

SSFN

Scottish Solution Focused Network

Newsletter No. 5.

Welcome to the [Christmas edition](#) of the Newsletter. In this edition we have a report of our last [training day](#), held in Kincardine O'Neil and news of our [2014 Review](#). We also have news of a great [new book](#) on Solution Focused Practice recently published by one of our members, and there's news of our [next Training Day](#) in February.

Training Day

The last training day was held on 21st November at Claudia Van Zuiden's '[Solution Ways](#)' premises in Kincardine O'Neil. A small, but determined, group made their way into the heart of Royal Deeside for what turned out to be a very instructive and enjoyable day. The day began, as usual, with the group sharing some of the successes we have been experiencing in SF practice lately. Graham Buchanan spoke of the success he has been having in introducing further SF focused models of working within NHS Fife. Following on the success of previous SF initiatives, he has been given approval to develop a training programme for Mental Health staff working in high dependency areas. He hopes to develop a network of *Solution Champions* to help promote solution focused working within some of the hospital wards in NHS Fife.

Steve Smith reported that the Solution Focused Brief Therapy training course, being delivered at Robert Gordon University in February next year, was almost fully subscribed. He noted that confirmed participants were coming from

across the country and from a wide range of practice backgrounds, making this, potentially, one of the most interesting groups to go through the training. Lindsay Leece shared some of her experience over the past year in her new role as a Mental Health Nurse working with people who are deaf. Building on her previous experience using sign-language in clinical practice, Lindsay now covers the northern half of the country, including the Northern Isles, as part of this specialist service. She provided a fascinating account of her work in, what was generally agreed to be, one of the most challenging roles we could imagine.

Claudia then led a presentation into her work in Solution Focused Team Building. Using two case examples she described the use of Solution Focused Interactions as a means to identifying client's best hopes for both the individual session and their on-going work. Helping individual workers identify what they and their colleagues did well was often a significant event (there were parallels here with the work of Ben Furman and the video session we discussed in May last year in Alloa) and provided a welcome opportunity to move on from 'what's not working' type conversations. Claudia stated that her clients find this approach highly encourages their teams and inspires them to thrive rather than spending too much time on what is **not working**. When there is more focus on **what is working** she finds that they are encouraged and empowered and the outcome/goal is more likely to be successfully achieved. She added that one of the benefits her clients find is that progress can be measured, which delivers evidence of improvement and success alike.

Following an excellent lunch in the village café across the road, there was a



Dr Luigi Boscolo

presentation of a video demonstrating the use of the Systemic Family Therapy style of Luigi Boscolo of the Milan Family Therapy Group. The video used actors to re-enact a clinical session, a useful technique where one wishes to protect the anonymity of the clients; an interesting discussion developed from this point alone. One of the key points of interest, though, was the relationship between the Milan Family Therapy model and the model of Solution Focused Brief Therapy. Given

that both share, at least some, parentage in the practice of John Weakland and colleagues at the MRI Brief Therapy Centre (Steve suggested that he had read that Paul Watzlawick had acted as a consultant to the Milan Group when they were establishing their practice) the differences between the two approaches were quite marked. The problem focus of the interview and the 'therapist as expert' role adopted by Boscolo was in stark contrast to the stance taken in SF practice; it was commented that Dr Boscolo appeared to be 'fishing for clues' as to how 'to solve' the couple's problem, in a process reminiscent of 'searching for a needle in a hay-stack' (the SF alternative being to go to a needle shop and ask 'can I buy a needle please'). All-in-all, the video prompted a lively and informative discussion. The day ended around 3:30 with plans being made for the next Training Day in February 2015.

2014 Review.

As part of our on-going efforts to keep the Scottish Solution Focused Network relevant to members and to continue to meet our objectives of Promoting Solution Focused Practice and Thinking in Scotland, Supporting Solution Focused Practice and Thinking in Scotland and Engaging with the Scottish Government's Agenda in Scotland, we want to know what you think. In reviewing the SSFN activity over the past three years, and in 2014 in particular, we are interested to know what has gone well, what could have gone better, and what we're going to do next year. The survey is open until the end of January 2015 (there are only 5 questions); but don't wait, have a look at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YWLB7CK> and let us know what you think.

New Book.

A new book (well, published in September) on [Solution Focused Practice](#) is always something to be celebrated, and this book by [Guy Shennan](#) (our SSFN ambassador to London) is well worth reading. Setting out the process in a clear and systematic fashion, this book shows how any conversation directed

towards change can become a solution-focused one, whether in planned series of sessions with individuals, families or groups, or in the less structured contexts in which many helping professionals work. Full of real-life case examples and stimulating activities, this will be an invaluable guide to anyone wanting to develop their skills in this empowering approach. The book is called **Solution-Focused Practice: Effective Communication to Facilitate Change** and is published by Palgrave Macmillan, and retails for around £17:00.

Next Training Day

As mentioned above, the next Training Day will be at the end of February 2015, and will probably be held at the Playfield Institute; more news to follow.

Christmas Wishes

Finally, best wishes to everyone; hoping you all have a quiet and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.