

Problem Solving Brief Therapy - MRI style

Applications to a County Agency



BRIEF
THERAPY
CENTER®



San Benito County, CA

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In 2021, the Brief Therapy Center, LLC got a phone call from the Director of Behavioral Health with an urgent request for our expertise. “We are seeing a lot more young families whose kids are struggling in school now that they are back in person and the teachers are referring them to us. The parents of these students need **results**, they need **change**, and they need it **now!**” said the Director.

Our staff quickly put together a 10 month program where we met with a selected group of Therapists and Case Managers, as well as their respective area managers. We met for 2 hours, twice a week. The first half of the program was mostly instruction on how to do Brief Therapy; the second half was supervision of the participant’s cases: the difficult situations that they face on a daily basis

What did the selected professionals learn from us?

- Their work is impossible if they work with only the children. **Who is the client in a session?** It’s the person who is the most motivated to make changes in the system, the person who is suffering the most with the status quo. Those people are **usually the parents** – As a result, **the rules at the Agency level were changed** to include parents as part of the contract that is being signed: no more dropping off the child ‘to be fixed’. In this way the whole Agency benefited from the training, rather than just the selected staff who were directly involved with us.



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- Both Therapists and Case Managers learned to **delineate a small but significant change to be achieved** in the family that would let them know that things were improving. It is impossible to recognize a change if it has not been made explicit from the start. Our brains don't see what they are not programmed to find.
- **Collaboration needs to be a priority.** Often, several staff were working on the same case, providing different or conflicting guidance and making their clients confused.
- Learn to **listen to what is important to clients**, and try to avoid making assumptions based on what staff thinks needs to be important. Listening and understanding the client's perspective will open the door to solutions that will produce the best results.
- When all these pieces fall into place, the person making an intervention can suggest **something that has not been tried before** and has a higher likelihood of promoting a positive change.



Daniel Padron

“To me what helped a lot was the directness in giving feedback, putting you on the spot. That really made me think about what I was doing... It was great, I really appreciate that... I loved it, I found it really helpful.”



Lindsay King

“I was told that it was just so direct... but I liked it. I kind of know that this was going to be a lot different than what we’ve been doing, I think I am a thinker, and now I am just noticing when I am overwhelmed or start to feel burnout it is because we are not going in a logical, predictive direction, so to me this gives me that reminder to go back, ask more questions and get more information, don’t just assume that you are gonna fix anything... It’s more useful for the clients as well, kind of empowering them... they are finding answers...I feel I am not taking them at home with me...I am thinking differently... A lot has changed in our work... I do appreciate it”