Chinese cultural values and solution focused therapy

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When we talked about how to implement Solution Focused Therapy in Chinese Community, we were always asked “How does it work?”

The emergence of the Strength Perspective reflects the discontent towards the pathological perspective that had influenced counselors, social workers and other professions over centuries (Saleebey, 2006). Strength based intervention identifies the potentials of the clients and believes that clients have the ability to heal and cure. Exploring solutions while identifying clients’ strengths are the main focus of strength-based interview. The interviewing method is based on Solution-Focused Therapy which was developed by Steve de Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg, and colleagues at the Brief Family Therapy Centre in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (de Shazer et.al. 1986). The interviewing method provides guidelines for exploring clients’ strengths, however, therapists sometimes will get confused about when and how to use the SF questions and what else they need to do. Besides, some Chinese therapists would query whether the guidelines developed from overseas context can also be applied to Chinese culture?

Having consolidated the experience in counseling cases with Solution-Focused Therapy in local Hong Kong and Singapore context, it is summarized that there are three stages in the intervention process and every stage will have specific task to do, i.e. Engagement Stage, Working Stage and Ending Stage. In this paper, we also bring up the concept of 6R: Resistance, Release, Re-focus, Reach, Regenerate and Reassure to fulfill the gap that just mentioned. Through this new Map, therapists will know what they need to do in the different stages, what kinds of skills and questioning techniques of Solution Focused Therapy will be used and thus they can easier to guide the clients to focus on the solution talk.

Under the concept of 6R, Solution Focused questions would be asked specifically in certain stage. It is aimed to inspire hope to shift the focus from conflict and hopelessness to a new perception of strengths and resources in individual as well as interpersonal bases. We consider that this new process map would give more directions to therapists who are working with clients from Chinese community.

Biography

Ada Chung has been working in the areas of Children & Youth and family service for over 15 years. She is now working in Singapore Management University (SMU) as a senior counselor, providing counseling service and leadership training to students. Ada has published a teaching Disk and Instructional Booklet - “Solution-focused therapy with Chinese Families”, which was funded by Teaching Development Grant, HKBU and the product was out in February 2010. Besides, she has also presented papers on Solution Focused Therapy in the International Conference on Social Work and Counseling Practice which was held in Hong Kong in June 2009 and International Social Work Conference in June 2010.

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