign up for. <https://thesfu.com/>

Some wonderful book recommendations were also presented including:

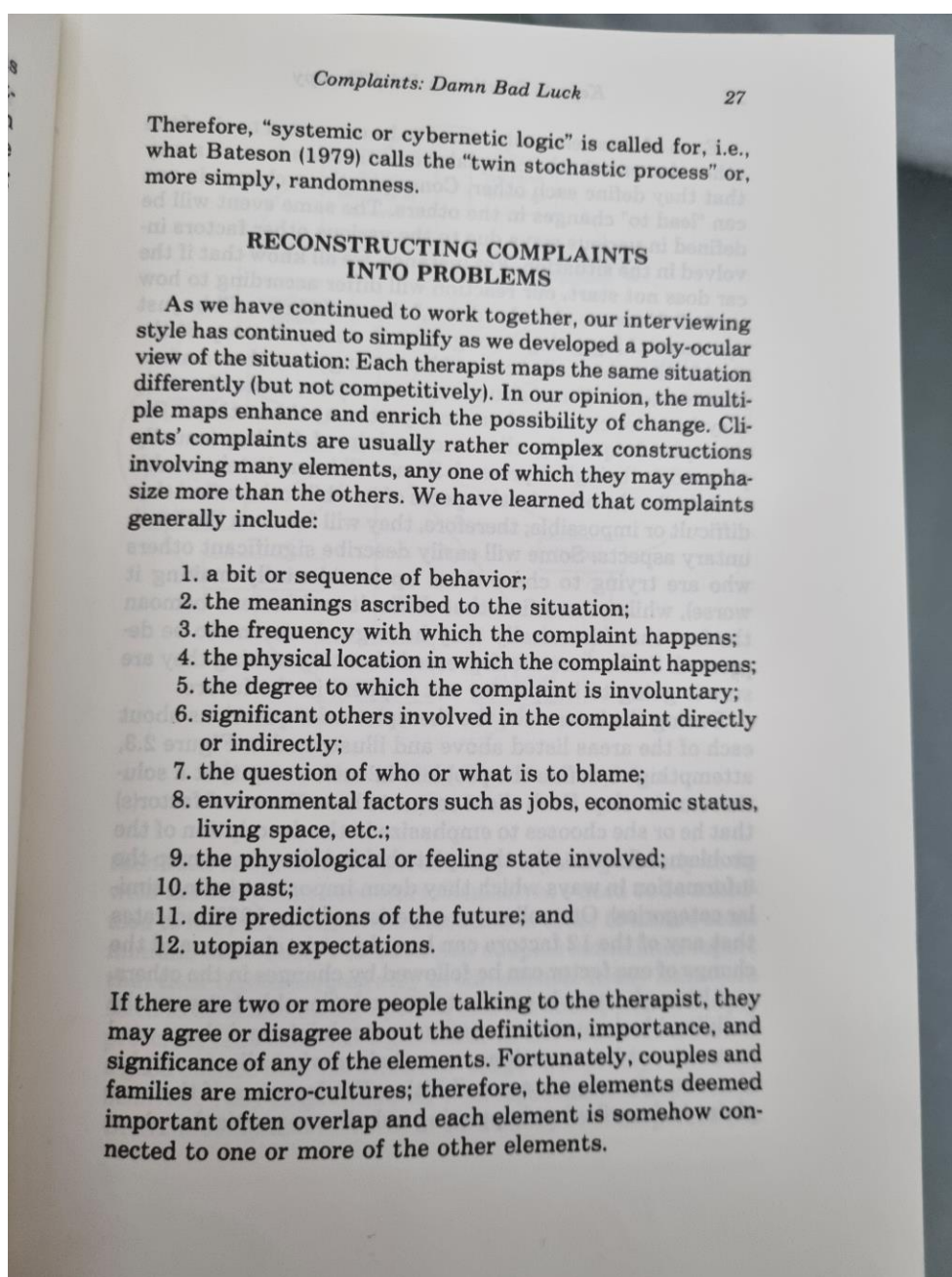
**Solution Focused Play Therapy** – Elizabeth Kjellstrand Hartwig (2020) – weaving SF into play therapy to invite parents to join in with their children as much as possible in session – as an example *The Family Zoo* where parents and child get to pick an animal and talk about what the animal's Best Hopes are and what kind of environment this animal would like to live in.

**1001 Solution Focused Questions: Handbook for Solution Focused Interviewing** – Fredrike Bannink (2010) – As part of SFBT 1.0 Insoo Kim Berg (1989) identified the kind of relationship with the therapist the client arrived to session in – either visitor, complainant or customer which was determined by how ready the client was thought to be to engage in therapy. In SFBT 2.0 this idea has evolved to believe that all clients are motivated to attend sessions since they have presented in session (Elliott Connie and Evan George), and how we respond to a client can have an influence on whether they are visitors, complainants or customers. With this mindset of belief in the client, if we treat a client as a customer, this evokes the customer, and they will respond as a customer.

**“The way you see people is the way you treat them, and the way you treat them is what they become.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

Elliott Connie and Adam Froerer’s new book about the SF Diamond Approach that we have been sharing is out in March 2023 and currently available for pre-order: **The Solution Focused Brief Therapy Diamond: A New Approach to SFBT that will Empower Both Practitioner and Client to Achieve the Best Outcomes**

**Keys to Solution Brief Therapy** – Steve de Shazer (2010): transforming complaints to solutions – how to know when to do what depending on what the client presents with, a table of 12 factors. Pages 27-30 are presented below.



Each of these elements seems to be connected to all of the other elements in the complaint construction in such a way that they define each other. Consequently, a change in one can "lead to" changes in the others. The same event will be defined in various ways due to the various other factors involved in the situation. For instance, we all know that if the car does not start, our reaction will differ according to how we feel. If we are already "down," the stalled car will be just one more thing going wrong. But if we are "on top of the world," then the stalled car will be nothing more than a minor inconvenience. From situation to situation, some elements may be more connected or more pertinent than others. For example, frequently clients complain of feeling (usually phrased as "being") depressed. Some will immediately be able to describe the behavioral aspects of it, while others find that difficult or impossible; therefore, they will focus on the involuntary aspects. Some will easily describe significant others who are trying to cheer them up (accidentally making it worse), while others find that difficult and instead bemoan the fact that historically they have good reasons to be depressed. Still others are depressed about something they are sure is going to happen (or not happen) in the future.

During the interview, the therapist asks questions about each of the areas listed above and illustrated in Figure 2.3, attempting to define the problem in such a way that a solution can develop. Each client seems to have "favorite" factor(s) that he or she chooses to emphasize in the description of the problem. Likewise, the therapists behind the mirror map the information in ways which they deem important (using similar categories). Our collective experience since 1977 indicates that any of the 12 factors can be subject to change, and the change of one factor can be followed by changes in the others.

Although there is no one-to-one relationship between the building blocks used to construct complaints and those used to construct interventions, nonetheless what clients emphasize strongly suggests possibilities. For instance, if the complaint is described as happening only in one particular place,

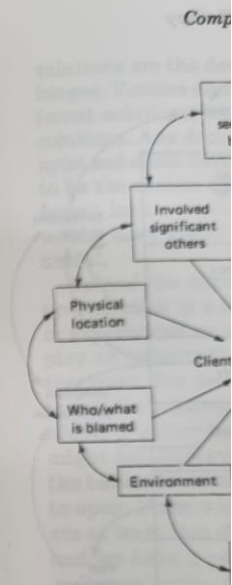


Figure 2.3

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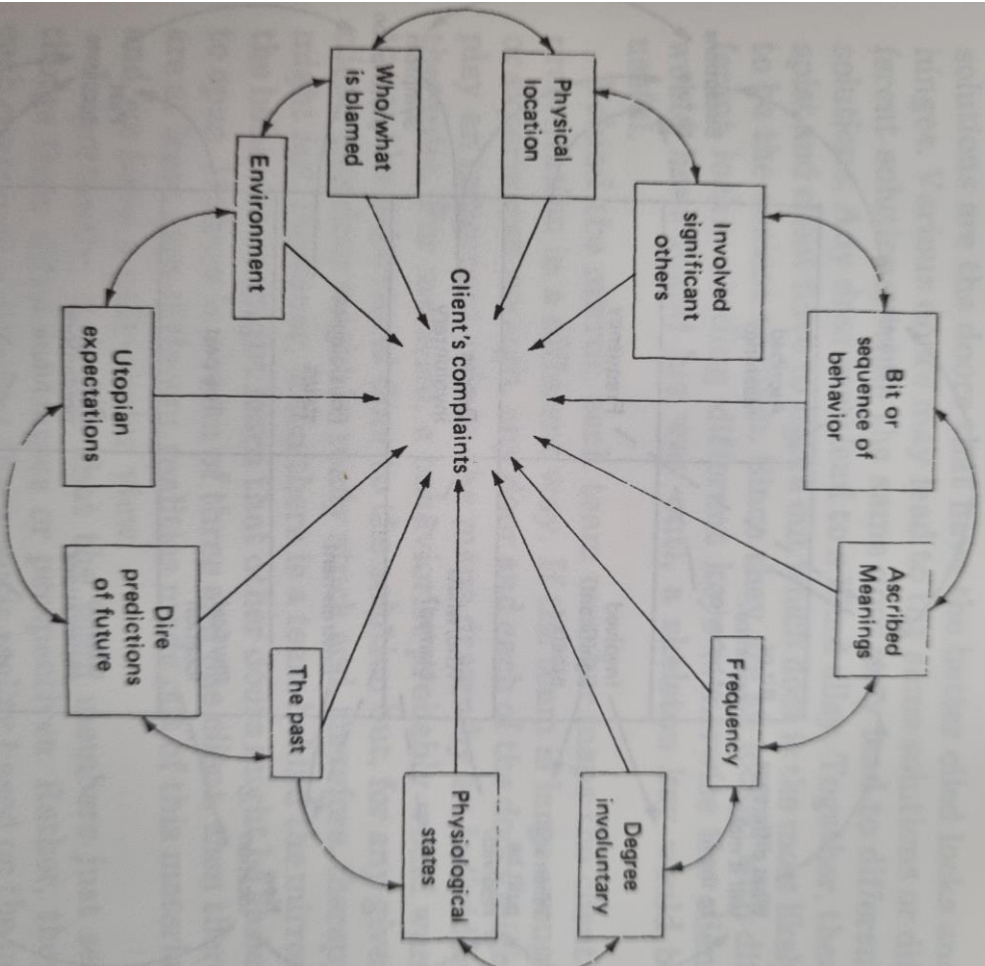


Figure 2.3 The Building Blocks of Complaints

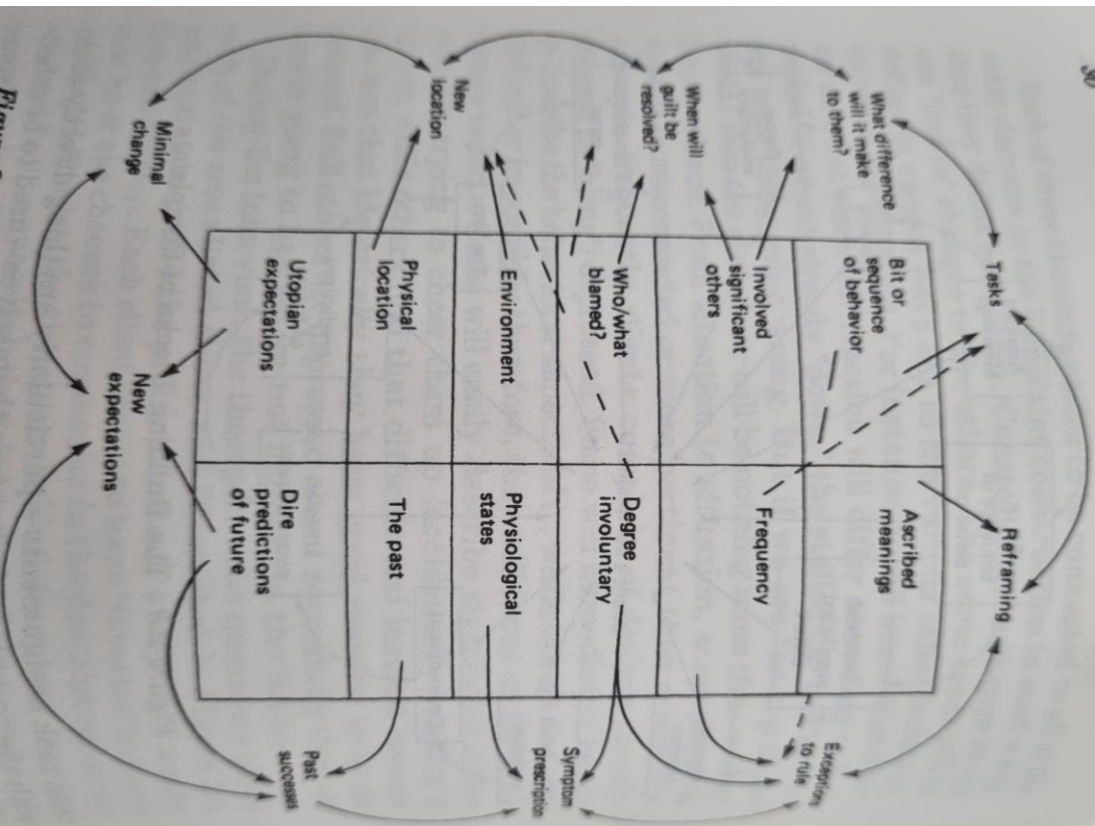


Figure 2.4 Transforming Complaints Toward Solution

## **Information for our Upcoming WASFIG Zoom Meeting 12 in April 2023**

### **WASFIG Zoom Meeting 12: Saturday 29 April 2023 9:30am-11:30am WA Time**

**When: Saturday 29 April 2023 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (VIC/NSW/QLD = 11:30pm-1:30pm, SA/NT = 11am-1pm)**

**Topic: Benefits of Using SFBT in Supporting Clients Experiencing Family and Domestic Violence (FDV): How SFBT Creates a Healing Relationship by Amplifying Client Resistance to FDV to Empower Survivors/Victims to Reclaim their Life**

Please join us for a discussion on the difference SFBT can make to empower clients experiencing FDV. We are again excited to draw on the wealth of knowledge of our attendees! Each attendee can have 5-10 minutes to share their SF tip/strategy for working with clients experiencing FDV. Please bring along to this meeting:

- a SF tip/strategy for working with clients experiencing FDV;
- a key idea from a Solution Focused training workshop on FDV you attended;
- a title of an interesting Solution Focused book or article you read on FDV and what you got out of it;
- an inspirational success story or sparkling moment of some good Solution Focused work you did with your clients experiencing FDV and what you did that contributed to the good outcomes;
- any other thoughts or questions you have for the group to consider when working with clients experiencing FDV from the Solution Focused approach.

Please let Steve and Kerry know if you would like to join us and we will send more information and the Zoom link to you closer to the time.

### **FIND US ON FACEBOOK: WA SFBT Interest Group Facebook Group**

Please join our WASFIG Facebook Group to keep connecting and building our network between meetings, see up to date news and information for our group, share great SFBT resources and get support in working with clients. If you have any more thoughts to add on this October Summary it would be great to start a discussion in the Facebook group so we can all join in: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3103428583276551>

Remember to join the **Australasian Solution Focused Association** to access free training during the year, articles from the Journal of Solution Focused Practices, online group supervision and the members only Facebook group. <https://www.solutionfocused.org.au/>

Thank you again to all attendees who shared their thoughts and experience of SFBT and we look forward to seeing you at our April 2023 meeting. Through expanding on difference and details we are building language for the version of self the client wants to be outside of the problem which they already have language for.

To have it you must describe it. *Change lies in the detail. When a client is talking about things they have not experienced before this makes the difference – change does not come from just rehashing what they already know. When working with non-imaginative clients who give one word answers – go slowly, leave them to sit with it to expand their answers – have patience/discipline – sit in silence while client puzzles about things rather than encouraging them to give an answer quickly. Invite your client into a zone where they have not been before and different thoughts emerge.* – Mark McKergow