

Editorial

Time to focus on SF training

How can we learn from each other to make SF trainings more effective? That's the key question to be addressed at the forthcoming SFCT Trainers Conference on 28–29 October 2011. This will be the first meeting anywhere to focus explicitly on SF training for around five years, and it's about time this issue was readdressed. Having focused on the review process and supporting consultants, SFCT is now moving to engage the 'T' in its name by working with trainers.

One key question to be addressed is the balance between showing and telling. Steve de Shazer was famously uncompromising in his stance of wanting to show SF and the grammar of the practice, rather than explaining it. This may have been rigorously correct – but is it the best way to engage newcomers? Even today there are a variety of views around this, with some trainers seeking near-total experientiality and others favouring a greater balance between cognitive frameworks and practical exercises.

Another question is about timing. Some leading groups have for many years run simple two-day workshops, and even insisted that the approach is so simple that no further new content is necessary after this. Others have found a benefit in multi-module approaches. How to sequence material, how to link modules together, how to engage learners between modules – these are all areas where bringing together international experience can lead to a more lasting impact on learners and return in investment for client organisations.

Something that many will wish to discuss is how to support learners in applying their SF skills in the workplace. What is the role of ongoing supervision? How can we use different learning methods including 'brain-friendly' learning? How can we assess the effectiveness of SF training – in an SF way? And how can we get more people interested

in learning SF to benefit themselves and their organisations. All of these are issues with direct relevance to many SFCT members and would-be members. Please help us to spread the word about this exciting and timely event.

This issue features a fascinating interview with Luc Isabaert, the founder of IASTI (the International Alliance of Solution-Focused Training Institutes). As well as his pioneering work on alcohol dependency, Luc discussed his reasons for wishing to make progress on certification of SF therapy trainings. We at SFCT hope to forge a partnership with IASTI to utilise our work on accreditation via the review process. It's time for those who want to raise the profile of SF and have expressed support in the past for such initiatives to get actively involved in whatever way they can.

The peer reviewed articles in this issue are mainly about SF's relationship with other approaches. Bannink and Jackson compare Positive Psychology and SF, Macdonald reacts to common questions that are often asked (critically or curiously) about SF and Dierolf points out the similarities between Discursive Psychology and SF. Comparisons with other approaches are very helpful in understanding our own approach better – and it is always a good idea to broaden your horizon. We hope our readers will enjoy these papers as much as we – and the peer reviewers – did.

Our classic paper is Nick Triantafillou's 'A Solution-Focused Approach to Mental Health SF Supervision' and is introduced by Alasdair Macdonald. This paper is well worth revisiting as a very early example of managers/supervisors using the model to work with practitioners who were also using the model. It features actual outcome data as well as good clear thinking.

In our case section, you will find a very interesting case from Japan. Yoshida-san has developed an SF process for teams in retail banking. What is most fascinating about this case is that although the SF process was the same for all branches, the conclusions the individual branches came up with were very different from one another – showing the SF principle of 'every case is different'.

This time we have book reviews on topics including positive deviance, beyond the crisis, combat stress and 1001 SF questions. If you have read an interesting book about or around SF – why don't you consider writing a review? There is always space for them, and it's a great way to start writing. Finally, our research reviewer this time is Steve Smith from Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK.