

Western Australian Solution Focused Interest Group (WASFIG) Meeting 24



*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 24 Review: Saturday 23 August 2025 9:30am-11:30am WA Time

When: Saturday 23 August 2025 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (QLD VIC/NSW = 11:30pm-1:30pm; SA/NT = 11am-1pm; New Zealand = 1:30pm-3:30pm)

Where: Zoom

Attendees: Michele Thomas, Shona Scallan, Tracy Shirvill, Ruth Leveson, Roger Lowe, Cathy Martin, Joanna JM Kwan, Wendy Garreffa, Cara Maclay, Andrew Worotniuk, Andrew Gibson, Steve Runciman and Kerry Drummond (Co-ordinators).

Apologies: Theresa Acutt, Nadia Truong, Samantha Smith, Fiona Skahill, Heather Bunting, Simon Dowling, and Lucy Fisher.

Group Presenter: Andrew Gibson

Topic: The Essence of Solution Focused Practice that Creates Meaningful and Sustainable Change

We were delighted to welcome **Andrew Gibson** as our Special Guest Speaker at the WASFIG August 2025 gathering, having travelled all the way from the UK to be with us in person. With his extensive experience in business and team coaching, training, and supervision, Andrew brought rich insights into how Solution Focused approaches can inspire meaningful and sustainable change within organisations.

Andrew Gibson is a coach, trainer, speaker and author, immersed in Solution Focused Practice since he was introduced to it in 2007. He lives in Leeds in Yorkshire, UK, and regularly visits Australia to spend time with his Australian wife's family and friends, hence his visit to WA in August this year. Andrew specialises in helping people who help people who need help, from charities/non-profits, people starting new businesses to large scale organisations looking to improve productivity and morale.

Since he first spoke at a UKASFP Conference in 2012, he has been an active member of the SF Community. A former member of the committees of both UKASFP and SFiO, he is presently the Chair (Operations) of the Journal of Solution Focused Practice. He speaks at Conferences online and in person regularly, and was a keynote speaker at the UKASFP Conference in 2024 (where Steve Runciman had the great pleasure to meet him in person).

Andrew has written three books, each applying Solution Focused Practice to a specific challenge. *'What's Your URP?'* (2019) helps people to build a career or new business around doing what they love to help people they want to spend time with. *'Make Life Simple'* (2020) was published at the height of the Covid pandemic to help people focus on what they wanted (to be healthy) rather than spending time avoiding what they didn't (Covid)! His latest book is, *'The Essence of Solution Focused Practice'*, a very short, practical, illustrated guide to the Solution Focused mindset, and the topic of the August WASFIG group meeting.

The Solution Focused Mindset - A Mosaic of Voices

Elliott Connie and Adam Froerer of the SFU remind us that part of our role as practitioners is to hold belief in our clients, especially at times when it feels difficult, and even more so when they struggle to believe in themselves. This distinction of *believing in the client, rather than always believing the client*, lies at the heart of the Solution Focused mindset. Elliott often describes this as the *"grandmother effect"* - the transformative power of having even one person who sees your strengths and speaks to your capacity, encouraging us to evoke and hold our own more resilient version of ourselves in challenging times.

Similarly, Evan George of BRIEF London explains that the SF stance involves looking for and speaking to the client's capacity for success. By engaging with the version of the client who is already moving toward their preferred future, we affirm that the person they want to become is already present within them.

To prepare for our reflective August WASFIG discussion on the SF mindset, prospective attendees were invited to consider some warm-up questions: *What is your understanding of the SF mindset? How do you bring it into your work with your particular client base? And what difference has it made — both for your clients and for you as a practitioner in your work and life?*

Steve opened our gathering with invited introductions, followed by two minutes of creative silence to reflect on the central question: *"What is the Solution Focused mindset to you, and how do you use it in your work with clients?"* Each attendee then shared how the mindset resonated for them and how it shapes their practice. What emerged was a wonderfully rich mosaic of perspectives, each contribution offering a unique piece of the SF mindset puzzle.

Together, we were reminded of what makes Solution Focused Brief Therapy so vibrant: not a single fixed definition, but a living, breathing model of understandings that, when combined, become far greater than the sum of their parts.

Some beautiful thoughts from attendees describing the SF mindset included: 'an approach to life, not just therapy'; 'words matter .. promoting hope, resilience, whilst validating client resources and strengths.'; 'Truly believing that the best version of each person already exists within them. SF questions reveal this version to us.'; 'The client is the expert of their lives which they can talk about that in many aspects of past, present and future. I am an expert in question framing and asking about their past, present and future which permits them the opportunity to open up a realisation of their full capacity displayed till now and can be utilised in their future.' and 'Resource driven, strength-based approach. Recognising everyone has the resources and strengths needed to achieve what they want. Our job to ask the right questions to help them discover, realise and externalise this to support movement in that direction.'

When we met to explore the *mindset* of Solution Focused Brief Therapy, each person offered a thread, a colour, a note. Individually they were vivid; together they formed a rich mosaic, a harmony of insights that captured both the diversity and the unity of our practice.

Clusters of Meaning within the SF Mindset Description That Emerged:

- **Hope and Direction**

Many spoke of how Solution Focus invites clients to become aware of what they hope for, want, or love — described in detail. Attention turns to signs of progress, glimpses of the desired future already present in the past or present. Like plants turning toward the sun, people have a natural tropism toward growth when light is shone on their hopes.

- **Autonomy and Respect**

Several noted that it is about giving autonomy to the client: it is *their* life, *their* story, *their* wisdom. The stance is one of honouring the best version of the person and trusting the “inbuilt mechanism” for growth that is already there.

- **Small Steps, Remarkable Change**

A number of voices highlighted the power of the smallest next step. Even tiny shifts, when named and noticed, can lead to remarkable transformation. Language itself plays a role here: the words we listen for and respond to activate hope, validate strengths, and invite movement.

- **Strengths and Resources**

Again and again came the reminder: people know more about their own lives than we ever will. Our questions are not diagnostic but catalytic — helping clients uncover strengths and resources, and integrate them in authentic, inspiring ways.

- **A Way of Living, Not Just Working**

For some, Solution Focus is not only a therapeutic method but a life approach. It shapes how they see, listen, and relate — a whole-person way of being that values strengths, hopes, and difference in everyday encounters.

Listening to this collage of expressions was like watching a mosaic unfold: each attendee laying down a cloth of their own colour and shape, until a larger design emerged in the centre — intricate, multi-layered, and beautiful; to change the metaphor to sound, like hearing a harmony of notes: each contribution distinct, yet resonating with the others, creating chords richer than any single voice could achieve.

What holds these diverse cloths and notes together is a spirit of hopeful attention to what gives life. Whether expressed as autonomy, growth toward the light, small steps, or language that validates strengths — the essence is clear: Solution Focus is a practice of evoking possibility, and of trusting that people carry within them the seeds of their own flourishing.

The Essence of Solution Focused Practice:

Andrew shared the story of how he first discovered Solution Focused Practice and the shift it created in the way he approached challenges. Instead of trying to “fix” problems, he realised the power of focusing on outcomes, exploring the differences people want to see and describing what life would look like once those changes are happening.

He also spoke about the inspiration behind his new book, written with the hope of expressing the Solution Focused mindset in a clear and accessible way. Designed for both practitioners and professionals both familiar and unfamiliar with the Solution Focused approach, the book offers simple, practical ideas that can be immediately applied in day-to-day work contexts. From there, Andrew encourages those who are curious to deepen their knowledge through further training and the many excellent books already available on Solution Focused Practice and Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

In guiding us through his journey, Andrew highlighted how the Solution Focused mindset can support meaningful change across a wide range of settings. He shared how his own *Preferred Future* became reality through writing *The Essence of Solution Focused Practice*, and he generously walked us through his four-step, common-sense approach to having useful conversations. Andrew introduced us to his *Red Square, Green Circle Model*, bringing the ideas from his book to life in a way that was both practical and inspiring.

Here is a summary of Andrew’s key points:

1. Common Sense: Focus on What Is Wanted

When faced with a problem, our attention often becomes stuck on the problem itself. Yet the more we talk about the problem, the larger it grows (Red Square). The alternative is common sense: shift our focus to what we want instead. By describing what we want, we begin to move in a constructive direction (Green Circle).

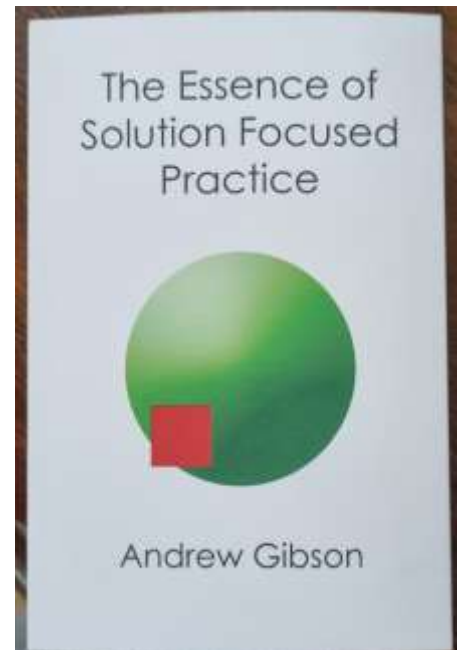
2. Social Capital: Drawing on Resources

As soon as we begin describing what we want, we naturally think of other people who may be able to help us. Family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances form a network of support, a valuable resource known as our *social capital*. Recognising and mobilising these resources helps us take steps toward achieving what we want.

3. Description Before Action: Asking the Right Question

A common question in times of difficulty is: *What do you want to do?* Yet, when we rush to action, we may end up creating new problems, consuming time and resources without achieving what we truly desire. The better question is simply: *What do you want?*

By spending time describing what we want, making the description as rich and detailed as possible, we give ourselves a clear guide. This enables us to compare possible next steps, select the most promising one, and then recognise the signs that tell us our chosen action is working.



4. Time: Progress in Steps

Realising what we want takes time and often many small steps. As we act, we look for signs that indicate progress. If we see no signs, we pause, revisit our description of what we want, and adjust our steps without returning to the beginning.

This process is made easier when we accept that progress is gradual. In conversation, we can time-travel: first imagining our perfect (or preferred) future, then noticing where aspects of it already exist in the present or past, and finally picturing the near future to identify signs that we are on the right path. Only then do we take our next step.

In summary, Solution Focused Practice rests on four essentials:

1. **Common Sense** – Focus on what is wanted instead of the problem.
2. **Social Capital** – Draw on the resources of others to move forward.
3. **Description Before Action** – Explore in detail what is wanted before deciding what to do.
4. **Time** – Recognise that progress takes time and uses small steps to move toward the preferred future.

Together, these principles form the heart of solution focused practice: a practical, hopeful way of working that builds clarity, mobilises resources, and sustains progress.

In line with Andrew's desire for a shared Solution Focused understanding for practitioners and professionals, Adam Froerer, Cecil Walker and Beverley Kort (2021) previously explored and reiterated the benefits of having a 'common language' for SFBT practitioners their article *Creating a Common Language: How Solution Focused Brief Therapy Reflects Current Principles of change and Common Factors*. Their hope is for Solution Focused practitioners and professionals to be able to engage with practitioners or professionals from other approaches about the effectiveness of SFBT and how SFBT utilises similar mechanisms of change.

Thank you Andrew!!

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Andrew for so generously sharing his insights on how Solution Focused Practice can be applied across diverse contexts, making a tangible difference not only to organisational productivity but also to staff morale, a true win-win for both employers and employees. And, much to everyone's delight, Andrew confirmed that, due to popular demand, *Red Square, Green Circle Model* coffee mugs will soon be available on his website!



Our August WASFIG gathering was especially exciting, as attendees were the very first group to hear about Andrew's brand-new book, *The Essence of Solution Focused Practice*, newly released for 2025! Adding to the sense of occasion, and in a WASFIG first, Andrew kindly gifted six copies of his book to attendees! The lucky recipients, Michele, Shona, Ruth, Tracy, Roger, and Cara, were chosen because their reflections on the Solution Focused mindset shared with the group as our opening introductory question particularly resonated with Andrew. Each of them will receive a copy of this inspiring new resource in the post.

Andrew has kindly offered to connect with anyone who would like to learn more about the Essence of Solution Focused Practice, follow up the conversation, or reach to out to ask any questions if they were unable to attend in person. To contact Andrew, please reach out on his email address andrew@businessservicesleeds.co.uk or mobile number +447808096170.

Resources:

Gibson, A. (2025), *The Essence of Solution Focused Practice*, Fisher King Publishing: United Kingdom

Find Andrew's books and a set of video resources on his [website](#). The first is his SFP Coaching Skills training course, based on 'The Essence', and his experience of training team leaders in the NHS.

Here is Andrew's [website](#) for more information on his work.

Dion Sing and Jason Pascoe recently interviewed Andrew Gibson on their [Towards Solutions Podcast](#)!

Andrew presenting at the SF24 Conference this year in 2025 on "[Improving Productivity and Team Spirit in the NHS, UK](#)"

To link back into our usual SFBT clinical focus, here are some recent podcasts from the Solution Focused Universe talking about the importance of the SF mindset in working as a SF practitioner:

Elliott Connie – Power of SF mindset and importance of believing in our clients: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-37ctbF2ZE0>

In a recent episode of the *Meta Well* podcast, Adam Froerer and Cecil Walker spoke with Dr. Scott Noorda, who has integrated the Solution Focused mindset into his work in the medical field. Echoing Andrew's reflections on the value of bringing Solution Focused thinking into different contexts, Dr. Noorda described how this approach can support patients in making meaningful changes to their health and wellbeing. Rather than focusing solely on medical problems, he invites his patients into conversations about their *purpose in life*, exploring what matters most to them and how their current habits align with that purpose. From this perspective, caring for their physical health becomes less about avoiding illness and more about enabling them to live more fully, in line with their values and aspirations.

Enjoy listening more about this idea here: "Why You Should Optimize Your Brain Health with Dr. Scott Noorda | MetaWell Episode 7" <https://youtu.be/Crcnx266tCo?si=K8xi5sBgza1qPNXP>

Kort, B., Froerer, A. and Walker, C. (2021) "Creating a Common Language: How Solution Focused Brief Therapy Reflects Current Principles of change and Common Factors," *Journal of Solution Focused Practices*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 1 , Article 5. Available at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/journalsfp/vol5/iss1/5>

Information for our Upcoming WASFIG Zoom Gathering 25 in October 2025

When: Saturday 25 October 2025 3pm-5pm WA Time (QLD VIC/NSW = 6pm-8pm; SA/NT = 4:30pm-6:30pm; New Zealand = 7pm-9pm) Daylight Savings would have started by then so please double check your time zone!

Topic: Special Guest Speaker Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs: Being a Soul-ution Whisperer – The Essence of a Solution Focused Practitioner in Building Resilient Clients and Vicariously Resilient Practitioners

We have been honoured to be joined by some amazing guest speakers over the year, and for our final WASFIG for 2025 we will go out with a ROAR!

We are delighted to announce our Special Guest Speaker for WASFIG October 2025 will be Zooming in to join us LIVE all the way from Johannesburg in South Africa, **Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs!** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GibiNy4d4gc> (for added impact!)

Jacqui is a Clinical and Educational Psychologist and Director of the Solution Focused Institute of South Africa. She will be sharing about her Solution Focused work with clients managing trauma and her latest thoughts around what it takes to be a *Resilientologist* and Solution Focused practitioner – a ‘*soul-ution whisperer*’ – to embody the philosophy of the Solution Focused mindset that is good for our clients, and protects ourselves as practitioners from burnout to build more compassion satisfaction instead! Learn how to use ‘hope-catching language’ to be an ‘attention shifter’ for our client to notice the gaps of strength and resilience in their trauma story where they are somehow managing to get through.

We warmly welcome you to join us at the very special time of **3pm-5pm AWST (6pm-8pm AEST because of daylight savings) on Saturday 25 October 2025** rather than our usual 9:30am-11:30am WA time.

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

This is a WASFIG not to be missed!

In preparing for our October 2025 WASFIG meeting:

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

- If you have any questions you would like Jacqui to consider when planning for the meeting, please send these through to Kerry by **11 October 2025** to invictuscounsellingservice@gmail.com or you can ask these on the day;
- Bring along any good resources, books or articles you have for working with clients managing trauma you would like to share with the group;
- It is always inspiring to hear of ‘sparkling moments’ you might have had when working with a client managing trauma and we would be honoured to hear these examples from you;
- We also invite you to ask any questions on client cases you have or if you are feeling stuck with a client managing trauma and would like some ideas from Jacqui and 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 on the day to be re-energised to continue working in this challenging area to support our clients and learn how to be mindful of building vicarious resilience within ourselves.

WASFIG News:

Look out for these Upcoming SF Events

October 2025 Creative Silence Australasia (CSA) with Steve Runciman and Tracy Shirvill via Zoom – First Wednesday Morning of the Month! – Next meeting is **Wednesday 1 October 2025 11:30am-1:30pm (AWST)**. Please see more information and [Zoom link](#) at the end of the WASFIG Summary and contact Steve on srunciman@iinet.net.au or Tracy on hello@findingfelicitycounselling.com.au

SFBT Skills Practice and Supervision Groups with Kerry via Zoom – **Alternate months to WASFIG on Saturdays 9:30am-11:30am WA Time (11:30am-1:30pm AEST)** for \$80 for the 2 hours if anyone would like to join to get some support and inspiration on client cases and to practice SF skills in a supportive environment. Please contact Kerry if you are interested to join a group.

ASFA Members Meetings – Next meeting will be **Wednesday 15 October 2025 at 3pm WA time/ 5pm AEST**. Topic to be announced. Join ASFA for free members meetings and group supervision and discounts to training and the conference.

October 2025 - Michael Durrant is coming to Perth to provide a two day workshop in SFBT on 21 and 22 October!
<https://www.brieftherapysydney.com.au/event/sfbt-parramatta-perth2025>

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.

ASFA Conference November 2025 in Dunedin, New Zealand – 14-16 November 2025 and speakers Brent Gardiner (Counsellor, Supervisor and Educator) and Sharon Shea (Working in Maori Health and Systems Transformation and Indigenous Wellbeing) and John Henden and Emma Burns SF experts in suicide prevention.

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 all again for attending our August 2025 WASFIG meeting with the reminder to focus on and build the *Green Circle* instead of getting stuck in the *Red Square*! Andrew shared how the SF mindset, shifting from problem to what is wanted instead, can be taught to anyone who would like to make a positive difference to the way they work, by implementing this mindset with the tools they already use to increase productivity, morale, identify resources and guide teams to work towards a mutual goal in a Solution Focused way to reduces stress and burnout.

We look forward to seeing all who can attend our final WASFIG meeting for the year in October 2025 WASFIG. Please RSVP and save yourself a front row seat and meet our special guest speaker Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs and learn how (exactly) to become a Resilientologist, and to “fill the gaps in the client’s conversation with hope”. Minding the gap, by noticing strength and resilience before, during and after trauma can uncover a different history of managing with trauma for our client, and co-construct with them a more hopeful future. This can simultaneously serve to protect our mental wellbeing as practitioners by tapping into vicarious resilience!

Warmly,

Kerry and Steve

WA SFBT Interest Group Co-Coordiators

August 2025

*“Always spend time exploring and describing what you want before you decide what to do.
The richer the description you create, the easier it is to choose your next steps.”*

- Andrew Gibson, (2025, p. 51)

Join Steve Runciman and Tracy Shirvill for their new WASFIG initiative for 2025 *Creative Silence Australasia (CSA)*!

Next Meeting: Wednesday 1 October | 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM (AWST)

Then ongoing: First Wednesdays of the month with a break in January 2026 to start again February 2026

Upcoming dates:

November 5 | December 3 | February 4

A quiet space for creative focus, shared presence, and Solution Focused inspiration.

In silence, we make room for what is not yet spoken, for what is waiting to be born.

Join us for *Creative Silence Australasia*—a monthly Zoom session where we come together in silence to work on whatever inspires us through a Solution Focused lens. Whether you're writing, planning, reflecting, creating, or dreaming, this space offers a gentle nudge and the comfort of shared intention.

The format is simple:

11:30AM – 11:45 AM – Arrive, say hello, and share your focus for the next 90 minutes

11:45 AM – 1.15 PM – Silent work time (cameras on, mics off)

1.15PM – 1:30 PM – Music and reflections on what the time brought you

No fee. No registration. Just come.

This space is an **Australasian expression** of the inspiring *Creative Silence* sessions created by **Anton Stellamans and Jonas Wells** in Europe. With gratitude, we draw on their creativity and generosity to host this peaceful, productive pause each month.

[Zoom](#) link: Wed 1 October, 2025 11:30 AM Perth AWST

Enquiries:

Tracy Shirvill – hello@findingfelicitycounselling.com.au

Steve Runciman – srunciman@iinet.net.au

Come as you are—and enjoy the quiet company of others doing the same.