



Really Useful Solution-Focused Questions

People prefer Solution-Focused questions and respond to them because they are future-focused, affirm their strengths and skills and help them to move forward with their agenda. It is important however not to overdo questioning or it can feel like an interrogation.

Being fluent in speaking solution-focused language requires the practitioner to listen carefully to the client and connect with the possibilities, stated or implied in their responses. The other major intervention is questioning, of which the following are examples.

To Negotiate Goals

- What needs to happen here today to make you think this meeting was worthwhile?
- What are your best hopes for this meeting today?
- What will be the first signs for you and (others) that things are moving in the right direction?
- What are the benefits for you in achieving your goal?
- What makes you think now is a good time to make some changes?

To Identify Resources

- Thinking of a recent difficult time you've had, how did you manage to come through it?
- What did you/ they find helpful?
- What was unhelpful?
- How do you/ they talk themselves through difficult situations?
- What do you know about yourself (or your situation) that reassures you that you can deal with this?

To Motivate

- On a scale of zero to ten, with ten meaning that you would do almost anything to achieve your goal and zero being hardly anything, where would you put yourself today?
- How confident are you that you already have the ability to achieve your goal?
- Can you find evidence for this?
- How will you know that this is a good time to make a start at least?

To Focus on the Future

- Imagine one night when you are asleep, something amazing happens and the problems that have been worrying you disappear. Since you are asleep you don't know that this has happened. When you wake up in the morning and go about your day, what will be the first signs for you that things have improved?
- Do you think that any of these things have happened to you recently, even for a short while?
- If I were to meet you in a few months time and you were to tell me that things were getting better, what would you tell me had happened?

To Maintain Progress

- What do you think you need to do/ think / remember to give you a chance of keeping on solution track?
- What will you say to yourself if you have a set back?
- What will be the best way of handling a set back?
- What will be helpful / unhelpful?
- How will other people know that you need help at that point?
- How will you overcome any obstacles that come in the way?
- Should plan A not work what's plan B?

To Increase Self-Awareness

- What does it say about you that you managed to do that (when person has achieved something)?
- Did you know you could do that?
- Where did you learn to do that? Have you done it before?
- Has anyone else noticed that you have done this?
- What do they think about it?

To Develop Strategies

- What could you do about the things over which you do have control and how could you accept the things you can't change?
- What have you tried so far that you know does not work?
- Do you know anything that worked for anyone else in this situation?
- How would you advise a friend who was having this problem?
- What is the smallest step you could take in the next forty eight hours which would be helpful?