

BOOK REVIEWS

Solution Focused Brief Therapy With Children and Young People Who Stammer and Their Parents: A Practical Guide From the Michael Palin Centre by Ali Berquez and Martha Jeffery

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¹ Refind Your Way

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Ali Berquez and Martha Jeffery have produced a detailed and highly practical guide to using Solution Focused Practice with children and young people who stammer. Featuring a clear, step by step framework that supports understanding of each stage of the approach, the book will be a particularly valuable resource for Speech and Language Therapists working with this client group.

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Routledge, 2024, 252 pages, ISBN 9781032393735, £39.99 paperback (Kindle edition available)

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After a short introduction to the history and principles of SFBT, the authors describe how the approach is used at the Michael Palin Centre in London. This centre of excellence, established in the early 1990s, is named after the British actor Michael Palin, well known as part of the Monty Python team and for his portrayal of a character with a stammer in the film, *A Fish Called Wanda*. Palin's understanding of the issue comes from personal experience, as his own father spoke with a stammer.

Although the book acknowledges recent influences from the disability rights movement and the social model of disability (where stammering is recognised as a 'protected characteristic', therefore not something to be

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eliminated as a target in therapy), the Michael Palin Centre supports clients to achieve their own hopes, whether ‘to eliminate a stammer or to live more comfortably alongside it’.

The authors draw on their extensive experience with SFBT, providing a wealth of detailed case studies with clients of different ages and their parents, as well as full transcripts of therapy conversations. Alongside these, and a highlight of the book, are a plethora of drawings, photocopied materials and other evidence from practice, which help show how the solution focused approach can be adapted across a wide age range.

The book’s initial exercise, which invites the reader to experience an SF session, and is described as a 20-minute activity, felt to me unexpectedly demanding, leaving me in need of a pause before continuing. While it offers a useful insights, the intensity of engaging so personally, so early on, may feel slightly overwhelming to some readers.

Only chapters Two and Three are dedicated purely to the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the SF approach, so readers with limited time can dip in and get started with the practicalities, returning to explore further as time allows. The format combines original commentary with frequent quotations and passages from other SF books and journals, revealing the wider body of literature available to interested readers.

For those already familiar with SFBT, or who perhaps wish to explore and extend their knowledge, the manual includes chapters on supporting clients with additional physical, learning, and emotional needs, on using the approach purely with parents, and on integrating it into group work.

Finally, the authors consider what becoming a Solution Focused Therapist involves. They highlight the importance of adopting an SF mindset, and detail the crucial skills and techniques, which are supported by a comprehensive Resources section.

All in all, this book is an accessible introduction for those new to the use of SF in speech and language therapy, and an excellent confidence-building tool for experienced practitioners.

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