



# **Solution-Oriented Social Work Practice: An Integrative Approach to Working with Client Strengths**

*Gilbert J. Greene, Mo Yee Lee*

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Too often in practice, there is a tendency to pathologize clients, requiring a diagnosis as part of the helping relationship. Suppose, however, that most of the client problems that social workers encounter have more to do with the vagaries of life and not with what clients are doing wrong. This powerful idea is the philosophy behind the strengths-based approaches to social work. This groundbreaking practice handbook takes this concept one step further, combining the different strengths-based approaches into an overarching model of solution-oriented social work for greater impact. The strengths perspective emphasizes client strengths, goal-setting, and a shared definition of positive outcome. Solution-focused therapy approaches ongoing problems when they have temporarily abated, amplifying exceptions as solutions. This natural but rarely explored pairing is one component in the challenging and effective practice framework presented here by the authors, two seasoned practitioners with over 50 years of combined experience. By integrating the most useful aspects of the major approaches, a step-by-step plan for action emerges. With this text in hand, you will:

- Integrate elements from the strengths perspective, solution-focused therapy, narrative therapy, and the strategic therapy of the Mental Research Institute (the MRI approach) into an effective and eclectic framework
- Build and practice your skills using case examples, transcripts, and practical advice
- Equip yourself with the tools you need to emphasize clients' strengths
- Challenge the diagnosis-first medical model of behavioral health care
- Collaborate with clients to get past thinking (first-order change), and more to acting "outside the box" (second-order change)
- Learn to work with a wide variety of clients, including individuals, groups, and families; involuntary clients; clients with severe mental illness; and clients in crisis

For any student or practitioner interested in working with clients towards collaborative and empowering change, this is the essential text.

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