

Solution-Focussed  
Motivational Coaching

Session Guide

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

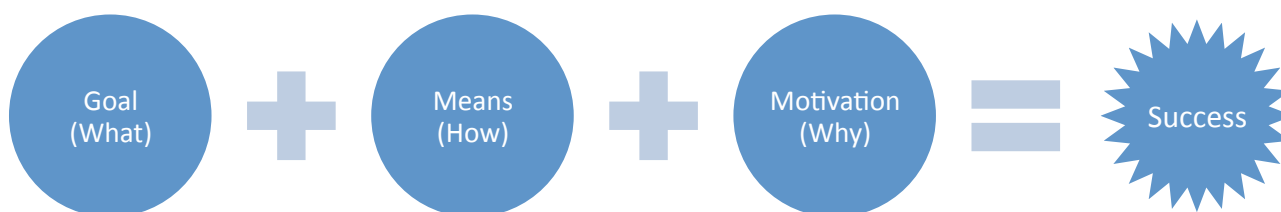


Session Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

### About Solution-Focused Motivational Coaching (SFMC)

The SFMC is an approach to coaching designed to offer professionals an increased level of sophistication and choice around the tools available for their practice, improving outcomes for their clients, both individual and organisational.

SFMC is a hybrid method drawing together goal-formulation, solution-focused coaching, and aspects of motivational enhancement, into a single framework. This is because in order for an individual to succeed in any goal-directed behaviour (the “What”), there are two other essential components... having the means to achieve the goal (the “How”), and generating the motivation to maintain the focus and drive until the goal is achieved (the “Why”).



This pamphlet provides a brief summary of the SFMC session, followed on page 5 by a **long-form session template**, for use by the novice student of the technique. Pages 14 & 15 provide a **short-form session template** for more experienced practitioners, and on page 16 there is a sample **client feedback sheet** for the coaching recipient to fill out at the end of the session.

The SMFC session is divided into 5 discrete stages and there are crucial checkpoints at the end of each sessions that must be met before proceeding to the next stage. These are:

- Stage 1 – Defining Objective – What the overall aim is to be
- Stage 2 – Enhancing Motivation – Why we want to do this
- Stage 3 – Goal Generation – what are the key goals along the way
- Stage 4 – Inner Strengths & External Resources – how to achieve these goals
- Stage 5 – Feedback – the plan and motivation to stick with it

SFMC commences with stage 1 by exploring the clients’ long-term aspirations (the ‘objectives’). Often, in corporate settings, these have been predetermined by the organisation prior to your being contracted. However, in more generalist life coaching, these may not yet have been set, and can be clarified using a tool such as the 4PACQ (available from [www.4pacq.info](http://www.4pacq.info)).

This tool is designed to explore not only the goals and ambitions that the client is presenting with, but also assesses their overall contentment through identifying and measuring the degree to which core human needs are being met. This can be important for those clients who present with preconceived notions around what they believe they need to be happy, but for whom the ongoing discontentment that triggered their help-seeking may have quite different causes.

## Solution-Focused Motivational Coaching

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Of these long-term objectives, one is selected to be the current focus of the coaching, and during the SFMC session, this will be broken down into smaller goals, the achievement of each of which will require both a means, and adequate motivation, as illustrated above.



Stage 2 of SFMC now differs from traditional solution-focussed approaches, by proceeding to identifying the key motivation factors that underlie the client's desire to attain their objective, and the first of the eight dimensions of motivation described on page 4 of this pamphlet, are introduced (marked with an asterisk in the long-form template). Once motivation has been established, it is modified to ensure that it is constructive, not avoidant (carrots, not sticks).

Then, in stage 3, the key goals, or stepping stones required to attain the objective are decided, using exception questions, scaling questions, and a range of other solution-focussed questions, and this is followed by stage 4 exploring those inner resources already available that facilitate that goal, coupled with any additional external resources that may be required. These goals, internal resources, and external resources are recorded on a separate sheet.

The session finishes in stage 5 with feedback and suggestion of tasks. This stage is similar to traditional solution-focussed approaches, except for the addition of another motivational exercise, and the scaling of willingness and confidence of the tasks selected.

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### The 8 Dimensions of Motivation

**Eight dimensions of motivation are utilised during the SFMC session, and these are briefly summarised below.**

#### i) Constructive vs. avoidant (Carrots and Sticks)

Carrot create positive emotions and the desire for the goal, sticks create negative emotions, and the need for the goal. Carrots are better in the long run because change beomes a much more enjoyable process... just think from your past how you prefer doing things that you **want** to do, rather than things that you **have** to do. Furthermore:

- People may put less effort into the job when motivated by a stick, than a carrot,
- People are less likely to enjoy the task when stick motivated,
- People may be less inclined to voluntarily repeat the task when motivated by a stick,
- People may be more likely to procrastinate when motivated by a stick,
- People may be more likely to search for excuses, 'yes but's and ways out with sticks.

#### ii) Importance

Goals that are important to YOU will generate stronger emotions... and emotions are what generate motivation. So more motivation can come from stronger emotionally-laden goals,

#### iii) Confidence

Goals that you are more confident about achieving will create more positive emotions and therefore create stronger motivation.

#### iv) Frequency of thought

The more often you think about a goal, the more motivation it may create. Visualising your 'carrots' and trying to feel the positive emotions associated with them may enhance motivation.

#### v) Time frame

Goals can be short-term or long-term. However, remember that the more distant the carrot, the weaker it's motivating power. It's best to have a trail of carrots, remembering that once a carrot is achieved, it usually stops creating motivation, and so you need to replace it ASAP!

#### vi) Internally / externally motivated

When we focus an a goal for someone else, such as to make them happy or to impress them, then we are reliant upon them being there to create the motivation. If for whatever reason they leave or go away, they take their motivation with them! So always have reasons for yourself too.

#### vii) Under/beyond my control

How much of this motivating reason is dependent upon aspects that I have control over, as opposed to things that are beyond my control? Some reasons, such as making your boss happy, getting family to trust you, or being liked are out of your control. However, being a good husband/ father/son, or being a responsible and trustworthy employee ARE all under your complete control.

#### viii) Real / Hypothetical

Goals that the person has past positive experiences around will often generate more consistent and reliable motivation than goals where there is no past experience.

## SFMC Long Form Template

### Introductions / Formalities

- Preferred names
- Confidentiality, costs and other contractual obligations
- Past experience at being coached, what the role of a coach is, how you work and time frame.

### Notes

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## Stage 1: Defining Objective(s).

*Purpose of stage 1 is to identify the overall objectives of the coaching sessions.*

*The client may be several objectives so you want to prioritise the most significant for the client, especially in the case of life coaching clients. Organisational clients are likely to have pre-determined objectives.*

*The objectives are different from the goals or stepping stones elucidated in stage 3.*

### Establish Focus: Broad Life Areas of Interest

*e.g. Work, Friendships, Relationships, Hobbies.*

**“What broad areas/aspects of your life are you interested in focussing upon at the moment?”**

**“What would you like to be different about your life (this time next year)?”**

*Can use the **4PAC** Questionnaire to identify where certain life needs are deficient. Where general growth is requested, explore: **knowledge, skills, insight, creativity, discovery, & acquisition** in the person’s or personal life.*

1

2

3

4

5

➤ Validate and enthuse about the objectives

➤ **For each objective ask:**

- **“Whose idea is this (the objective)?”** (*internal vs. external\**)
- Reframe the objective if it was someone else’s so that the client perceives it as being theirs

# Solution-Focused Motivational Coaching

## Narrowing Down to Specific Coaching Objective

“Of these broad life areas, which is the most important that you’d like to focus on first? “

1

Tell me more about this (*area above*)? What sort of problems/what do you want to achieve in that area?... What else?... What else?...”

1

2

3

4

5

- Objective needs to be reasonably concrete, specific, and framed in positive terms
- Objective must be **important** to the client (*important to self vs. important to others\**)
- Objective must be **within the client’s locus of control** (*under/beyond my locus of control\**)
- Get much **detail** about the objective so you understand it and what it **means to the client**.
- More distant objectives need more motivation. Consider **less than 1 year** (*time-frame\**).

“Which of these objectives above do you want to focus upon?”

Priority Objective:

to be achieved within/by

*Visualising exercises can be applied here.*

“Out of 10, please rate your confidence right now that you will achieve this objective?”

/10

“What has happened so far towards this objective, and what have the results been?”

- Explore for and enthuse about achievements and progress,
- Briefly identify setbacks but don’t dwell,
- Affirm & summarise progress & achievements, especially inner resources already identified.

Progress to date

Checkpoint: Ensure that overall objective is clearly defined from within the client’s locus of control, rather than in terms of someone or something else.

### Stage 2: Enhancing Motivation. *(the 'Why')*

*To generate further motivation towards the objective and ensure that the motivating reasons are the best available, i.e., those that generate strong positive emotional responses in the client.*

**“What are the reasons that you want (this objective)?”**

**“What are the good things about (this objective)?”** *(sticks vs. carrots\*)*

For each reason ask:

**“and what does that make you feel when you think about it?”**

**“What is another good thing?”**

- Ensure that reasons are ‘carrots’ i.e. when asked what it makes them feel, they respond with a positive emotion
- Any motivating reasons that elicit negative emotions, or relate to the avoidance of negative feelings, should be reframed into carrots
- Do not allow negative terms, or the use of ‘no’, ‘not’, ‘never’, or ‘less’ in the wording.

	Motivating Reason	Makes me feel
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		

**“Of all these reasons, which are the three most important ones for YOU?”** *(importance\*)*

- Circle the three most that elicit the strongest positive emotional reaction.

**Checkpoint:** Are the motivating reasons above important to the client and described in such a way as to elicit only positive emotions?

### Stage 3: Goal Generation. (*the 'What'*)

To identify the goals that form stepping-stones to achieving the agreed objective.

**“What are the things that need to happen in order to achieve (*the objective*)?”**

**“What are some things that need to be different in order to achieve (*the objective*)?”**

**“Imagine that you are six months down the track and (*the objective*) has been reached. What sort of things would have happened or have been achieved along the way?”**

**“What are some things that you might be doing differently?”**

**“What would other people (*specify*) notice would be different about you?”**

**“What else... What else?”**

- If they are having difficulty ask the miracle question or scaling questions - see below.
- Try to generate at least five goals – use “what else” regularly.

As goals get generated fill them out in the action plan on the next page.

- Ensure goals are well-formed, i.e. concrete, measurable, & preferably behavioural (i.e. you can video them)
- Describe in terms of presence of desirable behaviours, not absence of problematic ones
- The goals are things that are under the person’s control

### Scaling Questions

**“In terms of how close you are to your objective, where 10 is you have achieved it, and 1 is haven’t even thought about it, whereabouts down that track are you today? .... what would need to be different for you to increase that by one extra point?”**

### Miracle Question (*less commonly used in SF coaching than SF counselling*)

**“Imagine that you went to bed tonight, and while you were sleeping a miracle happened and you had been achieved (*the objective*). The thing is, that because it happened while you were sleeping, you don’t know it has been achieved.**

**What would be the first thing you’d notice that would tell you that this miracle has happened?**

**What else? What else?**

**What would other people notice? What would they notice you doing differently?**

**What would you notice yourself doing differently? ... What else?... What else?”**

Checkpoint: Do you have 4 or 5 concrete, measurable and behavioural goals?



External Resources derived actions							
Inner Strengths derived actions							
Goal							

### Stage 4: Internal Strengths / External Resources. *(the 'How')*

Repeat for each goal listed on the previous page to establish what necessary internal strengths and resources the client already possesses, and then when internal resources are exhausted, to explore for external resources. These become the actions for the coming week.

#### 1) Internal Resources and Actions

- Get enough detail so you and they understand how they can achieve this today
- External resources generated here can already be added to the action plan

Direct Questions

**“What are some of the things that you need to do in order to achieve *(this goal)*?”**

Exception Questions *(real vs hypothetical\*)*

**“Are there times in the past when you have *(whatever the goal is or similar)*?”**

**“What were you doing then? ... How did you contribute? ...How else? ...What would other people say about how you were doing it?”**

Scaling Questions

**“Suppose we were to make a scale to rate *(the action/goal)* from 1 to 10 *(define scale)*, how would you score your ability today?” *(if the person is resistant you may ask)* “What’s the lowest you’ve ever scored and when?”**

*(always ask)* **“When in your life did you score the highest you’ve ever scored on that scale?”**  
**“What was happening and what were you doing then?”**

#### 2) External Resources and Actions

- Because the objective is likely to be new, the client may need external resources for some/all goals

**“Are there any people that may help you to achieve *(this goal)*? ... who else? ... who else?”**

**“What about organisations or other resources? ... what else? ...what else?”**

- you may want to come up with several things depending upon the task

Remember to repeat this stage for each of the tasks that the client agreed to work on between now and the next session.

Checkpoint: Do you have specific internal/external actions to attain the goal?

+++++ OPTIONAL BREAK TO PREPARE FEEDBACK +++++

### Stage 5 : Feedback

*To review the goals that have been identified and suggest the tasks (from internal and external resources) for the coming week/month , as well as strategies to maintain their motivation.*

#### i) Compliments

- Affirm their objective
- Other relevant compliments relating to the tasks:

Compliments:

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**After compliments: “I’d like you to write these things down on the Feedback Form (page 16). First, ‘My goal is to (the objective) in (their timeframe)’”**

#### ii) Motivational task

**“Also, please write down the three most important reasons for my doing this are:’ (the 3 most important carrots from page 7)”**

- Get them to write the reasons on the feedback form (p 16) and brainstorm some regular re-motivating exercises such as bedtime affirmation, post-it notes, screensavers, mobile phone recurring alarm.

Carrot 1

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Carrot 2

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Carrot 3

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**“is there someone who you can recruit to help you remain motivated? How?”**

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#### iii) Bridge:

**“So given these things we’ve just talked about, how do you feel about trying a few things before our next session?”**

**“You said that you thought that (the agreed goals) are some ideas you came up with that you can focus upon between now and next time we meet.”**

### iv) Tasks:

- List the goals previously agreed to.
- With each goal list the tasks (*internal resources and/or external resources*) and ask them to choose which they will follow up on and list these.
- When there are several tasks, you may need to work out an order for them to be addressed

Tasks:

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### v) Scaling willingness & confidence towards tasks

**“Using a scale where one represents ‘no chance!’ and ten represents ‘an absolute certainty’ how likely do you think it will be that you will (*the task*) before next time?”**

**“And, again out of 10, how confident are you that the task will help you in your overall objective?”**

- Repeat for each task
- If less than an 8, then either
  - ask what other internal or, more likely, external resources would bring it to an 8
  - adapt the task (make it easier or smaller) to bring it to an 8

Revised tasks:

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### vi) Rescaling confidence towards objective:

**“Out of 10, how do you now rate your confidence at achieving this objective?”**

/10

### vii) Next Time:

When to meet next.

Date: ..... Time: .....

### Follow Up Sessions

#### i) Review Objective from stage 1 last time

- Still interested?
- Any changes, including timeline?

#### ii) Last weeks tasks

- Ask them how they went over the past (week) – don't specifically mention the tasks
- No sense of failure – only affirmation of what achieved or review of task if it was unrealistic
- Explore for any other tasks they may have come up with and acted upon on their own

#### iii) Review Motivation from stage 2 last time

- Review 3 key motivators
- Any other motivating reasons?
- How did they go with the motivational homework?

#### iv) Select Goals for this week

- Any goals already on the list to aim for before next session
- Any new goals need to be added

#### v) Internal and External Resources

- Repeat this step like last time for each of this session's goals to find more potential tasks

#### vi) Feedback

- Same as for last time

#### vii) Scaling Progress

- You may use this to assess how far they feel they've progressed by scaling their confidence at the objective this week, and last week, and comparing the two.

## SFMS – Short Form Template

Name

Date

Session

Comments:

### 1: Defining Objective(s).

Overall Objective Area

1

2

3

Narrowing Down to Specific Objective

1

2

3

4

5

Priority Objective:

\_\_\_\_\_ to be achieved within/by \_\_\_\_\_

/10

Progress to date

## Solution-Focused Motivational Coaching

Stage 2: Motivators (why)	Makes me feel
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Stage 3: Goals (what)	Stage 4: Internal/External Resources (how)

Stage 5: Actions

## Session Feedback Form

i) Overall Objective

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ii) The goals/stepping stones that I'm going to focus upon for now are:

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iii) Why I want it the goals:

1 

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2 

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3 

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iv) How I'm going to keep myself motivated:

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v) What I'm going to do about the goals:

Action	Willing	Confidence
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

vi) Rescaling confidence towards objective:

/10
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vii) Next Session: Date: ...../..... Time: .....