Solution-Focused Questions Worksheet

Part 1. Best hopes and the miracle question

Best hopes

What are your best hopes from our work together?

The morning after the miracle

Suppose that tonight, while you sleep, a miracle happens and the problem you came here with is gone. You don't know it happened, because you were asleep. When you wake up tomorrow, what is the first small thing you will notice that tells you things are different?

What else will be different?

Include: what you will do, say and feel through the day, in as much detail as you can.

Who will notice?

Include: who will be the first to notice, and what they will see you doing.

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Part 2. Scaling and exceptions

Where you are today

On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the day after the miracle and 0 is the time you chose to seek help, where are you today? Circle a number.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0: when I chose to seek help										*10: the day after the miracle*

What puts you at that number and not lower?

What will tell you that you have moved up one point?

Times when a little of the miracle already happens

Include: when the problem is smaller or absent, and what is different at those times.

Something to notice before we meet again

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Clinician guide: asking solution-focused questions

- **When it fits.** Use the questions from the first session on, with any client who can describe what the client wants. Solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) builds a detailed picture of the client's preferred future and of what is already working (de Shazer et al., 2007/2021).
- **Start with best hopes.** Ask what the client hopes will come from the work, and help the client describe it as something the client wants to have in life (Ratner et al., 2012).
- **Ask the miracle question slowly.** Set up the night, the miracle and the next morning with pauses, then ask for the first small signs. Follow each answer with "What else?" and with what other people would notice (de Shazer et al., 2007/2021).
- **Use the scale.** Let 10 stand for the preferred future and agree with the client on what 0 means. Ask what the client is already doing that puts the number where it is, and how the client will know of a move up one point (Ratner et al., 2012).
- **Look for exceptions.** Ask about times when the problem is smaller or absent, and what the client did differently then. Use the client's words throughout, and leave the next step to the client.

Based on the descriptions of the best hopes, miracle and scaling questions in de Shazer et al. (2007/2021) and Ratner, George and Iveson (2012). The layout and wording are original.

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Completed example: Leah (a fictional client)

Leah, 44, is a high school teacher who came to counseling because she felt overwhelmed at work and at home. Her counselor, N.H., wrote her answers on this worksheet at their first session, on November 18, 2026. Leah, her counselor and every detail of the case are invented.

Part 1. Best hopes and the miracle question

Best hopes

"To feel calmer and enjoy teaching again."

The morning after the miracle

"I'd wake up before the alarm and lie there for a minute before I look at my phone."

What else will be different?

"I'd eat breakfast with my son. I'd get to school early enough to set up the room, and I'd laugh at something a student says in first period. I'd leave by 4:30, grade at the kitchen table for one hour and stop at six."

Who will notice?

"My son would notice first. He'd see me sitting down at breakfast. My co-teacher would see me joking in the hallway."

Part 2. Scaling and exceptions

Where you are today

On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the day after the miracle and 0 is the time you chose to seek help, where are you today?

0	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0: when I chose to seek help										*10: the day after the miracle*

What puts you at that number and not lower?

"I made the appointment. I already leave my phone in the car during class, and I still love my fourth-period group."

What will tell you that you have moved up one point?

"Two breakfasts sitting down with my son in one week."

Times when a little of the miracle already happens

"Last Wednesday, when I graded at school and left by five. I felt lighter at dinner."

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Something to notice before we meet again

What is different on the days I leave by five.

N.H. asked the miracle question slowly and followed each answer with “What else?” until Leah described a whole morning. When Leah rated herself at 3, N.H. asked what was already working before asking about the next point, and Leah chose what to notice before the next session.

References and further reading

Books for clinicians

de Shazer, S., Dolan, Y., Korman, H., Trepper, T., McCollum, E., & Berg, I. K. (2021). *More than miracles: The state of the art of solution-focused brief therapy*. Routledge. (Original work published 2007)

Ratner, H., George, E., & Iveson, C. (2012). *Solution focused brief therapy: 100 key points and techniques*. Routledge.

Research

Franklin, C., Zhang, A., Froerer, A., & Johnson, S. (2017). Solution focused brief therapy: A systematic review and meta-summary of process research. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 43*(1), 16–30.

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