

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number:	SW 393R30	Instructor's Name:	Jack Nowicki, LCSW
Unique Number:	64470	Office Number:	SWB 3.104-A
Semester:	Fall, 2013	Office Phone:	Nowicki: 512-659-1465 (cell) Nowicki: 512-892-6888 (LM)
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SOLUTION FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY (SBFT)

I. Standardized Course Description

This course is designed as a seminar to provide students with a basic understanding in solution-focused brief therapy. The content will include the history of the SBFT approach within the framework of systems and cognitive approaches, research related to the approach with different populations, as well as heavy emphasis on skill development and practice.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Compare strengths-based and deficit-based approaches to working with clients, including understanding the impact of the ecological and social environments in which diverse families live.
2. Demonstrate understanding of similarities and differences among strengths-based theories and critically assess their theoretical perspectives, value bases, and the role of gender in family dynamics.
3. Integrate and demonstrate the application of procedures, techniques, and methods of SBFT that reflect best practices for problem areas or helping diverse client groups.
4. Understand and integrate research information on the effectiveness of SBFT within an evidence-based framework.
5. Understand and integrate research information of effectiveness of empirically based practice for SBFT on problems frequently seen in practice such as: chemical dependency, child maltreatment, and crisis intervention with youth and families.
6. Demonstrate skill in applying knowledge of the impact of policy and social justice issues to interventions with families of diverse cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, national origin, ability, or other manifestation of diversity.
7. Demonstrate skill in applying knowledge concerning multi-level policies and their impact on SBFT interventions with families of diverse culture, socioeconomic background, race, sexual orientation, and ability.
8. Demonstrate skill in using strengths-based theory to assess family problems in the context of the larger community and target systems within and outside the family for change.

III. Teaching Methods

This class provides opportunities for both theory and skill development. SBFT will be presented through a combination of lectures, demonstrations of the practice interventions, experiential skill-building exercises, and class discussions integrating the course readings, and an essay exam testing students' knowledge and ability to communicate their understanding of SBFT.

IV. Safety Policies

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at www.utexas.edu/emergency or from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

If students are worried about someone who is acting in a way that concerns them or that they perceive to be dangerous to themselves or others, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another person's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call [512-232-5050](tel:512-232-5050) or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

V. University Policies

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs>).

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (512-471- 6259 voice or 512-471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester (by the end of the second week of class) so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently - preferably daily, but at minimum twice a week - to stay current with university-related communications, which

may be time- sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

When social work students choose to participate in social media and networking sites and forums they must remember that these forums are public and users cannot be certain that any kind of privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. Social work students must assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued and as such, what is posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image. Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including any information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in any way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities. The professor of this class does not friend students on social networking sites.

VI. Class Policies

Students are expected to read the assigned readings (some students use study groups), attend each class meeting, contribute to class discussions, and participate in skill-building exercises. Failure to attend class regularly (missing more than two class sessions) may result in a lower grade for the course, at the instructor's discretion. As soon as students know that they will not be able to attend class, they should e-mail or call the instructor. I respect student's observance of religious holy days. If you must miss class to observe a religious holy day please let me know as soon as you know you will be absent. See section VIII.5 for grading details.

No late assignments will be accepted except in extreme emergencies and then only with permission of the instructor. If students are in an emergency situation they should contact the instructor and negotiate a new due date. All late assignments will be assessed point penalties at a rate of 5 points a day.

VII. Course Requirements

The grade for the course will be based on the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge and methods from the evidenced-based models of solution-focused therapy and effective interventions for finding solutions. Class attendance, participation, and promptness in completing assignments are considered when assigning the grade. There are three major assignments. This is a professional practice class and each student is expected to demonstrate behavior that meets the criteria of the National Association of Social Workers code of ethics and meets the standards for professional practice of social work.

VIII. Required Texts

- De Jong, P., & Berg, I.K. (2013) *Interviewing for solutions*, 4th Edition. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Franklin, C., Trepper, T., Gingerich, W., & McCollum, E. (Eds.). (2012). *Solution-focused brief therapy: A handbook of evidence-based practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Required Online Readings:

- All additional readings are available on **Blackboard**.

IX. Course Assignments

1. **Essay Exam: (25% of your grade):** There will be an essay exam based on the readings, lectures, and discussions. The exam will be given on Blackboard (details forthcoming). Make-up exams are not given unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances.

A note about essay exams: My intent in giving essay exams is for students to complete and integrate the readings, class discussion, and other materials. Exam taking improves student ability to communicate their ideas, and tests their application of knowledge and skills in practical situations. A goal of graduate education is to integrate and apply your education, and essay exams are a practice in which this can occur. As practice for this, we will engage in discussion groups related to the readings at the beginning of class. Exams also challenge and encourage students to the high standards of a graduate education: students have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge of SFBT and explain their individual understanding by use of examples, comparisons, and critiques.

2. **Group Demonstration of SFBT Techniques (30% of your grade):** The class will divide into four or five groups for preparation and presentation of experiential practices from SFBT. Each group's purpose is to experientially model one or a few specific intervention practices of SFBT in a client(s)/counselor format. The modeling may be "live" or captured on video. Members of the group will act as producers, writers, researchers, and actors. If there is a live production, the group will be available to discuss and answer questions about their demonstration. If the demo is on video, the group may choose to stop, discuss, start their demonstration. In addition, the group will develop and provide a written protocol for using the intervention in practice and shared with the class during or after the presentation. The intervention topics are: 1) building an alliance; 2) exploring exceptions; 3) miracle questions; 4) scaling; 5) taking a break and goaling. The demonstrations will be presented on the dates corresponding to these topics on the class schedule. The demonstration, with a question and answer period, should be 30 to 40 minutes long.

As the group progresses in developing their demonstration, they must schedule at least one planning session with the instructor. The group is responsible for scheduling this meeting. (I suggest the group meet with me early in the development process.) All group members will be assigned the same grade for their presentation, so it should reflect equal responsibility on all members' parts (If all members of the group are not sharing the burden of the work, please notify the instructor).

3. **Video Assignment (30% of your grade):** Each student must turn in a video demonstration of a solution-focused counseling session they have conducted. The video must include all the parts of a solution-focused counseling session as they are elucidated in the SFBT Treatment Manual (Ch 2 of Franklin, et.al. text). Students are free use peers, friends, or other volunteers as their "interviewees" with the understanding that the participant is aware that the tape is being turned in as an assignment, that their participation is NOT confidential, and that the tape may be used (with their permission) as a teaching instrument in the future. More details about this assignment will be given in class.
4. **Class Participation (15% of your grade):** This course is practice related. Each class includes "Group Discussion Activities" and/or "Skill-building Exercises" as opportunities for students to

share what they are learning or practice the attendant skills. There are opportunities for students to use their own family history and life experiences in these activities; therefore, we will discuss class personal sharing and make agreements about keeping our stories confidential if necessary.

Class participation includes active class involvement and discussion, demonstrating an understanding of SFBT techniques, and evidence of having read the readings. Class involvement is graded based on the student's self-evaluation and the instructor's observation of class participation. The class participation grade is not only determined by the quantity of participation behaviors but also on the quality of the participation; i.e. making salient contributions, reflecting preparation and knowledge of the material, and raising thought-provoking and/or pertinent information.

5. Course Grades

A note on Grading: "I do not give grades; I record students' achievements! Students earn grades."¹ What matters is learning. In studying SFBT we realize that there is no way students can learn everything about this approach in 13 weeks. Our goal is to push students' knowledge base beyond the level they brought to the class. My goal is for industrious and motivated students to stand out and the average students to recognize that they get out of the class what they put into it. Finally, grades, I think, should be viewed as a measure of understanding, integrating, and applying the course materials. I start the semester imagining that the all students are "B" students and it is up to students to earn their way up from there.

Definitions	Grading scale
<u>Superior work:</u> The assignment significantly exceeds expectations listed in the syllabus. Student does more than is required in the assignment and demonstrates a high level of in-depth critical thinking and analysis (i.e., coherence and integration of ideas).	94.0 -100 = A 90.0 to 93.999 = A-
<u>Good Work:</u> The assignment meets <u>all</u> the requirements and demonstrates evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis.	87.0 to 89.999 = B+ 84.0 to 86.999 = B 80.0 to 83.999 = B-
<u>Average Work:</u> The assignment meets the requirements has <u>minor</u> gaps and/or lacks evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis	67.0 to 79.999 = C+ 74.0 to 76.999 = C 70.0 to 73.999 = C-
<u>Poor Work:</u> The assignment has important gaps, both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking in-depth critical thinking and analysis.	67.0 to 69.999 = D+ 64.0 to 66.999 = D 60.0 to 63.999 = D- Below 60 = F

The final course grade is calculated as follows:	Points
Essay Exam	25
Group Demonstration	30
Video	30
Class Participation	15
	100

¹ Miller, S. (2000) Thoughts about lessons and grades. Sue Miller's Homepage. Retrieved online August 20, 2010 from <http://academics.hamilton.edu/biology/smiller/lessonsgrades.html>

X. Course Schedule: This schedule is intended as a guide: the professor reserves the right to shift sessions and topics based on the learning needs of the class.

(1) September 3		Course Overview and Introductions	
		1) Class introductions 2) Course (syllabus) review; class structure, assignments, readings (prep hours) 3) Communications: Use of Blackboard, printed handouts, emails, "office hours" 4) Open frame for questions and discussion. → <i>Insoo Berg Interview Video</i>	
(2) September 10		Client-Centered Therapy & Clients' Theories of Change	
Texts		Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 1 [15] De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 1 [45]	
Readings		Duncan, B., Miller, S., Sparks, J., et.al. (2004) The client's theory of change. In B.Duncan, S.Miller,& J.Sparks, <i>The heroic client</i> . San Francisco:Jossey-Bass [27] 87	
Supplemental		Blundo, R. (2006) Shifting our habits of mind: Learning to practice from a strengths perspective. In, D. Saleebey, <i>The strengths perspective in social work practice, 4th Ed</i> . New York: Allyn & Bacon, pp 25 - 44 Hubble, M., Duncan, B., & Miller, S. (1999) Learning and honoring the client's theory: Practical guidelines. In M. Hubble, B. Duncan, & S. Miller, <i>The heart & soul of change: What works in therapy</i> . Washington, DC: The American Psychological Assn., pp 119 - 146 → <i>Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise</i>	
(3) September 17		Evidence-based Practice & SFBT	
Texts		Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 2 [14]	
Readings		Kim, J., Smock, S., Trepper, T, et.al. (2010) Is solution-focused brief therapy evidence-based? <i>Families in Society (91)3</i> , pps 1-7 [6] Duncan, B. & Reese, (2012) Empirically supported treatments, evidence-based treatments, and evidence-based practice. In I. Weiner, G. Stricker, and T. Widiger (Eds) <i>Handbook of psychology, Vol 8: Clinical psychology, 2nd Ed</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons. [37] Franklin, C., & Hopson, L., (2007), Facilitating the use of evidence-based practices in community organizations. <i>Journal of Social Work Education, 43,3</i> [20] 77	
		→ <i>Group Discussion Activity, Skill-Building Exercise, or Group Demonstration</i>	
(4) September 24		Outcomes, Research	
Text		Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 4-7, 9, 19 [70]	
Reading		Gingerich, W & Peterson, L., (2013) Effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy : A systematic rualitative Review of controlled outcome studies. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 23(3)</i> [15] 85	
Supplemental		Kim, J. (2008). Examining the effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy: A meta-analysis. <i>Research on Social Work Practice,(18)2</i> , pp. 107-116 → <i>Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise</i>	

(5) October 1		<i>Cultural Competency & Ethics</i>
Text	De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 12	[14]
Readings	Barrett, M. (2012) Ethics yesterday & today: Boundaries in an age of informality. <i>Psychotherapy Networker</i> (34)4, 21-25...	[7]
	Corey, G., Schneider-Corey, M., & Callanan, P. (2011) Multicultural perspectives and diversity issues. <i>Issues and ethics in the helping professions</i> . Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Ch 4	[43]
	Dermer, Hemesath, & Russell, (1998) A feminist critique of SF therapy. <i>American Journal of Family Therapy</i> . (26)3 pps. 239-249	[10]
	Diller, J. (2011) What it means to be culturally competent. <i>Cultural diversity: A primer for the human services</i> . Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole. Ch 2	[24]
		155
➔ <i>Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise</i>		

(6) October 8		<i>SFBT "101" ~ Alliance, Assessment, & Finding a Solvable Problem</i>
Texts	Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 2 [Review]	[16]
	De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 2-4	[65]
Readings	Berg (1994) <i>Family based services: A solution-focused approach</i> . New York, NY: Norton, Ch 2-3	[33]
	Walter, J. & Peller, J. (1992) Assumptions of a solution-focused approach. <i>Becoming solution-focused in brief therapy</i> . New York: Brunner/Mazel, Ch 2	[25]
		139
Recommended	Murphy & Duncan, (2007) Assessment 1: Recruiting the heroic client. <i>Brief intervention for school problems</i> , 2 nd Ed., New York, NY: Guilford	
➔ <i>Group Demonstration & Skill Building Exercise</i>		

(7) October 15		<i>SFBT ~ Finding Exceptions & Questioning Techniques</i>
Texts	Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 3	[15]
	De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 6 (skip pps 113-117)	[8]
Readings	Berg, I.K. (1994): Ch 6	[26]
	Berg, I.K., & Dolan, Y. (2001) <i>Tales of solutions</i> . New York, NY: Norton, Ch 3	[23]
	Berg & Dolan (2001) Ch 6	[24]
		96
➔ <i>Group Demonstration & Skill Building Exercise</i>		

(8) October 22		<i>SFBT ~ The Miracle Question</i>
Text	De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 5	[26]
Readings	Berg, I.K., & Dolan, Y. (2001) Ch 2	[33]
	De Shazer, S. & Dolan, Y. (2007) <i>More than miracles: The state of the art of solution-focused brief therapy</i> . New York, NY: The Hawthorne Press. Ch 3-4	[35]
		94
Event	Friday: 10-25-13 <i>Beyond Compliments: Using SFBT Everyday with Every Client</i> , Linda Metcalf UT SSW Office of Professional Development Course #F1304	
➔ <i>Group Demonstration & Skill Building Exercise</i>		

Extra Credit Activity: 3 points for attending the Linda Metcalf training on October 25th! Students can register by emailing ssw-pd@austin.utexas.edu and mention that you are in Professor Nowicki's SFBT Class.

(9) October 29		SFBT ~ Scaling	
	Texts	Franklin, et.al. (2012): Ch 5 [15] De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 6, pps. 113-117 [4]	
	Readings	Berg (1994) Scaling questions. <i>Family based services</i> . Ch 6 [9] Franklin, Corcoran, Nowicki, et.al. (1997) Using self-anchored scales to measure outcomes in SF therapy. <i>Journal of Systemic Therapies</i> [17] Walter & Peller (1992) Ch 4: Well defined goals. [10]	55
➔ <i>Group Demonstrations & Skill Building Exercise</i>			

(10) November 5		SFBT ~ Taking a Break & Goaling	
	Texts	De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 7 [23]	
	Readings	Walter & Peller (1992): Ch 9 [18] Berg & Dolan (2001): Ch 5: [16] Chang, J. (2010) The reflecting team: a training method for family counselors. <i>The Family Journal</i> (18)36-44 [8]	65
➔ <i>Group Demonstration & Skill Building Exercise</i> Essay Exam on Blackboard!			

(11) November 12		Applications: Populations	Essay Exam Due!
	Texts	De Jong & Berg (2013): Ch 14 (pp.288-298) [10]	
	Readings	Green, G.J. & Lee, M.Y. (2011) Working with persons with a severe mental illness, <i>Solution-Oriented Social Work Practice</i> . (pp 255-274) New York: Oxford University Press [19] Lee, M. & Mjelde-Mossey, L.A., (2004) Cultural dissonance among generations: Solution-focused approach with east Asian elders and their families. <i>Journal of Marital & Family Therapy</i> , 30:4, 497-513 [14] Tohn & Oshlag (1996) SF therapy with mandated clients. In S. Miller, M. Hubble, & B. Duncan, <i>Handbook of solution-focused brief therapy</i> . San Francisco: Josey Bass Publishers. Ch. 5 [31] Zamarripa, M. (2009) Solution-focused therapy in the south Texas borderlands. <i>Journal of systemic therapies</i> . 28:4, pp 1-11 [10]	84
➔ <i>Group Discussion about the essay exam answers</i>			

(12) November 19		Applications: Special Problems	
	Texts	Franklin, et.al.(2012) <i>Any Two</i> : Ch 11[10], 12[10], 15[11], 16[13], 17[14], 18 [11]	
	Readings	George, E, Iveson, C., & Ratner, H. (1999) Smoke gets in your eyes: A case of depression. <i>Problem to solution: Brief therapy with individuals and families</i> . London: BT Press. Ch 3 [9] Sahily de Castro, (2008) Solution-focused therapy for families coping with suicide. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i> . Retrieved online November 2008 from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3658/is_200801/ai_n24392892/print?tag=artBody;col1 [13]	56
	Recommended	Nowicki, J. & Arbuckle, L. (2009) Social workers as family counselors in a non-profit, community-based agency. In A. R. Roberts, A., (Ed) <i>Social worker desk reference</i> . New York: Oxford U. Press, pp. 45-53.	
➔ <i>Group Discussion Activity or Skill-Building Exercise</i>			

(13) November 26	<i>Applications: Groups</i>
Reading	Connie, E. & Metcalf, L. (2009) <i>The art of solution-focused therapy</i> . New York: Springer. Ch 8-9 [30] Metcalf, L. (1998) Changing directions in group therapy. <i>Solution-focused group therapy</i> . New York: Free Press, Ch 1 [23] 53
(13) December 3	<i>Last Class ~ Evaluations</i>
	→ Class Reflections Evaluations