



Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association

News of the Difference

June 2026

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

Message from Chair of Member Communications Committee

Dear all,

Welcome to our June newsletter.

As summer begins to make its presence felt (sometimes rather dramatically here in the UK!), I've been reflecting on the work of Kristin Neff and her writing about self-compassion. One idea that particularly stayed with me is her suggestion that self-kindness is not just about you; rather, it co-creates the conditions for the common good.

This made me wonder about the connection with solution focused practice. So much of our work invites people to notice what is already working in their lives, to recognise their efforts, and to speak to themselves with the same respect and curiosity they might offer to someone they care about. When we are able to acknowledge our own humanity, our own struggles, and our own small signs of what is working, perhaps we become more patient, hopeful, and generous in our interactions with others.

What difference might it make if we were just a little kinder to ourselves? What might our conversations sound like? How might our relationships change? What possibilities might emerge in our families, workplaces and communities?

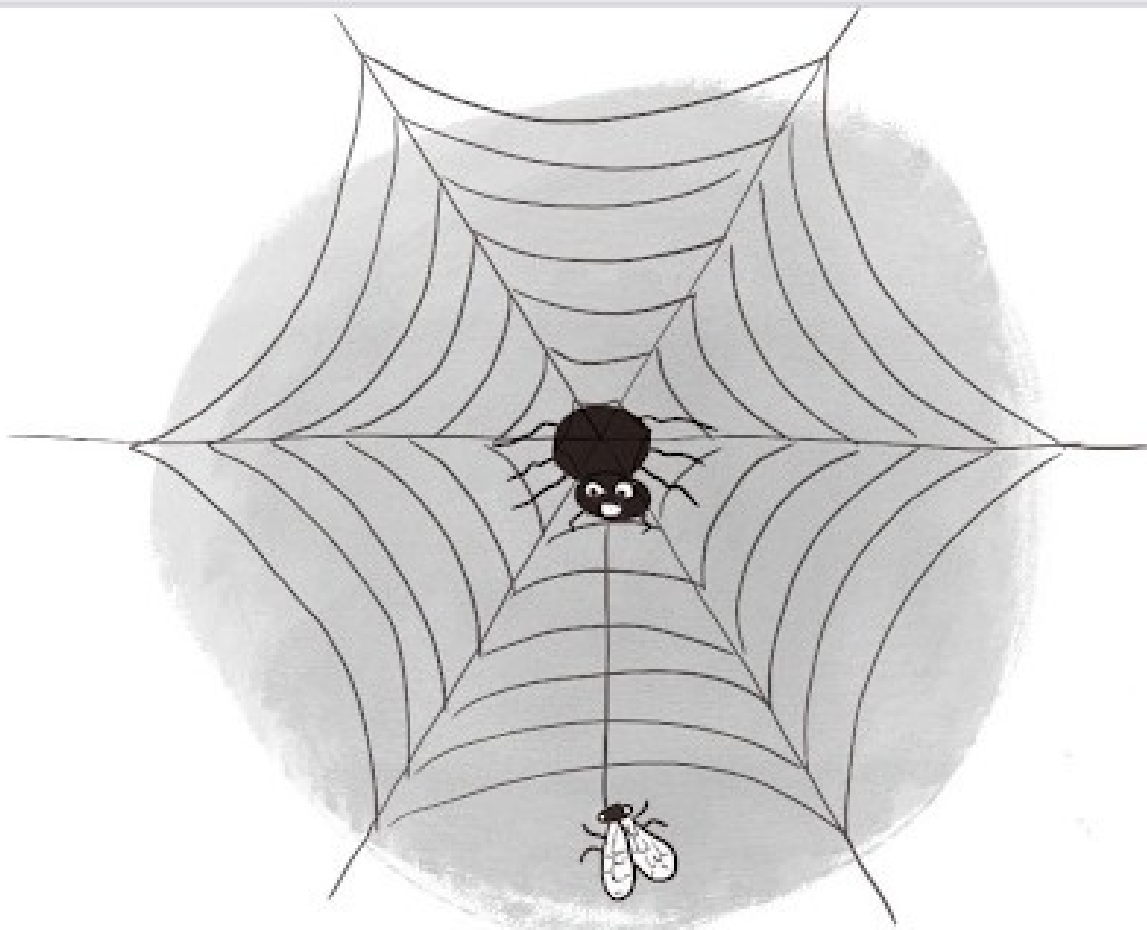
As you read this month's newsletter, perhaps take a moment to notice something you have done well recently, something you have managed despite challenges, or something you would like to appreciate about yourself. Small acts of self-kindness have a way of rippling outward.

I hope you enjoy this month's contributions and find ideas, stories, and inspiration that support both your work and your own wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around you.



Warm wishes,
Tara Gretton
Chair of Member Communications Committee

SF Cartoon



B. KORT
S. KLEIN

"What are your best hopes for our time together?"



Beverley Kort



Steve Klein

President's Message

Dear SFBTA Members & Community,

As the days grow longer and the sun shines brighter, we find ourselves at a beautiful seasonal turning point. Summer has a unique way of inviting us to slow down, breathe more deeply and reset.

"The clinician's job is not to diagnose deficits and remediate them - it is to identify and amplify what is already working." (Peter De Jong)

We can use welcome pauses in summer to notice our unique personal resources, the many small factors that contribute to our successes, and the things that bring us genuine joy and peace. Let's celebrate ourselves by doing more of what is already working.

Sponsorship & Donorship

As we look toward the future of the SFBTA, our focus this month is on expanding professional learning opportunities and providing CEU credits/scholarships for upcoming seasons and future conferences. To bring these robust opportunities to life, we're actively seeking new avenues of sponsorship and donorship. This is where we can truly use your help. If you know of an organization that would be interested in partnering with us, or if you are personally able to contribute, we would be deeply grateful. Donations of any amount make a meaningful difference in helping us fund these vital resources. Please visit [**SFBTA DONATIONS**](#) to make a contribution or learn more. Thank you so much for your ongoing support and commitment to our shared growth.

Remember to Secure Your Spot

Our upcoming conference is shaping up to be an incredible opportunity for learning, connection, and community. If you haven't already registered, I highly encourage you to do so today. [**2026 SFBTA CONFERENCE**](#).

Please send us your questions and feedback. Your input is always welcomed. Thank you and wishing you all a safe and invigorating summer!



Warmly,
Vicky Essebag
President SFBTA 2026
www.sfbta.org
board@sfbta.org



HELP US BUILD THE SFBTA CONFERENCE PHOTO ARCHIVE

Do you have photographs from past SFBTA conferences?

We're looking to expand our archive and would love to hear from anyone who has photos they'd be happy to share from the following conference years:

2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2023.

Whether they're from keynote presentations, workshops, social events, or those spontaneous moments that capture the warmth and spirit of our community, every photograph helps tell the story of the SFBTA.

If you have images you'd be willing to share, please send them to us. By submitting your photos, you're giving the SFBTA permission to use them on our website, in newsletters, and in other SFBTA publications. Wherever possible, we'll happily acknowledge photographers.

Thank you for helping us preserve and celebrate the history of our community.

Please email them here:

[Email Us](#)



SFBTA 2026 CONFERENCE

Call for Proposals & Website

Greetings SF Community!

As we march into summer and toward the fall, I find myself growing excited and nostalgic at the approach of our conference. I attended my first conference in 2024 in Fort Worth and I have felt the warm embrace of this community since that time.

The conference is important to me as it highlights all of the work, conversations, connections and opportunities that exist in SFBTA. I'm immensely proud to be a part of this organization and honored to serve in this important capacity.

I am also excited and proud to show off my home city! Bringing together two communities that have been essential in my growth makes me wish it was already November! Planning this conference has given me a chance to really immerse myself in solution focused practice.

I have taken more opportunities to present and teach SF practices this year and my confidence and passion has only grown. I encourage everyone to think about getting involved in our organization in whatever capacity speaks to your passions and strengths.

As a reminder, conference registration is open and we are still seeking sponsors. I cannot tell you how excited I am to see each of you in just a few months. Thank you for all the support you have shown me during this incredible process.

[Register Here](#)

[Learn More about Sponsorship](#)



With love,
Michelle Lasky
2026 SFBTA Conference Chair



COMMITTEE UPDATES

Join the Committees!

Each of our standing committees is led by one of our Board members. You can learn more about these committees here [committees](#). If you're interested in joining or if you have any questions, please reach out at board@sfbta.org.



Research Committee - Mo Yee Lee - Chair

SFBTA 2026 Research Awards

Call for submissions!



For more information, read here:
<http://sfbta.org/2026Award>

[Learn More and Apply](#)



Professional Development Committee - Olivia Wedel - Chair

Save the Date: SFBTA Town Hall & Legacy Panel - Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 11AM EST: "SF in Conversation: Connecting Generations with What Works"

Confirmed Legacy Panelists: Joel Simon, Anne Lutz, Guy Shennan, Mark McKergow, Mo Yee Lee (with one-two more, possibly)

If you are a new professional in the world of SFBT, and you would like to be one of the panelists who asks questions of the legacy members, please reach out to Board@sfbta.org. You may also email Board@sfbta.org if you have questions you'd like to submit for the panel.

The Town Hall, Bridging SF Generations, aligns with this year's SFBTA conference theme. This type of Town Hall creates space for newcomers to learn while inviting reflection from those who have been doing this work for longer periods. Our best hope is this will foster dialogue about how the panelists got started, what was helpful and what worked, how SF has evolved, and how they visualize SF in their current work setting. We will also hear any insights they can share from working personally with Steve and Insoo.

The next meeting for the Professional Development Committee is Friday, July 10, 2026 at 9AM CST. If you are interested in attending, please email droliviaw@oliviawedelcounseling.com for the Zoom link.

Other updates: The SF Affinity Circles/Learning Groups will be rescheduled with a potential August date. We will also host SF Graduate Student Fireside Chats with Board members and other legacy members beginning in September 2026. These monthly chats will be informal conversations where students can ask questions and learn more about SFBT. The dates will be announced in the July newsletter.



SF OPPORTUNITIES Events and SF Gatherings

Solution Focused In Organisation

SFiO is an international network of solution-focused practitioners which promotes, supports and develops research and applications of Solution Focus in Organisations. This website accompanies you in your discovery of SF by offering you an overview of SF events worldwide, access to the SF Clues, to the InterAction Collection, and much more. Enjoy staying curious.

[Learn More](#)

SF24/25 Watch Party

When: 2 July 2026

Can you scare people green? with **Denise Baden**

[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](#)

SOLWorld University 2026

Where: Land Aan Zee, Netherlands

When: 14-18 October 2026

[Register Here](#)

Australasian Solution Focused Association Annual Conference 2026

Where: Twin Towns Conference and Function Centre, [2 Wharf St, Tweed Heads, NSW, Australia](#)

When: 24-25 October 2026

[Register Here](#)

SF24/27 – Building Hope, Empowering Change

Save the date!

When: 25-27 February 2027

[Learn More](#)



SF@WORK

BeyondtheTherapy Room: Training the Next Generation of Solution-Focused Practitioners in Performance and Sport Psychology.

How do we prepare graduate students to use Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) with confidence when the stakes are high?

At the University of Illinois Chicago, Dr. Karrie Hamstra-Wright and I developed the Resilient Athlete Program Research Study (RAPRS) as a training model that introduces graduate students to solution-focused practice within sport and performance psychology. Rather than teaching students to become experts on problems, RAPRS trains them to become skilled partners in discovering strengths, exceptions, and preferred futures.

Graduate trainees work through a structured four-session framework, learning how to facilitate conversations that help injured athletes identify what is already working, clarify meaningful goals, scale progress, and build practical next steps. Throughout the process, supervision emphasizes curiosity over certainty, collaboration over direction, and confidence in clients' existing resources.

Students quickly discover that solution-focused conversations are not simply about asking the "right questions" They are about developing a disciplined mindset, listening carefully for possibilities, amplifying moments of success, and helping clients recognize their own capacity for change to enhance their sports injury rehabilitation experience and outcomes.

RAPRS also demonstrates how SFBT can be integrated into interdisciplinary healthcare and performance settings. Future sport psychology professionals learn to collaborate effectively with athletic trainers, physicians, coaches, and strength and conditioning professionals while maintaining their solution-focused identity.

For many graduates, RAPRS becomes more than a practicum experience. It shapes how they think about helping conversations throughout their professional careers. By combining evidence- informed practice, reflective supervision, and the enduring principles of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, the next generation of practitioners leaves prepared to create conversations that build resilience, hope, and meaningful change in performance and sport settings.



John Coumbe-Lilley Ph.D, LMFT, CMPC

Clinical Professor.

Email: jcoumb1@uic.edu

Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition. University of Illinois Chicago.
Program Director, Performance, Sport and Exercise Psychology. Co-Director, Applied Sport Psychology Research and Education Lab.

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!



MEMBER ARTICLES

Articles by Jay E. Valusek, MS, MEd, and Harneet Kaur

How I brought my daughter back from the dead by Jay E. Valusek, MS, MEd

In July 2018, one day before my Institutional Review Board approved the protocol for a \$46,250 year-long clinical research study of Solution-Focused Chronic Pain Management (SFCPM), a novel program I'd developed over the previous two years, my daughter, Beth, killed herself without warning.

The future as I had imagined it went down in flames, leaving nothing but ash. In the aftermath of her suicide, during which I lost not only my child but also my mind and, eventually, my job and career, I began asking myself what the hell good solution-focused practice was to me, now, writhing in unimaginable existential pain. Fortunately, I found myself tenaciously embracing a unique, powerful, seemingly preposterous preferred future—one in which, among other things, I would unravel the mystery of why she chose to annihilate herself and, ultimately, I would bring her back from the dead. Seriously.

Instead of judging or dismissing my vision, I consciously allowed myself to want what I wanted and to take small steps in that direction, day by day for the next four years. In the end, believe it or not, I achieved both facets of that vision by researching and writing a monumental book about Beth's life and death, entitled *Girl of Light & Shadow: A Memoir of My Daughter, Who Killed Herself* (2022).

For one thing, I made sense of her final, fatal decision from the inside out; I understood—from her perspective—why she had done what she did. What's more, I effectively brought her back to life both in my own, vivid imagination as well as on the printed page. I did so in a number of bizarre and innovative ways that surprised even me.

If you must know, Beth is, in fact, alive and well to this day . . . at least in one or two parallel universes, somewhere in the cosmos.

As a solution-focused practitioner, I think it's essential not to restrict the scope or scale or so-called practicality of our clients' preferred futures, but to trust that, somehow, if not literally, they can find within their own wisdom and expertise the creativity and capacity to realize miracles that might strike us as fantastical at first blush.

At the Global SF24 online conference in 2025, I explained in more detail how I applied solution-focused principles to navigate my own traumatic bereavement and to achieve what I jokingly called my daughter's "solution-focused resurrection." You can find that talk on Youtube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1d8COhPPIs> For other idiosyncratic strategies that worked for me (including more about the transformative power of a preferred future), here's the script of a TED-style talk I gave to a gathering of suicide loss survivors: <https://speakingofsuicide.com/2025/09/03/my-daughters-suicide/>.

Finally, if you'd like to read the book that brought my daughter back from the dead (and decide for yourself how successful I was), you can find it on Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Girl-Light-Shadow-Daughter-Herself/dp/B0BLYHNDS4/ref=sr_1_1?crid=21WJOVBUPM5N4&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.J0ng_FUQkYXm5lfsuaY9dwg.ftAXtemlGpptwT1suZxgJtGEfjBUvDohu-ZyE-wS2zM&dib_tag=se&keywords=girl%2Bof%2Blight%2B%26%2Bshadow%2Bvalusek&q.

(written without AI, thank you very much)



Submitted by:
Jay E. Valusek, MS, MEd
SFBTA Member

The Same Picture by Harneet Kaur

I recently realized that life has a strange sense of humor.

Sometimes nothing changes. And somehow, everything changes.

The situation stays exactly the same. The people are the same. The circumstances are the same.

Even The problems are often the same. Yet one day, we look at it differently and suddenly it feels like we're looking at an entirely new picture.

For the longest time, I assumed change had to be visible. New opportunities. New achievements. New goals. Something dramatic enough that I could point at it and say, "There. That's what changed."

But lately, I've started noticing a different kind of change.

The kind that happens quietly.

The moment when frustration becomes curiosity.

The moment when uncertainty becomes a possibility.

The moment when a question changes from "Why is this happening?" to "What can I learn from this?"

Nothing on the outside may look different, but the experience becomes completely different. Perhaps that is what a paradigm shift really is. Not always a change in circumstances, but a change in perspective.

And that idea feels surprisingly hopeful.

Because if perspective can shift, then possibilities can shift too. New options become visible. New strengths become noticeable. New directions begin to emerge from situations that previously felt stuck.

From a solution-focused perspective, this matters. We are often invited to look for what is already working, what is changing, and what might be possible next.

Sometimes the breakthrough isn't finding a different picture.

Sometimes it's discovering a different way of looking at the same one.



Submitted by:
Harneet Kaur
SFBTA Student Member



RESOURCES

JSFP



Journal of Solution Focused Practice

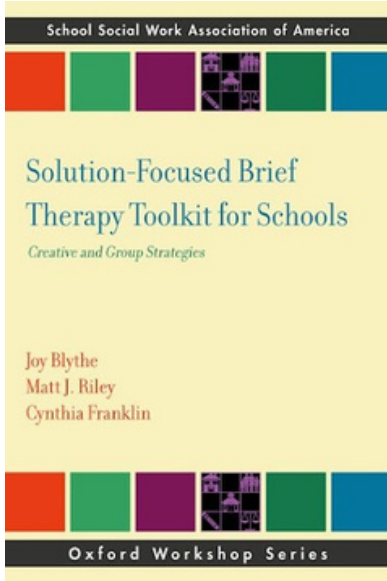
[Problem-Focused Interviews With Rural and Indigenous Aymara Communities \(Viacha and Laja\) Regarding Intersectional Violence](#)

Marcos Perez Lamadrid, Master's degree and Specialist in Clinical Psychology, Freddy Andrés Ponce Valdivia, Master's degree and Specialist in Clinical Psychology, Adam Froerer, Ph.D., Marriage and Family

[View their Website](#)

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Written by Joy Blythe, Matt J. Riley, and Cynthia Franklin



This month, we're showcasing:

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Toolkit for Schools

Creative and Group Strategies

by Joy Blythe, Matt J. Riley, and Cynthia Franklin

Practical, down-to-earth explanations of SFBT techniques for social workers in any school Innovative, individual, paired, and group exercises for using SFBT in school settings Provides what has long been lacking in the practice of SFBT - an approachable and practical guide that demonstrates creative communication tools and group activities for school social workers.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 SPONSORS

We're grateful for the generous support of our 2025 SFBTA Conference sponsors, whose partnership helps make Moving Conversations: Advancing Solution Focused Practice and Research in Toronto possible. Our Gold Sponsors include Microanalysis, the University at Buffalo School of Social Work, Relationspaces, and Arnold Street, and we're also pleased to acknowledge Wander in Harmony as a Bronze Sponsor — thank you for helping us advance solution focused practice and research around the world.

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MICROANALYSIS ASSOCIATES

University at Buffalo
School of Social Work

relationspaces
Solution-Focused Coaching, Consulting, Leadership -
Schools, Organizations, Families



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