

The background features a repeating pattern of light blue concentric circles at the top and bottom. Scattered throughout the white space are several glowing yellow lightbulbs with radiating lines, symbolizing ideas and innovation.

From Challenge to Change

**A Solution-Focused
Workbook**

by Angela M. Doel, M.S.

From Challenge to Change: A Solution-Focused Workbook

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A Note From the Publisher

This workbook is designed to help you navigate life's challenges using Solution-Focused techniques. It can be used as a stand-alone resource or as an addition to your ongoing work with a therapist or counselor. Researchers have found that working "between sessions" while you are in therapy can be extremely helpful in addressing various issues, making every session more meaningful.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy is a unique therapeutic approach developed by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg at the Milwaukee Brief Therapy Center. Rather than focusing on your problems, this therapy is future-focused and goal-directed, helping you use the strengths and resources you already have to solve life's challenges. I have based the worksheets in this book on this evidence-based therapy, which has helped tens of thousands of people around the world.

In this workbook, you'll find 17 worksheets to help you focus on the positive aspects of yourself and your life. The techniques are designed to be practical and easy to use. There is no specific order to the techniques, so you can start with any of the worksheets that interest you.

At Between Sessions Resources, we believe there are many ways that people can learn to change and grow, and we encourage you to always be open to new ideas.

If you are working through this workbook on your own but are not seeing any changes, I urge you to consider contacting a counselor, therapist, or other mental health professional.

It's important to remember that you are not alone, and there are many people who can help. The National Alliance of Mental Health (Nami.org) provides a wealth of resources for people seeking help including crisis hotlines.

SOLUTION-FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SBFT), developed by Stephen deShazer and Inzoo Kim Berg at the Milwaukee Brief Therapy Center, has specific guiding questions to address your presenting problem in (or before) the first counseling session.

Solution-Focused Therapy has a specific format for asking questions that keep you focused on the present and the future. Questions about the past primarily gather information about you. Solution-focused questions are intended to:

- help you define problems.
- allow you to identify strategies that have worked in the past for the same or similar problems.
- rate different aspects of your experience on a 1 to 10 scale.
- look for exceptions to problems (for example, times when you might have expected the problem to occur, but something else happened instead).
- encourage you to do more of what is working.
- provide questions that remind you about how you deal with problems positively.

What do you want to get out of therapy or counseling?

What changes have you made before coming to therapy?

How would you define the problem for which you are seeking help?

How often does this problem affect you?

How long has it been going on? _____

How have you dealt with it in the past? _____

What is said or done when this problem occurs?

What happens next?

And then what?

What would you see on the recording if you made a video of the problem?

How have you tried to address this problem?

What has worked, even a little bit?

Have there been changes for better or worse since you decided to take action?

Who else noticed this?

What will it be like when the problem is solved?

What will you be doing instead?

When that happens, what difference will it make?

How will other people know that things are better?

Who will notice first? _____

And then who? _____

What else will be different?

Tell me about times when the problem does not occur or is not affecting you very much.

Is there something that makes the problem better at certain times?

What are you doing differently at these times?

What else is better at these times?

On a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the best, how did you feel when things were at their worst? _____

Where are you on that scale right now? _____

What was happening when you felt like a 10?

Therapy can help you with your problem, but maybe a "10" is too big a goal. What number will be acceptable for you? _____

How will you recognize when you are one point further up the scale?

What else will be different when you are one point further up?

How long will it take to get one point up the scale? _____

How will you get through the rest of the day?

How have you kept going so far?

What else helps?

Is there anyone else who can help you with this problem?

Anyone else? _____

How do these people help you with the problem?

Suppose you sleep tonight, and while asleep, a miracle happens, and the problem that brought you to counseling is solved. But you are asleep and do not realize it has been solved. What will be the first minor signs that this miracle has happened and that the problem was solved?

What Are Your Positive Psychological Skills?

You may discover that your mental health problems improve when you practice positive psychological skills. These skills can include new ways to think about your problems, new ways to handle upsetting feelings, new ways to act that make you happier and feel more fulfilled, and new ways to relate to others. Sometimes, people have more psychological skills than they realize. This worksheet can help you think about the psychological skills you already have and the ones you can work on.

Rate each sentence on a 1 to 7 scale, where 7 = Strongly Agree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

- _____ I know how to reduce everyday stress in my life.
- _____ I talk to friends and relatives when I feel upset.
- _____ I think before I speak when I'm having a conflict with someone.
- _____ I enjoy being in the company of others.
- _____ I know how to make myself happier when I'm blue.
- _____ I know how to calm myself down when I'm anxious or upset.
- _____ I am aware of my character strengths.
- _____ I know how to focus on a problem even if I feel distracted.
- _____ I stand up for myself when necessary.
- _____ I have an overall positive and optimistic attitude toward life.
- _____ I have several good friends that I can rely on if I need help.
- _____ I can always find some humor in the day, even when things are not going well.
- _____ There are very few problems that I can't solve.
- _____ When I'm feeling upset, I usually take a few minutes to reflect on what's upsetting me.
- _____ I count my blessings every day for the good things in my life.
- _____ I can turn to a higher power when things in my life are really difficult.
- _____ I regularly practice relaxation techniques like meditation, deep breathing, or yoga.
- _____ I am aware of my feelings and what's causing them.
- _____ I am aware of my values and act in ways that are consistent with my beliefs.
- _____ I express my thoughts and feelings clearly while being aware of the feelings of others.
- _____ I am supportive and caring to others whenever I can.

_____ I live a healthy lifestyle, eating nutritious food, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly.

Next, add up your total score: _____

A score of 100 and above indicates areas where you possess firm, beneficial psychological skills, suggesting these are strengths you can lean on in challenging times. Lower ratings (60 and below) indicate that you may need to engage in personal development. Circle the statements with lower scores (1, 2, or 3). Note these are areas where you might consider focusing your efforts to build new skills.

Remember, this worksheet is not just a tool for assessment but a step toward self-improvement. The insights you gain will guide you in harnessing your natural strengths and identifying skills you wish to develop further. As you work on these skills, you may find your mental health improving, your relationships deepening, and your overall sense of fulfillment enhancing. The journey of self-discovery and skill development is ongoing. Your ratings may change as you face new challenges. Embrace this process with kindness and curiosity, knowing that each step forward is a part of your journey toward a happier, more fulfilled life.

What has helped you?

What to Know

Personal change can be a long and sometimes unexpected process. Sudden insight or following a carefully crafted plan can help you find solutions to your problems and conflicts. You can also find help by working with your therapist, reading books, spending time with trusted friends, learning information on the Internet and social media, and much more.

Whatever your process in discovering solutions to your problems and conflicts, writing down what you learned will be essential to making lasting changes.

This worksheet is designed to help you think about what has helped you along your journey to overcome your problems. At least once a month, take some time to fill in the worksheet. You will likely benefit from sharing it with your therapist or a close friend. Of course, you can also use this worksheet more frequently. Using it more frequently may be helpful in times of stress and during difficult life transitions.

What to Do

Complete the following questions in the space below.

What are specific skills you learned in therapy, counseling, or coaching?

What are specific insights you have gotten from therapy?

What books or other resources have helped you (be specific about what has helped)?

What are some things that have inspired and motivated you (e.g. quotes, people, events, activities, etc.)?

What are some decisions you have made that could help you with future choices?

Are there spiritual practices or spiritual moments that have guided or inspired you? If so, list them.

Have changes in your habits made a difference? How so?

What else has helped you?

After reflecting on what has helped you, what is the one thing you think made the most important positive impact?

Identifying Past Successes

What to Know

In solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT), identifying past successes can help you identify your strengths and previous solutions that can be built upon or re-utilized. The goal is to help you gain a more balanced view of your situation and capabilities, which can improve your confidence and self-efficacy. This approach can foster a positive mindset and encourage you to leverage your own strengths and resources.

Identifying past successes is important for several key reasons. Even though SFBT is a goal-oriented therapy that focuses on present and future circumstances and goals (rather than past experiences), exploring past successes plays a vital role within this framework for the following reasons.

This strengths-based approach emphasizes the resources, skills, and abilities you already possess. Identifying past successes can help you recognize and leverage your strengths to address challenges and pursue your goals.

Reflecting on previous achievements and the strategies that led to those successes can boost your confidence and sense of competence. Self-assurance is essential to motivating you to tackle present difficulties.

Past successes provide a valuable toolbox of strategies, solutions, and coping mechanisms that you have effectively used before. These can be adapted and applied to current situations, offering concrete, proven methods for overcoming obstacles and achieving your goals.

SFBT aims to shift the focus from problems to solutions, from what is going wrong to what is going right. Highlighting past successes helps to cultivate a positive outlook, encouraging you to view yourself as capable and resourceful, which is more conducive to problem-solving and goal achievement.

By identifying past successes, you can see evidence of your ability to make changes and achieve goals, which fosters hope and optimism about your future.

Your path to success is unique. Examining past successes helps you identify personalized strategies and solutions that align with your values, preferences, and life context.

Identifying your past successes empowers you, providing a sense of agency and a toolkit of strategies for addressing current challenges and working toward future goals.

This worksheet is designed to help you reflect on your past successes and understand how they are a foundation for overcoming current challenges. By recognizing your achievements, you can build confidence and a sense of competence that will aid you in navigating life's difficulties.

What to Do

Take a moment to reflect on your past experiences. Consider times when you felt proud of what you accomplished, no matter how big or small the success might seem. Answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

Describe the situation and the challenge you faced.

How did you feel at the beginning? Be specific.

What actions did you take to overcome this challenge?

How did you feel after overcoming it?

Write about a personal goal you achieved in the past.

What steps did you take to achieve this goal?

Who or what supported you in reaching this achievement?

How did accomplishing this goal affect your life or perspective?

Reflect on a time when you positively changed your life or someone else's.

What motivated this change?

How did you implement this change?

What was the outcome of this change?

Based on your previous answers, list the skills and strengths you utilized to achieve these successes.

How can these skills and strengths be applied to your current situation or the goals you want to achieve?

Considering your current challenge, how can your past successes support you in addressing this challenge?

What specific skills or strengths can you leverage to navigate this challenge?

Visualize yourself overcoming a future challenge using your strengths and skills. Describe what you imagined.

Describe this visualization, focusing on your actions, thoughts, and feelings during the process.

Are there any other past successes you can think of that can help you cope, address problems and challenges, and achieve goals in the future? List them.

How does it feel to revisit your past successes?

How can recognizing these successes influence your approach to current and future challenges?

Exploring Exceptions to the Problem

What to Know

Solution-focused therapy is a goal-directed collaborative approach to change conducted by directly observing your responses to a series of questions. Based on what you want to achieve, it focuses on the present and future circumstances and desires instead of past experiences. The approach assumes you have some knowledge of what would make your life better, even though you may need help describing the details of your better life. You already possess at least the minimal skills necessary to create solutions, and you may identify when a problem is not present or less influential in your life. Establishing these situations can build hope by demonstrating that the problem is not “fixed” and not constantly occurring.

Exceptions refer to those instances or periods of time when your problem either does not occur at all or happens to a lesser extent than usual. These exceptions provide evidence that the problem is not constant and that there are circumstances under which you experience relief or better outcomes. Identifying and understanding these exceptions help you to:

Recognize that the problem is not all-encompassing, offering hope and a different perspective.

Analyze what is different about these times—what factors, behaviors, thoughts, or external conditions contribute to the absence or reduction of the problem.

Use these insights to develop strategies to increase the frequency of positive exceptions. This might involve replicating the behaviors, thoughts, or conditions present during the exceptions.

Build on existing strengths and resources, reinforcing your capacity for creating change in your life.

Exceptions challenge the problem-saturated story that you might have and open up new possibilities for action. They are the foundation for constructing a more positive and solution-focused narrative about your life and capabilities.

This worksheet includes an exercise designed to help you explore and identify exceptions to your problem, which can be pivotal in creating a pathway toward a solution.

What to Do

Reflect on and answer the following questions. Think about recent instances and those in the more distant past. Remember, the goal is to identify exceptions to the problem—times when you expected the problem to happen, but it did not, or times when the problem could have been worse.

Briefly describe the problem you are facing.

When has this been less of a problem for you? _____

Think about the last week. Were there times when the problem did not occur, even though you might have expected it to? Describe these instances.

Can you think of times in the past month when the problem was less intense or absent? What was different about these times? Be specific.

Reviewing the exceptions you identified, what was happening during these times that was different? Consider your actions, thoughts, environment, and the people around you.

What did you do differently during these times? How did others around you behave differently?

What small steps can you take to increase the frequency of these exceptions or to create new exceptions?

Are there specific behaviors or thoughts that you can replicate or encourage to occur more often?

Set one or two small, achievable goals for the coming week that involve replicating the conditions or behaviors associated with the exceptions.

How will you remind yourself to implement these steps? Consider setting reminders, enlisting the help of a friend or family member, or placing visual cues in your environment. Describe what you will do.

Reflect on your experiences at the end of the week. Did the problem occur less frequently or intensely? Explain.

What adjustments would you like to make to your approach for the next week? The next month?

Shifting from a Problem to a Solution Orientation

What to Know

Do you ever feel lost or overwhelmed by your problems? It is easy to become fixated on what is going wrong, but such a focus can cloud your vision, preventing you from seeing the way out.

Sometimes, it helps to consciously shift from focusing on your problems to identifying solutions. By doing this, you will review your life experiences and identify moments of strength, resilience, and success that perhaps you have overlooked or underestimated. This is about positive thinking and recognizing and mobilizing your inherent capabilities and resources. The journey from problem to solution orientation is not about denying your difficulties but changing how you relate to and address them. The focus is on actionable change—what you can do right now, with what you have, to make a difference in your life. Consider the example of Alex, who has been feeling overwhelmed at work.

Alex often stays late and feels constantly behind on tasks, and this stress has started to affect his personal life and well-being. Instead of dwelling on feeling overwhelmed, Alex shifts his focus toward solutions.

Identify the Problem. Alex writes, "I'm constantly behind on my work tasks, and it's affecting my health and personal life."

Shift the Focus. Reflecting on exceptions, Alex remembers a week when a daily to-do list helped him manage tasks more effectively.

Build Solutions. Alex envisions a future where work is managed efficiently, leaving time for personal life and well-being. He decides to create and prioritize a daily task list, break down larger projects into manageable parts, and allocate specific times for breaks and personal activities.

Utilize Strengths and Resources. Alex identifies his organizational skills and supportive coworkers as resources. He plans to use these strengths by setting up a more structured daily schedule and seeking help or delegation opportunities when necessary.

Reflect and Create an Action Plan. After reflecting on the process, Alex feels more in control and optimistic about making changes. He commits to implementing the daily task list, schedule adjustments, and track progress over the next month.

In Alex's case, the shift from focusing on the overwhelming nature of work to identifying practical, solution-focused steps changed his approach to challenges and helped him reclaim a sense of agency and balance in life.

This worksheet can help you transform your relationship with challenges. By focusing on what is possible and changeable, you cultivate a resilient and solution-oriented mindset that will serve you well beyond the current moment. Remember, the aim is not to erase difficulties but to navigate them confidently and gracefully.

What to Do

Answer each of the following questions or statements as honestly as possible.

Describe a problem you are currently facing.

Be as specific as possible about what is bothering you—describe your emotions, reactions, etc.

How does this problem affect your daily life and well-being?

How does this problem impact your feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and relationships?

Identify any exceptions to the problem. Think of times when the problem could have occurred but did not or when it was less intense. What was different about those times? Be specific.

Describe a time when you successfully dealt with a similar problem or challenging situation.

What did you do that was helpful?

What strengths or resources did you use?

Envision your preferred future. Imagine a future where this problem is managed effectively or nonexistent. What does that look like? How do you feel in this scenario?

Identify small, achievable steps you can take toward this future.

Consider actions that align with the strengths and resources you identified earlier. These should be specific, measurable, and realistic.

List your personal strengths and resources that can help you solve this problem. These can include personal qualities, supportive relationships, material resources, or external services and support.

How can you apply these strengths and resources to your current situation?

Think about specific ways you can use what you have identified to address your problem.

Review your answers above and write down one possible solution to your problem.

How did shifting your focus from the problem to potential solutions make you feel?

Did new insights or perspectives emerge?

Create an action plan. Based on your above answers, outline a plan of steps you will take in the coming weeks. Include what you will do, when you will do it, and how you will track your progress.

Steps	What will you do?	When will you do it?	How will you track your progress?

Steps	What will you do?	When will you do it?	How will you track your progress?

Remember, the goal of this worksheet is not to eliminate problems entirely but to change how you approach and manage them. You can create positive changes in your life by focusing on solutions, strengths, and resources.

B.E.T. on Yourself

What to Know

Believing in yourself, generating excitement, and taking action are essential to personal growth and success. The B.E.T. technique can help you cultivate these qualities and achieve your goals. By fostering belief, excitement, and action, you can overcome obstacles and lead a more fulfilling life. Follow these steps to B.E.T on yourself:

1. Believe in Yourself (B): Self-belief is the foundation of any successful endeavor. When you believe in yourself, you unlock your potential and develop the confidence to face challenges head-on. You recognize your worth, trust your abilities, and know you have what it takes to achieve your goals.
2. Excitement (E): Excitement fuels motivation and creativity. When genuinely excited about something, staying committed and enthusiastic about your journey becomes easier. Excitement ignites your passion and gives you the energy to push through setbacks and challenges.
3. Take Action (T): Believing in yourself and feeling excited are essential, but they must be followed by action. Taking action is where your dreams become a reality as you set clear and attainable goals, breaking them down into manageable steps. You are consistently working toward the achievement of your goals. Action transforms your aspirations into achievements.

What to Do

Answer the following questions.

How do you feel about your life right now? Be honest!

How do you want your life to be? Be specific.

What are you willing to give up to have the life you want?

Follow the steps below.

1. Believe in Yourself (B). Reflect on your past successes, no matter how small they may seem. Write down at least three achievements that make you proud.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

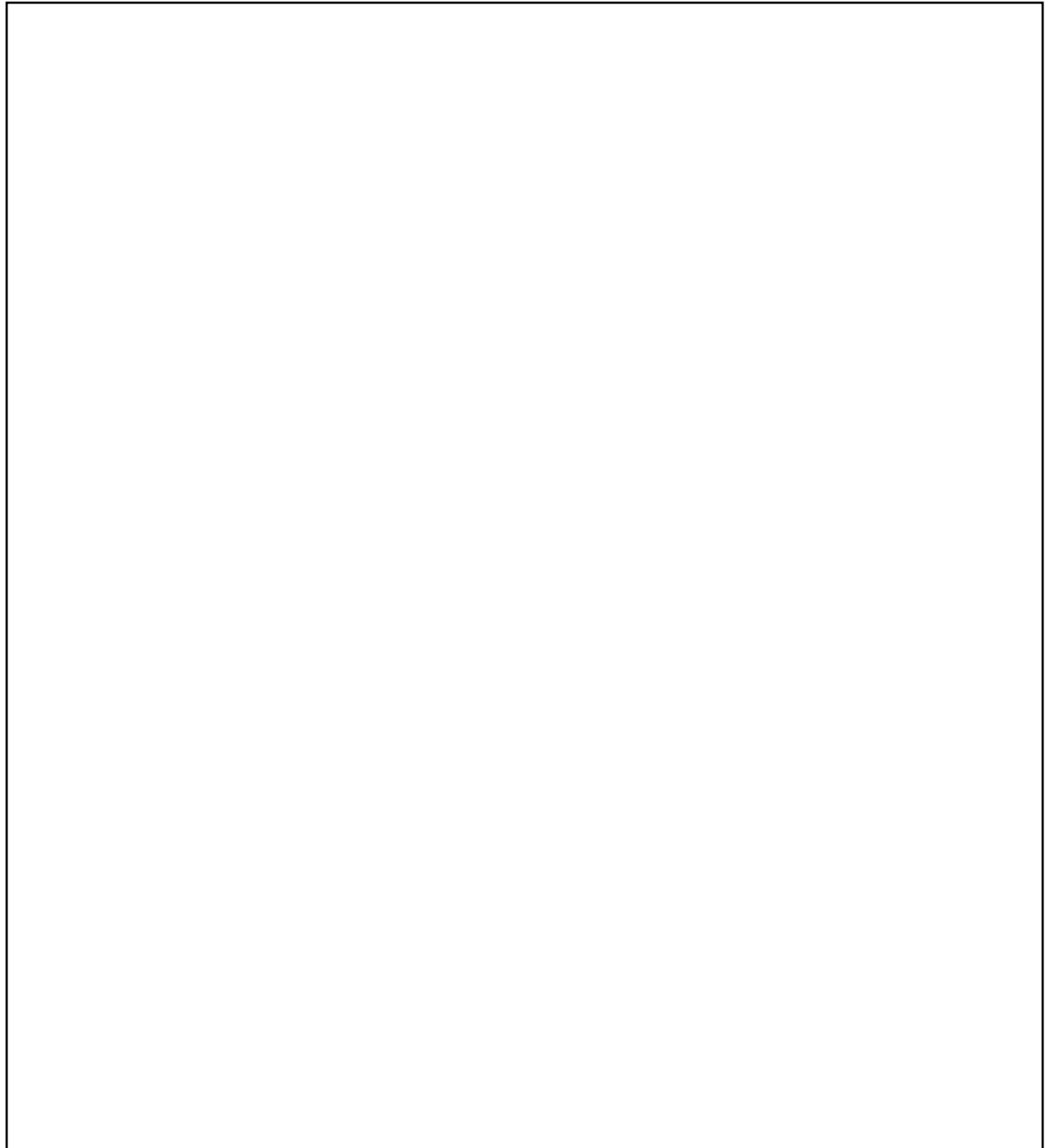
List your strengths, skills, and talents. What are you naturally good at?

Identify any negative self-beliefs that may be holding you back. Write down three and challenge their validity. Replace them with positive affirmations.

Negative Self-Beliefs	Alternative Positive Affirmations

2. Excitement (E). Think about your current goals or dreams. Which one excites you the most? Write it down.

In the space below, create a collage that represents this goal. Include images, quotes, colors, and symbols that resonate with your excitement.



Commit to taking the first step today, no matter how small! Mark it on your calendar and hold yourself accountable.

Did you complete the first step? Yes / No

Why or why not? _____

This worksheet is a tool to empower you to believe in yourself, generate excitement, and take action toward your goals. Remember that success is not a linear path – setbacks and challenges are part of the journey. The key is maintaining your self-belief, fueling your excitement, and consistently taking action. With these three steps, you can achieve your dreams and create a brighter future for yourself.

Strengthen Your Relationships

What to Know

Building and maintaining meaningful relationships is an essential part of life. Strong connections provide support, happiness, and a sense of belonging. While forming new relationships can be intimidating, you can begin by focusing on something less scary: strengthening your existing relationships. You can learn to nurture and enhance the connections with the people in your life. By working on your existing relationships, you can build a strong foundation for creating new ones in the future.

What to Do

What relationships do you have that could be strengthened? Write down anyone kind to you. Try not to fear rejection or assume they are not interested in being friends with you.

Review the list and set small goals to increase contact with them. Make sure they are (1) realistic, (2) within your control, and (3) include specific actions. For example, you might text a cousin you have not heard from in a while or message a friend to get together. What would you like to do?

Over the next few weeks, reach out to a few of the people on the list. You might send a text, make a phone call, or start a conversation. Write down the people you will reach out to, what you will do to strengthen each relationship, and the day you will do it.

Person	What I Will Do	When I Will Do It

You can start with small steps and work up to bigger ones. If you get stuck, consider this example.

Miguel’s Relationship Goals

Week 1:

- Catch up with Marcus through a video call and make plans to visit each other.
- Call Cara (who is extroverted!) for advice about making new friends.

Week 2:

- Bake some cookies for my cousins.
- Ask my elderly neighbor over for dinner.

Week 3:

- Accept my coworker’s invitation to meet for coffee the next time they ask.

Week 4:

- Start a conversation with Jessica about a new art exhibit at the museum. If she seems interested, invite her to come with me.

Relationship Goals

Week 1:

Week 2:

Week 3:

Week 4:

Did you get stuck while trying to do the previous exercise? What happened?

If unsure where to start, select an action from the list below.

- Text a friend or relative and tell them about something good that happened in your life.
- Ask an acquaintance you would like to get to know better if they want to meet.
- Invite someone to watch a movie with you.
- Follow or send a friend request to an acquaintance on social media.
- Compliment a coworker about something they did.
- Strike up a conversation with your neighbor the next time you see them.
- Reconnect with a friend you lost touch with.
- Call a relative and make plans to visit each other.
- Invite a family member to play a game with you (either online or in person).

- Ask a friend who watches the same television show as you if they want to watch it together and talk about it afterward.
- Pick a relative, friend, or acquaintance with a social life like the one you want and ask them if they could advise you.

Here are some tips:

1. Replace negative thoughts about yourself and worries about what others think of you.
2. Plan what you want to say and practice saying it until you feel comfortable. Practice role-playing the situation with a friend or on your own to feel less anxious.
3. Offer yourself compassion and encouragement. It is okay to feel nervous.

What if the person says no? How will you react?

It is natural to want to avoid rejection. If this happens, know that everyone experiences rejection sometimes. It doesn't mean something is wrong with you or you did anything wrong. The person could be struggling, you two may not be a good fit, or the timing is not right.

Strengthening your social connections will likely improve your mental health. You need people for support and friendship; you deserve strong, nurturing relationships!

Developing an Optimistic and Hopeful Mindset

What to Know

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is a therapeutic approach that emphasizes finding solutions rather than solving problems, emphasizing what you want to achieve rather than your problems. This approach aligns closely with cultivating optimism and hope, as both are forward-looking states that can motivate you to achieve your desired outcomes. Here are some reasons why optimism and hope are essential elements in SFBT.

1. Enhances Motivation and Engagement. Optimism and hope motivate you to consider the possibility of positive outcomes. When hopeful and optimistic, you are more likely to engage actively in the therapeutic process and take steps toward your goals.

2. Shifts Focus from Problems to Possibilities. Dwelling on problems is not always productive. SFBT encourages you to explore solutions and possibilities. When you are optimistic and hopeful, you can easily envision a preferred future and consider the steps you can take to achieve it. You will become open to new ideas and possibilities you may not have considered otherwise.

3. Strengthens Resilience. Hope and optimism are critical components of resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity. Recognizing your strengths and past successes (contributing to optimism and hope) is a strategy to build resilience. If you are resilient, you are more likely to persist when facing challenges and continue working toward your goals.

4. Promotes a Sense of Agency. Agency is the belief in one's ability to influence life outcomes. SFBT emphasizes resources, strengths, and the capacity for change, and optimism and hope reinforce this view by highlighting your role in creating positive changes.

5. Improves Mental Health Outcomes. Research suggests that optimism and hope are associated with better mental health outcomes, including lower levels of depression and anxiety.

6. Facilitates Solution Building. A hopeful and optimistic mindset supports creative thinking and solution building, which are core components of SFBT. If you are hopeful about the future and believe that positive change is possible, you are more likely to engage in the process of identifying and implementing solutions to your challenges.

From the SFBT perspective, cultivating optimism and hope is a strategic approach that enhances motivation, focuses on possibilities, builds resilience, promotes agency, improves mental health outcomes, and facilitates identifying and implementing solutions.

This worksheet is designed to help you cultivate optimism and hope by focusing on solutions rather than problems. It encourages you to envision a preferred future and identify your strengths and resources to make it a reality.

Identify people who support you and can contribute to your journey toward a more optimistic and hopeful future. Describe how each person can help.

Reflect on a time in the past when you overcame a difficult situation. What strengths or resources did you use? How can these be applied to your current situation?

Based on the differences between your current situation and your preferred future, identify one small, achievable step you can take this week to move closer to your goal.

Detail your plan for taking this step. Include when, where, and how you will take this action.

Consider any potential obstacles and how you might overcome them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Do you notice any changes in how you feel about your ability to achieve your preferred future?
Explain.

What insights have you gained about the role of optimism and hope in your life?

Recognize and Appreciate Your Resilience

What to Know

Solution-based therapy appreciates personal resilience and recognizes that everyone has some knowledge of what would make their life better and the ability to create solutions. Sometimes, people who experience tough situations must be reminded of their strengths.

Focusing on your strengths instead of your weaknesses reminds you to think of and appreciate how you cope with your difficulties. Ask questions like, “How have I managed to carry on?” or “How have I managed to prevent things from worsening?”

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. It is an inner strength that characterizes many people who persevere under difficult circumstances.

What to Do

This activity will help you recognize and appreciate your resilience.

Using the following chart, write down things you have been able to accomplish or ordeals or problems you have overcome.

Reflect on what personal strengths enabled you to achieve each accomplishment. For example, successfully overcoming a problem might require determination and resolve. Use the sample of strengths that follows for ideas.

Include how you felt and every small satisfaction or happiness at your achievement.

If you like, share your chart with someone who is supporting you along your journey. You could ask them to think of an accomplishment you have not included, perhaps because you forgot about it or didn't even consider it an accomplishment.

Make a copy of the chart and keep it to look at whenever you feel hopeless. Add to the chart every chance you can.

Ambitious	Artistic	Caring	Knowledgeable	Persistent
Analytical	Authentic	Charming	Leadership	Persevering
Appreciative	Confident	Considerate	Motivated	Compassionate
Self-Assured	Responsible	Creative	Patient	Strategic
Dedicated	Flexible	Fair	Observant	Industrious
Modest	Precise	Humorous	Respectful	Versatile
Courageous	Honorable	Loving	Kind	Understanding

Understanding Your Goals

What to Know

Understanding your goals is a foundation for personal development, motivation, and fulfillment. Here are ways in which this understanding can transform your life.

1. **Provides Clear Direction.** Understanding your goals offers a clear direction for your life's journey and defines a path from where you are now to where you want to be. Your decisions and actions become more purposeful and aligned with your ultimate objectives. This can reduce feeling lost or aimless and enhance your sense of personal agency.
2. **Increases Motivation.** Goals give you something to aim for, and understanding what you want to achieve can boost your motivation – especially when goals are meaningful and aligned with your values. Increased motivation is essential for initiating and sustaining action, even when faced with challenges or setbacks.
3. **Enhances Decision Making.** When you have clear goals, decision-making becomes more focused and intentional. Choices are evaluated based on how well they align with your goals, simplifying complex decisions and reducing decision fatigue. This can lead to better outcomes and greater satisfaction with your choices.
4. **Improves Focus and Productivity.** A deep understanding of your goals helps prioritize your tasks and manage your time effectively, enabling you to focus on activities that directly contribute to your goals. Targeted focus also helps in minimizing distractions and procrastination.
5. **Facilitates Personal Growth.** Pursuing clear goals often requires stepping out of your comfort zone and developing new skills or improving existing ones. This process fosters personal growth and self-improvement, increasing self-confidence and a stronger sense of self-efficacy.
6. **Builds Resilience Against Adversity.** When challenges arise, clearly understanding your goals provides a reason to persevere. It serves as a reminder of what you are working toward, helping you to navigate through difficulties and emerge stronger.
7. **Enhances Well-being and Life Satisfaction.** Pursuing and achieving goals can enhance your overall well-being and life satisfaction. It brings a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment, contributing to a more positive outlook and improved mental health.
8. **Promotes a Sense of Purpose.** Goal clarity connects your day-to-day actions with your broader ambitions, making daily life more meaningful. This sense of purpose is associated with a happier and more fulfilling life.
9. **Encourages Mindfulness and Present Moment Awareness.** Well-defined goals can increase your mindfulness and awareness of the present moment. Focusing on specific objectives makes you more engaged with actions and experiences.

You are not starting from zero because you already possess valuable skills, attributes, and support systems that can be harnessed to facilitate change. Think about times in the past when you faced a challenge but were able to overcome it. What strengths did you use? List at least three strengths or resources you possess that can help you achieve your goals.

Who are the people in your life who can support you in achieving these goals? How can they help? Be specific.

Use the following chart to break down your goals into smaller, manageable steps. In the first column, describe the goal. Next, write down up to five steps you must take to achieve it. Set a deadline for each step. What is one small thing you can do within the next 48 hours to move closer to your goal? Write that down in the fourth column.

Goal #1	Steps 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Deadline	Small Step
Goal #2	Steps 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		
Goal #3	Steps 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		

Spend a few minutes visualizing yourself achieving a small step toward one of your goals. How does it feel? What are you doing? How are others responding?

Consider potential obstacles that might hinder your progress toward your goals. How can you use your strengths and support system to overcome these challenges? Be specific.

What insights have you gained about your goals and how to achieve them?

How do you feel about your path forward?

Setting Goals Using the GROW Model

What to Know

The GROW model is a solution-focused framework used for problem-solving, goal setting, and performance improvement. Created by Sir John Whitmore, GROW is an acronym for Goals, Reality, Options, and Way forward (or Will). This leadership tool has four steps:

The essential first step is to set a Goal which is clear, inspiring, and challenging – not just SMART (specific, measurable, and achievable in a realistic time frame). When you have clarity, you can more easily envision the steps required to move forward to achieve your goal and establish a personal connection to the goal. You can always revisit the goal as needed.

Next, consider your Reality or the current situation, including internal and external obstacles. You will also explore your motivation for achieving the goal.

When you review your Options, think of your strengths, resources, and all the possibilities. Brainstorm various strategies to achieve the goal. Let your imagination run wild! It can be fun to imagine an unlimited budget and resources.

The final step, the Way Forward (sometimes referred to as Will) is your barometer of success and involves actions and accountability – including what, when, and by whom. Your intentions and desire to achieve the goal must be converted into successful action steps. What are you willing to do to achieve the goal? Include a way to track your progress.

GROW can promote confidence and increase motivation, leading to increased productivity and personal satisfaction. The model takes goal setting to a higher level. When using this approach, most of your time should be focused on the goal and reality steps.

This worksheet will guide you through using the GROW model.

What to Do

For each step of the GROW model, answer the questions. Be as honest and detailed as possible.

Step 1. Goals

First, think about something you would like to achieve. Write it down.

Next, you will clarify your goal. Answer the following questions.

What's important to you right now?

What does your ideal future look like?

What will you be doing in five years?

What new skills do you want to learn or develop?

Where is your life out of balance?

What challenges are you facing right now?

What are you currently working toward? For example, at home, at work, or within a relationship.

Now, write down one goal you have using only positive words.

Why is achieving this goal important to you?

Step 2. Reality

What is working well right now?

What do you need?

What excuses have you always used for not achieving your goals?

What have you done so far to improve your life?

What parts of your life will be impacted if you achieve your goal?

What is the biggest obstacle you are currently facing?

What does self-sabotage look like for you?

What does your inner critic say to you?

What are your fears?

What are you passionate about?

What impact or effect does your fear have? Your passions?

What steps have you taken so far toward achieving your goal?

Any other relevant factors? If yes, list them.

Step 3. Options

What is the first step toward achieving your goal?

If you had 50% more confidence, what would you be doing that would be different?

If success was guaranteed, what would you do?

If money was not an obstacle, what would you do?

What action step is the best use of your time?

If someone else came to you with your obstacles, what would you tell them?

What strengths can you use to move forward?

If you could do only one thing this week toward achieving your goal, what would it be?

What would you do if you answered to no one?

What is the most efficient use of your time right now?

Identify any other obstacles (people, resources, environment, etc.).

What else prevents you from reaching your goal?

What personal changes would you have to make to achieve your goal?

What is stopping you from changing?

Step 4. The way forward: Create an action plan

On a scale of 1 to 10, how motivated are you to achieve your goal? _____ (1 = not at all motivated, and 10 = extremely motivated)

What will it take to get your motivation closer to a 10?

Considering all the options you listed above, what steps can you take right now?

(Note: It is also an option to do nothing and review later!)

Whatever your first step is, can you think of anything that might stop you from doing it?

How committed are you to achieving this goal? _____
(1 = not at all committed, and 10 = extremely committed)

How do you want to be held accountable for this goal?

Who can hold you accountable? _____

How will you celebrate when you achieve your goal?

What step can you take toward your goal in the next 24 hours?

What else do you need to consider before starting?

What are your next steps? List three and be specific.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What is the timeframe for each? Be specific.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What might get in the way?

What support do you need?

How and when can you get that support?

How will you track your progress? For example, you might use an app or write in your journal each day.

What will you do when you achieve your goal?

Solving Your Problem in Five Simple Steps

What to Know

Problem-solving is the process of identifying a problem, developing possible solutions, and taking appropriate action. It is a basic life skill that is essential to daily life at home, work, or school. You probably solve problems every day without really thinking about it.

To develop your problem-solving skills, focus on the why, what, and how of the problem. Ask yourself the following five questions.

Why should I care about this problem? Describe your problem using specific details. Instead of, “I spend too much money on takeout,” a better statement is, “Last year, I spent an average of \$300 each month on takeout food.” Consider why this problem is an issue for you – or why you should care.

What does success look like? Write down what you want to achieve by solving this problem. Focus on the goal, not the solution. For example, “Next year, I’ll spend 50% less each month on takeout food.”

How can I solve this problem? Now, think about solutions to your problem. You might find out as much as possible about it or search for resources to help you solve it. Maybe there is someone who can help you. Brainstorm as many solutions as possible. Ask for help from others if you get stuck.

How should you solve the problem? Look at your list of possible solutions and identify the best one.

How can you take action? Make a simple step-by-step plan to solve your problem. Remember that no matter how well you plan, things will change, and your plan might change, too.

Problem-solving can be an easy process if you follow these steps. This worksheet will help you follow the five simple steps to solve your problem.

What to Do

Describe your problem.

Why should you care about this problem?

What does success look like? Or, how will you know you solved the problem?

How can you solve this problem? Write down as many solutions as possible. If you need more space, use additional paper.

How should you actually solve the problem? Pick one solution from the list above and explain why it's the best option.

How can you take action? You can use the following chart to write down all the actions that make up your problem-solving steps. Write down when each step should be done. In the final column, check off when each action step is complete.

Action step to solve your problem	Due date	Completed?

Action step to solve your problem	Due date	Completed?

Did this activity help you solve your problem? Why or why not?

Coping Questions for Tough Days

What to Know

You will inevitably have days that test your resilience, and your responses to challenges can impact your well-being and personal growth. Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) emphasizes the power of directing your attention toward solutions rather than dwelling on problems. SFBT is grounded in the belief that people possess the strengths and resources to solve problems despite adversity. This approach is not about ignoring your difficulties but building a bridge to where they are manageable and where you feel confident in your capacity to overcome them.

The essence of SFBT lies in envisioning a preferred future and taking small, concrete steps toward it. Whether you are coping with chronic stress, uncertainty, loss, or any form of emotional discomfort, you can identify solutions that align with your values and goals.

This worksheet is designed to help you through tough days by utilizing coping questions intended to guide your thoughts, help you gain perspective, and find ways to cope with difficult situations. Remember that challenging days are a part of life, but how you respond to them can make a big difference to your well-being.

What to Do

Answer each question honestly in the space provided. Try to be as detailed as possible in your answers, allowing yourself to explore your thoughts and feelings fully.

What are you feeling right now? Identify and name your emotions. This can help make them feel more manageable.

What triggered these feelings? Reflect on the events or thoughts that led to your current emotional state.

What have you done in the past that has helped you deal with similar feelings? Think about strategies that have worked before and how to apply them now.

What can you control in this situation? Focusing on what you can control can help reduce feelings of helplessness.

What is uncontrollable in this situation? Acknowledging what is out of your control can help you let go and reduce anxiety.

Who can you reach out to for support? Identifying a support system can provide comfort and perspective.

What is something positive that can come out of this situation? Finding a silver lining can shift your mindset and help you see growth opportunities.

How can you make today a bit easier for yourself? Think of small, achievable steps you can take to ease your burden.

What are you grateful for today? Reflecting on gratitude can improve your mood and outlook.

What is one thing you can do right now to feel better? Focus on immediate, small actions that can boost your mood or provide relief.

Did you discover anything new about coping with difficult or demanding days? Yes / No

Are there strategies you'd like to implement more often or new approaches you would like to try? Explain.

These coping questions can help you build resilience and navigate life's challenges more easily. Keep this list of questions handy and revisit them whenever you have a difficult day.

- What am I feeling right now?
- What triggered these feelings?
- What have I done in the past that helped me cope?
- What can I control in this situation?
- What can't I control?
- Who can I reach out to for support?
- What is something positive that can come out of this situation?
- How can I make today a bit easier for myself?
- What am I grateful for today?
- What is one small thing I can do right now to feel better?

Using Scaling Questions to Assess Your Progress

What to Know

Scaling questions help you envision your desired future and map the necessary steps. They also help you explore your feelings and analyze behaviors and experiences on a 1 to 10 scale. Here is how they work.

1. **Measure Progress.** Scaling questions ask you to rate your current position on a scale related to your goals, feelings, or perceptions of a problem.
2. **Identify Resources.** By identifying your current position on the scale, you can explore what it took to get to that point from a lower number, highlighting your strengths, resources, and previous successes.
3. **Set Achievable Goals.** What would a higher number on the scale look like for you? This can help you identify goals and feel more hopeful.
4. **Explore Detailed Change.** Aim for detailed, specific changes, making your goals tangible and achievable.
5. **Recognize Small Successes.** Even a slight move up the scale is a success, building your confidence and increasing motivation.
6. **Find Exceptions.** Identify times when the problem was less severe or absent (also known as exceptions). This can illuminate what you are doing differently during those times and how those strategies might be applied.
7. **Future Pacing.** Imagine a future where the problem is less impactful or resolved, and what steps are needed to reach that point.

Scaling questions are a flexible tool, adaptable to many situations, and helpful in supporting you in visualizing progress, planning steps to achieve your goals, and recognizing your strengths and resources.

What to Do

Write down your strengths, resources, and previous successes when faced with challenges or problems. Be specific.

Describe a current problem you have.

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = the worst the problem has ever been, and 10 = the problem is completely resolved, where are you now? _____

What factors influenced the number you chose? Describe them.

Imagine your scale number is one point higher. What small changes or differences might you notice that would indicate this improvement?

What number on the scale represents your "best hope" for the situation? _____
Describe this ideal scenario.

Consider the problem you described above. What would it take to increase the number, even by a half point, if you utilized your strengths, resources, and previous successes? Be specific.

Next, think about an important personal goal. Consider any challenges you face. Rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = farthest from your goal, and 10 = achieving your goal. _____

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 = complete confidence in achieving your goal, and 1 = complete lack of confidence, where do you currently place yourself? _____

If you did not choose 1, what prevented you from choosing a lower number? What positives in your situation are reflected in the number you chose?

What specific actions or changes can you make to move your number up by one point?

Considering the ideal number, identify your strengths or resources to help you reach this goal.

Reflect on the insights gained from answering the above questions. Based on your reflections, write a brief action plan outlining steps you can take in the next month to move closer to your goal.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Now, choose either the problem you wish to solve or the goal you want to achieve. Use the following chart to track your progress over the next month. In the first column, write down the date. Record the action step, the outcome, and then rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10. If you choose a goal, rate yourself 1 = farthest from your goal, and 10 = achieving your goal. Or, if you choose to solve a problem, 1 = the worst the problem has ever been, and 10 = the problem is entirely resolved.

Relationships

Career/Professional/Educational Life

Health and Wellbeing

Hobbies/Passions/Interests

Other Areas _____

Now that you have outlined your ideal life consider how it makes you feel and how others react.

How do you feel in this new life? Describe your emotions and state of mind in detail.

How do people close to you react to these changes? Describe their responses and any changes in your relationships with them.

What will others notice about you that makes them aware things are different or better?

While the miracle question can help you envision an ideal future, the next step is to bridge the gap between your current reality and your imagined future.

What would be the very first difference you would notice in your life?

What would you do next? _____

Identify one small step you can take within the next week to move closer to your ideal future. Consider habits, actions, or changes in perspective that align with your miracle vision.

What would you see (feelings, thoughts, and behavior) if you compared a before-and-after picture? Draw the pictures below. Use symbols, words, and images.

Before	After

Have you ever seen any of this before? Why or why not?

Take a moment to reflect on the process and any insights you gained. How did it feel to envision an ideal future without limitations? How can you use these insights to guide your actions moving forward? Be specific.

This worksheet is a tool for exploration and inspiration. The future you envision today can serve as a guiding star, helping you navigate life's challenges and decisions. Keep revisiting and revising your answers as you grow and evolve.

Create a Vision of a Happier Life

What to Know

It is natural to feel a mix of emotions whenever you face significant changes in your life. You may feel excitement about the new opportunities ahead, but it is also expected to experience anxiety or sadness as you step into the unknown. These feelings are both normal and understandable. With the emotional turmoil that such changes can bring, it might be challenging to maintain a sense of hope—hope for success, hope for relief from your struggles, and hope for a brighter future. Remember, it is perfectly okay to hold on to hope, even during difficult times—perhaps especially then. Envisioning a future where you have overcome your current challenges can act as a powerful motivator and a guiding light on your journey of personal growth.

What to Do

Do you know what you want in life? Is there anything stopping you from working toward it? Describe briefly.

Next, create a vision statement to help you “keep your eyes on the prize”— living a happier life.

First, make a list of twelve things you want in your life. There are no right or wrong answers, and you do not have to be realistic. Just go for it, whether it is getting a new job, moving to a new place, buying a house, taking a vacation, falling in love, having children, or simply having peace of mind—anything goes! Use extra paper if needed. If you want, you can create a collage of images from magazines or download photos or images from the internet.

Things I Want in My Life

Progress Evaluation

This final worksheet is designed to help you assess your progress after completing the activities in this workbook. By reflecting on your journey, you can highlight your achievements, pinpoint areas for further growth, and appreciate the benefits of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT).

What to Do

Please take your time to thoughtfully respond to the questions below using the 1-10 scales provided, where 1 represents the least positive outcome, and 10 represents the most favorable outcome. This reflection will provide insights into your growth and guide your future steps.

List the main goals you set at the beginning of this workbook. For each goal listed, rate your progress toward achieving it, where 1 = no progress and 10 = goal fully achieved. Provide a rating and a brief explanation for each goal.

Goal	Rating (1-10)	Explanation

Rate the significance of the changes or improvements you have noticed in yourself while working through the workbook, where 1 = no significant changes, and 10 = very significant changes: _____

Please describe the changes or improvements you have noticed.

Which tools or exercises from the workbook did you find most helpful? Explain.

Were there any tools or strategies that you found challenging or less helpful? Explain.

How did the solution-focused questions influence your approach to challenges or problems?
Rate the influence, where 1 = no influence and 10 = high influence: _____ Explain.

Describe a situation where you successfully applied the skills or strategies learned.

Rate the outcome, where 1 = unsuccessful, to 10 = highly successful: _____

Rate any changes in how you handle situations that previously upset or challenged you, where 1 = no change, to 10 = significant change: _____

Please provide specific examples.

Rate your overall improvement in managing and overcoming personal challenges since starting this workbook, where 1 = no improvement, to 10 = significant improvement: _____

Rate your confidence in continuing to apply the solution-focused techniques on your own, where 1 = not at all confident, to 10 = very confident: _____

What are your next steps to build on your progress or address areas where you desire more improvement? Be specific.

Rate your motivation to implement these steps, where 1 = unmotivated, to 10 = highly motivated: _____

Do you feel a need for further sessions or another workbook? If yes, explain.

Rate your need for additional resources, where 1 = no need, to 10 = high need: _____

Please provide any other feedback or thoughts about your experience with this workbook and its impact on your journey.

Rate your overall satisfaction with this workbook, where 1 = completely dissatisfied, to 10 = very satisfied: _____

Reflect on your responses and consider how they can guide your future personal development. Share this completed worksheet and discuss your reflections and future plans with your coach, counselor, or therapist. I appreciate your dedication to your self-improvement journey!