An Introduction to Single Session Counselling:

Claiming Each Moment for Hope, Change, & Growth

Heather J Hair, MA, MSc, PhD Candidate
hairhere@cogeco.ca
905-627-2018
Imagine for a Moment…

- Jane
- Steve
- Susan
- Barbara
So What’s in Common?

- Need for services & corresponding skills.

- Because each month of waiting for a vulnerable child can mean extended suffering with long-term risks.

(Kirby & Keon, 2004, 2006)
Brief Therapies:

Context for Single Session Counselling
Unplanned Brief Therapies:

Therapy has a Long History of Being Brief
Research Reviews Report:

- Positive changes after 2 sessions.
- Median number to be 5 - 6 sessions.
- By the 8th session 22% - 50% of clients report improvements.
- Change continues for approximately the first 10 sessions.
Therapists Naming Clients who Practice Unplanned Brief Therapies:

- Drop-outs. Resistant.
- In denial.
- Not able to trust.
- Not ready for psychotherapy.
- Not interested.
- Lacking motivation for change.
Therapists Naming Other Therapists who Practice Unplanned Brief Therapies:

- Failed to create rapport.
- Inexperienced.
- Not liked by the clients.
- Finds clients boring.
- Unskilled.
- Lacking warmth and less personable.
Therapists seem to have more difficulty than clients accepting the phenomenon of effective therapy that is brief...
Planned Brief
Therapy:

By Design Rather than by Default
Time-Effective, Cost-Sensitive Therapies:

- No length in the number of sessions.
- Time allotted is rationed.
- Maximum benefit with the lowest investment of therapy time & client cost, both financial and psychological.
Essence of Effective, Time-Sensitive Conversations…

- Values
- Assumptions
- Worldview
Impact of Economics & Growing Social Concerns: Session Limits

Brief Therapies gained the reputation amongst practitioners:

- Time-limited
- Insufficient, inadequate, “not enough”
Planned time-sensitive cost-efficient therapies are ideal when external limitations are imposed.
Research Reports of BTS:

After 3 planned sessions:

- 89% of parents rate situation better. (Hair, 1998)

After 1 planned session:

- 78% improvements. (Talmon, 1990)

- 67% some improvement; 43% sufficient to address concerns. (Miller & Slive, 2004)

- About 45% to 50% of families do not ask for or require referral into further services. (Young, 2006)
Two Necessary Facets for Effective SSC:

1. Particular assumptions
2. Particular skills
The intent of a therapeutic conversation is not to totally resolve the problem with the person, but rather to help children and families feel they are on a workable track towards a better life.

That might mean you will have to be comfortable when hope appears to be the only outcome of meeting together.
Some Thoughts to Consider for Effective SSC cont...

Having a SSC conversation now doesn’t mean people can’t come back for more –

But when they do want further services: they come back when they want to and need to and the service is there.
Some Thoughts to Consider for Effective SSC cont...

- It is not always necessary to know the history or details of the problem to be able to participate in a conversation of hope or to explore what differences are desired in the present for the future.

- Small differences in the present decrease the power of traumatic histories.
Some problems will be lived with for a long, long time...

What in this moment can help to determine who is in charge – the problem or the person?
Some Thoughts to Consider for Effective SSC cont...

- Change is constantly occurring. Small differences influence further differences.
- Each conversation creates something that has never existed before.
- This is it. All we have is now.
Questions to Ponder…

- What are your current thoughts about hope, change, and growth? How do you measure evidence of these elements in the lives of children, youth, and their families?

- How do you determine how long a child or family needs help in order for their lives to be better off? How would you usually know when “better off” has occurred? Who are the people who help you decide?

- What is your definition of success for at-risk kids & their families?
An Introduction to Single Session Counselling:
Claiming Each Moment for Hope, Change, & Growth

Heather J Hair, MA, MSc, PhD Candidate
hairhere@cogeco.ca
905-627-2018