

# SSFN

Scottish Solution Focused Network

## Newsletter No. 2.

**In this edition** we have details of our last [Training Day](#), which was held in Perth, we have a roundup of the [feedback](#) we've received through the website and what we've done in response to that.

There's an update on our virtual network with details of our [Facebook](#) page, and links to an [excellent video](#) of Insoo Kim Berg demonstrating the simplicity of solution focused practice.

There's also news of our next Training Day.

## Training Day

The last Training Day was held at Perth Royal Infirmary, courtesy of Tom Bulley. The venue was easily found and the day started with a brief roundup of 'what's going well'. As ever, the fifteen minutes (or so) anticipated for this discussion expanded into almost an hour. Steve spoke about the successful launch of the SSFN website and the feedback we had received, and also about SF developments at Robert Gordon University. Two new cohorts of the credit-rated training course are being delivered in the Outer Hebrides and there has been increased interest in using an SF approach when working with people with long-term conditions such as diabetes or COPD. Graham stated that there was to be a two-day introductory workshop offered to NHS staff in Fife and, that in his new role, he hoped to see SF practice introduced across mental health practice in Fife. Chris spoke about the continual motivation boost that comes from working with clients in a SF manner, and seeing the unexpected

positive outcomes from practice. The implications of this, including being swamped by referrals because ‘you can help everyone’ and matching SF practice to mandatory treatment protocols based on a problem-solving paradigm, provided a spontaneous and insightful discussion.

Steve Smith then presented a session on *Specific aspects of SF practice using*



*Richard Gere explains the rules of swordsmanship to an aspiring yeoman*

*cinema as a source of inspiration.* Steve highlighted three clips from films (and television) as diverse as *Sixth Sense*, *First Knight* and *The Limmy Show*. In the first clip (*Sixth Sense*) he focused on the

importance of believing the client’s story (or suspending disbelief in it) for SF practice. Building on the character Cole’s demand, “How can you help me if you don’t believe me?” Steve highlighted how ‘believing the client’ can facilitate engagement with the client, enable the co-constructing of potential solutions and allow respectful enquiry into the client’s frame of reference. In the second clip (*First Knight*) Steve focused on the sequence close to the beginning where Richard Gere explains the rules of swordsmanship to an aspiring yeoman. Building on the metaphor of a dance Steve suggested that the successful practitioner can learn from the client how to be the practitioner they require, that there comes a ‘fulcrum moment’ in most encounters in which the potential for change is maximised, and which the SF practitioner should know will happen and learn to wait for it, and that the practitioner should ‘suspend their caring’ as to whether the SF encounter is ‘successful’ or not. The final clip, from the [Limmy Show](#), highlighted the differences between Client Goals and solutions; the former encapsulated in the character’s desire to ‘get there’, and the latter being what that would mean to him.

Following lunch, Chris Ward gave an excellent presentation on *Multiple Scaling Techniques*. Chris argued that scaling was a wonderful tool for learning the structure of solution building, providing visual prompts to both client and

practitioner, and covering all aspects of the SF interview. He suggested that multiple scales can be used for a specific singular problem or can be used for scaling multiple problems. Scaling provides a flexible approach to measuring client progress and movement towards their solution state in a very visual and spatial way. Having discussed aspects of multiple scaling, Chris suggested that the best way to approach the matter was to see it in action and Fiona Grant kindly volunteered to be the client (a student with a range of problems seeking support in a Higher Education setting). Chris quickly enabled the client to identify what she wanted from their conversation (to be putting words and sentences down on paper) and to scale where she was in relation to that goal now. The client's responses were noted on paper, thus providing a visual prompt to what she wanted and what she had achieved so far, and used to build further detailed information of where she was now (2) and what 3 would look like. Chris then scaled with the client how confident she was of making that transition from 2 to 3; again noting down the things that had helped the client get to her current state of confidence and what would tell her she had moved one step further. Finally, Chris scaled how 'up for it' the client was, scaling her motivation to move from 2 to 3. The client placed herself at 10 and Chris, again, highlighted what had got the client to this position. Asking what 11 would look like, the client realised that 'even more of the same' wasn't what she required, she needed to do something different with what she had already been doing: she wouldn't go *up* the scale, she'd *go off* the scale at a right angle (possibly a fulcrum moment before our eyes). Thanks to Chris and Fiona for an excellent enactment which led on to a lively and informed discussion.

The training day closed with a discussion on where the SSFN heads in the coming year. The two key themes emerging were finding ways to enable more people to participate in the Training Days (particularly our colleagues in the Northern and Western Isles) and facilitating interaction within the Network in between Training Days. Everyone present felt the boost to motivation and engagement that comes from sharing SF experience with other practitioners and how to build on this was the core message from the discussion. Suggestions included enabling some form of video conference link to allow others to participate in the Training Days, video recording key presentations and making them available on the website, and developing the use of the

website and Facebook, as well as email, to communicate between each other outside of Training Days.

The day closed around 3:00 pm, and the next Training Day is scheduled for late May, probably being held at the Playfield Institute at Stratheden Hospital, Fife.

## Feedback

Thanks to everyone for the feedback we have received about the new website. Comments such as “The website is a great innovation” and “Really enjoyed discovering your website” are good to receive as are the suggestions you have made as to how we can ‘move up the scale’ one more point. Suggestions that have been acted upon include changing the ‘note of the last meeting’ to a Newsletter; something that has a wider scope and includes other SF related information. This Newsletter (and the previous one) is a result of that. On a wider basis, the suggestion that we re-term the Gatherings as Training Days has been seen as a positive move. This not only highlights the training and educative function of the day (thereby enabling more of you to get time away from your place of work to attend) but also refocuses the Network towards on-going communication between SF practitioners. Training Days are only part of what the Network provides but the heart of the SSFN lies in communication and support; so, with that in mind, thanks for the feedback and keep it coming.

## Facebook

As part of the feedback mentioned above, we have also launched our own Facebook page. You can find us on [www.facebook.com/ScottishSolutionFocusedNetwork](http://www.facebook.com/ScottishSolutionFocusedNetwork) or follow the link on the



website. The website can be found at [www.solutionsinpractice.co.uk/#!ssfnc1jxp](http://www.solutionsinpractice.co.uk/#!ssfnc1jxp). The point of these activities isn't just to be 'socially networked'; we're aware that most people use Facebook in particular to keep in contact with friends and family and don't necessarily associate it with something like the Network. However, Facebook also allows the Network to have a free forum to communicate among ourselves and to promote SF practice to others. If you have a Facebook account and you 'Like' the SSFN page not only do you get automatic updates on resources, training and events but everyone you are in contact with see's that you now 'like' our page enabling them (if they are SF practitioners in any way) to link into the page and see what the SSFN is all about. In this way, the network grows in a natural and spontaneous way (see the write up on [Gregory Bateson's](#) thinking on the website). We've been online since the 11<sup>th</sup> of February and we have 9 'Likes'; let's see how many we can have by the end of March.

## Video Link

Watch this [brilliant video](#) of Insoo working with a teenage girl (Sarah) and her parents. Insoo simply sits and listens to the mother, asking only minimal 'not knowing' questions, and changes the focus of the conversation from Sarah's deficits to her assets by asking what she has 'going for her' at the end of the first session. An excellent example of using the client's own words to uncover unrecognised assets, and demonstrating most of the ideas discussed in various forms at the Training Day.