

MAY 2025

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SOLUTION FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY
ASSOCIATION - NEWS OF THE DIFFERENCE

NEWSLETTER



The goal of this newsletter is to share relevant information on solution focused brief therapy practices, events, and other news from the Board of Directors.

In this edition, we invite you to review the President's message, review conference information in Toronto (and register!), meet current SFBTA Board Members, and see member milestones. You can also check out some news from around the world of SF!

We want to be actively involved with Association members and anyone else who is interested in learning more about SFBTA.

If you have ideas for content or would like to submit a practice brief, please reach out!

● Message from the President, Shaema Imam

Greetings to all my fellow SF practitioners and researchers!

We are almost at the halfway mark for our 2025 Board and only about 5 months away from our annual conference! Registration is now open!

Our board is progressing with the backend of our website re-model, and we hope to unveil our new more interactive look soon!

Most momentous of all, our long-awaited 3rd edition of the SFBT treatment manual is ready and available for download in this newsletter as well as on the website! Many thanks to the authors for their careful and comprehensive work!

We would love to have you join us on any aspect of the association you would like. There is a list of open committees on the back page. Please email me at board@sfbta.org!

Event Report

SFBTA Town Hall
& Training



"Not Knowing" as a Pathway to Possibility **Report by Nate Guyton**

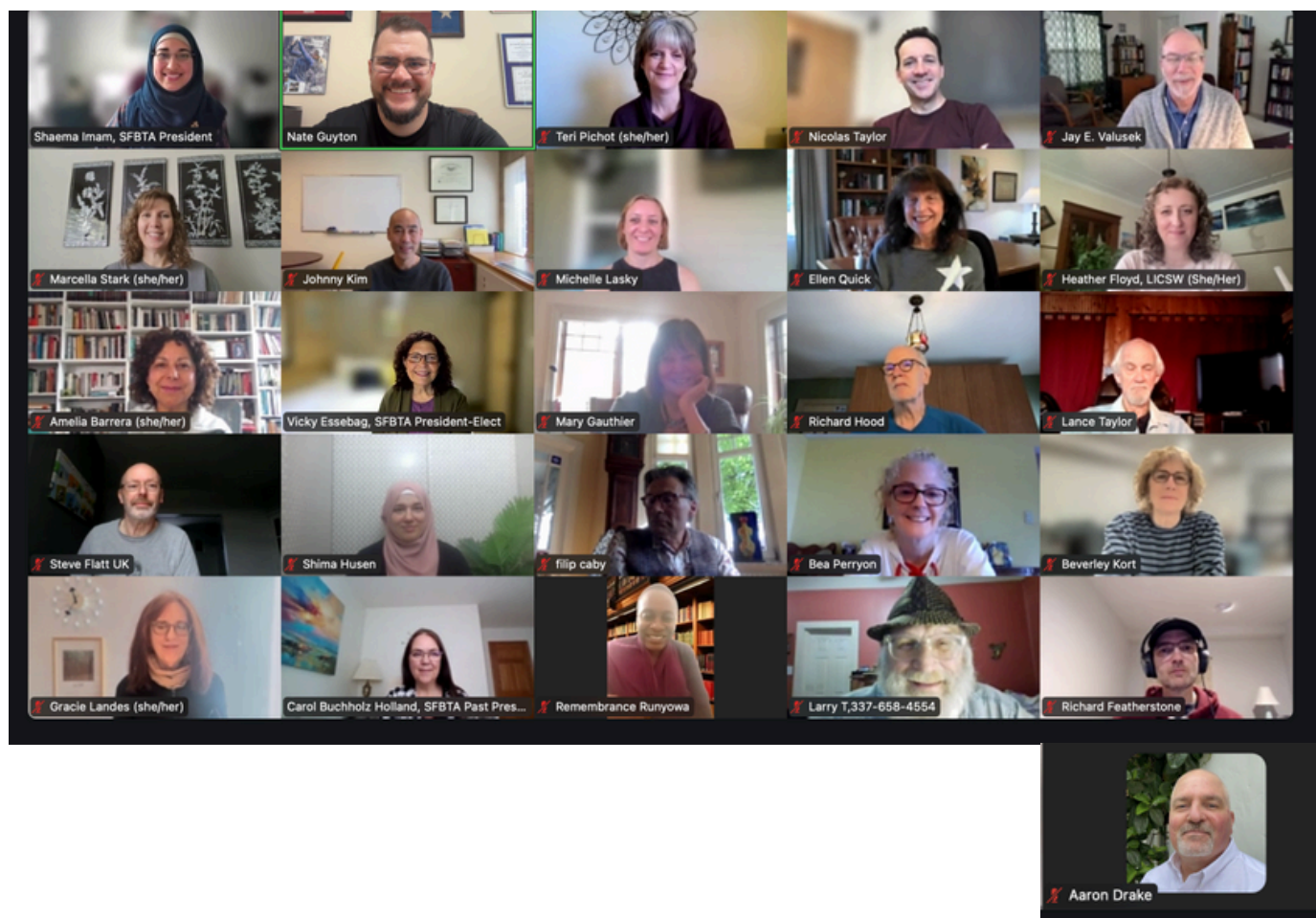
On April 26, 2025, the SFBTA community gathered online for a Town Hall and Training centered around one of the most paradoxically powerful concepts in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy: "not knowing." Under the wise and generous leadership of Teri Pichot, LCSW, LAC, MACF — founder of the Denver Center for Solution-Focused Brief Therapy — we explored what it means to approach our clients, and perhaps our very lives, with open hands rather than fixed minds.

Throughout the conversation and Teri's training, "not knowing" revealed itself not as a deficit, but as a radical stance of humility and hope. Participants spoke from the heart — invoking Socratic wisdom, the medieval mysticism of The Cloud of Unknowing, and even quantum physics — all to describe how certainty is a seductive illusion, and real invitations to change begin where certainty ends.

We reflected together on how adopting a posture of curiosity and unlearning allows the client's voice to emerge more clearly. It was not simply a training, but a living dialogue: a weaving of insights about language, sensory intuition, vulnerability, and the delicate art of letting the client lead. We recognized the need to leave expectations behind and embrace a deliberate allowance for this client, in this moment, teach us how change becomes possible for them.

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Town Hall and Training Attendees on April 26, 2025



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The chat itself became a tapestry of inspiration: Mary Gauthier offered the word "curious"; Heather Floyd, "engaging in humility"; and Nicolas Taylor, "getting myself out of the way." Richard Hood reminded us that creating community requires welcoming difference with respect and openness. Larry T shared his enduring practice of knocking himself off the therapist's pedestal, a small act of relational heroism repeated across a career.

As the session closed, the collective gratitude was palpable — a reminder that when we gather not to showcase what we know, but to wonder together about what we don't, we create spaces where growth is not demanded, where difference is invited, and where change is possible.

In a world that often prizes expertise over openness, this Town Hall was a courageous act of remembering: we change best when we dare to not know first.



SOLUTION FOCUSED THERAPY TREATMENT MANUAL FOR WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS 3RD EDITION

**AUTHORED BY THE SFBTA RESEARCH
COMMITTEE**

**DOWNLOAD THE MANUAL
AND JOIN SFBTA BY VISITING
SFBTA.ORG!**



Solution Focused Therapy
Treatment Manual for Working with Individuals
3rd Edition

© Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association
2025

Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association Research Committee

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Authors are listed in alphabetical order. Please cite this manual as:

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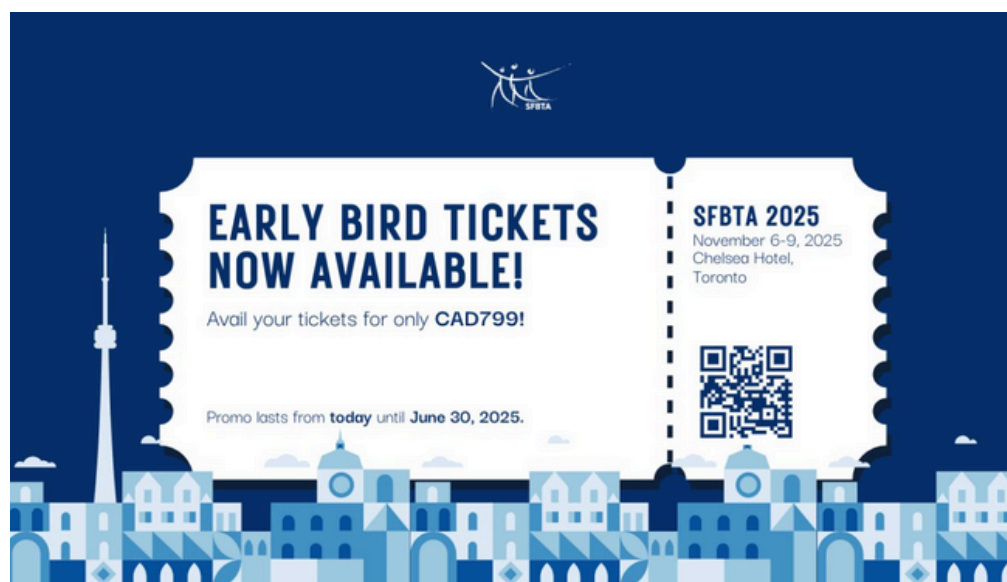
WWW.SFBTA.ORG

SFBTA Treatment Manual 3rd Edition
(2025)

SFBTA Conference 2025 Update



Conference Co-chairs Haesun and Vicky , as well as SFBTA President, Shaema, met with conference site staff Siobhan and Maureen on May 27, 2025. They were able to see meeting rooms, guest rooms, and onsite amenities. The Chelsea Hotel is in the heart of downtown Toronto, close to public transport, restaurants and prime landmarks. Join us!



Register at sfbtaconference.org



URGENT NEED!



Seeking 2026 Conference Location!

**A Host City & Site is Needed for
SFBTA 2026!**

**We are looking for our next location
for the SFBTA Conference! If you
would like to host it in your city in
November 2026, please email us at
board@sfbta.org.**

**You will need an onsite team, but
SFBTA will help you with past event
experience and extra volunteers!**





2025 SFBTA Research Award Announcement and Application Procedures

The SFBTA Research Awards are aimed at fostering the growth of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy by encouraging original research in solution-focused practices, and to support students, faculty, researchers, and clinicians who wish to study solution-focused practices. The inclusion of clinicians is an effort to bridge the gap between research and practice in advancing knowledge of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy.

Award

The 2025 SFBTA Research Awards will provide up to \$1,500.00 to support ongoing or proposed project(s). Funding amounts for individual projects will depend on the number of projects being awarded. Priority will be given to research that supports empirical evidence of SFBT practices, mechanisms of change, meta-analyses on SFBT interventions, or other research which could directly or indirectly investigate the effectiveness of SFBT practices.

Eligibility

Graduate students in any disciplines, clinicians engaging in research focusing on SFBT, post-doctoral fellows, and junior faculty who are in their first three years past graduation are eligible for this award. The SFBTA Research award will give priority to applicants who have a high probability of completing their projects. This determination will be based on many factors, including but not limited to the significance of the study, rigor of the research design, previous research or practice experience, access to an appropriate sample, and other institutional support. In addition, priority will be given to applicants who will conduct the research study in the U.S. or Canada.

Proposal Outline

Applicants should submit a proposal with the following content:

- Name and complete contact information of applicant
- Title and one paragraph description of the proposed/current study
- A detailed description of the proposed/current study, including:

1. Statement of the problem
2. Previous research in the area
3. Purpose of this study
4. Methods, procedures, and analysis to be/being used
5. Significance of the study to the SFBT field
6. A detailed description/outline of how the grant funds will be used
7. Qualifications of the applicant

Page limit of the proposal is 5 pages, single-spaced, font size 12. Additionally, please submit a current resume as a separate document or attachment.

Criteria for Assessment

The SFBTA Research Committee will review the application proposals and will make the final decision on the award. The award decision will be based on the following criteria:

- Appropriateness and significance of the study to solution-focused brief therapy and in meeting the goals of the Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association (SFBTA).
- Appropriateness of the methods, procedures, and analysis to the proposed goals of the study.
- Qualifications of the applicant.
- Likelihood of the project being completed and disseminated.

Deadlines and Announcement of Award

Application proposals must be received by the SFBTA Research Committee by **July 15, 2025**. The recipient(s) of the award will be notified by **August 15, 2025**, and the official award ceremony will be hosted at the Business Lunch meeting at **2025 SFBTA Annual Conference, November 6-9, 2025, Toronto, Ontario, Canada**. The funds will be made available immediately after the Conference.

Conditions of Acceptance

As part of the obligation of receiving the 2025 Research Award, award recipients are expected to:

- Submit a Study Report in the form of a 1-page infographic or poster to the chair and co-chair of the Research Committee, Dr. Taylor Yates at yatesh@uncw.edu and Dr. Cynthia Franklin at cfranklin@austin.utexas.edu upon the completion of the study.
- Disseminate and present findings of the study at the Research Day of the SFBTA Conference in 2026 or 2027. Recipients can first present the preliminary findings of their study at the Research Day of the 2026 SFBTA Conference if the study is still in progress.

For further information, or to submit Application Proposals, please contact:

Mo Yee Lee, PhD
SFBTA Research Award Committee
Professor & PhD Program Director
College of Social Work, The Ohio State University
440B Stillman Hall, 1947 College Road, Columbus, OH43210
Phone: 614-292-9910

Fax: 614-292-6940

e-mail: lee.355@osu.edu

Board Introductions!

See this space in the newsletter each month for a feature of two-three current SFBTA Board members!



**Vicky Essebag, MEd-CPSY, OCT, CSFC; SFBTA President-Elect;
2025 Conference Co-Chair (she/her/hers)**

Vicky is a relational communication specialist. She pairs her extensive background in education as a teacher, guidance counselor, head of guidance, curriculum consultant, and school administrator, with her experience as a family therapist and solution-focused coach. Vicky is widely known for applying and teaching Solution-Focused Communication as a model to support a relationship-based approach in schools, families and organizations. Vicky sets the tone for prioritizing effective communication to inspire inclusive and compassionate spaces for living and learning. She is a public speaker, instructional leader and organizational consultant. Vicky is Founder of the company – Relationspaces. www.relationspaces.com. info@relationspaces.com, and author of Relationspaces; A Solution-Focused Handbook for Parents.

Podcast: A Call Across the Pond; Transforming Relationships at School, at Home and Beyond. With Vicky Essebag and Tara Gretton (UK).

Relationspaces Power Bursts: On their YouTube channel, Vicky Essebag and Tara Gretton discuss brief answers to relationship questions, using their expertise in solution-focus.

Board Introductions!

See this space in the newsletter each month for a feature of two-three current SFBTA Board members!



Dawn Crosswhite, MSW, LCSW (she/her/hers)

Dawn is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work and has over 30 years of clinical practice experience. She specializes in working with adolescent females and LGBTQIA-identified clients and their families who are often times involved in the juvenile justice system and child welfare. Dawn currently serves on the SFBTA Board as the Treasurer.

Board Member Update



Shirley served on the SFBTA Board of Directors since 2022 and has recently submitted her resignation. She was especially active with the Website, Technology, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Legacy Video Committees.

The SFBTA Board wishes to thank Shirley Ben-Zvi for her dedicated service to the SFBTA Board of Directors for the past 2.5 years.

A message from Shirley:

There is an old Hebrew saying:

Watch where you're going, or you'll go where you look to.

To my message:

Sometimes it's so easy to see what we hope for for our clients. Or the path we think they should take. But you're not the hero, and you're not there to save them. You're the sidekick.

Drop the cape and let the real heroes - your clients - write their own story.

I am leaving the Board due to being unable to currently contribute in a way in which is deserved. My best hope is for SFBTA to become a beacon and a hub for SFBT thinking and SFBT practice; to take its place in leading this magnificent field. Being on the Board has been my honor, privilege, and pleasure. It's a creative, thoughtful, caring group of people. This is not goodbye, but a pause - to be continued.

FROM THE GLOBAL SOLUTION-FOCUSED COMMUNITY and SF WORLD

NEXT WATCH PARTY

5TH JUNE - Coaching like Momo- Holding the space with a Solution-Focused Perspective with Peter Szabó

SF24 Watch Parties are here to stay! We've had rousing conversations in last years with speakers and practitioners - and friends - from all over the world.

What are Watch Parties?

A place to gather with SF practitioners and the SF-curious. We watch a ~10 minute video clip from a talk delivered at one of the SF24's global conferences. Then, discuss in small and plenary group conversations. Often, the speaker is on hand to update us on news from the field and for Q&A.

Who's this meant for?

Open for all, both experienced SF practitioners, new SF practitioners--and those who've never heard of SF before. It's a wonderful chance to learn more about the approach, as well as see wonderful work from our peers and colleagues happening around the world.

How can I sign up?

We publish all Watch Parties as soon as possible. When you are on the checkout page, feel free to tick the 'Keep me updated' box to keep up to date with all things SF24.

How can I attend?

Once signed up, you will receive:

An order confirmation with the zoom link

An email reminder a day before each session with the zoom link.

Access to the "online event page" that also has the zoom link. You can find this by logging onto your Eventbrite account and looking at 'tickets'.

The zoom link is the same for every watch party.

We look forward to seeing you there!

The SF24 Watch Party Team

Julia, Orsi and Lilla

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

Speaker Schedule 2025-2026

5th JUNE: Peter Szabó

Link to Register: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sf24-watch-party-tickets-1355050575749>

Member Milestones

Any SFBTA member is welcome to send a “shout out” or congratulations message to a fellow SFBTA colleague on any professional accomplishment or development. Please send an email to board@sfbta.org with “member milestones” in the subject line. If an SFBTA member would like to share their own accomplishment, they are also welcome to do so! Please make sure your submission is 50 words or less.



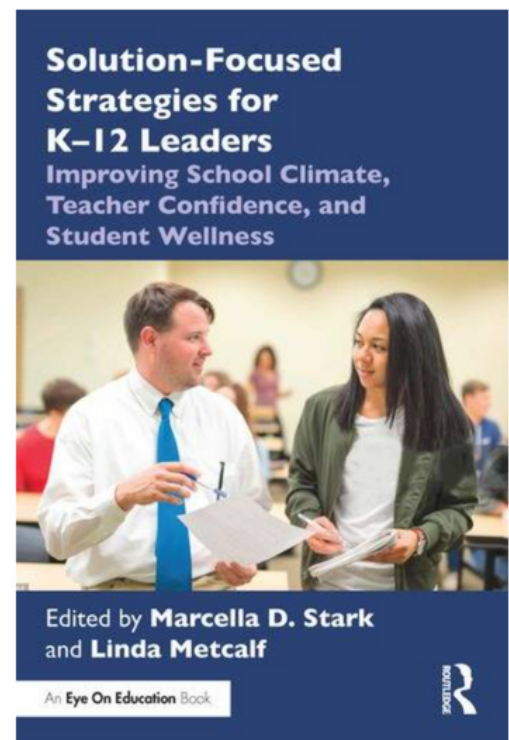
The Board of SFBTA would like to congratulate their former President (2023) Dr. Marcella Stark for her full professorship at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

Congratulations and best wishes Marcella!

We would also like to congratulate Marcella and Dr. Linda Metcalf on their upcoming publication with contributions from several scholars, including our 2024 SFBTA Past-President Carol Buchholz Holland!

More information can be found at the link below:

<https://www.routledge.com/Solution-Focused-Strategies-for-K-12-Leaders-Improving-School-Climate-Teacher-Confidence-and-Student-Wellness/Stark-Metcalf/p/book/9781032730332>



Member Meet-Ups

Any SFBTA member is welcome to send a “meet up” picture or pictures when visiting with SFBT friends and colleagues!

Please send an email to board@sfbta.org with the “Member Meetup” in the subject line. Please include a brief description of the meeting (50 words or less).



Between the official business of touring the 2025 conference site, SFBTA Board President, Shaema Imam, and Conference Co-Chairs, Vicky Essebag and Haesun Moon shared some laughs and lunch in Toronto in May 2025

Shaema was also able to tour the Canadian Center for Brief Coaching with Dr. Haesun Moon, Executive Director. The Center is located on the University of Toronto campus, not far from the 2025 Conference site.



Highlights from the May 2025 Board Meeting

- Wise and Paypal set up as payment portals for conference and website
- Website overhaul process initiated
- Treatment manual completed by members of Research Committee and uploaded to website



Join us!



We have several committees that need new members:

Welcome and Engagement Committee

Association Development Committee

Conference 2026 Committee

Finance Committee

Research Committee

Website Development Committee

Newsletter Committee

And maybe some new ones that you can suggest!

Such as an SFBTA Book club? What else?

If interested, please contact board@sfbta.org