

Western Australian Solution Focused Interest Group (WASFIG) Meeting 25



*We gather to share what we've learned on the way,
Fresh insights unfolding with each passing day.
We connect with each other, no longer alone,
A community strengthened, a spirit well grown.
We grow the bright spark of SFBT far and near,
Each sign of hope making pathways more clear.
Together we see possibility's call,
Bringing hope into action—
a vision for all.*

WASFIG Best Hopes: Share · Connect · Grow · Learn · Develop

1. **Share** – To keep our Solution Focused knowledge alive and evolving, revisiting what we first learned in training while embracing fresh insights and practices.
2. **Connect** – To nurture meaningful relationships with fellow SF practitioners, reducing isolation and building a strong, supportive community spirit.
3. **Grow** – To spark curiosity and expand interest in SFBT across WA and beyond, knowing that every small SF step can contribute to changing the world.
4. **Learn** – To explore where, when, and with whom SF works best in our practice, bringing clarity and focus to how we apply it.
5. **Develop** – To strengthen our effectiveness and efficiency as practitioners, making every session count—approaching each one as though it is the only, or the last, and giving our very best.

WASFIG Zoom Meeting 25 Review: Saturday 25 October 2025 3pm-5pm WA Time

When: Saturday 25 October 2025 3pm-5pm WA Time (QLD = 5pm-7pm; VIC/NSW = 6pm-8pm; SA/NT = 4:30pm-6:30pm; New Zealand = 8pm-10pm)

Where: Zoom

Attendees: Michele Thomas, Shona Scallan, Tracy Shirvill, Ruth Leveson, Theresa Acutt, Nadia Truong, Cathy Martin, Wendy Garreffa, Cara Maclay, Rebekah Collins, Helen Reilly, Matt Cameron, Allison Van Corler, Dr Jacqui von Czipfra-Bergs, Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond (Co-Coordinator).

Apologies: Simon Dowling and Sara Ristovska.

Group Presenter: Dr Jacqui von Czipfra-Bergs

Topic: *Special Guest Speaker Jacqui von Czipfra-Bergs: Becoming a Soul-ution Whisperer in Trauma – Building Resilient Clients and Vicariously Resilient Therapists*



We were honoured to welcome our special guest speaker, Dr Jacqui von Czipfra-Bergs, who joined us live from Johannesburg, South Africa via Zoom for our final WASFIG meeting of 2025.

Dr Jacqui is an Educational Psychologist and the Director of the Solution Focused Institute of South Africa. She is internationally recognised for her expertise in teaching Solution Focused Therapy and Solution Focused thinking to psychologists, counsellors, social workers, educators, and organisations. As the founder of the Solution Focused Institute of South

Africa, Dr Jacqui has been instrumental in promoting world-class training and advancing Solution Focused practice across diverse settings.

Formerly an Associate Professor at the University of Johannesburg, Dr Jacqui continues to teach at universities across South Africa and has lectured widely both nationally and in the United States. She has made significant contributions to the field through her writing, including co-authoring *SFBT and Clients Managing Trauma* (2018) with Adam Froerer, Elliott Connie, and Johnny Kim. Her most recent publication, *Women's Perspectives on the Solution Focused Approach: International Applications and Interventions* (2024), co-written and edited with Anne-Marie Wolff, takes readers on an inspiring global journey exploring the voices of women using Solution Focused practice in their own unique contexts. Many chapters of this book also offer rich insights into working with trauma through the Solution Focused lens. Here is Dr Jacqui's [website](#) for more information on her work.

To prepare for our reflective October WASFIG discussion on working with clients managing trauma from the SFBT approach, prospective attendees were invited to consider the warm-up question: *When a client presents with a history of trauma or other challenging problem, what is your 'Solution Focused anchor in the problem storm' that you use to hold onto hope and possibility to stop being swept away with your client?*

Steve opened our gathering by welcoming attendees to introduce themselves and share their answer to the question: *"What is one word for your SF anchor and put this in a sentence to share with the group."* Attendees were then invited into two minutes of creative silence to reflect before sharing their thoughts with the group. Attendees shared their SF anchor word in working with clients and how this keeps them grounded, hopeful and focused on possibilities when working with clients sharing challenging experiences and trauma.

Thank you very much to Theresa Acutt who kindly shared her reflection on her SF anchor in the problem storm before our meeting:

My initial answer was that I think being resilient in knowing (somehow I refuse to not believe otherwise) that at some point, I will ask the client a question that will help them see something for the first time or see something different or at least be curious about something they have not been curious about before.

This took me on a tangent and that looks like this:

Getting from A -----to----- B (BH), there are many dustings of golden nuggets to be collected along the way. Each nugget shifts you, enriches you, steadies you, encourages you, reminds you, reflects a version of you. Some nuggets are small and others big and you may spend time polishing one particular one, until it really sparkles, before moving onto the next one.

I suppose this in a way reinforces that achieving the best version of yourself and working toward your best hopes, is happening from the outset, from the conversations in a session. They may be leaving a session with a golden nugget, which is great, but not the aim, as the aim is for them to have taken a glimpse at least, of the nuggets all around them already in their lives and some yet to be discovered, during a SF conversation.

Two Stories Can Be True at Once: Build a Relationship with the Resilient Client who Survived the Story of What Happened to Them

Dr Jacqui inspired us with her exploration of what it truly means to be a Resilientologist. Together, we discovered how to "fill the gaps in our clients' conversations with hope," and how focusing on strengths and resilience - before, during, and after trauma - can uncover a different story of coping, growth, and possibility. Through this lens, we not only help clients co-create more hopeful and empowered futures, but also nurture our own wellbeing as practitioners by embracing the power of vicarious resilience. She reminded us that embodying the Solution Focused mindset not only supports our clients, but also safeguards us from burnout, fostering compassion satisfaction and professional sustainability. We learnt how to use "hope-catching language" to become intentional "attention shifters," helping clients to notice the often-overlooked moments of strength, courage, and resilience woven through their trauma stories.

Key Points for Listening for Hope Within Hardship: Working with Trauma through a Solution-Focused and Resilience Informed Lens:

1. Two Realities: Holding Trauma and Resilience Together

Both pain and strength can exist at the same time. While acknowledging trauma, we intentionally look for the *other side of the story* - the version of the client who survived, adapted, and showed resilience. The aim is to connect with and strengthen that version.

2. Beyond “Toxic Positivity”: Searching for the Resilient Client who is Already There

SFBT is not about denying trauma or forcing optimism. It's about noticing and amplifying the parts of our client's life that demonstrate coping, strength, and hope - aspects often overlooked because attention has been drawn to trauma.

3. Believing *In* the Client

We follow Elliott Connie's invitation to *believe in* the client and their capacity for change, not merely the client's trauma story. We highlight their competence and resilience - the evidence that they have already survived difficult experiences.

4. Hope-Aware Practice and Language

Hope is intentionally kept “in the room.” How we listen and the words we choose to speak back to our client can shift focus from suffering to survival. As Elliott notes, “*The trauma story and the hero story are the same story, it just depends on how you listen.*”

5. From Trauma Debrief to Resilience Rebrief

Instead of only revisiting what happened to our client, a *Resilience Rebrief* explores *how* the client got through. After hearing and validating the client's trauma experience, curious questions like “What are you most proud of?” and “How did you know how to do that?” illuminate the client's inner resources and ‘instinctual brilliance’.

6. Listening for ‘Instinctual Brilliance’

By attending to how clients managed, we uncover their natural capacity for resilience. The language we reflect back can either reinforce trauma or cultivate hope - our carefully chosen words are powerful builders of possibility and shift our client's attention to their stronger version of self who is also part of their trauma experience. As Elliott has said, when we speak to this more resilient version of our client, they speak back.

7. Doing Hope: Acknowledgement and Possibility

We can “do hope” by validating pain *and* recognising coping. Practitioners keep “one foot in acknowledgement and one foot in possibility”, Mark McKergow has also referred to this as ‘validating curiosity’. Witnessing both our client's struggle and their survival within it can co-construct a more resilient version of our client they may not have noticed or had minimised.

8. Building Relationship with the Resilient Self

SFBT connects with the resilient version of our client who is *already present*. Through curious, respectful questions, we help clients remember and re-experience their own strength and resourcefulness. As Evan George reminds us, “*The person the client wishes to be is already there.*”

9. Identity Shifting: Seeing the Client as Co-Therapist

When we speak to the client's resilient self, enlisting the help of our client as the co-therapist in the room, we co-construct a new identity for our client rooted in coping and capability. As Elliott says, “*Change a client's perception of themselves and you change their reality.*”

10. Language as a Hope Shifter

The practitioner's language matters - use the client's own words, reflect with empathy, and avoid amplifying distress through adopting language that is more negative and intense than in the client's original description of their experience. Instead, look to build in ‘hope-catching language’ when reflecting back a client's experience like ‘for now’, ‘at the moment’, or ‘currently’ to acknowledge a difficult experience is not permanent and can change.

11. Co-Constructing Resilience

We selectively amplify the parts of the client's story that reveal response, effort, and hope. This co-creates a narrative of survival and capability, turning the focus from what happened *to* the client to how they *responded* and survived. We help clients "say yes" to their resilience - to remember, re-experience, and embody the version of themselves who coped.

12. The Resilientologist Mindset

A "Resilientologist" looks for hope within hardship - for the client's words of coping, courage, and response - and reflects this back to the client in comments or questions that draw attention to hope. This brings positive emotion into the room, creating a *spiral of hope* for both client and practitioner and contributes to an experience of vicarious resilience to counterbalance vicarious trauma. Working with the client's resilient self is deeply hopeful and healing - not only for the client but also for the practitioner. Each hopeful exchange strengthens resilience for everyone in the room.

13. Integrating Body and Mind

For single-event trauma, a resilience rebrief may suffice; for complex trauma, we may also need body-based support such as breathwork or visualisation to reconnect safety and calm.

Dr Jacqui's presentation was rich with insight and hope, offering many golden moments on how to work with clients managing trauma in ways that are empowering for both client and practitioner. She generously shared a video of her solution focused work with her client, Jill, bringing her ideas vividly to life. We left with hearts and minds full - inspired, reflective, and energised. One key takeaway for me was the invitation to build a relationship with the *resilient version* of our client - their desired transformation or identity - rather than focusing solely on the story of what happened to them. As Dr Jacqui reminds us, both stories are true at once: the story of what happened to them, and the story of how our client responded and survived. Our role in 'doing hope' is to both validate their trauma story and help clients re-remember that parallel reality - the one filled with coping, courage, and resilience. This is where *hope lives*, and through our conversations, we help it grow.

Thank you Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs!!

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs for generously sharing her insights on working with clients managing trauma through the Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) approach. Dr Jacqui invited us to listen for hope within hardship, and to rebrief resilience by connecting with the resilient version of our clients, the version of them that has been supporting and sustaining themselves through difficulty. Dr Jacqui also kindly shared her presentation slides and her creative *Resilience Dice* with attendees that has SF questions we can ask ourselves as a check in to keep on track in living a good life for ourselves, and in working in a SF way in session with our clients. We left the session feeling uplifted and energised, reminded that when a client enters the room having experienced trauma, there is always hope - because we can choose to listen to their story in a different way that is good for our clients and ourselves, and recognise that two realities can be true at once.

With so much rich information presented we ran out of time for questions! If you'd like to connect with Dr Jacqui to share reflections or follow up on her presentation, please feel welcome to reach out to her directly on drjacqui@solutionfocusedsa.com

Resources:

Here is Dr Jacqui's [website](#) for more information on her work.

Watch Joe George's interview with **Dr Jacqui** [here](#).

Froerer, A. S., von Czipfra-Bergs, J., Kim, J. S. and Connie, E. E. (2018), *Solution-Focused Brief Therapy with Clients Managing Trauma*, Oxford University Press: New York

Wulf, A. and von Czipfra-Bergs, J. (Eds), (2024), *Women's Perspectives on the Solution Focused Approach: International Applications and Interventions*, Routledge: New York

The video that Jacqui shared during her presentation of herself working with her client Jill is the client that Jacqui was also sharing in the table she presented in her book *SFBT with Clients Managing Trauma* on page 52. The table compares how to work with a client from a traditional trauma debriefing and how a SF practitioner would work with trauma. It was this table that first drew Kerry down the pathway of SFBT!

TABLE 4.1. Traditional Trauma Debriefing

Questions and reflections	Client response	Amplified experience
Tell me what happened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He tied me up. • He nearly raped me. • He cut my face. • He threatened my baby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I got hurt. • I nearly died. • I had no control. • I was afraid.
Jill, what did you hear, see, smell, feel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I smelt alcohol on his breath. • I smelt old sweat. • It was so quiet around me. • My baby was sleeping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights fear and being out of control. • Remembering what went wrong. • Encourages destructive recall.
So you felt scared and alone, Jill? Sounds as if you were very worried about your baby, Jill?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, I was very scared. • Yes, I got hurt. • Yes, I nearly died. • Yes, he could have hurt my baby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was alone. • I have no control. • I was terrified. • I nearly died. • My baby nearly died.
Under these circumstances, Jill, it is natural to feel stressed and overwhelmed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am allowed to feel this way. • I must feel scared. • I am allowed to feel like a bad mother. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am going to be scared forever. • I cannot look after my child. • I am not a good mother.
Jill you can expect negative symptoms after trauma, such as fear and anger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will not sleep. • I will continue to feel scared. • I will not cope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I cannot do this. • I will always stay afraid. • My child will always be in danger.

TABLE 4.2. Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

Questions and reflections	Client response	Amplified experience
Jill, how did you get the idea to fabricate a lie and get him to the kitchen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I thought of my child's safety. • I needed to protect my son, get him away from my child. • I just did it, I did not think about myself, just about keeping my child safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think of my child first. • I am a good mommy who protects her child.
Jill, it sounds like you stayed in control. You kept thinking about your child and you made a plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had to get the guy away from him. • I had to do something. • I had to act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I take control. • I am a protective mother. • I make plans.
Jill, how did you manage to stay calm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't know, I just did it. • I kept saying to myself, "stay calm, stay calm." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I trust my instincts. • I can calm myself down.
Jill, how did you find the courage to break through a glass door? Suppose your son were old enough to retell this story to his friends, what would he say he is proud of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I just did it. • I just ran. • That I am a brave, strong mommy. • That I'm not afraid. • That I will do anything to protect my child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am brave. • I am courageous. • I am a strong woman. • I am a plan maker. • I am a protective mother. • I am courageous. • I remember all the positive, brave and protective things I did to save my baby and myself.

Information for our Upcoming WASFIG Zoom Gathering 26 in February 2026

When: Saturday 28 February 2025 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (QLD = 11:30am-1:30pm; VIC/NSW = 12:30pm-2:30pm; SA/NT = 11am-1pm; New Zealand = 2:30pm-4:30pm)

Topic: Special Guest Speaker Dr Jane Tuomola: Unlocking the Value of Supervision: Solution Focused Strategies for Supervisors and Supervisees

We're thrilled to welcome Dr Jane Tuomola, Clinical Psychologist from Singapore, who will be joining us live via Zoom. Jane will explore how we can bring a Solution Focused mindset into supervision — both as supervisees navigating a problem-focused world, and as supervisors offering respectful, empowering guidance regardless of our supervisee's modality. Steve has personally known Jane for several years through SF peer supervision and he is delighted that she has accepted the invitation to talk with us about a specialist area for her, the art of supervision. In supervision, Jane is herself a wonderfully clear thinker and sharer of insightful SF feedback, very supportive and focused on helping fellow practitioners. She has written, edited and co-authored several books with other leading practitioners, including a new book that was just released in 2025 called *Solution Focused Coaching Supervision: An Essential Guide for Individual, Group, peer and Team Coaching Supervision*. We are so fortunate to have such wonderful presenters. Mark the date **Saturday, 28 February 2026** and don't miss it! Have a look at the attached document for more information about Jane and her upcoming presentation.

Please email Kerry on invictuscounsellingservice@gmail.com to **register for the Zoom link!**

In preparing for our February WASFIG meeting:

Imagine our upcoming WASFIG meeting on Solution Focused Supervision being an informative and enriching experience. As you prepare for this session, you might like to pause and reflect on these questions:

- What do you notice you're already thinking about or doing well in your supervision practice?
- What areas would you most like to strengthen so this meeting can be of greatest value to you?
- During the meeting with Jane, how would you notice yourself engaging in ways to build your confidence in making the most supervision, or in being a supervisor that you'd most appreciate afterwards?
- At the end of the meeting, what signs would show you that this time had helped grow your capacity to participate usefully in supervision - either as a supervisee making the most of reflective space, or as a supervisor showing up at your best to support the professional growth, confidence and competence of your supervisee?
- Over the following week after the meeting with Jane, what would you be most pleased to have noticed improving within yourself - something that continues to enhance the quality and enjoyment of your supervision conversations?

Please bring along your best questions for Jane on being a supervisee or supervisor in a problem-focused world or anything else you might like to share with the group. Or just join us on the day to learn some useful ways to get the most out of your supervision sessions as a supervisee, and how to best support your supervisees as a supervisor.

WASFIG News:

Look out for these Upcoming SF Events

🌟 Solution Focused Workshop – Perth, June 2026! 🌟

Save the Date: Monday 15 June 2026 – Wednesday 17 June 2026

"Listening to trauma in a different way has made me see how incredible people are, how resilient people can be, and how brave people become." – Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs (2018, p. 231)



I am delighted to share some very exciting news - **Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs** will be visiting Perth to present a **3-day Solution Focused Workshop** in June 2026!

Across the first two days, Jacqui will share more on her thoughts and experience that she presented at our WASFIG October 2025 meeting and guide us through **Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) with clients managing trauma**. Jacqui will invite us to transform into 'Resilientologists', exploring hopeful and respectful ways to 'rebrief resilience' with our clients. By shifting our focus to building a relationship with, and speaking to, the version of our client who survived their trauma, clients have an opportunity re-remember themselves and their capacity in a more empowering way.

On Day 3, Jacqui will be joined by her colleague **Merritt Watson**, a School Psychologist and Principal who established a pioneering Solution Focused School in Johannesburg, South Africa, to co-facilitate a full-day workshop on **Solution Focused Practice in Education and Schools**. Together, they will

share practical tools and inspiring approaches for educators, school leaders, and practitioners who wish to bring Solution Focused principles into classrooms and whole-school cultures.

🎉 Special Thank You Offer

To celebrate five wonderful years of WASFIG, we're offering a **10% discount** on tickets for:

- WASFIG members who have attended a meeting or training with Steve and Kerry, and
- ASFA members

🎉 But wait... there's more!

As another *taster* for the June workshop, please join us for **WASFIG April 2026** (at the very special time in March!) on **Saturday 21 March 2026 | 3:00 – 5:00 pm (WA time)**

Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs will be kindly joining us to present *live* to share more of her "gold nuggets" and this time focusing on applying Solution Focused Practice with students and teaching staff.

🌟 I invite you to join us and be part of this exciting new chapter for WASFIG and for SFBT and SFP in Perth in 2026!

Registrations will open soon - stay tuned for more details! 😊

WASFIG Christmas Lunch 2025 & Appreciating Steve – 6th December 2025

As we come to the close of another inspiring year of **WASFIG**, we warmly invite you to join us, Steve and Kerry, for a celebratory **Christmas Lunch** at [Mia Cucina](#) in **Hillarys** to reflect, connect, and celebrate the year that's been!

We are deeply grateful for your support over the past five years - your encouragement, energy, and commitment have helped shape our Preferred Future for WASFIG and have made this community the warm, hopeful, and inspiring space it has become. In gathering together for a Christmas lunch, we hope to thank you for your ongoing support and contribution to WASFIG, which is fuel to our SF fire! We would also love to thank everyone who joins us online from beyond Perth who are unable to attend the Christmas lunch in person. Please know that you will be with us too in our minds and thoughts on the day!

This year's lunch will also be a special opportunity to celebrate and appreciate Steve, who, as he shared at our October meeting, will be stepping back from his role as Co-Coordinator after our February 2026 gathering. Steve's generosity, wisdom, and humour have been such an integral part of WASFIG's journey – and my own! - and I'd love to acknowledge Steve's contribution for all he has brought (and will continue to bring!) to our community. Steve will also take the opportunity to be appreciative of the community of key individuals, speakers and participants whose work, curiosity, collaboration and regularity has made such a difference to him.

Please email Kerry to reserve your seat on **Saturday 6 December 2025 at 12pm** at Mia Cucina in Hillarys for our Christmas Lunch!

SFBT Skills Practice and Supervision Groups with Kerry via Zoom – Alternate months to WASFIG on Saturdays 9:30am-11:30am WA Time beginning in March 2026 for \$100 for the 2 hours. Please contact Kerry to join us for inspiration in working with your clients and to practice SF skills in a supportive environment.

Creative Silence Australasia - Please note: the December Creative Silence Australasia session will not go ahead, and there are no further meetings planned at this stage. With gratitude to all who shared in the quiet in 2025.

ASFA Members Meetings – Next meeting will be **Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 2pm WA time/ 5pm AEST**. Topic to be announced. **Australasian Solution Focused Association (ASFA)** - To connect with SF practitioners across Australasia, please join [ASFA](#) (\$110 annual fee) and have access to monthly members meetings held on the third Wednesday of the month, monthly online peer group supervision on the first Monday of the month, discounts for SF training and the ASFA Conference, and access to the private Facebook group.

More Than Just a Book Club meetings (Wednesdays) and **SF in Organisations (SFIO) Downunder - SF Conversations** (Mondays) to find out more please contact **John Teager** john.teager@outlook.com.

Tap into inspiring conversations between WASFIG meetings by joining our [WASFIG Facebook Group](#)! Keep connecting and building our network between meetings, see up to date news and information for our group, share great SFBT resources and link in with Solution Focused peer support while working with your clients.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our final WASFIG gathering of the year! As we reflected together, we were reminded to look for hope within hardship and to build a relationship with the resilient version of our client - standing alongside them as co-therapists, listening to trauma in a different way, and inviting their co-construction of a new identity shaped by survival, strength, and growth. We're so grateful for your encouragement, energy, and support throughout the year. May your Christmas season be peaceful and restorative, and may 2026 bring new possibilities, connection, and continued hope-filled conversations.

We look forward to seeing you again in 2026 which promises to be a big one as we continue to shine our *Solution Focused light* brightly across Perth!

Warmly,

Kerry and Steve

WA SFBT Interest Group (WASFIG) Co-Coordinators

October 2025

“Realizing that people “bounce back” (Bannink, 2014, p.19), and are resilient and even grow in the wake of trauma opened a whole new world for me. Becoming part of a journey that rebriefs resilience and celebrates bravery rather than a dance with terror by debriefing what went wrong changed my relationship with my practice and allows me to love my job again. Once I started acknowledging and honoring that clients who have experience trauma enter a session with hope – a hope to feel better or cope better – I started building on the already existing hope and allowed hope to grow. Once I started looking with a solution-focused lens and listening with a solution-focused ear to my client’s story; amazing things happened to me and my clients. As a solution-focused brief therapist I am continuously amazed at my client’s ability to cope and handle a traumatic experience. Instead of being exhausted after a session with a client who has experienced trauma, I now feel inspired by my clients. Where once my clients’ stories made me fear going outside, I now feel I too can conquer whatever comes my way. No longer do I need to run away from my practice and go lecture at a university, I now look forward to a practice with ‘a waiting room full of heroes’ (Macdonald, 2011, p.36). Listening to trauma in a different way has made me see how incredible people are, how resilient people can be, and how brave people become.”

- Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs (2018, p. 230-231)