



Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association

News of a Difference

December 2025

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Do you have an idea for our newsletter? Please get in touch! board@sfbta.org

Farewell and Thank You Message from 2025 President, Shaema Imam

Greetings everyone! We have finally come to the last newsletter of 2025! What a nice year it has been with monthly opportunities to update our dear members and interested parties about SFBTA's efforts and happenings. With the end of the year has also come the end of my term as President of the Association, a role I will remember and cherish for all my days ahead.

I hope you will read this newsletter with a smile, thinking back to our amazing year. A lot of transitions! Getting the assistance of a professional website designer and online content manager, [Cyan Verzosa](#) ([more about her below](#)), launching the updated website, getting several committees set up and reshuffled ([updates here](#)), our April and August town halls and trainings, as well as our awesome conference in Toronto! To top it off, we have a talented board ready to go for 2026! Please see [here](#) for a memorable photo of our transition and handoff meeting that took place on December 14th, as well as information about the portfolio that each board member has agreed to take on for the new year.

I am also proud to present three new contributors to our newsletter this year, [Franchesca Garza-Fraire](#) with an [event report](#), [Sherrill Campbell](#) with [SF@Work](#), and a minute after the 2025 Conference team put down their feedback form report, [Michelle Lasky](#) stepped forward after months of backstage efforts to officially press GO on [Conference 2026](#), join us from the start as we plan it out!

I could not have managed this year without an excellent 2025 board by my side! My warm thanks to fellow outgoing board members: **Johnny Kim**, my University of Denver professor who introduced me to SFBT in the first place, **Dawn Crosswhite**, who managed the weighty Treasurer role with an eye for security and stewardship, **Shirley Shani Ben-Zvi**, talented online presence with an eye for new

perspectives who had to end her term early in mid-2025 after 2.5 years of service, and my mentor and 2024 president **Carol Buchholz Holland** who, along with another mentor, past-president (2023) **Marcella Stark**, nominated me for the role of president in the first place, thank you all!

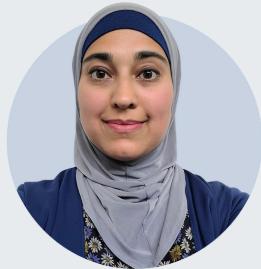
Best wishes to my other board members who I had the privilege of walking alongside who will be carrying the torch forward for another year or two or three, **Nate Guyton**, energetic, smart, and prudent, **Olivia Wedel**, with so much experience from other boards and an eye for international collaboration, **Marsha Wichmann**, seemingly quiet yet apt and timely with her suggestions, and of course **Mo Yee Lee**, who we are blessed to have with us to remind us of SFBTA's earliest days as well as keeping research at the forefront of our mission.

I have only gotten the chance to work with our newest board members briefly, **Tara Gretton**, **Tom Fraire**, **Katherine Davis**, and **Cecile Dietrich**, best wishes to you all! My fellow equity, diversity, and inclusion committee member, **Toya Brown** is now on the board herself. I thank her for stepping forward and wish all of you the best.

Last but not least, my heartfelt thanks goes to my steadfast, even-keeled partner aka president-elect in SFBTA this year, **Vicky Essebag**. Your encouragement, thoughtful advice, and reminder of when to go to sleep and start back another day was invaluable. SFBTA is so lucky to have you at the lead as president for 2026, I wish you all the best.

A final thanks to all the SFBTA members I had the honour and privilege of meeting this year, either by email, zoom meetings, or at the conference, you are all appreciated and our door is open whenever you would like to walk over and join us at the helm.

You all make a difference, and thank you for the opportunity for me to make a difference too.



Warmly,
Outgoing 2025 President,
Shaema Imam

Hello and Transition Message from 2026 President, Vicky Essebag

On behalf of the SFBTA Board of Directors, I want to share our deepest appreciation as we wish a fond farewell to our President, Shaema Imam.

For over two years, I have had the distinct pleasure of working alongside Shaema on the SFBTA Board. The time has passed quickly, and I will truly miss her strong leadership, unwavering passion, and profound dedication to this organization and the role of President.

Shaema quickly mobilized as a powerful and effective leader who responded to her responsibility with deep intention and resourcefulness. Her work has left a lasting mark on the SFBTA. Among her significant contributions, Shaema:

- **Revitalized Communication:** Successfully bringing back and spearheading the Monthly SFBTA newsletter, "News of a Difference."
- **Streamlined Governance:** Updating our Standing Committee process and introducing new committees to better reflect our strategic direction.
- **Fostered Growth & Inclusion:** Generating new initiatives focused on inviting membership, inclusion, diverse learning/research opportunities, our legacy as an organization, and connecting with our global community.
- **Ensured Stability:** Diligently ensuring that our organizational bylaws are comprehensive and fully up to date.

Shaema has brought kindness, compassion and patience to her role. She listens respectfully to all views and concerns and consistently rises to every task with integrity, resourcefulness and attention to detail. I'm especially appreciative of Shaema's wholehearted commitment to ensuring a seamless transition, as she continues to work diligently to leave the SFBTA Board organized and ready to go for the new year.

While we will all miss Shaema, we know this is not a goodbye. We look forward to staying in close contact and finding opportunities for future collaboration.

Shaema Imam, on behalf of the SFBTA Board and all our membership, we wish you the very best in all your endeavors and thank you for your exceptional service.



Warmly and with gratitude,
Vicky Essebag
President-Elect 2025 and Incoming President for 2026
SFBTA Board of Directors



BOARD UPDATE

December Transitional Board meeting with 2025 and 2026 Board members held on December 14, 2025

Welcome to our Executive Committee for 2026

President: Vicky Essebag

President - Elect: Nate Guyton

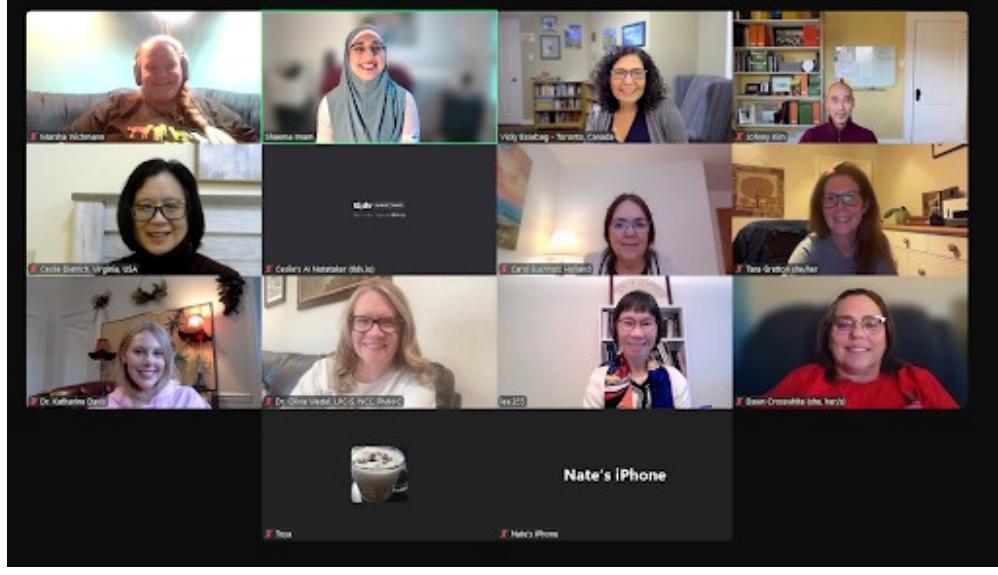
Treasurer: Tom Fraire

Secretary: Cecile Dietrich

Welcome to our Members at Large for 2026:

Marsha Wichmann, Mo Yee Lee, Olivia Wedel, Tara Gretton, Toya Brown, Katherine Davis

December Transitional Board meeting with 2025 and 2026 Board members held on December 14, 2025.



From top left: Marsha Wichmann, Shaema Imam, Vicky Essebag, Johnny Kim Cecile Dietrich, Carol Buchholz Holland, Tara Gretton Katherine Davis, Olivia Wedel, Mo Yee Lee, Dawn Crosswhite
Board member photos missing: Toya Brown, Nate Guyton, Tom Fraire



SFBTA 2026 CONFERENCE

2026Launch, Call for Volunteers, Save the Date

Greetings to my cherished SFBTA community!

For those who do not know me, I'm Michelle Lasky, LCSW, and I have the honor of chairing the 2026 SFBTA Annual Conference. I am truly grateful to be entrusted with coordinating an event that is such an important part of our time together as a community.

I hope you will **save the date: November 5–8, 2026**, hosted at **Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio**.



Our 2025 conference in Toronto was a deeply nourishing and connecting experience for me, and I know many others felt the same. My hope is to carry forward the warm, inviting, and meaningful energy that has become a hallmark of our gatherings. And of course, I know I cannot do this alone.

So many people contributed their time, talent, and passion to making last year's conference a success, and I would be grateful for your support again this year. If you are interested in serving on the conference committee, please contact me at sfbta.annualconference@gmail.com. When you reach out, feel free to note if you are particularly drawn to any of the following sub-committees:

- Advertising & Sponsorships
- Presenter Selection & Program
- Research, Survey & Certificates
- Welcome, Entertainment, Registration & Volunteers

My hope is to begin meeting in **February** as we launch into planning in earnest.

I look forward to serving this wonderful community and connecting with you throughout the coming year. Thank you for all you do to support the work of SFBTA.





With gratitude and hope,

Michelle Lasky



COMMITTEE UPDATES

Join the Committees!

SFBTA has 10 standing committees and 10 elected board members, thus one board member is the liaison for each committee. That board member can attend committee meetings and update the SFBTA board on committee progress so that ideal teamwork can be achieved while still maintaining final decisions in the purview of the SFBTA elected board.

Committee Board Liaisons - Based on bylaw regulations or previous work on committees or preferences voiced during board position polling, the following portfolios have been assigned for 2026:

- Vicky Essebag – Advisory Council (President's portfolio)
- Cecile Dietrich – Membership Committee (Secretary's portfolio)
- Tom Fraire - Finance Committee (Treasurer's portfolio)
- Nate Guyton – Conference Committee
- Mo Yee Lee – Research Committee
- Toya Brown - Outreach Committee
- Marsha Wichmann – Board Development Committee
- Olivia Wedel – Professional Development Committee
- Tara Gretton – Member Communications Committee
- Katherine Davis - Archives Committee

A look back at 2025 Committees: Work done and best hopes going forward

Advisory Council (President's Portfolio)



Though this is a new “official” committee per Bylaw amendments made at the Annual Members’ Meeting in November 2025, this year, Shaema was able to get informal advice from past presidents of SFBTA and past board members going back to the origins of SFBTA almost 25 years ago. Going forward, the President will have the official help of the immediate-past-president on this committee if desired, as well as the ability to seek advice as she sees fit from previous board members so that she may learn from our resourceful past to innovate into our preferred future!

Membership Committee



This is a new committee to support the bylaw-mandated membership coordinator role. In 2025, membership was increased from about 120 in January to 208 members by December. Also, a “frequently asked questions” list was developed for the website as well as a welcome letter for all new members.

Finance Committee



In 2025, Treasurer Dawn Crosswhite managed this role on her own without a committee to assist. The 2025 budget stayed relatively balanced (slightly positive) from start to finish, with income from the conference, membership fees, and donations, balancing out the research award, support for JFSP, and some board expenses (board insurance, and expenses and subscription fees for online profiles).

Conference Committee



Conference Co-chairs Vicky Essebag and Haesun Moon managed a successful 2025 Conference with strong attendance achieved from points outside of the host city as well as from locals, costs remained as predicted, and the diversity of topics and presenters was appreciated. A 2026 conference site was identified (Cleveland) after a review and bids exploration from 5 different sites. 2026 Conference chair Michelle Lasky was able to secure her alma mater for a conference host, Cleveland State University. More information about current updates on the conference [available here](#).



Research Committee

In 2025, the latest update to the Treatment Manual was completed and published on the [sfbta.org](#) website for public viewing and access free of charge. The 2025 Research Award was disbursed and information about past winners was updated on the website.

Outreach Committee



The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee was renamed as the Outreach Committee to reflect its action-oriented approach to invite underrepresented groups to the table. Several organizations were invited to collaborate with the SFBTA and networking is ongoing. Committee members are diverse as well, with representation from 5 different countries around the world (UAE, Canada, USA, India, and Zimbabwe).

Professional Development Committee



In 2025, this committee met for several monthly meetings to develop brainstorming ideas into practicable events going into 2026. Ideas for a mentorship program were developed, the established twice yearly trainings were reconfirmed (with successful events in April and August), and lists of free online training were compiled. Other potential training formats were also discussed, including case conferences, skill development workshops, and specialty/affinity focus groups.



Member Communications Committee

There was much growth in this committee during 2025! The website was reinvented with much more content and resources onboard. This newsletter was re-established after about two decades of pause. An active online presence was maintained on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, and a new YouTube Channel was established. At the Annual Members' Meeting, a motion was made to formally thank and recognize Cyan Verzosa, our professional website designer and online content manager, for her extensive contributions to SFBTA communications. This motion was proposed by Shaema Imam, seconded by

SFBTA Member Catherine, and adopted unanimously by the entire membership. Thank you Cyan!



Cyan Verzosa

Website Designer and Online
Content Manager



Archives Committee

Several meetings were held over the second half of 2025 to formulate what a documentary on the early development of SFBT with a specific focus on interviewing those who knew Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer would look like. The upcoming 25th anniversary (2027) of SFBTA's formulation was also noted, with plans to have a retrospective video interviewing those involved from the earliest days. Though filming has not yet started, potential interviewees have been listed and invitations to participate are being sent.



Board Development Committee

This committee was “officially” formulated by majority vote through bylaw amendments in November 2025. However, this year, an informal meeting was held with a representative of Solution Focus in Organizations (SFiO) executive Annie Bordeleau to discuss collaboration so that SFBTA may be not only “about” SF, but run in an “SF” manner. Transition protocols were also formulated so that SFBTA’s institutional knowledge and lessons learned may transfer smoothly from one board to the next. Bylaw Amendments are also within the purview of this committee, and this year, 31 amendments were made by majority vote to ensure that the bylaws reflected current realities of online participation, and delineated the roles of standing committees and members. The latest ratified bylaws can be found on the SFBTA website at [Bylaws | SFBTA](#).

All of these committees can benefit from the ideas and energy of motivated members! Please contact board@sfbta.org if you would like to join any of them for 2026!



SF AROUND THE WORLD

Events and SF Gatherings

SF24/26

About SF24

SF24/26 is a unique global event, with four regional time zone conferences running round the world consecutively on Febr. 5-6, 2026. Each time zone conference offers you six hours of Solution Focused presentations, workshops, panels and plenaries aimed at:

- Strengthening the networks within the SF community
- Showcasing the variety of Solution-Focused work – as organisational consultants, teachers, coaches, facilitators, academics, researchers, writers, counsellors or therapists
- Inviting more people to take an interest in the SF approach
- Peer support to re-fuel your SF tanks

 6 Years of SF24

 4 Timezones

 1400+ Average attendees yearly

5-6 February 2026

Call for contributions

**Submit
your work now:
solutionfocus24.com**



SF24/26 Online Conference

When: 5-6 February 2026

Call for proposals now open:

<https://www.solutionfocus24.com/>

[Learn More](#)

SOLWorld Unconference 2026

Where: Porvoo, Finland

When: 4-7 June 2026

[Register Here](#)

UKASFP2026 Conference

Where: Greyfriars Church meeting rooms, Friar Street, Reading RG1 1EH

When: 10-11 July 2026

[Register Here](#)

SOLWorld Summer Retreat 2026

Where: Möschberg Oberthal Switzerland

When: 10-15 August 2026

[Register Here](#)

EBTA Conference 2026

Where: Olomouc, Czech Republic

When: 18-20 September 2026

Registration is now open!

You can submit a workshop proposal until 30 March 2026.

[Register Here](#)

Where: Land Aan Zee, Netherlands

When: 14-18 October 2026

[Register Here](#)

SF School Professionals Working Group for anyone interested in SF Community and Conversation in schools.

Contact Julie Magadance: jmagad@neisd.net or 210 407 0350.

[Email Julie](#)



Compiled by:

Olivia Wedel



SF EVENT REPORT

Online Training for North Dakota Counseling Association

Franchesca presented More of what works— A Solution Focused Approach to Supervision for the North Dakota Counseling Association's monthly webinar series in December. (Her biggest take away— there was an attendee who had never heard of solution focus!)

SFBTA member, Franchesca Garza-Fraire, presented More of What Works— A Solution Focused Approach to Supervision for the North Dakota Counseling Association's monthly webinar series on December 12, 2025. Attendees across North Dakota participated in the Moan, moan, moan Activity and SF Silent Supervision in which Franchesca adapted a lesson on Silent Sessions presented by Family Based Solutions at the SFBTA Conference in November by Ayse Adil. This adaptation has created a way for large, supervised groups to reflect and ask focused questions for feedback, and Franchesca couldn't wait to share the tool with her colleagues in North Dakota.

Franchesca is the Program Director for School Counseling at the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. Since 2023, she has been introducing Solution Focus to her graduate counseling students who are specializing in both clinical mental health and school counseling. SF became a valuable resource to UMary in 2023 when the university was awarded a 6.2 million dollar grant for the recruitment, education, and licensure of school counseling students in high needs, rural, and tribal communities by the department of education. This grant created immediate positions in school for novice counseling students. With the current demands in schools, counseling students asked for support and resources they could use right away. The MHSP grant funded supplemental training in SF for the counseling students and set them up with language and a helping stance that has begun to empower and support the students and the school communities in their care.

Dr. Garza-Fraire's most exciting moment from the NDCA webinar was one attendee who stated she had never heard of Solution Focus. Franchesca has learned the value of SF in practice and in counselor education and finds great joy in sharing a practice that empowers clients, creates sustainability for the helper, and facilitates curious respect. Learn more about her practice at wanderinharmony.com.



Dr. Francesca Garza-Fraire



SF@WORK

Essay by Sherrill Campbell



I am a registered social worker with over 20 years of clinical experience in health care and private practice. I currently work as a hospital social worker in oncology outpatient services and also maintain a private practice supporting individuals with a wide range of psychosocial concerns.

Solution Focused Therapy is my primary clinical approach and one I have consistently used across diverse health care settings, including oncology, emergency services, cardiology, and other medical programs. I find this approach to be highly practical, collaborative, and effective in helping individuals navigate complex health and life challenges.

In both hospital and private practice settings, clients often seek support because they want meaningful, tangible change. A solution focused approach validates clients' strengths, emphasizes what is working and

actively involves them in their own progress. Throughout my career, clients and patients have consistently shared that they feel heard, empowered, and capable of moving forward.

Even in oncology and palliative contexts where the prognosis may be poor, solution focused therapy remains deeply valuable. It supports individuals in clarifying their goals, identifying what matters most, and shaping how they wish to live during every stage of illness, including end of life. Sherrill can be reached at info@sherrillcampbell.ca. For further information www.sherrillcampbell.ca.



Sherrill in her therapy room (with a friend posing as client for demonstration purposes)

Would you like to share how you use SF principles in your daily professional role? Please email us your 200-250 word essay for a future newsletter!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Best wishes to our dear members for a pause-ful and peaceful holiday season and a happy new year!

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