

COU709

Solution Focused Therapeutic Approaches

School: School of Law and Society

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course introduces you to a new set of skills and techniques for interviewing clients based on solution building, in contrast to problem solving. You will learn to assess the nature and seriousness of client problems and then design interventions that enable clients to achieve their desired outcomes or preferred future. Intensive practice of these skills will prepare you for the Internship in your second year where you will work with clients and enable them to construct their own solution, based on their own resources and successes.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus workshop - 3 hours	3hrs	Week 1	11 times

1.3. Course Topics

Introduction to the Solution Focused Therapy approach;

Principles of the SFT Interview; The stages of solution-building;

The Miracle Question, Setting goals;

The power of Exceptions; Working towards solutions; Scaling;

Integration and consolidation of the first phase of the SFT interview;

The Feedback phase of the interview: Compliments, a Bridge and Suggestions;

Subsequent sessions: Amplifying and measuring client progress;

Arts-based approaches in SFT;

Working with children; SFT in schools;

Facilitating SFT with mandated clients;

Narrative Therapy I, II, and III

2. What level is this course?

700 Level (Specialised)

Demonstrating a specialised body of knowledge and set of skills for professional practice or further learning. Advanced application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Articulate and demonstrate capability in both knowledge and skills of SFBT.	Knowledgeable Empowered Engaged
2 Articulate and demonstrate capability in both knowledge and skills of Motivational Interviewing.	Knowledgeable Empowered Engaged
3 Identify a client's need through the interviewing process and develop strategies for working towards a solution utilising the advanced skills of SFBT.	Creative and critical thinker Empowered Engaged
4 Develop solutions based on SFBT principles that anticipate and overcome resistance to sustained change for clients in their socio-cultural context.	Creative and critical thinker Empowered Engaged
5 Draw on research and best practice in SFBT counselling to propose new solutions to client's contemporary problems.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Engaged
6 Critically reflect on their own facilitation of Solution Focused Brief Therapy within a counselling session.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered Ethical
7 Demonstrate a developing scholarly capacity in written submissions, incorporating clarity of written expression, integration of scholarly literature and adherence to APA style.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of "pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites".

5.1. Pre-requisites

COU701 and COU750 and enrolled in Program AR708

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Students will be requested to complete an online test in Week 5, assessing uptake and comprehension of material presented during the first third of the course. Informal formative feedback will be offered in class from Week 3 in relation to observed practice and development of component skills of SFT.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Quiz/zes	Individual	30%	70 minutes per Quiz.	Refer to Format	Online Test (Quiz)
All	2	Oral	Individual	35%	30 minutes video recording of an SFT counselling session	Week 11	Online Submission
All	3	Essay	Individual	35%	2000 Words	Week 11	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Online Quiz A: Theories, Concepts and Process; Online Quiz B: Applications of SFT

GOAL:	Online Quiz A: To demonstrate your understanding of the concepts, theories and processes of solution focused brief therapy;	
	Online Quiz B: To demonstrate your capacity to apply your knowledge of SFT to presenting counselling scenarios.	
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes	
FORMAT:	Submit: Online Quiz A: In Week 5 Online Quiz B: In Week 9 This task involves completion of a set of two online, open-book quizzes. Quiz A will consist of three short answer items, relating to core concepts explored within Weeks 1-5 of the course. Each item will be valued at 5 marks, The total available score for the first quiz is 15 marks. Quiz B will consist of three short answer items, that will invite you to apply your knowledge of SFT to presenting counselling scenarios. Each item will be valued at 5 marks, The total available score for the second quiz is 15 marks.	
CRITERIA:	No. 1 Demonstrated knowledge of course material; 2 Capacity to apply course content to practice situations at knowledge level.	Learning Outcome assessed 1 1
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Applying technologies, Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 2: Oral Task Recorded skills demonstration (video)

GOAL:	To demonstrate the use of skills in a solution focused brief therapy approach, within a counselling session. To demonstrate that the effective application of these skills will assist the client to move towards their preferred solutions in an ethical and professional way.		
PRODUCT:	Oral		
FORMAT:	You are required to complete a 30 minute video recording demonstrating advanced practice and understanding of SFBT skills and techniques. The faces and bodies of both the counsellor and the client will need to be visible in the recording, in such a way that facial expressions and body language are clearly visible. It is strongly advised that students use the counselling studio for this assignment. It is expected that students will pair up for this assessment, and that each will act as client to their partner in turn.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Knowledge: Demonstrated knowledge of appropriate solution focused and strengths-based skills; demonstrated knowledge of therapeutic alliance; understanding of linkages between counselling and multicultural contexts where relevant.	1 3 4 5
	2	Skills: Demonstrated capacity to utilise appropriately selected counselling skills to build therapeutic alliance. Demonstrated capacity to implement solution focused and strengths-based counselling techniques;	1 3 4 5
	3	Evidence of client movement towards preferred outcomes; Evidence of self-assessment of SFBT skills;	1 3 4 5
	4	Knowledge/Skill. Level of understanding of the range and purpose of counselling skills demonstrated, and their therapeutic outcomes. Level of appropriate intra- and inter-personal awareness.	2
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Applying technologies		

All - Assessment Task 3: Critique of the recorded counselling session

GOAL:	To demonstrate capacity to critically reflect on capacity and performance in relation to the application of Solution Focused Brief Therapy		
PRODUCT:	Essay		
FORMAT:	2000 Words. Complete a written reflective critique of your session. Describe the strategies and skills you felt that you used effectively, explaining the effect of those skills on the client-counsellor relationship; 2. Make use of the following reflection questions: How do you think the session was for your client? - How did you notice this - what cues did you pick up on? How did you build an alliance with the client and how do you know if that happened? What positive responses did you notice in your client? What did you do or say that contributed to those responses? What parts of the session could be improved? What changes would you need to make to your counselling skills for this to happen? Which parts of your counselling do you think were most effective, and why? 3. Were there strategies and skills used that you would like to strengthen? Note how these skills impacted on the client-counsellor relationship, and, provide specific details as to how these would need to be modified; how this might then create a better therapeutic outcome; 4. Consider alternative action choices that may have been appropriate. Would the relationship have benefited from any other strategies or skills not demonstrated - name these and describe why they would have been beneficial; 5. Did considerations of diversity or other therapeutic issues impact your interactions within the session (e.g., culture, gender, age, power, or ethics).		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Knowledge/Skill. Level of understanding of the range and purpose of counselling skills demonstrated, and their therapeutic outcomes. Level of appropriate intra- and inter-personal awareness.	1 5
	2	Evidence of personal learning through informed and relevant critical reflection.	5 6
	3	Argument. Critique is analytical rather than descriptive, with a focus on process rather than content. Explanations are linked to SFBT.	1 5 6
	4	Clarity and expression. Quality of expression. Accuracy of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Application of the APA referencing and formatting style. Adherence to word limit.	7
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy		

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	Peter De Jong, Insoo Kim Berg	2012	Interviewing for Solutions	4th	Cengage Learning

8.2. Specific requirements

Nil

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au