

Editorial

Steve de Shazer once told Kirsten Dierolf and Mark McKergow (separately) that he was very confused about the fact that Solution Focus (SF) was being used in other areas than therapy. He said that he had no idea why or whether it works outside this field. He would have been very surprised about our current issue, which is mainly practically-focused and has articles and case studies from diverse areas of application.

Our first peer-reviewed paper in this issue introduces SF as a methodology for workshops to train hospital staff in end of life conversations. Emily Mckean shows how using an empowering SF methodology for staff training improved their ability to hold “end of life” conversations in order to increase the number of people who can spend their last days where and how they want. Strengthening the practitioners to hold these difficult situations and working from “what works” rather than imposing a methodology seems like an ethical and effective way of helping achieve this important goal for the patients.

The other peer reviewed paper comes from the world of coaching. Chris Iveson and Peter Szabó comment on each other’s cases and Susanne Burgstaller offers an introduction with her perspective and learning. Susanne is also the star of our interview in this edition and shows us yet another application of SF: organisational development in some very august and important Austrian bodies including the Supreme Court and the Parliament.

Our case studies also come various areas in organisational work: risk management, dealing with bullying situations in organisations and achieving tough targets.

Stefan Kreil has been involved in risk management for a large German software company for a long time. There is little that sounds less Solution Focused than “Risk Management”,

especially when it is done with a focus on “let us discuss what can go wrong and analyse mistakes that haven’t even been made yet”. In Stefan’s article you will be pleased to read how SF can be used even in an environment that seems oriented at quite the opposite.

Detlef Beck and Heike Blum are using an approach very similar to Sue Young’s support group approach for children who are being bullied in primary school in organisations. Kirsten Dierolf had mentioned Sue Young’s approach in her book on team coaching, asking whether this might be applied to organisations as well. Two months after the publication of the book, Detlef and Blum sent her their book on “Shared Responsibility Approach” answering her question. Yes, the methodology can be used – the main difference is that instead of a consultant, the team’s leader uses a support group to help the person being bullied.

Our final case study comes from an interview with John Pelton about using SF ideas to save huge amounts of money on London’s vast Crossrail project. Crossrail is the largest infrastructure project currently running in Europe, a whole new rail line connecting the west and east sides of the UK capital by slicing right through the already-packed centre. SFCT Board member John Brooker worked with John Pelton, and it is fascinating to get the customer’s perspective about this very useful and significant work.

Our classic paper by Steve de Shazer and Gale Miller – who volunteered to be a guest editor for this edition – is “Have You Heard the Latest Rumor About . . . ? Solution-Focused Therapy as a Rumor” from 1998. This important work offers ideas on how we think about SF in post-structural terms without getting too fixed on any one description being the truth. We use these ideas all the time within our work, and it’s important too to think about how they apply to the practice of SF itself. Or its selves?

Carey Glass has provided a research review drawing on the last papers to hit the new HESIAN research listing (to which you should definitely sign up for updates). This has an even more amazing range than usual, with peer-reviewed work

from farms in New Zealand, sports psychology, computer-mediated therapy interventions (DIALOG+) and the application of SF work with children by the world-famous British institution the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

We have three book reviews. Ramu Iyer reviewed Patricia Lustig's "*Strategic Foresight*", Anton Stellamans has "*Encounters with Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg*", and Chris Iveson reviewed Rayyy Ghul's book "*The Power of the Next Small Step*" – telling us about "self-help" in a solution focused way.

In this edition we have the very sad occasion to say "thank you and goodbye" to two wonderful SF practitioners and SFCT members who both were taken from our communities through accidents well before their time: Steve Onyett and Greg Vinnicombe. Steve died from a heart attack while biking on a charity ride in Palestine and Greg died in an road accident while on holiday in Turkey this autumn. They will both be much missed, particularly in the UK chapter.