



Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) FAQ

How will I know if SFBT is for me?

SFBT is a form of psychotherapy based on solution-building rather than problem-solving, involving specialised conversations. With SFBT, the conversation is directed toward developing and achieving the client's vision of solutions. Instead of other traditional therapies that focus on the client's problems, SFBT shifts the conversation on to what is working in the client's life. The assumption is that all clients know what is best for them and have the strengths and resources to make positive changes in their lives already. It is by eliciting these strengths that clients start to gain more confidence to make changes in their lives.

SFBT may not be for you if you want to focus exclusively on your problem or if you find it very difficult to consider your strengths and would prefer more problem-solving tools.

What can I expect on my first visit with a SFBT therapist?

At your first visit, you and the SFBT therapist will discuss:

- What is going well in your life
- Past strengths and resources that you can utilise to overcome current issues
- The need to start noticing when things are going right rather than wrong
- Whether SFBT is a suitable treatment approach for you

By the end of this first visit, you and the therapist will have developed a future-oriented treatment plan to address your difficulties.

How can I get the most out of SFBT between sessions?

SFBT is a treatment approach that requires one to be open-minded and look beyond their problems. It usually takes a little while to get used to re-focusing on exceptions to the problem rather than the problem itself.

Early in treatment, the SFBT therapist will suggest homework, such as times when the problem is not present and increase positive behaviours. As treatment progresses, clients will start to identify more positive behaviours to enhance. Research demonstrates that the more you focus on what is going well will directly cause improvements to mood.

How long does SFBT last?

SFBT is a short-term, focused treatment approach. Generally, sessions span 3-5 sessions. However, the length of treatment can vary, depending on the severity and complexity of your issues.



How frequent are the sessions?

SFBT usually starts out with weekly sessions. As treatment progresses, sessions may be spaced further apart, such as every two weeks or month. Once clients have finished a course of SFBT, it is common for them to return for occasional “booster” sessions to keep up their progress, deal with any setbacks and prevent relapse of problems.

Do I need to prepare for SFBT sessions?

Preparing to discuss a specific problem at each session helps you to get the most out of SFBT. Coming prepared also means considering what kind of preferred future one wants and the values that they hold. It also helps to build a therapeutic relationship between you and your therapist and to communicate well throughout the session.

Will the SFBT therapist be able to understand and appreciate my own unique background?

Research on SFBT demonstrates that it is an effective treatment regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation or social economic status. SFBT therapists are trained to recognize the importance of cultural values and to adapt their treatments to meet culturally unique needs. They are trained, for example, to be aware of:

- their own personal values and biases and how these may influence their relationship with the client
- how certain cultural processes may influence the relationship between the therapist and client

As a client in SFBT, you should feel that you can openly discuss, aspects of your culture or work for example, and that your treatment will be delivered in a manner that is consistent with these values.

Is SFBT an effective treatment for children and adolescents?

SFBT has been found to be particularly useful for use with children and adolescents, whom generally have a tendency to be more open to exploring new ideas and solutions, and also to be keen to focus on themselves. The content and pacing of the therapy is adjusted to be appropriate for the child’s level of development.

What are the common barriers that come up in SFBT?

Barriers to treatment can include:

- perceived stigma associated with mental health treatment
- difficulty identifying and distinguishing emotions and their intensity
- difficulty recognising past achievements
- difficulty tolerating heightened emotions
- low optimism toward improving

The therapist will work with you to reduce these barriers and will also offer strategies that you can use to overcome barriers.



How can I stay well after finishing SFBT?

A major goal of SFBT is for you to become your own therapist and to continue to practise SFBT skills even after you are feeling better. You may also wish to return for follow-up or “booster” sessions from time to time. Ultimately SFBT aims to shift ones mindset to be more solution-building rather than problem-solving, and also to be able to be focused on ones desired future rather than on past problems or current conflicts. By doing so, clients will naturally increase the frequency of current useful behaviors over time.