

Western Australian Solution Focused Interest Group (WASFIG) Meeting 19



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 19 Review: Saturday 31 August 2024 9:30am-11:30am WA Time

When: Saturday 31 August 2024 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (QLD/VIC/NSW = 11:30am-1:30pm; SA/NT = 11am-1pm; New Zealand = 1:30pm-3:30pm)

Where: Zoom

Attendees: Michele Thomas, Shona Scallan, Rebekah Collins, Roger Lowe, Heather Bunting, Tracy Shirvill, Katti Jisuk Seo, Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond (Co-Coordinator).

Apologies: Theresa Acutt, Nadia Truong, Samantha Smith, Fiona Skahill, Ruth Leveson, and Yvette Strawbridge.

Group Facilitators: Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond

Group Presenter: Katti Jisuk Seo

Topic: *SFBT Coaching, Self-Coaching and Using Creative Writing In Client Sessions.*

In our WASFIG August 2024 we were joined by Katti Jisuk Seo a Solution Focused Coach and writer Zooming in from Sydney to share her thoughts on SFBT Coaching, self-coaching and how she uses writing as a tool with her clients in session. Katti learnt about Solution Focused coaching in 2014 and became passionate about Solution Focused self-coaching methods when she wanted to access Solution Focused coaching for herself and developed questions and techniques to talk to herself in a Solution Focused way. Please have a look at Katti's website to learn more about her approach: <https://en.kattijisuk.com/>

Steve invited attendees to start out in our usual way of reflecting on and sharing some 'sparkling moments' of client work, or other 'sparkling moments' in our life more generally, we were pleased to experience since our last group meeting. Listening to these moments shared by the group brings a sense of energy and hopefulness that is special to SFBT groups who know the value of taking this time on the outset. Reflecting on these moments is a powerful reminder of the positive difference we can make in our client's lives by working from a Solution Focused approach.

Katti then started her presentation by providing an introduction and overview as to how she works as a Solution Focused coach. Katti described how she uses creative writing and visual story telling with her clients during session and how she has improved her own development as a practitioner using journalling and training ChatGPT on how to ask her solution focused questions to be her Solution Focused coach. Katti invited questions from the group to learn more about the way she works with clients.

Some key points shared by Katti were:

- Journalling for self care – when providing prompts for clients to write in their journal after the session, be mindful of their language and where they are at to match in with their tone and pace. For a client who is struggling, being invited to notice highlights of the day (or to start a gratitude journal) may be invalidating or too overwhelming. If you think it may be too much for a client to be invited to notice 3 good things, adjusting our language to noticing 3 good enough things, or to notice 1 thing you were pleased to see yourself do despite this challenging time may be more manageable. Also be mindful to invite our client to look for tiny signs or glimmers rather than looking for big things to happen. This is in line with Mark McKergow’s idea of asking Solution Focused questions with ‘validating curiosity’ and Adam Froerer’s suggestion that we are highlighting a client’s ‘strength amidst adversity, not strength without adversity’.
- Ask yourself Solution Focused self-coaching questions when experiencing a challenging time or to show up at your best by asking yourself what version of yourself you would like to show up as. As Elliott Connie has suggested “it is not about removing the struggle but showing up at your best for the struggle”.
- “Hear the images” – listen for imagery when your client shares their experience to identify metaphors in their language to use in your solution focused questions. For example, if the client describes a challenge in their life as a volcano we could ask a question of what would be happening to transform that image into one depicting the client coping better with the challenge or volcano. The client might describe themselves surfing across the lava. Then we can ask for tiny signs that might let the client and others in their life know they are beginning to ‘surf across the lava’ in the way they are coping better with their challenge.
- Visual story telling – we can invite our client to describe their Preferred Future in terms of watching a movie trailer and then asking the client what they might be pleased to see as the highlights in their movie trailer.
- Invite your client to take some time in session to make some notes to start the journalling or creative writing process that they can then build on outside of the session. Once the client can get started on journalling they are more likely to keep going, otherwise they might not get around to starting the process.
- Provide your client with some bedtime prompts to reflect on over the day. Encourage them to notice different things each day so this is more likely to have an impact. Noticing only 1 thing can shift the client’s attention but might not have the same impact on change as listing 10 or more things they have noticed. Once the client has listed things to the point where they feel they could not list another thing and then they are asked to list one more thing, this is where change starts to happen. Mark McKergow has called this process ‘mind stretching or world stretching’. This process encourages our client to build language for things they might not have reflected upon previously. Once they have, they are more likely to notice these options to engage in which can create change in their life.
- Using ChatGPT as a Solution Focused coach is a good way to access free Solution Focused coaching. This takes time, experimentation and much patience to set up using some prompts to ‘teach’ ChatGPT to learn how to be your coach. This is similar to the way we would listen to our clients to learn how to best be their practitioner to support them in the right way. If ChatGPT asks us an unsuitable question or a problem focused question we can correct it and ChatGPT will learn to ask the question in a better way. This can be

helpful for our development as a practitioner, however ChatGPT would not be able to replace a conversation with a human coach!

Katti kindly shared some tips on the information she types into ChatGPT to set up ChatGPT to provide a Solution Focused Coaching session for herself, and she has given her Solution Focused Coach the name 'Hannah':

Create a free account for ChatGPT on <https://openai.com>

Not 'what do you have to do' but 'how will you know you are moving forward.' Focus on signs rather than steps. One of the key differences between problem-solving and Solution Focus is recognizing signs of the preferred future happening rather than steps towards it. The core of #SolutionFocus #SFBT (Tweet by Evan George, BRIEF The Leading Centre for Solution Focused Teaching, Training, and Practice)

As an SF coach, Hannah only asks questions without making suggestions.

Hannah should use the coachee's words when responding, avoiding rephrasing with synonyms.

Hannah always asks open-ended questions.

Hannah asks one question at a time.

Solution Focused Self Coaching Questions:

Family Therapy Podcast Bonus Episode: Questions – Elliott Connie 14 September 2024

In Elliott Connie's new podcast *Family Therapy*, available to listen to on Spotify or via the SFU website, he ended with a bonus episode asking questions which can help practitioners to shift their focus to what is working in life. Elliott encourages us to ask ourselves more useful questions to build hope into life and adopt a new way of living. This shifts our focus from problem focused questioning of why the challenge happened to more solution focused questioning on possibility of identifying what you can control and actions you can take to move forward despite the difficult experience to build hope. Elliott invites us to shift from a 'why me?' approach to 'what if?' approach.

Some Solution Focused self coaching questions Elliott suggested are:

What are your Best Hopes for your life?

What is the version of yourself in line with yourself functioning at your very best?

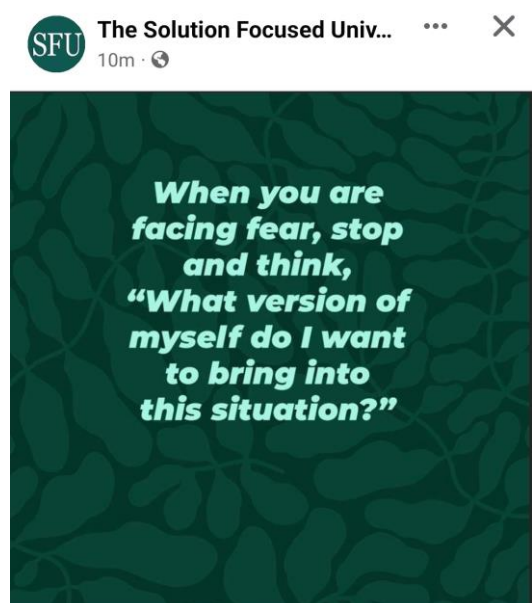
What signs are present to let you know you are living your life based on your outcome?

How would others in your life notice you are living your life in this way?

What sacrifices are needed to lead to the life you want?

What is the first step to build momentum towards this path?

Elliott encourages us to envision and focus on achieving the life we desire, rather than on past setbacks. By asking ourselves hopeful questions, he continues, we can consider possibilities and actions to move forward. While problem focused investigative questions that search for why problems happened can leave us feeling stuck, shifting focus to what outcome you want despite the problem and



signs that would let you know you are stepping forward towards this can build hope and energy to persist during a difficult time.

Elliott Connie and Adam Froerer's new book *Change Your Questions, Change Your Future* is out now! Their book explores more useful questions we can ask ourselves to move towards our preferred future. It would be great to hear your reviews on their book on the WASFIG Facebook page!

Thank you Katti Jisuk Seo!

Thank you again Katti for sharing your time and experience with us. Thank you for the encouragement to use writing with our clients in session and for ourselves to shift our perspective more to what we want to have happen in our life, and to record what is already happening when we take the time to notice this. Thank you for introducing us to the latest technology of what is possible using ChatGPT to be our Solution Focused coach, and for the reminder of the importance of matching our tone and pace to where our clients are at to ensure we can be most useful for them.

It would be great to hear from attendees and those who have reflections after reading this summary who would like to share a take away from the meeting that will help you in your client work. Please share your comments on our WASFIG Facebook page so we can all join in on the conversation to keep connecting between meetings!

Resources from Katti:

Some coaching insights: <https://en.kattijisuk.com/coaching-insights>

Her article *The Glint of Light on Broken Glass* which explores her experiences of being a client during a SFBT training program with Evan George of BRIEF and her reflections on this: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/journalsfp/vol5/iss2/6/>

Thoughts on self-coaching, SF walk and talk sessions and training ChatGPT for Solution Focused questions at the September 2023 ASFA Members meeting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_hB7qS2tQY

References:

Connie, E. (2024), *Family Therapy, The Podcast: Bonus Episode: Questions*, Available <https://elliottconnie.com/> ; Accessed 8 September 2024.

Connie, E. E. and Froerer, A. S. (2024), *Change Your Questions, Change Your Future: Overcome Challenges and Create a New Vision For Your Life Using the Principles of Solution Focused Brief Therapy*, California: Hay House LLC

Information for our Upcoming WASFIG Zoom Meeting 20 in October 2024

WASFIG October 2024 Zoom Meeting 20: Saturday 26 October 2024 9:30am-11:30am WA Time

When: Saturday 26 October 2024 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (QLD = 11:30pm-1:30pm; VIC/NSW = 12:30pm-2:30pm), SA/NT = 12pm-2pm; New Zealand = 2:30pm-4:30pm)

Topic: Building Towards Better: Cutting Edge Solution Focused Ideas and Practice Reflections for 2024.

Please join us for our last WASFIG meeting of the year where Steve will share cutting edge SF ideas and his key learnings of latest SFBT thoughts from UK SFBT Conference 2024, and Steve and Kerry will share their key learnings of latest SFBT thoughts from ASFA Sydney Conference 2024 with Mark McKergow as keynote speaker. If you attended the ASFA Sydney Conference (or the UK SFBT Conference!) it would be wonderful to have you join us to share your insights with the group and what inspired you at the conference! It is encouraging to be around and

connect with like-minded SF practitioners who are passionate and energetic about making a difference in their clinical, organisational or educational fields.

In preparing for our October 2024 WASFIG meeting:

- Come along and inspire us with one of your key SFBT learnings this year that has had a positive impact on your life as a practitioner and/or in your personal life;
- Reflect on your highlights and ‘ah-ha’ moments from the ASFA or UK conference;
- Share your latest favourite SFBT book and a lesson learnt from this;
- We also invite you to ask any questions on client cases you have or if you are feeling stuck with a client and would like some inspiration from the group to reconnect to the Solution Focused mindset to move the session forward in a positive way for your client.
- Or just join us to enjoy hearing about the lessons learnt, changes made and skills developed that you might like to try out in your own life in becoming the practitioner you aspire to be!

WASFIG News:

Katti’s New Online Group

Katti will be offering a group via Zoom on Thursdays at 3pm WA Time (5pm her time in NSW) for anyone who would like to connect and discuss SFBT, journaling or self-coaching. For more information, please contact Katti on www.kattijisuk.com/contact.

Matt’s Solution Focused Dice

Matt Cameron (SF practitioner in New Zealand) has created a Solution Focused dice in different sizes that have Solution Focused questions on each side! These are great to use for both child and adult clients alike to bring more playfulness into the session for clients who might be struggling to answer questions. Please contact Matt on matt@discoversolutions.nz to add some SF dice to your toolbox.



November 2024: Solution Focused Skills Practice and Supervision Groups via Zoom

“When we struggle in session we may feel we have done a bad job, but when we are struggling is when we are most creative but we tend to focus on the struggle instead of the creativity. It is easier to see the brilliance in our colleagues that we struggle to see within ourselves.” – Chris Iveson, June 2024

Being able to share SF ways of working and thinking about clients inspires and energises me. I find conversations with a group of SF practitioners renews my confidence and drive to make a difference for clients. SF group supervision is an opportunity to share in the same inspiring and hopeful conversations that we have with our clients with each other as practitioners. It is so helpful to leave with useful SF ideas to use with my clients, rather than having suggestions that don’t always fit with my way of weaving hope into hard conversations. SF colleagues are focusing on what we did well with our client and what is working to build on to move more intentionally down this more useful path. SF colleagues are intentionally noticing our brilliance that we may have not noticed as Chris has

pointed out, as we are too busy criticising ourselves for what we did wrong! Walking away from a SF conversation in supervision leaves me feeling stronger in myself and ready to create positive change with my clients.

You are warmly invited to join Solution Focused Skills Practice and Supervision Groups with Kerry Drummond. Experience the Solution Focused 'difference that makes a difference' and leave group supervision feeling energised, stronger and with a sense of renewed confidence as a practitioner. These are open groups trusting that you know when group supervision would be most useful to engage in for yourself. With changing life circumstances, what was once a suitable time locked in at the beginning of the year might not be useful later in the year. SF Skills Practice and Supervision Groups are a safe and empowering space where practitioners can feel a sense of connection, appreciation and encouragement. Groups are held during the year on the alternate month to WASFIG (March, May, July, September, November) either on a Friday or Saturday for 2 hours via Zoom with 4 practitioners to receive support on client cases and to practice SF skills together. The next groups will be held on **Friday 8 November 2024 at 9:30am-11:30am WA time** and **Saturday 30 November 2024 9:30am-11:30am**. Please contact Kerry on invictuscounsellingservice@gmail.com if you would like more information. Fees are \$80 for the two hour group. There is a 10% discount (\$72) for your first group for WASFIG members who have attended a meeting, attended a training workshop with Steve and Kerry, and for all ASFA members.

What are your Best Hopes for WASFIG 2025?

We invite you to consider topics to discuss at WASFIG in 2025. Please share these with us at the October 2024 meeting, via email us or on the WASFIG Facebook page. We would love to hear about your SFBT work with clients and how this has made a positive difference for them. If you would like to present some of your 'sparkling moments' of client work at a WASFIG meeting, we would be happy to facilitate and support you with this.

Join the ***Australasian Solution Focused Association (ASFA)*** 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 between meetings, see up to date news, share great SFBT resources and get support in working with clients: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3103428583276551>

Thank you all for attending our August 2024 WASFIG meeting with Katti and learning how to have creative conversations with our clients in session by listening for imagery in their language to build into our solution focused questions, and using Solution Focused self coaching questions to care for ourselves as practitioners and improve our development and practice of working in a Solution Focused way.

Looking forward to seeing all who can attend at our last WASFIG meeting for 2024 in October.

Warmly,

Kerry and Steve

WA SFBT Interest Group Co-Coordinator