

Workshop Exercises & Materials

You Can't Re-Arrange the Furniture Unless You're Invited into the House A Toolbox of Relationship-Building Strategies for School Psychologists

1. Supervisor Exercise (Pairs, 5-10 minutes)

Instructions: (1) Think of an *effective* and *ineffective* supervisor from any time in your life—anyone in a position of authority (teacher, parent, coach, boss, etc.); (2) Interview each other for a couple minutes about both supervisors using the questions below. Feel free to jot down notes in the boxes below as you go.

Effective Supervisor	Ineffective Supervisor
What was it about this person that was effective for you?	What was it about this person that was ineffective for you?
How did this person influence your attitude, motivation, and performance?	How did this person influence your attitude, motivation, and performance?

When you finish the interviews, discuss the implications of these experiences for your work with teachers, parents, and students.

Notes:

2. What Works and What's Frustrating? (3-5 per group; 5-10 minutes)

Instructions: Discuss the following questions as a group.

- (1) What do you already do that helps build strong relationships with others in your work?
- (2) What are your biggest frustrations and challenges in building relationships in your work?
- (3) Drawing from your group's ideas in Step 1 (or anything else from your experience), what specific techniques could you use to address one or more frustration or challenge from Step 2?

Notes:

3. Ambassador Exercise (3-4 per group, 5-10 minutes)

Instructions: One person (as self or in the role of parent) shares a concern, frustration, or challenge in their lives, then others respond with one or more of the following “ambassador mindset” techniques—respectful curiosity, asking permission, validation, and complimenting. Switch roles to allow for as many practice rounds as possible.

Notes:

4. Hope-Building Strategies (3-4 per group, 5 minutes)

Instructions: Take turns sharing hope-building techniques that you’ve used in your work, then discuss some additional ways you could boost hope with students, teachers, parents, and others you work with.

Notes:

5. Building on Exceptions (3 per group—2 Helpers, 1 Client; 10 minutes)

Instructions: Select a role (Client or Helper), then:

- 1) Client describes real-life concern (or role-played student/teacher/parent problem), and Helpers:
- 2) *Find* an exception (Ask about a recent time when the problem could have happened but *didn’t happen* or was *less intense or noticeable* than usual):
- 3) *Explore* exception-related details (How was this time different than usual?; How did you/others approach things differently?; What else was different?):
- 4) *Expand* the exception (What would it take for this to happen more often?; What small step could you take in the next few days to make it happen again?):

After the Interview: Ask Client for reactions to the conversation. If time permits, brainstorm practical ways to build on exceptions in your everyday work with teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

Notes:

6. Empowering Progress: Letter-Writing Exercise (3-4 per group—1 Client, 2-3 Helpers; 5-10 minutes)

Instructions: The Client describes a small but important improvement in his/her life, then Helpers work together to compose and present a short letter (3-4 sentences) aimed at empowering and sustaining the improvement.

Notes:

Letters and Documents for Building Relationships and Empowering Improvements



Erika, age 8 (after noticeable improvements in classroom behavior)

Dear Erika,

I noticed how kind you were to others this week in class. How did you do that? What made you decide to do that? Maybe you can teach me more about the “new you” so that I can help other students who need help behaving well in class. I’ll check with you tomorrow to see if you can help me with that.

The “New You” Award

Ms. Erika Jones

for breaking old habits and starting new ones

Michael, age 9 (after a few days of better classroom behavior)

Dear Michael,

You really showed Mr. Talky who was boss this week. I’ll bet Mr. Talky was mad that he wasn’t able to push you into talking a lot in class. I wonder what else you’ll think of to remind Mr. Talky that you are the boss now, not him. Please keep track of how you do that and we’ll talk about it next time we meet.

Chelsea, age 14 (after slight improvement in aggressive behavior)

Dear Chelsea,

I know you value your freedom and want to preserve it. This will take some hard work, because other people may say and do things that tempt you to act in ways that steal your freedom. I am curious how you will figure out ways to preserve your freedom and stay out of trouble in school. It is impressive that you were able to hold your freedom and resist the urge to go off on Tonya when she gave you some trouble in class yesterday. Maybe you could keep track of some other victories that help you stay free and move closer to the life you want for yourself.

Ms. Smith (parent of Derek, age 15, after Derek went an entire week with no discipline referrals)

Dear Ms. Smith,

I wanted you to know that Derek did much better at school this week. Thank you for hanging in there and continuing to work with us to help him behave more successfully. Derek is lucky to have you in his corner, and so are we. Congratulations to you and Derek on starting to turn things around. I wonder how next week will go.

NOTE: The following measures (and their group versions) are part of the Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS) and are available in several languages (downloadable for free from: www.heartandsoulofchange.com). Better Outcomes Now (BON) software allows for computerized administration and scoring of these measures and is also available to individuals and agencies (see www.heartandsoulofchange.com for more info on client PCOMS, BON, etc.).



Outcome Rating Scale (ORS)
**Sample Copy* (13 years and older)*

Name: _____ Age (yrs.): _____ ID # _____ Sex: M/F
Session # _____ Date: _____

Looking back over the last week, including today, help us understand how you have been feeling by rating how well you have been doing in the following areas of your life, where marks to the left represent low levels and marks to the right indicate high levels.

Individually
(Personal well-being)

|-----|

Interpersonally
(Family, close relationships)

|-----|

Socially
(Work, School, Friendships)

|-----|

Overall
(General well-being)

|-----|

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Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS)

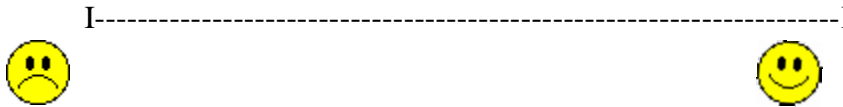
**Sample Copy* (12 years and under)*

Name _____ Age (Yrs): ____ Sex: M / F Session # ____ Date: ____
Who is filling out this form? Please check one: Child _____ Caretaker _____
If caretaker, what is your relationship to this child? _____
[If you are a caretaker filling out this form, please fill out according to how you think the child is doing.]

How are you doing? How are things going in your life? Please make a mark on the scale to let us know. The closer to the smiley face, the better things are. The closer to the frowny face, things are not so good.

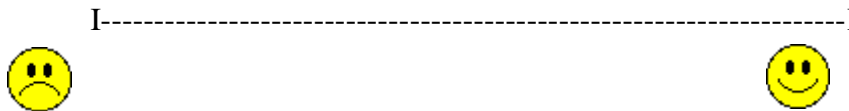
Me

(How am I doing?)



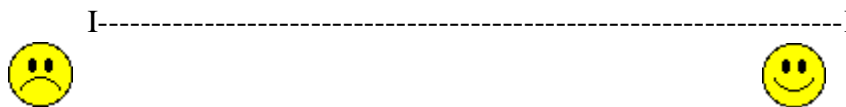
Family

(How are things in my family?)



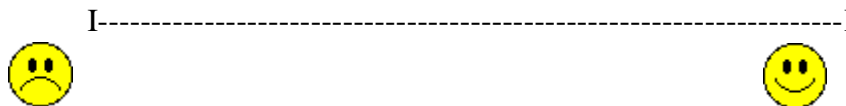
School

(How am I doing at school?)



Everything

(How is everything going?)



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Session Rating Scale (SRS V.3.1)

Name _____	Age (Yrs.): _____
ID# _____	Gender: _____
Session # _____	Date: _____

Please rate today's session by placing a mark on the line nearest to the description that best fits your experience.

Relationship

I did not feel heard, understood, and respected.

I-----I

I felt heard, understood, and respected.

Goals and Topics

We did *not* work on or talk about what I wanted to work on and talk about.

I-----I

We worked on and talked about what I wanted to work on and talk about.

Approach or Method

_____ approach is *not* a good fit for me.

I-----I

_____ approach is a good fit for me.

Overall

There was something missing in the session today.

I-----I

Overall, today's session was right for me.

The Heart and Soul of Change Project
<https://heartandsoulofchange.com>



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Child Session Rating Scale (CSRS)
**Sample Copy (12 years and under)*

Name _____ Age (Yrs): _____ Sex: M / F Session # _____ Date: _____
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How was our time together today? Please put a mark on the lines below to let us know if how you feel.

Listening

Did not always listen to me.	I-----I	Listened to me.
		

How Important

What we did and talked about was not really that important to me.	I-----I	What we did and talked about were important to me.
		

What We Did

I did not like what we did today.	I-----I	I liked what we did today
		

Overall

I wish we could do something different.	I-----I	I hope we do the same kind of things next time.
		

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Format for First Session in Solution-Focused Counseling

[Adapted from *Solution-focused counseling in schools*, 3rd ed. (Murphy, 2015) ©American Counseling Association]

Note. These steps should be flexibly applied and may vary depending on the client and the circumstances.

Orient Client: Welcome and compliment client; Use problem-free small talk to put client at ease; explain the purpose of counseling, your desire to be useful, and the role of client feedback.

Validate and Clarify Concerns: Validate and clarify the client's concerns using the Outcome Rating Scale or Child Outcome Rating Scale (ORS/CORS) and follow-up questions; gather details ("How is this a problem for you?" "What is your theory about the problem/solution?" "What has been tried?" "What has been most helpful so far?").

Clarify Desired Future and Develop Practical Goals: "What are your best hopes for life/and from our meetings?" "What do you want for from counseling?" Use scaling (ORS/CORS or other scaling strategies) or miracle/tomorrow questions to develop goals that are significant, specific, small, start based, and self-manageable (5-S Guideline).

Build on Exceptions and Other Resources: Identify and build on *exceptions* ("When doesn't the problem happen?" "What's different about those times?" "What will it take to do more of it?") and *other resources* (explore client's "natural resources"—resilience, hobbies, heroes, social supports, and solution ideas and incorporate resources into solution-building plans and interventions.)

Can Interventions Be Developed from Exceptions or Other Resources?

Yes No

If yes, partner with the client to build on exceptions and/or other resources. If no, move to the next step.

(As Needed) Change the Viewing/Doing of the Problem: Change the viewing by offering a different interpretation of the problem; change the doing by suggesting the Do Something Different Task and anything else that alters the problem pattern.

Wrap-Up: Compliment the client on positive attributes, efforts to make things better, and other assets; review future plans and next steps; address any questions or comments from the client; administer and discuss the Session Rating Scale or Child Session Rating Scale (SRS/CSRS); thank the client for his or her cooperation and input; schedule the next meeting.

Format for Second and Later Sessions in Solution-Focused Counseling

[Adapted from *Solution-focused counseling in schools, 3rd ed.* (Murphy, 2015) ©American Counseling Association]

Note. These steps should be flexibly applied and may vary depending on the client and the circumstances.

Review Progress: Use scaling (ORS/CORS or other scaling strategies) to assess the client's perception of progress and compare it to previous scores/numbers.

When the Client Reports Improvement: Ask for the client's theory ("How do you explain this?"); compliment and credit the client ("Very impressive. How did you figure out what to do?"); explore exceptions ("What was different about this week that made things better?"); empower progress ("How is life different at school since making these changes?" "How did you manage to make these changes?").

When the Client Reports No Change (or Slips): Ask for the client's theory ("What do you make of that? Should we try something different or hang in there and see if things change next week?"); normalize and validate ("Sometimes things get worse before they get better"); ask coping questions ("How have you kept things from getting worse? Where do you find the strength to keep trying?"); explore exceptions and other resources ("As bad as it was, was there anything that went well at school this week? What have you thought about doing but haven't done yet? How can we rally your support team to help turn things around?" "Is there anything you've learned from all this that might help you in the future?").

Can Interventions Be Developed from Exceptions or Other Resources?

Yes No

If yes, partner with the client to build on exceptions and/or other resources. If no, move to the next step.

(As Needed) Change the Viewing/Doing of the Problem: Change the viewing by offering a different interpretation of the problem; change the doing by suggesting the Do Something Different Task and anything else that alters the problem pattern.

Wrap-Up: Compliment the client on positive attributes/actions, efforts to make things better, and other assets; review interventions and future plans; address any questions or comments from client; administer and discuss the SRS/CSRS; thank the client for his or her cooperation and input; schedule the next meeting or terminate services based on the client's progress and input.

John Murphy Workshop: Additional Resources

Website

John Murphy (www.drjohnmurphy.com): Client-directed/solution-focused approaches to helping people change with dignity by honoring their unique wisdom, strengths, resources, and feedback; translation of empirical research into practical applications in schools and elsewhere; books, DVDs, and workshops; links to other websites.

Books

Murphy, J. J. (2015). *Solution-focused counseling in schools* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association. (800-422-2648; www.counseling.org)

Murphy, J. J. (2014). *Conducting student-driven interviews: Practical strategies for increasing student involvement and addressing behavior problems*. New York: Routledge Press. (800-634-7064; www.routledge.com)

Murphy, J. J., & Duncan, B. L. (2007). *Brief intervention for school problems: Outcome-informed strategies* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press. (800-365-7006; www.guilford.com)

Murphy, J. J., & Sparks, J. A. (in press). *Strengths-based therapy: Distinctive features*. London: Routledge Press. (800-634-7064; www.routledge.com)

DVDs

Solution-Focused Therapy with Dr. John J. Murphy (“*Child Therapy with the Experts*” DVD Training Series): This professionally produced DVD includes: (a) a discussion between Dr. Murphy and the series’ hosts; (b) a full-length therapy session with a single mother and her two children; and (c) a lively question/answer session between Dr. Murphy and an audience of therapists in Chicago. Contact Dr. Murphy to order at: jmurphy@uca.edu or www.psychotherapy.net

About the Presenter

John J. Murphy is a Professor of Psychology & Counseling at the University of Central Arkansas and a sought after trainer and practitioner of client-directed, strengths-based approaches with young people, families, and school problems. He taught in public schools before receiving a PhD in psychology and completed post-doctoral training in systemic family therapy with Barry Duncan at the Dayton (OH) Institute of Family Therapy. John spent 13 years as a full time school psychologist in Covington (KY) Public Schools, a high poverty urban district, and he continues to work regularly with students and schools as well as adults and families in private practice. He was named by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) as one of the top five school psychologists in the United States in 1993, and received the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Writer of the Year Award for the popular book, *Solution-Focused Counseling in Schools* (currently in its 3rd edition; 2015). He also authored *Conducting Student-Driven Interviews* (2013, Routledge Press) and (with Barry Duncan) *Brief Intervention for School Problems* (2nd ed.; Guilford Press, 2007). His books have been translated into many different languages, and his therapeutic work is featured in various contemporary venues including *Fast Company* magazine, the NY Times bestseller *Switch*, and the DVD series, *Child Therapy with the Experts*. He is a Project Director with the Heart & Soul of Change Project, an international research/training initiative that promotes client-directed services for marginalized persons of all ages and circumstances. Dr. Murphy has provided training and consultation to thousands of school psychologists and other mental health professionals, teachers, and parents throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, New Zealand, China, and elsewhere. See www.drjohnmurphy.com to learn more about his work, and contact him at jmurphy@uca.edu to inquire about training for your professional organization or agency.