

[TEST] November SFBTA Newsletter!

SFBTA <board@sfbta.org>
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Thu, Nov 27, 2025 at 11:40 PM



Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association

News of a Difference

November 2025

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

Message from the President, Shaema Imam

Greetings to our dear SFBTA members and well-wishers!

What a conference we had this month! After all the newsletter updates and planning about the conference, the 4 days of the conference from pre-conference to post-conference were a whirlwind of ideas, inspiration, and many smiles.

Please see the pages of this newsletter to catch up on what you missed, or to reminisce on the good memories we made. Vicky has a [conference reflection](#) for us. We have 5 brand new board members to welcome, you can see the update in our [board section](#). We also have the annual report presented at the Members' Meeting available with [updates on all our committees](#). Our honorary poet, Erin Cusanno, has penned [our origin story](#). You can also read [reflections from a student](#) working on SFBT research. Lastly, we have our back page essay, [SF@Work](#), by therapist and board member Nate Guyton.

We have one more issue of our newsletter remaining this year! If you have something you'd like to submit, please send in your ideas to board@sfbta.org before mid-December!

Warmly,

Shaema Imam, B. Sc., BSW, MSW, LMSW, (GA)

President, Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association



SFBTA 2025 CONFERENCE

Conference Highlights

Over three and a half truly inspiring days, the SFBTA 2025 Conference, themed "Moving Conversations" (<https://www.sfbtaconference.org>), delivered a vibrant blend of learning and practice, meaningful professional connection, and moments of fun and inspiration! We extend our deepest gratitude to all 96 attendees, 54 expert presenters, volunteers and all dedicated committee members. Your collective engagement, expertise, dedication and support were the driving force behind SFBTA2025's success!

A Global Gathering of Solution Focused Practitioners

The conference was a truly international event, showcasing a widespread reach of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy and Practice, with participants from across the globe:

- **North America:** Canadian provinces (Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia), US States (Georgia, Texas, New York, Florida, Ohio, Utah, Illinois, Washington, Colorado)
- **Europe:** Denmark, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium.
- **Middle East/Africa:** Dubai, Zimbabwe.
- **South America/Asia:** Chile, Japan, India.

In addition, we had conference planning committee members who were not able to attend the conference, and who reside in Alberta CA, Louisiana US, Virginia US, Iran.

Workshops and Presentations

We experienced rich and diverse content from different streams showcasing Solution Focus in Therapy, Coaching, Business, Education, Academia, Research, Healthcare, and more, and offering attendees multiple avenues for deep engagement and skill development. We had 46 workshops and 3 poster presentations.

To showcase your work, we welcome presenters to send us informal summary videos of your workshops, that we can post on the SFBTA website. These submissions are voluntary and should be no longer than 5 minutes.

Awards

We were so honoured to present three prestigious awards at the banquet, the Steve De Shazer Award to **Johnny Kim**, the Insoo Kim Berg Award to **Elizabeth R. Taylor**, and the Research Award to **Arnoud Huibers, Vasundharaa Santhosh Nair and Jeff Chang**. We value their dedicated work commitment to solution focused practice and research. On behalf of the SFBTA Board of Directors, we extend our sincere congratulations to all 5 recipients!!

Thank You to Our Valued Sponsors

We were very fortunate to have the generous support of our sponsors, whose contributions helped make the conference possible and will continue to support our planning, programming and operations throughout the year:

- Microanalysis Associates
- Wander in Harmony Wellness
- University of Buffalo School of Social Work
- Relationspaces
- Arnold Street Agency

Capturing the Spirit

During the two main conference days, November 7th and 8th, **Arnold Street Agency** was right there with us, beautifully capturing the essence and spirit of **Moving Conversations**. They produced an amazing **Conference Video** that captures the energy of the event. We also anticipate sharing **all photographs** taken throughout the conference very soon on sfbta.org. We extend our deepest gratitude to Arnold Street!

We will cherish so many memories of our time together with friends and colleagues who love Solution Focused Practice, celebrating the magic that has occurred in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We will remember the many conversations that moved us and will continue to move us forward in our practice!

We look forward to seeing all of you again in **Cleveland, Ohio in 2026!!**


Haesun Moon and Vicky Essebag

SFBTA 2025 Conference Co-Chairs.



Poster Presentation from Remembrance Runyowa and Sikoliwe Eunice Sibanda

Although Sikoliwe and Remembrance weren't able to join us at the conference, their powerful poster presentation "Is There Room for Change? Training and Use of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Among Psychologists in Zimbabwe" is now available to watch.

 View the video presentation here:

[Watch Here](#)

Is there room for Change? Training and use of solution-focused brief therapy among psychologists in Zimbabwe

The session will provide information on the use of SF from a different perspective and offer a platform for increasing training and practice across the world. The objective is to present the findings of our study on the application of SFBT in Zimbabwean psychological practice. Firstly, by stating the study's relevance. Then present the context of mental health in Zimbabwe. Followed by highlighting the rise of SFBT as a practical approach among psychologists, Outlining the study design, including participant demographics and data collection methods. Discussing the rationale for choosing SFBT and its implementation. Lastly, highlighting key results and implications of the findings in Zimbabwe and SF practice globally. Also address potential barriers and challenges faced by practitioners. Ending with Summarizing the main takeaways and emphasizing the importance of integrating SFBT into the broader mental health framework.

About Remembrance Runyowa

Remembrance is a Zimbabwean counselling psychologist with academic and practice. A certified solution-focused practitioner, she is passionate about adding value to society by employing evidence-based approaches. She is particularly dedicated to closing the gap between research and practice, believing that the best solutions come from combining scientific insights with real-world application. She has experience working with autism, which positively changed her life by seeing the impact of working with children.

About Sikoliwe Eunice Sibanda

Sikoliwe Sibanda also known as Eunice is a clinical psychologist with extensive experience in mental health, child protection, and community development. With a Master degree in Clinical Psychology and Master degree in Counselling Psychology. Sikoliwe has worked with various organizations, including Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals' Mental Health Unit, Unilever

Zimbabwe, Africaid, and the Women's University of Africa. She is a member of the International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) and the Zimbabwe Psychological Association and has held leadership positions, including Director of the Divisions and Chapters. Sikoliwe is passionate about promoting mental health including research as she has 2 publications to date, child rights, and community inclusion.



MEET THE CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Incumbent and Newly-elected Members

We appreciate the following 4 board members continuing on for 2026:

Vicky Essebag (President 2026)

Nate Guyton

Marsha Wichmann

Olivia Wedel

And we welcome the following 6 people who have joined us for a new 3 year term!

Mo Yee Lee (incumbent, second term)

Tara Gretton

LaToya Brown

Tom Fraire

Cecile Dietrich

Katharine Davis

We wish the 2026 team a prosperous year!



COMMITTEE UPDATES

Join the Committees!

Professional Development Committee

Plans/Ideas for Preferred Future:

- Continue 75-minute training sessions (April and August)
- Compile a directory of free continuing SF education opportunities around the world.
- Skills Based Workshops (eg. February & July) (Possible format: Could be 1-3 hours, some training, breakout rooms and practice, end with debrief)
- Group case conferencing via Zoom with an SFBT expert (eg. March & October?)



- Focused learning circles based on specialization/affinity group (eg. May & September?) (eg. adolescents, suicide prevention)
- Career Fair online (for students who want to learn about options for careers in SF across various fields and work environments) (June? Before university applications are due?)
- Mentorship opportunities (matching early career mentees with later career mentors and having “human learning libraries” where people can learn and ask questions to later career mentors) (Year-round, different from conference mentors/buddies)

Outreach Committee

Activities - Outreach initiated to the following organizations:



- MENATA (Middle East and North Africa Trauma Association)
- ZPA (Zimbabwe Psychological Association)
- Institute of Muslim Mental Health
- Emirates Down Syndrome Association
- ABPSI (Association of Black Psychologists)

Additional Plans for Preferred Future - outreach planned to the following organizations in the coming weeks

- National Jewish Health (Psychosocial & Behavioral Health Programs)
- South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network
- TrevorProject.org Suicide Prevention for LGBTQ+ Young People
- AAPD (American Association of People with Disabilities)
- Naut’sa mawt Tribal Council (Indigenous Mental Health initiatives resource)



Research Committee

Activities

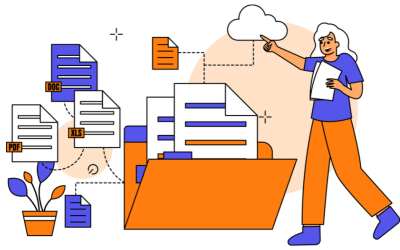
- Treatment Manual 2025 Published To Website (May 2025)
- Research Award 2025 Selection Process and Awarding

Additional Plans for Preferred Future

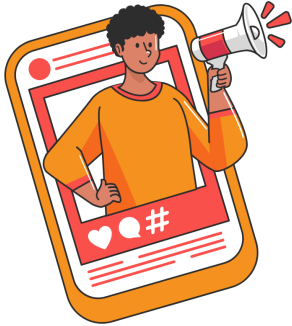
- Opportunities for translation of manual to other languages
- Possible training workshops on manual usage
- Possible collaboration with Outreach Committee about research with and on needs of underrepresented groups

Archives Committee

Plans for Preferred Future



- Formulate interview questions
- Record zoom interviews with key people who worked with or learned directly from Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer
- Post portions of these interviews on SFBTA's YouTube page and website
- Prepare video products for SFBTA's 25th anniversary (in 2027) and about the history of SFBT



Member Communications Committee

Additional Plans for Preferred Future

YouTube Channel now live! Please subscribe from now so you won't miss anything when we start posting!

[Subscribe Here](#)

Conference Committee

Activities



- Monthly updates to board, but also conference team had freedom to design preferred conference and processes
- More participants than before
- More first time participants than before (majority)
- More out-of-province participation
- More sessions
- Expenses and revenue balanced, but budget summary coming in a few weeks

Plans for Preferred Future

2026 Conference Location Selected!



MEMBER MEETUPS

SFBTA 2025 Conference

Of course, the conference is the premier member meetup of the year!



[See the Full Gallery Here](#)



SF AROUND THE WORLD

Events and SF Gatherings

What's on deck? SF and ADHD: Does Diagnosis Help, or is it a Dirty Word? with Sue Likorish+Ameachi

Nduka Agwu

When: December 4, 2025

11 AM EST / 4 PM UK / 5 PM CET

That's an interesting question, eh? Both speakers were diagnosed later in life, and both found that sometimes a diagnosis really helps. (That having an "ADHD brain" can't be SF-ed out of.) Some Q's we might address: How does one adapt SF Q's to be useful for those neurodivergent? If a client doesn't share (or know about their diagnosis), is it ever okay to bring it up? What makes you curious about this topic? What do you want to bring to this conversation?

[Sign up](#)

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](#)

JSFP Live

I am writing with exciting news from the Journal of Solution Focused Practices. We are starting '[JSFP Live](#)', an occasional series of online sessions discussing JSFP articles with the authors. These calls will be on Zoom and are free to join, thanks to your sponsorship. They will also be recorded and made available through our new JSFP YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/@JSFP-YouTube>. The first session is already posted: David Blowers to discuss his paper '[What Difference Will That Make?](#)' – Contracting More Collaboratively in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy'. David is Clinical Lead/Senior Solution-Focused Therapist at Oxford Brookes University and a lecturer at Metanoia Institute. He will summarise his paper, followed by questions and discussion.

[Watch Here](#)

SOLWorld Summer Retreat 2026

Where: Möschberg Oberthal Switzerland

When: 10-15 August 2026



POETRY CORNER

Original Poem by Erin Cusanno, SFBTA Member

It started at the Brief Family Therapy Center.
Where through the doors, Steve and Insoo did enter.
Observing through Mirrors that were one way.
Steve, Insoo and their colleagues said "Hey"
"Let's look for what works and do it some more"
"If Something doesn't work, we'll show it the door"
Let's look to the future and describe our best hope.
If we look back at the past, is it useful? Nope!
They started to share their ideas far and wide.
They trained people in America, Europe, Asia on every side.
They talked about compliments, scaling and the miracle question.
They asked their colleagues for other suggestions.
Over the years SFBT continued to grow.
With more and more professionals being "in the know"
Now we have Treatment Manual Number 3.
We are evidence based! Yipee!
We take this approach to hospitals, businesses, schools.
Continuing to spread its useful tools.
We do our best to notice what works.
To look past the problems.
To highlight the quirks.
To look for the differences small changes make
To create ripples of healing like stones thrown in lakes.
We meet at this conference every year.
Enjoying workshops, inspiration and maybe a beer.
Thank you to all who brought us together.
Traveling through the cold rainy weather.

To come to Toronto and make new friends
We wish that our time together would not end.



ON THE LIGHT SIDE OF SFBT

From the free version of ChatGPT, compiled by Steve Klein for the SFBTA Conference Cabaret!

An SFBT therapist walks into a bar.

The bartender says, "What'll it be?"

The therapist replies, "Well, suppose I *did* order a drink — what difference would that make?"

How many solution-focused therapists does it take to change a light bulb?

None — they just ask, "What will be different when the light comes on?"

You know you're at the SFBT conference when... the coffee line moves faster because everyone's focusing on what's working.

"What's the difference between a Solution-Focused conference and a traditional therapy one? We spend 90% less time talking about problems and everyone leaves smiling."



REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH

by Harneet Kaur, SFBTA Student Member

Have you ever noticed how the most impactful and meaningful changes often come from the simple shifts? In the world where innovation often gets related to complexity, I've realized that innovation doesn't always need to be complicated and high end in its process and language. When innovation meets simplicity, it gives space for ideas to breathe and creativity to grow. It's that space where clarity and curiosity meet, and the real transformation begins.

In the world of psychological assessment, we often look for complexity, the advanced scales, the long methodology, and keeping the therapist as an expert, the agent responsible for shaping the alliance. However, SFBT believes in the power of simplicity and mutual alliance between client and therapist throughout the whole process, and SFADS perfectly fits with this idea. The Solution-Focused Alliance Dynamic Scale (SFADS) is a short, reflective tool used to capture how the alliance felt during the session both from the client's and practitioner's perspective. Besides being a self-assessment tool for both client and therapist, it also helps both parties reflect on the progress, which helps in further sessions and becomes a game changer in the field of Therapy.

When I first came across the scale during one of the workshops, it had 7 items. I was amazed by its structure and simplicity. I noticed how each question captures a unique aspect of the therapeutic process. (For context, The SFADS includes 10 reflective questions designed both for client and practitioner reflection. For example, one item explores whether the therapist and client felt aligned on the goals of the session; though the full item list remains unavailable

until publication.) However, I also felt that it can be helpful to see a single overall picture of the progress, something that brings all these reflections together. That's when the idea of averaging the total of the items came to me. It helped create one simple score that represents the overall alliance and progress. Later, I proposed this as a scoring option during the developmental phase, and it eventually became part of the scale's updated version. Later on, while reviewing the updated version with 10 items, this tweak seemed to fit naturally, keeping the balance between simplicity and meaningful insight intact as earlier.

Sometimes, things don't need to be complicated. SFADS reminded me that even simple, focused questions can create insights and reflections that more complex methods might overlook. The scoring tweak highlighted how a subtle adjustment can make the process clearer for both client and therapist. It reinforced that simplicity can coexist with rigor, helping to capture meaningful progress without overcomplicating the process.

This experience also taught me that effective tools honor both perspectives in the therapeutic alliance. While perfectionism often drives us toward complexity, sometimes the most powerful impact comes from clarity and thoughtful design. SFADS showed me that even small innovations can meaningfully enhance the mutual understanding between client and therapist. SFADS beautifully brings reflection into practice, allowing both therapist and client to look at their journey together rather than from two different sides. It naturally fits in therapy sessions, supervision, and even training, where open conversations about progress and direction really matter. While reflecting on the scale, I also realized how this simple structure can be used in research settings too, by averaging the items to capture an overall progress. It adds a small quantitative layer to something deeply qualitative. To me, it shows how even a simple tool, when built on collaboration and clarity, can open new ways of understanding change, making SFADS not just a scale but a shared moment of insight between people.

Writing this reminded me that sometimes the smallest questions and the simplest scales can hold the deepest meanings, especially when they're created with collaboration and care. Special thanks to Dr. Arnoud Huibers for his guidance and inspiration while I learned and explored the SFADS during its pilot stage.

Harneet Kaur is a student reviewer contributing feedback during the SFADS pilot development. Harneet can be reached at www.linkedin.com/in/harneet-kaur.



SF@WORK

Essay by Nate Guyton, Founder of Guyton Counseling Services

Just as change is constant, so is solution-focused practice in my work at Guyton Counseling Services (GCS). GCS is a private practice in The Woodlands, Texas, grounded, with careful intention, in cooperative construction with each client we service. As the practice owner, I honor the investment(s) clients place in us by including and privileging the client's voice in our work. Our clients, as the experts of their lives, invite evocation of their competency made manifest in the "doing"



they report outside of therapy, and only they determine if the “doing” in question “did” what worked from coming to GCS.

Both myself and the growing number of clinicians at GCS make our mission a humble reverence and deferment to the client’s vision necessary for solution-focused practice. We note and amplify the smallest moments of change as an act of faithfulness in our clients’ competence. We service all walks of life, and we recognize athletes, veterans, first-responders, and medical professionals, a cluster of high-stress professionals, gravitating to our practice. The language alone

seems to elicit their description of our appeal, that our language seems to be theirs, that our commitment to effective outcomes respects their time. What is important to us is that we communicate—in every medium and opportunity, through all the competencies at our disposal as GCS clinicians—that we intend to center and honor their vision of a brighter future, that we join them in purposeful dialogue about what works.

Nate can be reached online at guytoncounseling.com.

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!

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