

# Western Australian Solution Focused Interest Group (WASFIG) Meeting 14



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

1. Share SF knowledge and update our SF knowledge since our original training;
2. Connect and network with like-minded SF practitioners to reduce isolation and enhance a community spirit;
3. Grow interest in the SFBT approach in WA and beyond and 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 for greater focus;
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).

## **WASFIG Zoom Meeting 14 Review: Saturday 12 August 2023 9:30am-11:30am WA Time**

**When: Saturday 12 August 2023 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (VIC/NSW/QLD = 11:30pm-1:30pm, SA/NT = 11am-1pm; New Zealand = 1:30pm-3:30pm)**

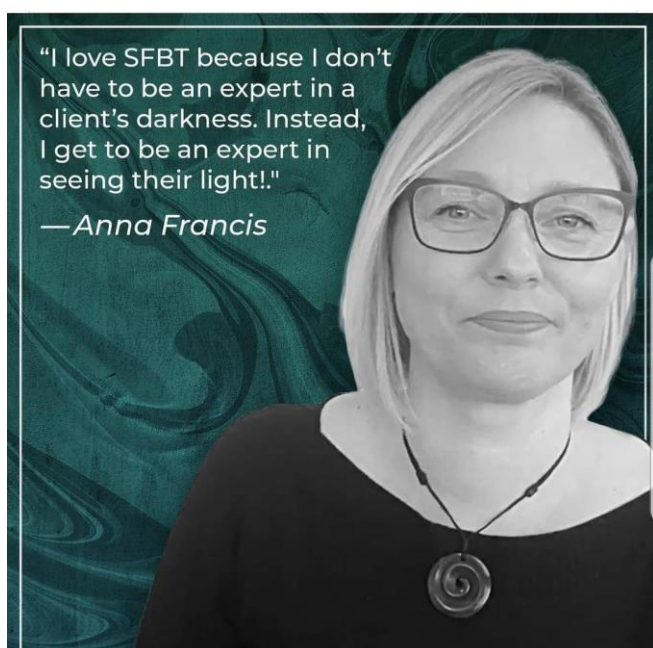
**Where:** Zoom

**Attendees:** Yvette Strawbridge, Janet Lim, Shona Scallan, Johanna Saltis, Theresa Acutt, Nadia Truong, Magdaline Wendot, Sara Ristovska, Kym Madden, Ruth Leveson, Fiona Skahill, Theresa Hewlett, Anna Francis, Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond (Co-Cordinators).

**Apologies:** Michele Thomas, Michael Bazeley, Brent Dagleish, Matt Cameron, Lisa Jooste, Daniela Kolundzija, and Emma Burns.

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

**Group Presenter:** Anna Francis!



## **Topic: Meeting Anna Francis and Learning Anna's SF Tips for Working with Clients Managing Grief and Trauma**

Anna Francis is an expert SFBT trainer/coach and Registered Counsellor based in New Zealand. Kerry recently completed the 16-week Coaching Course with the Solution Focused Universe (SFU) <https://thesfu.com/> and is freshly inspired and encouraged by Anna who facilitated the weekly Coaching Calls with Elliott Connie, Adam Froerer and Cecil Walker, and led the weekly SF Skills Practice groups. Amongst her million contributions to keeping the SFU on track in supporting and encouraging SFBT practitioners worldwide, in her 'spare time', Anna supports clients through her private practice *Good Grief Counselling*:

<https://goodgriefcounselling.co.nz/>. Anna has released a new video series through the SFU called “Don’t Forget” where she shares inspiring and practical suggestions for building our confidence and competence as SFBT practitioners.

In August 2023 our WASFIG enjoyed the honour of meeting with and spending two hours learning from Anna. In preparing us for the meeting, Kerry had created and shared a handout *SFBT Working with Client’s Managing Grief and Trauma* to read though. A selection of Anna’s *Don’t Forget* video blogs were also included, along with one from Adam Froerer and Cecil Walker who provide some great SFBT questions in working with clients experiencing grief. Attendees were invited to share their reflections on these and how they had found the information helpful with their own clients during the group:

**Anna Francis** – the importance of believing in your clients - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erUczj3nozY>

**Anna Francis** – whose Best Hopes we need to work with - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fX6xrlT8l6o>

**Anna Francis** – what to leave at the door to not get stuck in session - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukVH48px3P8>

**Anna Francis** – the quickest way to get better at SFBT while being yourself – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dsTeb4mx5Y>

**Anna Francis** – the problem is not relevant to change, the client’s outcome is more valuable and important to the change they want in their life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XS4zx5lDQI>

**Adam Froerer and Cecil Walker** from the SFU talking about how SFBT works to ‘rewire’ the brain and they give some great examples of SFBT questions to ask clients experiencing grief and loss: <https://youtu.be/AL8jaSmH20c>

The meeting began with a brief introduction from each person who was also invited to share with the group a ‘sparkling SFBT moment’ in their recent work. Everyone shared something positive and useful to learn from. It is such a valuable experience to have this community from whom and with whom to learn.

Anna then shared the following key tips in working with grief and trauma from the SFBT approach:

1. **Identify your client’s Best Hopes or Desired Outcome from the session** – similar to a taxi driver picking you up from the airport who needs to know where you are going to start driving towards your destination, SF practitioners don’t know in which direction to ask our questions to be most useful for the client if we do not know where the client wants to go.
2. When working with clients who have experienced grief or trauma, it is important to join with the client by **moving slowly and at the client’s pace** – be mindful of your tone, be sensitive to the painful experience and ensure your questions and tone match the intensity of the client. In this case, asking SF questions in a cheerful tone would obviously be disrespectful and insensitive to our client who is struggling. Use a tone that acknowledges the gravity of the situation and is curious about the possibility that the client is hoping for that their life could be better. Mark McKergow has previously suggested the term ‘validating curiosity’ to describe asking questions with having ‘one foot in acknowledgement and one foot in possibility’.
3. **Show up as a human** – be a person with a heart first before being a therapist – Elliott Connie has reminded us that working with clients is ‘heart work’, which is particularly important when working with clients who are managing grief and trauma. Eg. “Given how difficult things have been for you lately, what would make our time together useful to you?”

4. **Importance of using the words ‘despite’, ‘instead’ and ‘what difference would that make?’** in our questions to shift the client’s attention to what they wanted to have happening in their life ‘instead’ of the problem; or ‘despite’ the challenge they have experienced; and if this was to happen, ‘what difference would that make’ to the client’s life? This helps the client to build language for their Best Hopes/Desired Outcome that they would like their life to look like to bring about more positive change.
5. SFBT is not ‘problem phobic’ and we **do not stop clients from talking about their problems**. SFBT provides the space for the client to talk about their problem if they wish to. The difference is that when it is our turn to talk, the questions we ask are not going to assess the problem or ask anymore details about the problem; but instead, we invite the client to move towards their Best Hopes or Preferred Future.
6. The importance of **meeting the client’s special person who they have lost** as the client might fear this person might be forgotten. SFBT questions can invite the client to consider what they appreciated that this person brought into their life, and identify any lessons the client learnt from their special person that they would like to continue to live their life being guided by as a way to honour the legacy of their person. They can also reflect on what the person might have appreciated that the client brought into their life.
7. SFBT questions work to **create an increasingly detailed description for the version of self the client wishes to be**, to ‘stretch the client’s mind’ in building on this version and identifying signs of this reality in future.
8. **‘Pineapples are good, but not everyone likes pineapples.’** – Oprah Winfrey. Anna shared this quote to remind us that although we work to be the very best SFBT practitioner we can be, that not all clients like the SFBT approach and this is ok as we cannot be everything to everybody. We all strive to be useful for our clients, but if we cannot be useful, then we are happy to not be harmful.
9. Ask **SFBT questions that include the client’s Desired Outcome and their resources to achieve this** – most of the time. SFBT is a conversational approach so we will make other comments that build the description in the direction of the client’s Desired Outcome that are more or less targeted at the resources they can draw upon to achieve their outcome.
10. **Get comfortable sitting in silence** and discomfort to give the client time to think through and reflect on the question and to come up with an answer.
11. **Clients who are feeling-based can become irritated when asked ‘doing/behaviour questions’**. However, it is important to keep persisting in inviting the client to articulate what they would be doing or how their feeling would show up around others in their behaviours to create a clearer picture and description of this for them to notice. Work to ask meaningful questions that are connected to important people or pets in the client’s life to help them answer the questions and be less irritated.
12. **Be your own SFBT practitioner in a way that feels right for you** – we cannot all be Elliott Connie – he is already taken!

Anna also suggested a **SF-Self Supervision exercise** for us to try out: List 10 important traits that make you good at what you do. If the last 3 traits on the list were to somehow become stronger, what difference would you notice in your client work that would let you know this had happened?

## **Thank You Anna Francis!**

After the meeting, Anna let us know that she enjoyed attending our group and said it was ‘a privilege to meet a wonderful group of helping professionals’! We received some heart-warming feedback on the WASFIG August 2023 meeting in the chat comments, follow up emails and by SMS’s. Steve and Kerry were also delighted with a feedback comment received from Anna: “*Kerry and Steve provide a warm, nurturing and professionally informative learning SFBT environment in the WASFIG.*”

Anna invited anyone who has any questions for her to contact her on [anna@thesfu.com](mailto:anna@thesfu.com)

For more information on the free training workshops provided by the **Solution Focused Universe (SFU)** during the year, you can sign up to the email list through <https://thesfu.com/>

## **References and Recommended Reading:**

Connie, E. (2022), *SFBT Approach with Clients Dealing with Trauma*, Solution Focused Universe, Online training workshop, Accessed 12 June 2022

Connie, E. and Froerer, A. (2023), *The Solution Focused Brief Therapy Diamond: A new approach to SFBT that will empower both practitioner and client to achieve the best outcomes*, USA: Hay House Inc.

Froerer, A., Von Cziffra-Bergs, J., Kim, J. and Connie, E. (Eds.) (2018), *Solution-Focused Brief Therapy with Clients Managing Trauma*, USA: Oxford University Press

McKergow, M. (2021), *The Next Generation of Solution Focused Practice: Stretching the world for new opportunities and progress*, Routledge: London

von Cziffra-Bergs, J. and Froerer, A. (2021), *SFBT with Grief*, Solution Focused Institute of South Africa, Online training workshop, Accessed 30 March 2021

## **Information for our Upcoming WASFIG Zoom Meeting 15 in October 2023**

### **WASFIG Zoom Meeting 15: Saturday 28 October 2023 9:30am-11:30am WA Time**

**When: Saturday 28 October 2023 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (VIC/NSW/QLD = 11:30pm-1:30pm, SA/NT = 11am-1pm; New Zealand = 1:30pm-3:30pm)**

### **Topic: Unlocking the Magic of Young People: SFBT with Children, Adolescents and Families**

How do we use SFBT to best support children, adolescents and their families?

Elliott Connie and Adam Froerer of the Solution Focused Universe (SFU) offer many useful SF tips in how to ‘unlock the magic of young people’ in working with young clients and their families effectively with the SFBT approach. One great tip they shared in their free video series *SFBT with Children and Families* is when the Best Hopes/Desired Outcome of a young client and their parents contradict each other - ‘Don’t Panic!’. Instead of panicking, listen for and build on the existing greatness within the family by asking SFBT questions that cause the family to compliment each other and help to invite the best versions of themselves into the session. Although the family tends to present in session with the story about ‘what is not going well’, remember that there is also the parallel story about their strength, resources and what is going well in the family. This is where SFBT shines the light to invite young clients and their families to notice the times that what they want to be happening has already happened. By learning about how this happened, families can work together to make this happen again more intentionally in future:

*If your parent knew that despite how difficult the relationship is now that you are someone they can trust, what are they overlooking?*

*What do you value about your child that if they knew you thought this about them, they would feel respected and loved?*

*Given things are difficult now, what do you know about your partner/family member that lets you know they are somebody worth working with and worth trying to fix the situation with?*

Adam Froerer (2023) just released a wonderful new video on this topic. Have a look at Adam's thoughts on working with teenagers here: <https://youtu.be/MWxXQ-wmruo>

Please join us at our last WASFIG meeting for 2023 on **Saturday 28 October 2023 9:30am-11:30am (WA Time) (VIC/NSW/QLD = 11:30pm-1:30pm, SA/NT = 11am-1pm; New Zealand = 1:30pm-3:30pm)** where we will consider more SFBT tips in working to support younger clients and their families to show up as their best version of self to better cope with life's challenges.

We invite you to come along and share your thoughts and experiences in working with younger clients with the SFBT approach. Please let Steve and Kerry know if you would like to join us and we will email you the Zoom link and resources once we have confirmed these.

**\*\*\*\*\*Upcoming SFBT: The Three Essentials One-Day Workshop on Friday 29 September 2023\*\*\*\*\***

Steve and Kerry are excited to announce that we will be providing training on the latest SFBT 2.0 approach using Elliott Connie and Adam Froerer's SFBT Diamond model. This workshop's content and learning objectives include:

- Enhancing understanding of the SFBT **mindset** to adopt in a SFBT session, to know how this stance can help you avoid becoming stuck and doubting a client's ability to achieve their Best Hopes or Desired Outcome, and to persist in the search for the client's capacity for success instead;
- Embedding the **road map** (having your own SF-GPS!) to keep on track in a SFBT session working towards the client's Best Hopes or Desired Outcome;
- **Building fluency in SFBT language** with meaningful SFBT questions that lead towards positive change for clients; and
- Practicing in a supportive learning environment in developing your confidence and competence in SFBT and being able to use SFBT immediately with clients and within your own settings.

**Cost:** \$275

To thank our valued WASFIG members for walking with us along our SFBT journey over the last three years, we are offering a **10% discount ie \$247.50 for WASFIG members** who have attended a WASFIG meeting in person at Karrinyup or via Zoom, and for Australasian Solution Focused Association (ASFA) members. Student discounts on application.

Registrations close on Monday 25 September 2023. As we will have a maximum of 18 people, please book early to ensure your place. Morning tea and lunch is included. Please advise us of any special dietary requirements upon your registration.

**SFBT Skills Practice and Supervision Groups Arriving Soon in October 2023:**

To build your confidence in being the SFBT practitioner you aspire to be, Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond will provide monthly 2-hour **SFBT Skills Practice and Supervision Groups**. These open group sessions invite practitioners to join through the year in whichever months would best suit. Our Best Hopes from these groups are to connect with professionals who are keen to sharpen their SFBT practice in a supportive environment, and to navigate common SFBT challenges to better support our clients and ourselves as practitioners.

**Cost:** \$80

Again, to thank our WASFIG members for walking along our SFBT journey over the last three years, we are offering a **10% discount ie \$72 for first group session attended by WASFIG members** who have been to a WASFIG meeting in person at Karrinyup or via Zoom, for Australasian Solution Focused Association (ASFA) members and to **SFBT: The Three Essentials** workshop attendees. Student discounts on application.

For more information on the **SFBT: The Three Essentials One-Day Workshop** or **SFBT Skills Practice and Supervision Groups** please contact:

Steve on [srunciman@inet.net.au](mailto:srunciman@inet.net.au) or Kerry on [counsellingwithkerry@gmail.com](mailto:counsellingwithkerry@gmail.com)

Remember to join the **Australasian Solution Focused Association** to access free workshops with special guest presenters during the year (which is recorded to access at a later time if you cannot attend), articles from the Journal of Solution Focused Practices, monthly online peer group supervision on Monday afternoons, and the members only Facebook group. <https://www.solutionfocused.org.au/>

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 August 2023 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>

Thank you to everyone who attended our August 2023 WASFIG group and shared their kind words, it means the world to us to hear we are making a difference in supporting practitioners in a useful way! We continue to be inspired by the SFBT work our attendees share and are honoured that these practitioners take time out of their busy schedules to connect with us. We look forward to seeing you again at our October 2023 meeting.

Until next time, we wish you every success with the kind of practitioner you aspire to be - be your own kind of SFBT pineapple!

Warmly,

Kerry and Steve

WA SFBT Interest Group Co-Coordiators