Using a solution-focused approach to deliver person-centered care in speech and language therapy; the experience of service users and therapists.

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What is a Solution Focused Approach?

Brief Family Therapy Centre in Milwaukee in the 1980’s
The essence of solution focused brief therapy

• To see a person as being more than their problem

• To look for resources rather than deficits

• To explore possible and preferred futures

• To explore what is already contributing to those futures

• To treat clients as the experts in all aspects of their lives
Solution focused approach
Examples of solution focused questions at initial appointment

- What are your best hopes from coming to this assessment today?
- How has this session been useful to you?
- Since the referral was made what changes are you pleased to see in your/your child’s communication?
- What have you been doing that has helped those changes to happen?

Person Centredness: Research and Implementation in Health and Social Care Conference, May 2018
Aims of this research

• To explore the service user experience of an initial speech and language therapy appointment where a solution focused approach was used.

• To explore how speech and language therapists on this team describe the solution focused approach
Methodology

Service users
• All clients who attended for an initial appointment in April 2016
• 6/61 recruited
• One person didn’t meet inclusion criteria
• One recording failed
• 4 client interviews in data set

Speech and language therapists
• 6 therapists recruited
• Interviews by an external researchers
Methodology

Qualitative

Thematic content analysis
Results: Service user data

- Working together
- Therapist attributes and actions
- Opinions and feelings
- Service users as experts
Results: Therapist data

- Working together
- How a SF approach is being used
- Traditional v’s SF approach
- Service user expertise and preferences
- Therapists’ perceptions and actions

Person Centredness: Research and Implementation in Health and Social Care Conference, May 2018
Common global themes

Working together   Service user expertise
Service user data: working together

WORKING TOGETHER

- Process of working together
- Roles
- Uncertainty
Service user data

It was less of her ‘I’m the expert and you’re the eejit’ (2;09)

We seemed to be able to talk the same language (2;12)

She’s very…. you know...like any discussion between two people (2;04)
Service user data

Working together

It was much more relaxed and much more friendly (than I expected) (2;07)

She made it more flexible and more natural to adapt to our situation (4;09)
Service user data

I found it quite hard to grasp what the purpose was going to be or what the outcome was going to be (4;11)

I didn’t feel a strong sense of direction from that point (4;07)
I just sat and listened and I tried not to interrupt and just let her do her job. (1;05)  

My role is to do what I’m told I suppose really.....(laughing) (4;12)  

I think (my role is) just to take note during the class of how she does it (1;09)
Therapist data: working together
Therapist data

It’s more of a conversation than a tick box kind of thing (2;13)

The whole idea of working with stakeholders, it just seems to fit better in this [SF approach]

But [SU] get someone to listen to exactly what it is they’re concerned about from the very first minute of the assessment (3;18)
Therapist data

So she [parent] thought it was an important target. We agreed that that was probably a good thing to do (2;11)

So set it up from the very beginning that the focus is on the client themselves and their experience and what has been working for them
Service user data: service user expertise

- Clients' knowledge
- SERVICE USERS AS EXPERTS
- Strategy
Service user data

I’m definitely ...more engaged in the process and more buying into it. (4;16)

I felt that eh....a solution in terms of how to do the exercise without it being very prescriptive (4;14)
Service user data

We are trying to be more patient, if she wants to talk she will talk (3;17)

I knew that S wouldn't need speech therapy, this is not about speech therapy (3;80)

I found I could really see his eye contact, see his speech, I feel the confidence is coming (4;10)
Therapist data: service user expertise

Client as expert

SERVICE USER EXPERTISE AND PREFERENCES

Client preferences and experiences
Therapist data

Parents are generally able to describe what they are hoping for (2;8).

So we talked then about what she would like to do or what she feels would be the most useful thing to do (2;10).

Took maybe 3 appointments but it’s looking for what they want (4;15).

Service user expertise

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Therapist data

I asked her what seemed to help her in school, just questions (4;14)

Some people definitely and will verbalise that they prefer a kind of expert model (5;5)
But I asked him to focus on what it would take to get to number 7... and he phoned me back a week later to say do you know what the things I need to do to be a number 7, I want to for more walks, I want to spend more time with friends, it’s nothing that’s going to happen in a therapy session (5;9)
• Small number of interviews.

• Potential lack of diversity

• Nature of data collection meant that some adult clients were excluded

• We need to be careful of bias
• SF approach delivered in different ways by different SLTs

• Doesn’t tell us about the SF approach throughout intervention, only at initial appointment
Implications for Practice

• Importance of balancing expert role between client and clinician.

• Continue with open questions. These help clients to feel listened to.

• Be explicit about what we are doing, why we are doing it and what will happen next.
Implications for Practice

• Be aware of levels of anxiety and possible guilt.

• Know that some service users don’t necessarily expect to have an active role in the process.
Thank you!!