Solution Focused Art Therapy: Solidifying Positive Change toward a Preferred Future


Presenter: Justine LaBatch, MA, LMFT - Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, New Jersey License No. 37FI00169800; Art Therapist; Alumni, Notre Dame de Namur University, MA in Marital and Family Therapy & Art Therapy Psychology - 2004

Note: Questions here have been adapted from original texts by Insoo Kim Berg, Peter DeJong and Steve de Shazer following this writer’s development of the use of art therapy with the model in her Master’s degree Thesis titled: 2003-04 "Treatment effectiveness of Art Therapy combined with Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on Depressed Adults", Principal Investigator, San Mateo County Mental Health Dept., Primary Care Interface Unit, in collaboration with Notre Dame de Namur University

Justine work phone: 732-228-3336 - email: justinelabatch@mac.com

Through a guided solution-focused exercise, we will explore what your preferred future may be. In this workshop, participants will leave with more knowledge of specific next steps to take towards their personal and professional goals. This is a hands-on workshop and sure to be fun!

1. Reflect on your experiences at work in the last year. What is something that you feel proud of, something that has stood out to you in the last year? Something that perhaps you would want to share with someone else and that it is something that may be able to improved upon. Describe what has come to mind that you feel proud of in the last year:

2. Looking at the writing implements on the table, choose a color “feels” like what you have just described above. Pick a color that matches what you feel inside. Think of a title or word or phrase that represents what you are proud of. Write this at the top of the big paper in front of you. It’s ok if you are the only one who knows what the word or words means. Also write your word or phrase here:

3. Now look at the bowls of stones before you. Pick some stones that feel like what makes you proud. Arrange these in one area on the paper, under your title. Feel free to take a picture when you have finished your arrangement.
4. Now take a moment to look at your arrangement of stones.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means the lowest feeling of pride and 10 means you feel as proud as possible, where would you say things are at right now? Circle your choice:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

a. What tells you it is this number?  
Describe how you would know it's the number you chose and not another:

b. What keeps the number from being one number lower?  
Describe what you know:

c. What needs to be different for it to go up just one or two numbers?:  
Describe what you think you would need to notice that's different to tell you it is one number higher?:
5. **Guided Exercise using the miracle question led by Justine.**

   a. When I see you tomorrow, you tell me things are different, even better. Describe what you noticed that was different that told you things were better:

   b. Look at the bowls of stones and pick some that feels like the miracle picture that came to your mind. Take the stones you picked and arrange them on another part of the page, separate from your first grouping. Feel free to take a picture when you are finished.

   c. Describe a little bit about the miracle picture you created with the stones. What do the stones represent to you?

   d. Take a minute to look at the new grouping of stones you have created. What do you notice? What feels different now?

   e. Look at the first arrangement of stones you created when we first started. Now look at the stones you just arranged. What do you notice between the two? Now get up from your chair and look at your page from a different angle. If you can’t get up, turn your page around 90 degrees and then 180 degrees and view it from this angle. What do you notice is different?

   f. Did you get any more information as to what needs to be different?
g. What would a team member, colleague, family member or friend notice about you if you were to see things were beginning to be different, even better? Who would notice? What would they notice about you?

h. When they noticed that about you, what would they say or do different? How might it affect them?

i. When they did this, how would it be different for you?

j. What might you say or do different then?

k. Think about how this would be different for you. If you would like, merge the two groupings of stones into one arrangement or create a bridge with stones from your first arrangement to your second. Feel free to take a picture. What do you notice or feel now?
l. Think about the original number you chose when we first started. **What is one small thing you may do over the next week** that would tell you that your number was now a higher number?

m. On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 being you are the least certain and 10 being you are as certain as you could possibly be, how sure are you that you will do this one small thing in the next week or over this weekend? **Circle your choice:**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

n. Feel free to take one or two of the stones from what you created today as a reminder of your problem being solved and or a reminder of the small thing you will be doing to help the number become a higher one. Thank you for your time today. If it is ok with you I would like to photograph what you created today with my digital camera. If this is not ok, just go ahead and put your stones back. If it is ok with you, leave what you created, and I will photograph and clear the space later.

**Thank you for being here today!**

You can email me if you would like to discuss this exercise further, have questions on how to adapt the intervention to suit the population you work with or if you have any ideas you would like to share.

If you are willing to share any pictures of the artwork you created today, please email them to me with a brief explanation of the image. **Let me know if you give me permission to use your image in research and clinical trainings.**

*I will not identify your name if I use your image.*

My email is: justinelabatch@mac.com
Art Therapy Intervention Setup and Materials List

Read the set up directions and materials list before you get started. Once you have set up, you can ask the questions to the client in the session with art materials before them. You can write the dialogue the client engages in after each question on the next pages of this handout. Alternatively, if the client prefers, they can write their answers and discuss with you in the session. This can be a group exercise with a variety of populations and adapted as needed.

Setup:
Using the materials list as a guide gather your setup. You don’t have to spend a lot of money. Prepare a table you can sit with the client(s) at. Place several bowls of stones and objects in the middle of the table. The bowls should be consistent, meaning use the same types of bowls and place one color of stones as a group in the bowls. Dollar stores have 3 packs of clear glass bowls, which work great. You can email me if you need direction on the set up. Place the markers, colored pencils, black pen, ruler and pencil to the side of where the client’s paper will go. Once ready to facilitate a session, offer the client the paper choices and ask them to choose one that they are drawn to. If the client points to one, lay the paper out on the table where the client is seated. Or, ask the client to choose and take a piece of paper and place it in front of them.

Materials List:

1. Paper: 18 x 24 inch or 12 x 18 inch construction paper, multicolored for several choices a client can choose from. White Drawing paper, 12 x 18 inch; 8 x 11 inch Blank Copier Paper. A variety is good. I have found most people choose the large colored paper to work on. Colors can have meanings but it’s best not to interpret. Let the client tell you what the color means to them. You can ask, “Can you tell me a little bit about the color of paper you chose?”

2. Mr. Sketch Scented or Unscented Markers, 12 count or even better – 18 count. The American Art Therapy association recommends these markers. The light fastness and vividness of the colors seem to match a person’s affective states well.


4. Ruler

5. Black pen

6. #2 pencil, sharpened

7. Variety of clear and colored stones, nuggets, river stones, acrylic gems, feathers - available readily at Dollar stores, florist supply, AC Moore, Michaels, or online at http://www.save-on-crafts.com/vasgemmarsto.html

8. Same size/shape of bowls to hold stones, they sell 3 packs of clear glass bowls @ dollar store

a. Alternatively, I found the pressed acacia Leaf trays we have here at the training today. They are called, “EaternalPlates EPPT100 9-Inch Square Biodegradable Partition Tray, 10-Pack” sold on Amazon.com for approx. 9 dollars for the pack of 10. They are lightweight and strong

9. Digital Camera

Other options depending on ego strength of client – these are “more regressive type” of materials, use only with clients are not suicidal, psychotic, rapid cycling, etc.