

# Analysis of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Theories and Counseling Techniques in Islamic View

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**ABSTRACT**, This article aims to explain and understand the Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) technique and its development. This article uses the literature review method by discussing themes through relevant books and journals. The analysis technique used is content analysis. The results of this article show that the process of SFBT techniques and approaches need to carry Islamic values so that it does not only treat physically but also forms a *kaffah* Muslim by Islamic teachings. The reliability of a counselor is also needed so that this rapid counseling technique can run optimally. Islam-based SFBT not only helps counselors deal with life's problems but also helps them achieve worldly and afterlife happiness and peace of mind, by living life by the rules and instructions of Allah SWT. This method encourages counselors to focus on solutions and their potential so that they can overcome problems effectively and build a better future. The combination of the SFBT approach and Islamic values provides a powerful and holistic framework for counseling, helping individuals develop mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

**Keywords:** *Counseling, SFBT therapy, Theory and practice. Islamic Counselling*

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## INTRODUCTION

Humans in their lives are always faced with various problems. These problems are considered tests given by Allah SWT to strengthen individuals and gain wisdom from every challenge. However, not everyone can directly overcome the problems faced or know the right solution to overcome them. The complexity of these problems can lead to various physical and mental illnesses due to one's weak faith in facing trials. This condition highlights the importance of guidance and counseling services that can provide professional assistance from experts in the field. These services aim to help individuals find concrete solutions that can help overcome the problems faced in everyday life. With proper guidance, individuals can develop strategies to manage stress, resolve interpersonal conflicts, or plan steps toward achieving their life goals.

In this context, the Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) approach emerges as one of the effective methods in counseling. SFBT focuses on finding solutions and the potential of individuals to achieve positive changes in a short period. By identifying the strengths and resources that the counselee has, SFBT helps them build concrete steps to effectively address the problem.

The importance of spiritual and moral integrity is also manifested in Islamic-based guidance and counseling, which integrates religious values to guide in dealing with daily life problems. By adhering to the teachings of the Qur'an and sunnah, individuals are guided to live life by the guidance of Allah SWT, with the hope of gaining happiness and success in this world and the hereafter. Counseling can be defined as the process of helping clients to deal with the problems they face (Novitasari & Nur, 2017). The client's problems have differences. Even if seen from the client's background, the solution that will be provided by the counselor must be different (Sholihah et al., 2021). Client problems see the current global world, especially when the pandemic becomes very complex and requires varied and innovative strategies to solve these problems (Kusuma, 2021).

Given this situation, a brief and responsive counseling service approach is needed to increase the current and future motivation of the counselee. This counseling service should also be able to come up with creative solutions to overcome similar and potentially recurring problems in new counsees in the future (Palmer, 2000). Therefore, Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), or solution-focused brief therapy, becomes very relevant in this context. The main concept of SFBT is based on the positive assumption that humans have the mental health, competence, and capacity to generate solutions that improve their quality of life. The main goal of SFBT is to help clients understand their potential and focus on solutions when they face difficulties (Yusuf, 2016).

Previous research on SFBT for preventive and curative has produced and reduced the procrastination behavior of students or students (Pratini & Afifah, 2018). Meanwhile, reducing procrastination behavior also needs high motivation with Islamic counseling through motivation that actions also require ikhtiyar from humans themselves (Fernando & Rahman, 2016) (Rostini, 2021). SFBT counseling is also able to significantly increase students' Self-esteem (Kaharja & Latipah, 2016). This article will continue Rahman's research (Rahman & Indra, 2017) that SFBT is based on Islam, namely the need to strengthen the role of the counselor and remind of the existence of humans themselves. Seeing some of the problems above, the author wants to analyze how SFBT in Islamic counseling and the view of Islam itself.

From the background above, the following problems can be formulated: What is Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)? What is the History of the Development of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)? What is the Relationship Situation (Counseling Relationship)? What is the purpose of SFBT? What is a healthy person and a problematic person? What is the process of SFBT therapy? What are the advantages and disadvantages of SFBT? How is SFBT Counseling based on Islam?

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This article uses descriptive qualitative research with a design (library research). Data sources are books and journals relevant to the theme of STBT. Data analysis is carried out by content analysis, namely analyzing problems with current data.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)**

SFBT (Solution-focused Focused Brief Therapy) is a counseling method with a postmodern approach that focuses on finding solutions. This approach prioritizes problem resolution rather than focusing on the problem itself and pays more attention to the future than the past or present. In this method, the counselor and client spend more time building solutions than exploring the problem (Palmer, 2000).

SFBT differs from traditional therapy in that it usually delves into the past to help the current and future therapeutic process. De Shazer argues that understanding the cause of the problem is not necessary to solve it, and there is no direct link between the cause of the problem and the solution. Gathering information about the problem is not considered necessary to achieve change. If understanding the problem is not considered important, focus on finding the right solution. Everyone has a different view of the right solution, and what works for one person may not work for another. In this therapy, the client hopes to resolve the problem with little focus on diagnosis, story, or problem disclosure (Corey, 2016).

In essence, this therapy differs from other approaches that usually consider the counselee as the source of the problem and focus more on discussing the counselee's problems. O'Connell, cited by Palmer, also supports this view by stating that SFBT techniques reject the traditional understanding that emphasizes the discussion of the counselee's problems (O'Connell, 2001).

From this explanation, it can be concluded that "Solution Focused Brief Therapy" (SFBT) or Solution Focused Counseling is a brief form of therapy that emphasizes solutions rather than problems. When dealing with problems, many professional counselors often spend a lot of time thinking about, discussing, and analyzing the problem, while the client continues to suffer. Therefore, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy was developed. These therapists focus more on possible solutions and are less interested in a deep understanding of the problem.

### **History of the Development of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)**

Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) technique is one of the counseling and psychotherapy techniques developed by Steve de Shazer and Bill O'Hanlon, in 1980 (Yusuf, 2016). This approach emphasizes brief counseling that is focused on the future and directly on goals (Shazer & Dolan, 2012).

It was originally known as brief therapy and was developed by Milton Erikson in 1940. In 1980, Steve de Shazer and Bill O'Hanlon developed it further and named it solution-focused brief therapy. Other experts associated with this approach include Michele Davis and Insoo Kim Berg, who is the wife of Steve de Shazer (Novella et al., 2020). The SFBT technique is based on the initial theory developed by Milton, which views that humans have an innate ability to solve their

problems. The current situation or current reality is the result of experience and observation, and every individual has a basic desire to change (Yusuf, 2016).

Steve De Shazer is a senior researcher in Milwaukee and the author of a book on solution-focused brief therapy, including a guide and how-to on SFBT. He presents his work through workshops, trainings, and as a consultant in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia to develop theory and solutions in practice. Since the initial development of the SFBC approach, this therapy has been applied in various fields, including schools, psychiatric hospitals, counseling services, volunteer organizations, therapeutic groups, and even social work teams (Palmer, 2000).

One of the main hallmarks of SFBT is its solution-focused approach that utilizes the client's resources and strengths to achieve the desired changes. This is in contrast to traditional approaches that are more focused on analyzing problems and their causes. SFBT also emphasizes on building a collaborative and supportive counseling relationship, where the counselor acts as a facilitator in helping clients identify their goals and formulate steps to achieve them.

The use of SFBT continues to grow and is widely recognized for its effectiveness in providing practical and rapid solutions to a wide range of psychological and emotional problems faced by individuals, groups, and communities. An important contribution of its development is the application of universal values such as self-reliance, optimism, and belief in the innate ability of individuals to change and develop (Yusuf, 2016).

As such, Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is not only a counseling method, but also a philosophy and approach that inspires practitioners in various fields to help individuals achieve positive and sustainable change in their lives.

### **Relationship Situation (Counseling Relationship)**

De Shazer cited by (Yusuf, 2016), suggests several types of relationships between counselors and counsees, namely as follows:

**Customer:** The counselor and counsee work together in this case to identify problems and solutions. In general, counsees come only to be healed through counselor therapy. Here the counsee not only explains the problem and is involved in solving it, but also as an individual who has his own will to find a solution that suits the problem he is facing. **Complainant:** Counsees come as complainers when they admit to having a problem but are unable to find a solution. They believe that the solution depends on the help of other people, namely counselors. **Visitors:** The counsee comes to counseling because someone else thinks he/she has a problem. In other words, they do not come to the counselor of their own accord. So that in the process it can be found if the counsee claims not to have a problem, or is just unable to identify the problem.

In short, the client is the (ultimate) expert on what works for him/her, and the counselor's role is to help the client realize what is already working for him/her (Erford, 2020; Johnsen et al., 2021). The quality of the relationship between counselor and client is a crucial factor in the efficacy of SFBT. Consequently, the degree of involvement and the quality of the relationship between the counselor and the client represent a fundamental aspect of SFBT. The counselor's attitude has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the therapeutic process. It is of the utmost importance to foster a sense of trust to encourage clients to return for subsequent sessions. One way to build an effective counseling relationship is to show clients how they can use the strengths and resources they have to find solutions. Clients are encouraged to try

something different and think creatively about ways to address their current and future problems (Corey, 2016).

### **Purpose of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)**

The goals of SFBT therapy are: 1) Use and identify thoroughly the strengths and competencies possessed by the counselee. 2) Helping the counselee to recognize and build exceptions to each problem, namely when the counselee begins to think or feel something that begins to reduce or limit the impact of the problem. 3) Helping the counselee to focus on clear and specific things that they perceive as solutions (Fernando & Rahman, 2016). Membantu konseli menetapkan dan mencapai tujuan jangka pendek yang realistis dan terukur. 4) Directing the counselee to focus on the positive aspects and small successes that have been achieved, as a first step to bigger changes. 5) Increase self-confidence and the ability of the counselee to face and overcome problems independently. 6) Reduce feelings of helplessness by building effective coping strategies based on the counselee's previous experiences. 7) Develop a sense of responsibility and initiative within the counselee to continue to seek solutions and adapt to changing situations. With these goals, SFBT seeks to provide a practical and strengths-based approach to help counsees achieve the desired changes in their lives.

### **The Healthy Person and the Problem Person**

According to the Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) approach, healthy individuals are those who are not caught up in excessive focus on problems. They tend to direct their energy and attention toward finding solutions that enable them to act concretely in realizing their desired goals. SFBT believes that every individual has the natural capacity to be competent in constructing, designing, and reconstructing solutions that can effectively handle their life challenges.

On the other hand, a problematic person in the context of SFBT is an individual who may tend to focus on their weaknesses. They may have difficulty in identifying or implementing effective solutions to address the issues at hand. These individuals may feel trapped in a mindset that emphasizes the unhappiness or unwellness experienced, which may hinder their ability to achieve positive change and fulfill their full personal potential (Usmawati, 2019). As such, SFBT not only provides a practical approach in counseling but also provides a deep philosophical framework on how individuals can see themselves as active and capable change agents in managing their life challenges.

### **Therapy Process (SFBT)**

In the SFBT therapy process (Corey, 2016), namely: Building a Collaborative Relationship between therapist and client, it is important that a therapist believes that his client is the only person entitled to his own life. All techniques to be discussed must have a relationship between the therapist and the client and are learned based on a collaborative working relationship. Pretherapy change/pre-session change, At the initial SFBT meeting, the therapist will ask, "What do you hope to get out of coming here?" and "How will it make a difference to you?" Solution-focused goals i.e. having clear, concrete, and specific goals is an important component in SFBT. Therapists strive to get more specific goals from their clients. Constructing solutions and exceptions, an SFBT therapist spends a lot of therapeutic poses listening attentively to talk about previous solutions, exceptions, and goals. Taking a break and reconvening, model terapi family

telah mendorong terapis untuk istirahat menjelang akhir terapi. Dan biasanya melibatkan percakapan antara terapis dan tim rekan atau tim pengawas yang telah menonton sesi dan telah memberi umpan balik dan saran kepada terapis.

Experiment and homework assignment, The therapist gives homework to the client to enhance the first and second sessions. The therapist might ask, "What will happen in your life between today and tomorrow?" and "Do you want to continue?" In SFBT therapy, the counselor ends the session by proposing experiments for the client to try between sessions as they see fit. Therapist feedback to clients focuses on problem-solving until the end of the session to develop a closing message for the client, which takes about 5 to 10 minutes. During this session, the therapist will provide feedback that will be delivered to the client after the break. Terminating, The therapist considers ending the therapeutic process after the first session. Once the client can formulate a satisfactory solution, the therapeutic relationship can be terminated. Initial questions that therapists often ask are: "What does it take for you to know the focus you will take and the expected outcome of this therapy?"

### **Counseling techniques**

The counseling techniques in SFBT according to (Corey, 2016) are as follows: 1) Exception question: This question is based on assumptions or intentions in the client's life. When a problem is identified but is not a problem, this is called an exception or news about the difference. Exceptions are the client's past experiences that sometimes cause problems, but not always (Pusvitasari & Zarkasyi, 2024; Sholihah et al., 2024). 2) The miracle question: Therapeutic outcomes are developed using what De Shazer calls the miracle question. The therapist asks, "If a miracle happened and your problem was solved overnight, how do you know it would be solved? What would be different?" Clients are then encouraged to determine "what would be different" regardless of the problem, which is a way for them to do a "virtual exercise" about their desired future. 3) Scaling questions: This question is used in situations where changes in human experience are difficult to observe, such as feelings, mood, or communication (Lubis et al., 2022; Naini et al., 2021). The therapist will ask the client to rate from 0-10, where 0 indicates the beginning of the problem and 10 indicates one day after the miracle happened, and ask where they are now. 4) Coping questions: If the reported problem does not improve, the therapist will respond with questions such as, "How did you manage to prevent the situation from getting worse?" or "This sounds difficult, how did you manage or cope with it?"

Strengths and weaknesses of SFBT: Advantages of the SFBT approach: 1) The client can concentrate on the actions that need to be taken to deal with the problem. 2) Solutions are tailored to the client's condition so that they can be more effective. 3) This approach is combined with narrative and behavioral approaches. Weaknesses of the SFBT approach: 1) This approach relies heavily on the client's thoughts, so it will be difficult to apply if the client is experiencing a thought disorder. 2) The causes of the problem and the past are not discussed much, so the client is asked to focus on the solution to the problem.

### **Islam-based SFBT Counseling**

Islamic-based guidance and counseling provide enormous benefits because they not only help counselees overcome their life problems but also guide them toward happiness and salvation both in this world and in the hereafter. This approach involves counselors who are experts in psychology and also have a deep understanding of Islamic values and teachings. They provide

guidance and direction to the counsees so that they can live their lives by the teachings of Allah SWT and the instructions of His Messenger, thus achieving peace of mind and eternal happiness.

In practice, Islamic-based guidance and counseling not only deals with practical daily problems but also helps counsees understand and apply Islamic moral and ethical values in every aspect of life. The goal is to build a strong foundation in living life by the human nature created by Allah SWT. Thus, counsees not only get solutions to the problems they face but are also directed to live a meaningful and blessed life from an Islamic perspective (Azwar, 2022; Khoiriyah et al., 2024).

The main objective of Islamic-based guidance and counseling is to help counsees achieve a life of positive impact in this world, as well as prepare them for eternal happiness in the hereafter. By understanding religious teachings and applying them in their daily lives, counsees are expected to face life's trials and challenges with more calmness, wisdom, and steadiness in their spiritual journey toward Allah SWT. SFBT teaches us to focus on the solution rather than the problem itself, which is in line with Islamic teachings about seeing the positive side in every trial. The Qur'an Surah Al-Inshirah (94:6) says:

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Meaning: Indeed, after difficulty there is ease. (Q.S. Al-Inshirah (94:6))

This reminds us that every problem can be followed by ease, and SFBT helps counselors see the potential for solutions and positive changes in their lives. The Quran also emphasizes that people should strive to find solutions to the problems they face. For example, in Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:11), Allah says

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ

Meaning: Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change the condition of themselves. (Q.S Ar-Ra'd (13:11))

This text implies that SFBT, which encourages the counselee to actively seek and implement the solutions found, is in line with the principle of effort and change emphasized in Islam.

The SFBT approach to guidance and counseling is a strategy that is efficient and effective without being time-consuming. The SFBT strategy is to specialize the counselor in the solutions that will be offered to the client. The counselor's energy and time are focused on the client to present smart solutions (Rahman & Indra, 2017). SFBT strategies can also be used for problems such as 1) Self-anxiety in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic (Fadhli & Aldina, 2021). 2) Reducing the procrastination behavior of students or college students (Pratini & Afifah, 2018). 3) Strengthen students' motivation to read (Fajriani & Yulizar, 2020). 4) Strengthen students' self-confidence and so on (Kaharja & Latipah, 2016) (Rofiq & Khoirinnada, 2024; Salim et al., 2024).

According to Palmer (2000), the goals of SFBT are as follows: identifying and fully utilizing the strengths and competencies that counsees have; helping counsees develop the ability to recognize problems and set aside things that are not relevant in finding solutions; and helping counsees focus on clear and specific things that they consider as problem solutions (Bénabou & Tirole, 2002; Mohamed Adnan et al., 2014).

The goals of the SFBT approach and the goal of counseling are not that different. The essence of the goal is to find the right solution for the client. From this, it can be generalized that SFBT also requires expertise from the counselor on how to handle it quickly and efficiently. In the world of education that in the education process the most emphasized is the teacher's ability to manage the class. The classroom will be interesting and full of learning meaning if the teacher can master several learning methods (Sj et al., 2021). Not only in education and learning, but leadership is also like that. A leader if he does not have varied abilities is the same as a lie (Heriyono et al., 2021).

In this case, the most emphasized SFBT counseling approach from an Islamic perspective is the skill of the counselor. No matter how good the method used, it will be the same if the counselor is not able to apply it. This can be seen in the spiritual world of Islam (Sufism) that the ability of the Murshid to know the problem of the client (student) is very necessary. The Murshid provides appropriate solutions and appreciates the essence of Islam itself. As with this research, dealing with problems in life problems is a way with dhikr-based counseling (Sucipto, 2020).

In Islamic psychology, it should be recognized that the structure of the human body is not only formed between the body and the mind but is very complex. The human being consists of mind, body, spirit, heart, and soul, which have different potentials and tendencies (Baharuddin, 2007). Seeing this structure in the SFBT approach, which aims to show human existence, the Tasawuf-based Islamic counseling method is very appropriate. If you look at self-existence in Maslow's theory of needs, a person will show existence when he has found his identity. In Sufism, it can also be called *man arofa nafsahu faqod arifa robbahu*. A person will reach his true self through the process of *tazkiyah nafs* and dhikr to the Creator.

Seeing these problems, of course, not all can use a Sufism-based approach with the practice of dhikr. The SFBT method is a very fast solution while the dhikr and *tazkiyah* process often takes a long time. A person has been doing dhikr for a long time but it does not guarantee the solution obtained. However, Islamic counseling does not only provide psychological solutions but contains Islamic values and strengthens one's inner self. Thus the purpose of counseling carried out can oversee the goals of Islam based on the Qur'an and Hadith.

Islamic-based Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) counseling integrates Islamic principles and values into this therapeutic approach. This approach emphasizes the appropriateness of Islamic values in helping individuals achieve positive changes and solutions in their lives. Some key aspects of Islam-based SFBT counseling include: 1) Integration of Islamic Values: Islam-based SFBT counselors consider Islamic ethical values in guiding clients, such as justice, sincerity, patience, and gratitude. These values help in forming a positive attitude and a deep understanding of the purpose of life through religious teachings. 2) Emphasis on Solutions and Success: Islam-based SFBT counseling focuses on identifying solutions that are by Islamic principles to help clients achieve success in their lives. This approach supports clients in finding practical ways to deal with challenges based on Islamic teachings. 3) Understanding Spiritual Context: Islam-based SFBT counseling pays attention to the spiritual dimension of the client in the process of healing and change. Counselors may use Quranic verses, hadith, or other Islamic values as inspiration and guidance to help clients address their problems. 4) Use of Appropriate Language and Terms: Islamic-based SFBT counselors use language and terms that are in line with Islamic values and beliefs in interactions with clients. This helps build closeness and trust between



the counselor and client in the counseling process. 5) Collaboration and Consensus: As is the case in conventional SFBT, Islamic-based SFBT counseling emphasizes collaboration between the counselor and the client to achieve common goals that are by Islamic principles. This process allows the client to feel supported and guided holistically. Islam-based SFBT counseling provides a holistic and structured approach to helping individuals overcome their problems while integrating Islamic values and principles that enrich the therapeutic process (Jumiati & Kartiko, 2022).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the previous discussion, "solution-focused brief therapy" (sfbt) is a type of counseling that is brief and oriented toward solutions, not problems. To create an effective therapeutic relationship, therapists show clients how to utilize their strengths and resources to find solutions. Clients are encouraged to try new approaches and think creatively in addressing their current and future problems. The goal of SFBT is to focus on a solution to the client's problem. A healthy person does not dwell on problems but focuses on solutions. Conversely, a problem person is a person who builds up their weaknesses. In the therapy process, a therapist must be able to build a collaborative relationship with the client, so that the client can trust the therapist and have clear goals. SFBT is a counseling technique that only focuses on solutions, and develops and the solution comes from the client himself, and the therapist only helps direct his client. And every therapy has its advantages and disadvantages.

A further development of SFBT is Islam-based SFBT counseling, which adds a spiritual dimension by integrating values and principles found in the teachings of the Qur'an. The main purpose of Islamic-based SFBT counseling is to remind every Muslim of the importance of obeying Allah SWT's commands and staying away from His prohibitions. This is not only as a form of obedience to Him but also a preparation to account for every action in the afterlife. In the Islamic context, every good deed will be recorded as a reward, while every bad deed will be recorded as a sin. This belief is a strong moral foundation for counselees to guide their lives with full awareness and spiritual responsibility. Thus, Islam-based SFBT counseling not only assists individuals in solving practical problems in their lives, but also directs them to live by religious values and obtain sustainable happiness, both in this world and in the hereafter.

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