

A REVIEW ON THE APPLICATIONS OF SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY IN TURKEY

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to provide comprehensive information about solution-focused brief therapy, review studies conducted in Turkey regarding its effectiveness, and contribute to the relevant literature. Despite being a popular therapy method worldwide, there are few publications on this post-modern approach in our country. Post-modern thinking has observed a shift towards subjective knowledge where personal life experiences are emphasized. Solution-focused therapy focuses on individuals' positive and strong aspects. Therefore, literature-supported explanations about the use, duration, and outcomes of solution-focused therapy are included. The lack of sufficient coverage of this subject in Turkish literature is noteworthy, even though it is widely used as a solution-oriented method that can be completed in a short time in recent years.

Keywords: Post-modern approaches, therapy, solution-focused brief therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Therapy is a professional help process conducted by expert individuals in a therapeutic environment based on confidentiality and voluntariness between two people to provide psychological relief and cope with mental problems (Hackney & Cormier, 2008; Murdock, 2019). Today, there are many therapy methods. Recently, solution-focused brief therapy, which is preferred frequently due to its short duration and solution-oriented nature, stands out compared to other therapy methods (Güner, 2021).

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) emerged as a post-modern approach in the last quarter of the 20th century in the United States. Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg are among the pioneers of this approach. The foundation of the therapy is based on Milton H. Erickson's ideas before the 1960s, such as using time effectively, focusing on small changes in the client, concentrating on the future rather than the past, and creating meaningful changes in a short period (De Shazer & Berg, 1997).

Especially in today's intensive living conditions, it is a form of therapy that focuses on solutions in a short time (Arslan & Gümüşçağlayan, 2018; Kütük, Samar & Akkuş, 2020). Unlike other therapy methods, it focuses on the solution (Siyez & Tuna, 2014). Thus, the individual adopts a different perspective by imagining a life without problems without thinking about the causes, hows, and whys of the problem in a short time. This also saves the individual from struggling with the causes and hows of their problem (Trepper, Dolan, McCollum & Nelson, 2006; Siyez & Tuna, 2014). The counselor's goal is to help the client find and implement solutions that will be applied in the future (Güner, 2021).

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is a psychotherapy approach that helps clients achieve their goals by focusing on solutions rather than problems. This therapy method aims to achieve effective results in a short time by utilizing the client's existing resources and strengths. The application areas of this therapy method are increasingly expanding in Turkey. The purpose of this study is to examine the various application areas of SFBT in Turkey, scrutinize the studies conducted, and compile and present the effectiveness of solution-focused therapy. It evaluates the findings obtained in these fields in Turkey.

Description of the Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

To understand Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), it is essential to comprehend its underlying philosophy (Doğan, 1999). This is because the fundamental philosophy of SFBT differs from those of other problem-focused therapies (Akay, 2018). SFBT emerged in the United States in 1980 as a result of the extensive work of Steve De Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg, and their colleagues. It was initially proposed as family counseling (Ağca & Avşaroğlu, 2020; Erkan, 2019). While SFBT has its limits and constraints, there are also misconceptions about it. Firstly, solution-focused brief therapy is a constructivist and post-modern psychotherapy approach. Sessions vary between 4-6 sessions. The techniques used are likened to a monkey wrench in a toolbox (Murdock, 2013). It focuses both on the client's strengths and the therapeutic collaboration between the client and the therapist. Instead of internalizing the problem, the discussion revolves around the starting point for exiting the problem and how the solution will be achieved. In other words, the question, "What will be different when the problem is solved?" is answered for the client, so the solution is discussed and its implementation is encouraged. There are unique fundamental principles, such as ensuring that every problem is solvable and helping clients see that they have the power to solve their problems (De Shazer, Dolan, Korman, Trepper, McCollum & Berg, 2007).

Solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) is a therapeutic approach that offers solutions for various mental health problems (Çakır, 2020). It is a method that presents new possibilities and experiences of solutions focused on adaptation and resolution without delving into pathology (Doğasal & Karakartal, 2021). This approach, which stays away from the past, embraces the understanding that small changes can lead to significant transformations, much like a domino effect (Çakır, 2020). For solution-focused therapists, the first session is the most crucial. Important steps such as envisioning the desired future and helping clients recognize their existing skills are taken in this initial session (Trepper, Dolan, McCollum & Nelson, 2006).

METHOD

This review study was conducted using the descriptive content analysis method, which is one of the qualitative research methods which is widely used in the field of counselling. Data collected using the content analysis technique, a qualitative research technique, were utilized and some inferences were made. To access studies conducted in the related field in Turkey, databases such as ERIC, TÜBİTAK, ULAKBİM, and Google Scholar were used sequentially. In addition to these studies, university libraries were visited to research books and graduate theses. Some limitations and restrictions, such as key words, were applied in the process of selecting the sources to be reviewed.

FINDINGS

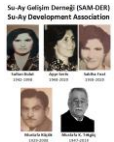
Solution-Focused Brief Therapy in the Field of Education

School Psychological Counseling

In Turkey, school psychological counselors use SFBT techniques to help students achieve their goals rather than solving student problems directly. This method has been effective in enhancing student success and providing motivation. For example, research has shown that SFBT is effective in reducing student anxiety and increasing academic achievement (Köseoğlu, 2018; Sklare, 2018). Additionally, it is effective in group guidance activities (Siyez & Tuna, 2014; Çitemel, 2014; Çavuş Bekce, 2019).

Case Study

In a study conducted at a middle school in Ankara, SFBT techniques were used to address students' exam anxiety. The results revealed a significant reduction in students' exam anxiety and an increase in their academic performance.



Management

Teachers create a more positive learning environment by using solution-focused brief therapy techniques to resolve classroom issues. This positively impacts students' classroom behaviors and supports their learning processes (İskender, 2020).

Classroom Application

An elementary school teacher used SFBT techniques to resolve discipline issues in the classroom. By conducting one-on-one meetings with students and helping them find their own solutions, the teacher was able to establish a general atmosphere of discipline and peace in the classroom.

Family Therapy

Marriage and Family Counseling

Couples and families experiencing marital problems strengthen their relationships by resolving issues through SFBT techniques. In Turkey, many family therapists utilize this method to enhance family communication and solve problems. Studies show that SFBT strengthens intra-family communication and relationships, and reduces conflicts among family members (Erkan, 2019; Kütük, Samar & Akkuş, 2020).

Case Study

In a study conducted at a family counseling center in Izmir, SFBT techniques were applied to couples experiencing serious marital problems. The results demonstrated significant improvements in the couples' communication skills and problem-solving capacities (Kütük, Samar & Akkuş, 2020; Ağca & Avşaroğlu, 2020).

Child and Adolescent Therapy

Solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) is used effectively to address behavioral and emotional problems in children and adolescents. Applications in Turkey have shown that this method is successful in increasing children's self-confidence and enhancing their problem-solving skills (Özmen, 2021).

Working with Adolescents

At a child and adolescent psychology clinic in Istanbul, individual and group sessions using solution-focused therapy techniques with adolescents experiencing behavioral issues have shown significant improvements in their social relationships and academic performance (Akbaş, 2021; Dinçel, 2006; Aslan & Çakmak, 2021).

Individual Therapies

Stress and Anxiety

In individual therapies, SFBT methods are used to help clients cope with stress and anxiety. This aids individuals in leading more peaceful and balanced lives in their daily routines. Research indicates that SFBT is effective in reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety (Karataş, 2017).

Case Study

At a private psychotherapy center in Bursa, SFBT techniques were used with individuals experiencing work-related stress and anxiety, resulting in significant reductions in stress levels. In the treatment of depression, SFBT helps clients set positive goals and achieve them, thereby reducing depressive symptoms. Studies conducted in Turkey have shown that SFBT is an effective method for treating depression (Yılmaz, 2018; Sarı & Günaydın, 2016; Sarı & Uyumaz, 2020).



Case Study

In a study conducted at a state hospital in Adana, SFBT methods were used with patients diagnosed with depression, leading to a significant reduction in depressive symptoms (Yılmaz, 2018; Sarı & Günaydın, 2016; Sarı & Uyumaz, 2020).

Corporate and Organizational Uses

Workplace Performance and Motivation

Some companies in Turkey use SFBT techniques to enhance employee performance and motivation at the workplace. This creates a more efficient and happier work environment. Studies show that solution-focused techniques are effective in increasing workplace motivation and improving performance (Demir, 2019).

Case Study

At a technology firm in Istanbul, SFBT methods were applied to increase employee motivation, resulting in noticeable improvements in employee satisfaction (Demir, 2019).

Leadership and Management

Leaders manage their teams more effectively and with a solution-focused approach by using solution-focused techniques. Research in Turkey indicates that solution-focused leadership approaches increase employee satisfaction and work efficiency (Kaya, 2020).

Leadership Training

In a leadership development program in Ankara, managers were taught SFBT techniques, and significant improvements were observed in their team management skills (Kaya, 2020).

Solution-Focused Therapy in the Field of Health

Coping with Chronic Illnesses

SFBT techniques are utilized to help individuals living with chronic illnesses manage their conditions and improve their quality of life. By leveraging patients' existing resources and strengths, SFBT assists them in better managing their health conditions (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

Case Study

In a study conducted with diabetes patients at a state hospital in Izmir, SFBT techniques were used, resulting in improvements in disease management and quality of life for the patients (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

Psychosomatic Disorders

In cases of psychosomatic disorders, SFBT helps reduce individuals' stress and anxiety levels, which in turn alleviates physical symptoms. This method facilitates improvements in both psychological and physiological health of the patients (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

Case Study

At a private hospital in Antalya, studies with patients suffering from psychosomatic disorders using SFBT methods showed significant reductions in their symptoms (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

Community-Based Applications

Community Mental Health Centers

In Turkey, community mental health centers use SFBT techniques to improve community mental health. These centers help individuals cope with daily life problems and mental health issues (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

Case Study

In a community mental health center in Istanbul, SFBT techniques were used with neighborhood residents, resulting in improved community solidarity and mental health (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

Working with Immigrants and Refugees

SFBT techniques are used to address the psychosocial needs of immigrants and refugees living in Turkey during their adaptation processes. These efforts help immigrants better adapt to their new lives (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

Case Study

At a migrant support center in Gaziantep, SFBT techniques were applied with Syrian refugees to support their adaptation and integration processes (Bilgin, 2020; Zengin, 2017).

DISCUSSION

Considering the current work pace, it is known that long sessions cannot be conducted with clients or students in schools (Sklare, 2018). Clients also prefer to reach results in a shorter period rather than prolonged durations. The use of this therapy method, which opposes traditional therapy methods, is becoming increasingly widespread and aims for efficient sessions in a short time, expecting behavioral changes from the client (Arslan & Gümüştaylan, 2018).

Due to its high impact in a short time, it is a therapy method that should become more widespread in our country as well. Clients are encouraged to envision a life without problems and emphasize their strengths, leading them to live this life behaviorally and focus on moments without complaints (De Shazer, Dolan, Korman, Trepper, McCollum & Berg, 2007). Thus, the client focuses on the solution instead of the problem (Çakır, 2020). In other words, they directly focus on the solution itself (Berg & De Jong, 1998). It is based on the philosophy that the path to significant changes passes through small changes. Therefore, it holds the view that there is no need to know the etiology, onset, or prognosis of the problem (Doğasal & Karakartal, 2021). Looking at scientific studies in our country, it is evident that more research is needed on solution-focused brief therapy.

SFBT has a wide range of applications in various fields in Turkey. This review examines how SFBT is used and its effects in areas such as education, family therapy, individual therapies, corporate uses, health, community-based applications, and judicial fields. The impacts in each application area are supported by findings from the literature.

In the field of education, the applications of SFBT have been effective in improving student success, reducing anxiety, and enhancing classroom management. Researchers like Köseoğlu (2018) and İskender (2020) emphasize that SFBT techniques bring about positive changes in the school environment and increase student motivation. SFBT has been found to develop students' problem-solving skills and provide a healthier learning environment.

In family therapy, the effects of SFBT have resulted in positive outcomes in marital and family communication. Studies by Erkan (2019) show that SFBT is effective in reducing conflicts among family members and strengthening communication. Particularly in child and adolescent therapies, SFBT has been successful in boosting self-confidence and resolving behavioral issues (Özmen, 2021).

In individual therapies, the effectiveness of SFBT in treating stress, anxiety, and depression is emphasized. Karataş (2017) and Yılmaz (2018) have shown that SFBT is effective in reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety and alleviating depressive symptoms. These techniques help individuals lead more balanced and peaceful lives in their daily routines, achieving positive results in a short period.

In the corporate field, the effects of SFBT on performance and motivation have been examined by researchers such as Demir (2019) and Kaya (2020). SFBT techniques, which increase employee satisfaction and improve workplace efficiency, have also yielded positive results in leadership and

management processes. The adoption of a solution-focused approach in institutions has improved workplace culture and increased job satisfaction among employees.

In the health field, SFBT has been effective in managing chronic illnesses and treating psychosomatic disorders. In a study with diabetes patients in Izmir, it was found that SFBT improved patients' quality of life and disease management. Studies with patients suffering from psychosomatic disorders in Antalya showed that SFBT was successful in alleviating symptoms.

In community mental health centers and work with immigrants, SFBT has been observed to increase community solidarity and facilitate adaptation processes. The application of SFBT techniques in community mental health centers in Istanbul has improved the mental health of neighborhood residents. Studies with refugees in Gaziantep have shown that SFBT is effective in supporting adaptation and integration processes.

In rehabilitation work with prisoners and judicial support services, SFBT has been effective. In Ankara, the application of SFBT techniques in correctional facilities has been successful in the rehabilitation processes of prisoners and reducing recidivism rates. Studies with young offenders at Istanbul Courthouse have shown that SFBT is effective in rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

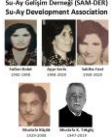
Conclusion

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy has a wide range of applications in Turkey and yields effective results in various fields. This review demonstrates that SFBT is successfully applied in many areas, such as education, family therapy, individual therapies, corporate uses, health, community-based applications, and the judicial system. Studies conducted in each application area reveal the effectiveness and benefits of SFBT.

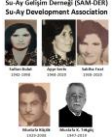
The use of SFBT has become widespread to improve student success, reduce anxiety, and enhance classroom management. The adoption of this therapy method by educators contributes to the academic and social development of students. The use of SFBT in strengthening marital and family communication and boosting self-confidence in children and adolescents is becoming more common among family therapists. This method, which improves intra-family relationships, helps families lead healthier and more harmonious lives. The effectiveness of SFBT in treating stress, anxiety, and depression has been proven. This method, which improves individuals' mental health, achieves positive results in a short period. The use of SFBT to increase employee performance and motivation and improve leadership and management processes is becoming widespread in workplaces. This method, which improves corporate culture, increases employee satisfaction. The effectiveness of SFBT in managing chronic illnesses and treating psychosomatic disorders is evident. This method increases the quality of life for patients in the health field. In community mental health centers and work with immigrants, SFBT has been observed to increase community solidarity and facilitate adaptation processes. The widespread use of this method in community-based applications improves public health. SFBT has been effective in the rehabilitation of prisoners and judicial support services. The use of this method in the judicial system reduces recidivism rates and facilitates the reintegration of individuals into society. These findings highlight the potential and impact of SFBT in Turkey, indicating that the method could be adopted and applied by broader audiences in the future. More research and application supporting the effectiveness of SFBT will increase its prevalence in Turkey.

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