



NATIONAL CENTER for
YOUTH ISSUES

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Speakers Bureau



Linda Metcalf

COUNSELOR, AUTHOR, AND SPEAKER

Linda Metcalf, M.Ed., Ph.D. is a certified school counselor, licensed professional counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist supervisor, and Professor of Graduate Counseling at Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth, Texas.

She is the author of *Counseling Toward Solutions*, the first book on integrating solution focused practice into school counseling. Additionally, she has written eleven books on various solution focused practices, school counseling, solution focused narrative therapy and marriage and family therapy. In 2017, she wrote *Solution Focused Narrative Therapy*, creating a new counseling model consisting of a blend of solution focused and narrative therapy. The model was designed to assist challenging clients dealing with grief, loss, trauma, abuse, addictions, anxiety and more.

Dr. Metcalf has made presentations on solution focused counseling for over thirty years, and in 2020, she created Solution Focused Schools Unlimited, LLC, which provides resources for school counselors. Those resources include SF Connection, a free webinar series that brings together school counselors from around the world to explore practical solution focused strategies and Monday Ideas, a free weekly resource offering school counselors simple, immediately usable ideas for their work with students, families.

In 2024, she presented a TEDx Talk, *Is There a Link Between School Violence and Teacher Bullying?* examining the impact of school relationships on student well-being. Her new book, *The Breaking Point: Keeping Hope Alive When Classrooms are on Fire*, (August 2027) aims to provide teachers and administrators tools to engage at risk students as a means of lessening school violence.

Over the course of her career, Dr. Metcalf has provided training in person for school counselors, educators, and mental health professionals throughout the United States and internationally, including Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Newfoundland, Norway, Scotland, Singapore, Thailand, and China. Her online presentations include Russia, Mexico, France and Germany.

See Next Page for Linda's Sessions

Contact Robert Rabon at rrabon@ncyi.org or 423-309-4300 to engage Linda for your event

The Solution Focused Mindset

What if school counselors could spend less time trying to fix problems and more time helping students, teachers, and parents discover what works? Imagine how many more students, teachers and parents they could serve!

This engaging, practical workshop introduces a solution focused mindset that helps school counselors move conversations from problems to possibilities. Participants will learn the process of uncovering and refining best hopes, how to create preferred futures, and noticing exceptions, resources that already exist within every student, parent, and teacher.

Through real school scenarios, videos, role plays and hands-on practice, participants will experience the solution focused approach personally and learn how to apply it immediately to situations they face every day, the next day! Topics such as individual and group conflict, behavior and social-emotional concerns, parent and teacher consultations, support groups, and MTSS will be covered so the school counselor can implement the knowledge the next day.

Solution Focused School Counseling for Today's Challenges

School counselors are increasingly called upon to support students struggling with mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, school avoidance, behavior concerns, peer conflict, and other challenges that can interfere with learning and attendance.

This practical, workshop shows counselors how to use the solution focused approach to help students move from feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, or stuck toward hope, confidence, and meaningful change. Rather than allowing the problem to dominate the conversation, counselors learn questions that uncover strengths, exceptions, coping abilities, and signs of progress that students may not recognize in themselves. This approach lessens resistance and soothes challenging students and parents.

Using real school mental health scenarios and cases solicited from the audience, participants will learn how to engage reluctant students, upset teachers and parents develop preferred futures, identify what is already working, and help students discover small, achievable next steps.

Participants leave with practical strategies and questions they can use immediately with students experiencing anxiety, depression, attendance concerns, behavior difficulties, conflict, and other social-emotional challenges.

Beyond the Referral: A Solution Focused Approach to Teacher Consultation and Student Success

What happens when a school counselor talks with a disrespectful student, gets the student calm and then sends the student back to class to the same frustrated teacher? The problem appears again. The same "system" that created the problem is still intact resulting in the same response from both teacher and student.

This unique workshop gives school counselors a different way to bring teachers and students together and change the conversation within fifteen minutes. Using a solution focused approach, counselors learn how to help both sides identify their best hopes, describe what a better relationship would look like, and discover the exceptions, those important moments when things are already going better. In addition, counselors will learn steps to take to "re-introduce" students returning from alternative school or suspension.

Through lively role plays and real school scenarios, participants will practice conversations they can use immediately to reduce conflict, rebuild trust, increase student engagement, and help teachers and students become partners in creating change.

Solution Focused Classroom Lessons that Last

The classroom is chaotic. The teacher is frantic and losing her voice from screaming. The principal wants things fixed now. A school counselor can be helpful but there is a better way!

What if students became part of the solution to creating a classroom where their teacher can teach and they can learn? And, what if the teacher listens to the lesson and becomes an agent of change after the school counselor leaves?

In this practical workshop, school counselors learn how to use three simple solution focused steps to help students take an active role in creating a more successful classroom climate and help teachers learn how to express their best hopes to their students! Rather than lecturing students about behavior or telling them what needs to change, this intervention involves everyone's input and since everyone creates it, they are more likely to follow through.

Participants will view an actual solution focused lesson plan and learn how to turn classroom counseling lessons into conversations that build student ownership, strengthen relationships, reduce disruptions, and ultimately give teachers more opportunity to do what they do best...teach.

Participants leave with a simple three-step process they can adapt to virtually any classroom concern, at any grade level.

The Solution Focused Guide to Crisis Management in Schools

A student is referred to the administrator for the tenth time and students are scared. A classmate dies unexpectedly. A fight is scheduled after school between two high school students. A teacher is at the end of their rope with his class, and the principal is asking the school counselor to help. A parent arrives angry and demanding answers.

On top of that, the principal asks the school counselor for anti-bullying initiative.

The school counselor's day can change in an instant. There isn't a script, lesson plan, or program for every situation and that's exactly why a solution focused mindset can be so powerful.

In this workshop, participants will discover that solution focused school counseling is much more than a set of questions. It is a way of thinking "systemically" that helps counselors enter difficult, unexpected, and emotionally charged situations with a framework for determining what people want to be different, what that preferred future could look like, and what strengths, resources, and exceptions can help move everyone toward it.

Various solution focused programs will be presented that provide ways that teachers gain control of their classrooms, help students create an anti-bullying team and change the school climate to one of belonging and acceptance.

Hope in the Hardest Moments: Solution Focused Narrative Therapy in Schools

School counselors encounter students carrying stories of trauma, abuse, anxiety, depression, grief, family conflict, and experiences that can leave even experienced school counselors wondering, "Where do I begin?" Since school counselors do not do long term counseling, this approach gives them something to use to calm and support their students until regular counseling occurs.

Solution Focused Narrative Therapy offers a compassionate, practical way forward for school counselors to help students in crisis situations. By combining the hope and future orientation of solution focused work with narrative practices that separate students from problems, SFNT helps counselors acknowledge what has happened without allowing the problem story to become the student's identity.

Participants will learn questions and conversational strategies that uncover strengths, exceptions, preferred futures, and alternative stories of courage and capability. Through examples and practice, school counselors will discover ways to help students move from "This is what happened to me" toward "This is who I am becoming."