

Mccarthy-Grunwald, Steven (2022) Book review: 'Solution focused harm reduction: working effectively with people who misuse substances' - written by Seán Foy. *Journal of Solution Focused Practices*, 6 (1). pp. 104-106.

Downloaded from: <http://insight.cumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/6522/>

Usage of any items from the University of Cumbria's institutional repository 'Insight' must conform to the following fair usage guidelines.

Any item and its associated metadata held in the University of Cumbria's institutional repository Insight (unless stated otherwise on the metadata record) may be copied, displayed or performed, and stored in line with the JISC fair dealing guidelines (available [here](#)) for educational and not-for-profit activities

provided that

- the authors, title and full bibliographic details of the item are cited clearly when any part of the work is referred to verbally or in the written form
 - a hyperlink/URL to the original Insight record of that item is included in any citations of the work
- the content is not changed in any way
- all files required for usage of the item are kept together with the main item file.

You may not

- sell any part of an item
- refer to any part of an item without citation
- amend any item or contextualise it in a way that will impugn the creator's reputation
- remove or alter the copyright statement on an item.

The full policy can be found [here](#).

Alternatively contact the University of Cumbria Repository Editor by emailing insight@cumbria.ac.uk.

7-2022

Solution Focused Harm Reduction: Working Effectively with People Who Misuse Substances -Written by Seán Foy

Steve McCarthy-Grunwald
steven.mccarthy-grunwald@cumbria.ac.uk

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/journalsfp>

Recommended Citation

McCarthy-Grunwald, Steve (2022) "Solution Focused Harm Reduction: Working Effectively with People Who Misuse Substances -Written by Seán Foy," *Journal of Solution Focused Practices*: Vol. 6: Iss. 1, Article 16.

Available at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/journalsfp/vol6/iss1/16>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Article in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Article has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Solution Focused Practices by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

*BOOK REVIEW***Solution Focused Harm Reduction: Working Effectively with People Who Misuse Substances**

Seán Foy

Palgrave MacMillan, 2017, 141 pages, ISBN 978-3319723341 (hardback/paperback) £38:00-£50:00 (e-book available from multiple online sources including Google, Amazon and Kobo)

Review by Steve McCarthy-Grunwald

Senior Lecturer & Pathway Lead for Mental Health Nursing

When it comes to substance misuse services, harm reduction within a medicalised model of care remains a stubborn point of contention between many practitioners, Vearrier (2019). Quite contradictory in fact if you consider the discussion paper from the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2010) who suggest:

Harm reduction is often made an unnecessarily controversial issue as if there was a contradiction between prevention and treatment on one hand and reducing the adverse health and social consequences of drug use on the other. This is a false dichotomy. They are complementary.

These points of contention are of global concern, stemming from the legal enforcement of prohibition of illicit substances within society with numerous laws carrying the risk of criminal prosecution or incarceration. This directly contradicts the theoretical approach to potential abstinence of substances through a reduction of their use over time with clients.

Solution Focused Harm Reduction: Working effectively with people who misuse substances by Seán Foy provides a nicely balanced viewpoint of the potential harm reduction strategies offer whilst bringing into this discussion the potential beneficial use of solution focused brief therapy as a conduit for creating change. The style of the book itself is very much solution focused as it approaches each chapter from a stance of 'not knowing' which enables the reader to develop knowledge and understanding on themes including an introduction to Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) and harm reduction, addiction theory and service design before providing case studies from Seán's clinical practice to help galvanise the learning further applying theory to practice.

From the start Seán sets the tone of the book as more a 'labour of love' offering his experience over many years working in clinical practice as testament to the importance of harm reduction strategies offering a viable approach in substance misuse. This is further explored by illustrating his use of solution focused brief therapy and how it has opened potential avenues of change or 'preferred futures' for many clients. What is particularly endearing about the book is despite this breadth and depth of Seán's experience, he still recognises his own limitations when developing as a practitioner which for readers new to this field of study offers a more encouraging platform with which to develop from. Seán also offers many helpful hints and tips providing examples he has used previously as a way of illustrating the points he is making without feeling like this is the definitive guide of what to do. This approach in itself, lives and breathes the philosophy of SFBT where small change can influence greater motivation to more change.

What stands out for me as a Mental Health nurse lecturer is how approaches such as motivational interviewing (which has been used extensively in addiction services for many years) have a similar ethical positioning, (Hall et al., 2016). The focus throughout Seán Foy's book is very much a convincing narrative to try and encourage the reader to see the benefits of potentially using a solution focused approach within substance misuse/harm reduction, whereas motivational interviewing has an already recognised and accepted position in substance misuse services. When comparing SFBT and Motivational Interviewing, they both have surprisingly similar approaches, which could enable Solution Focused approaches to have a greater foothold to become established.

Motivational Interviewing was developed through the 80s and 90s as a therapeutic approach to alcohol addiction by focusing on behaviour change through the empowerment of personal motivation (Frost et al., 2018). Motivational

Interviewing consists of four distinct phases (engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning) (Schumacher & Madson, 2014). Collectively, these four processes are designed to work on altering particularly ambivalent views towards encouraging a process of change (Levounis et al., 2017). If we were to take a SFBT principle of helping clients past those moments where they feel 'stuck' and unable to move forward, you can see the links starting to develop.

Engaging, which is thought to be the most important element of motivational interviewing, looks toward building therapeutic relationships which are person centred and full of empathy and unconditional positive regard for the person's lived experience. Saarnio (2011) in a study looking at interpersonal functioning and personality traits concluded that it is essential for clinicians to show empathy towards clients within the treatment of substance misuse whilst Dobber et al. (2018) take this further to identify how empathy also promotes continuity in building rapport between therapist and client resulting in clients showing increased willingness to engage.

With respect to the other 3 processes, focusing encourages the client to start identifying a particular goal they would like to achieve before the evoking process takes over fine tuning this desired goal to identify what the personal motivators for change are. Finally, planning starts to develop the person's commitment to change, and identifying the plan of how they aim to achieve their desired goal.

The enhancement of motivation is guided by four principles represented by the acronym 'RULE': Resist the righting reflex; Understand the client's own motivations; Listen with empathy; and empower the patient (Rollnick et al., 2007). By adhering to the 'RULE' principles the clinician is more likely to reduce any resistance for change (Beauvais, 2019). These four principles combined promote greater therapeutic communication and constructive conversation towards identifying a basis for future change (Amrhein, 2004; Rollnick et al., 2007).

From this brief overview of the components of motivational interviewing, there are direct parallels which can be drawn to solution focused brief therapy. Motivational Interviewing remains highly valued as a therapeutic intervention when it comes to substances misuse although interestingly, research conducted by De Jong et al. (2013) whilst looking at co-construction in psychotherapy, concluded that motivational interviewing requires a higher proportion of clinical interpretation when formulating a basis for change, whereas solution focused brief therapy was noted to be more neutral allowing more recognition of the need for a truly person centred philosophy. This most certainly reflects the not knowing stance (mentioned previously) of the clinician which Seán recognized within the book. He quotes Anderson and Goolishian (1992) who state:

The not-knowing position entails a general attitude or stance in which the therapist's actions communicate an abundant, genuine curiosity. That is, the therapist's actions and attitudes express a need to know more about what has been said, rather than convey preconceived opinions and expectations about the client, the problem, or what must be changed.

References

- Amrhein, P. C. (2004). How does motivational interviewing work? What client talk reveals. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 18(4), 323–336.
- Anderson, H., & Goolishian, H. (1992). The client is the expert: A not-knowing approach to therapy. In S. McNamee & K. Gergen (Eds.), *Therapy as Social Construction* (pp. 25–39). Sage.
- Beauvais, C. (2019). Motivational interviewing to improve treatment adherence. *Joint Bone Spine*, 86(5), 535-537. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbspin.2019.02.005>
- De Jong, P., Bavelas, J. B., & Korman, H. (2013). An introduction to using microanalysis to observe co-construction in psychotherapy. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 32(3), 17–30.
- Dobber, J., Latour, C., de Haan, L., Scholte op Reimer, W., Peters, R., Barkhof, E., & van Meijel, B. (2018). Medication adherence in patients with schizophrenia: A qualitative study of the patient process in motivational interviewing. *BMC Psychiatry*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1724-9>

- Frost, H., Campbell, P., Maxwell, M., O'Carroll, R. E., Dombrowski, S. U., Williams, B., Cheyne, H., Coles, E., & Pollock, A. (2018). Effectiveness of motivational interviewing on adult behaviour change in health and social care settings: A systematic review of reviews. *PLoS One*, *13*(10). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0204890>
- Hall, K., Staiger, P. K., Simpson, A., Best, D., & Lubman, D. I. (2016). After 30 years of dissemination, have we achieved sustained practice change in motivational interviewing? *Addiction*, *111*(7), 1144 - 1150. <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.13014>
- Levounis, P., Arnaout, B., & Marienfeld, C. (2017). *Motivational interviewing for clinical practice*. American Psychiatric Association Publishing.
- Rollnick, S., Miller, W. R., & Butler, C. C. (2007). *Motivational interviewing in health care helping patients change behavior*. Guilford Publications.
- Saarnio, P. (2011). Therapist's preference on motivational interviewing and its relationship to interpersonal functioning and personality traits. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, *24*(3), pp.171–180.
- Schumacher, J. A., & Madson, M. B. (2014). *Fundamentals of motivational interviewing: Tips and strategies for addressing common clinical challenges* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2010). *Reducing the adverse health and social consequences of drug abuse: A comprehensive approach*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. <https://www.unodc.org/documents/prevention/Reducing-adverse-consequences-drug-abuse.pdf>
- Vearrier, L. (2019). The value of harm reduction for injection drug use: A clinical and public health ethics analysis. *Disease-a-Month*, *65*(5), 119–141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.disamonth.2018.12.002>

The reviewer

Steve McCarthy-Grunwald is a senior lecturer and pathway lead for mental health nursing at the University of Cumbria with over 27 years of clinical and academic experience.

Email: steven.mccarthy-grunwald@cumbria.ac.uk