

BOOK REVIEWS

Solution-Focused Counseling in Schools, 4th Edition by John J. Murphy



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This fourth edition of *Solution-Focused Counseling in Schools* is an important update to an already popular resource, offering school counsellors advanced tools and strategies to implement solution-focused techniques in a dynamic and often challenging environment, with a focus on empowerment, practical application, cultural competence and the counsellor's own learning process.

[German translation of the book review.](#)

Solution-Focused Counseling in Schools, 4th Edition by John J. Murphy
American Counseling Association; 2022, 448 pages, ISBN 9781556203947
US\$ 74.66 hardback

John. J. Murphy's book, now in its fourth edition, stands out as a comprehensive guide for practitioners. It offers a rich blend of theory, practice, examples and applications tailored to the educational environment. This edition continues to refine and expand on previous iterations, making it a reliable resource for school counsellors and psychologists committed to fostering student well-being through strength-based, future-oriented interventions.

Murphy's latest edition incorporates significant updates reflecting contemporary challenges and advances in the field. New chapters include:

- New case studies, presenting more diverse scenarios and solutions. These real-world examples are particularly valuable for experienced practitioners seeking to refine their techniques and adapt to varying student situations and personal constellations.
- Current research and trends integrated throughout, providing evidence-based support for the solution-focused approach. Murphy also discusses emerging trends in student mental health, including the impact of social media and anxiety related to academic pressure.

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Topics such as technology in counselling (Partners for Change Outcome Management System, POCOMS) and new challenges in student mental health are incorporated.

- Integrating structure from training practitioners: since the author is also an experienced trainer who introduces others to the method, this edition is even closer to a real-life example of introductory training. It presents examples first and builds on them, offering activities at the end of chapters.

It is also novel to consider solution-focused counselling alongside three main tasks:

- Setting direction
- Building on exceptions and other resources
- Exploring progress

Murphy also presents three main techniques: asking, listening and amplifying (later including complimenting). This very simple way of presenting solution-focused work promises easy access for new learners of the approach.

The book provides strategies for working collaboratively with teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, emphasising the importance of a team approach to student support. This collaborative perspective ensures that interventions are holistic and that students receive consistent support across different areas of their lives.

The emphasis on collaboration is evident throughout. Murphy highlights the importance of building strong, supportive relationships with students, parents, and teachers. This relational approach not only enhances the effectiveness of counselling, but also promotes a more cohesive support system for the student.

Murphy addresses the critical aspects of cultural sensitivity and ethical practice in counselling. The book provides guidelines for adapting solution-focused techniques to diverse cultural contexts, ensuring that interventions are respectful and effective across different student populations. This focus on inclusivity and ethical practice is vital for creating an equitable and supportive environment for all students.

The book balances theory with practice, providing detailed guidance on implementing solution-focused techniques in real-world school scenarios. This practical orientation ensures that readers can immediately apply what they have learned from the book to their counselling practice. It is structured in an easy-to-read way, allowing practitioners to quickly find relevant sections based on their immediate needs. Appendices (including practical forms and further learning and networking resources), references and the index are real goodies in this book.

True to the solution-focused stance, Murphy's approach consistently empowers students by focusing on their strengths and potential. This empowerment helps build resilience and support long-term positive outcomes.

This fourth edition of *Solution-Focused Counseling in Schools* is an important update to an already popular resource, offering counsellors advanced tools and strategies to implement solution-focused techniques in dynamic and often challenging environments. Its focus on empowerment, practical application, cultural competence and the reader's learning process ensures that it remains relevant and valuable for new and experienced practitioners dedicated to fostering positive change in students' lives. Whether addressing everyday school issues or navigating complex crises, Murphy's insights offer a good framework for effective, solution-focused interventions that reflect the evolving landscape of school counselling.

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