Request for Proposals

Training and Implementation of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) in Integrative Care Settings in Illinois

Introduction
The Illinois Behavioral Health Workforce Center (BHWC) was established in 2022 to address a critical shortage of qualified behavioral health care professionals across the state of Illinois and to increase residents’ access to high-quality behavioral health care. One common point of entry into behavioral health services is through primary care providers, and co-locating primary care and behavioral health services in integrated care (IC) settings represents an important opportunity for promoting access to services. To facilitate high-quality services, behavioral health providers in IC settings need effective brief therapy interventions that can maximize the benefit of immediate access to behavioral health services in the IC model. BHWC has selected Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) as an evidence-based model suitable for the unique opportunities and challenges in IC settings.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy
SFBT is a strengths-based approach to brief psychotherapy that avoids problematizing clients’ situations and instead focuses on building solutions based on the client’s existing strengths and resources and guided by the client’s desired future. Though clients are free to share the history and extent of their presenting problems, the questions asked by the therapist do not seek to explore the problem or how it started. Instead, SFBT uses a unique set of skills, techniques and questions to explore exceptions to the existing problem (times and situations when the problem does not occur or is less bothersome), previous successes and the strengths that the client used to achieve them, and a detailed picture of the future the client would like to have once the problem is gone (or is less bothersome). SFBT was originally designed as a brief therapy approach and has shown benefits in medical settings and with low doses of treatment. With the expectation that these benefits can improve the efficiency and quality of behavioral health services provided in IC settings, BHWC has developed a SFBT training and implementation initiative to provide training and support for IC agencies to train their staff and implement SFBT.

This RFP is being issued by the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) to identify up to ten organizations to receive funding to participate in the pilot phase of a training and implementation initiative of SFBT in IC settings. Depending on the number of staff to be trained and the implementation plan to which an agency is assigned, up to $17,295 per site will be made available to support this initiative in fiscal year 2024. Depending on the outcomes of pilot initiative, additional future funding may be made available through BHWC to expand the number of sites or extend the work of previously funded sites.
SFBT Training and Implementation Initiative
BHWC at UIC will make funds available for agencies to receive staff training on SFBT from BHWC-selected training providers through live virtual online trainings. We will also conduct an evaluation of the SFBT training and implementation initiative to better understand the outcomes of the implementation protocol. Specifically, BHWC wants to know if enhancing training with additional consultation and support with a “local champion” component is a beneficial and cost-effective addition to expert-led training on SFBT. Agencies will be randomly assigned to receive or not receive the local champion component. During the application, one potential champion per site should be identified who would be able to complete champion tasks as described below. A good candidate for being a champion could be a clinical supervisor or other seasoned behavioral health provider with plans to stay at the agency long-term.

All training costs and staff time for training will be covered by BHWC funding. The SFBT training and implementation initiative will consist of:

- A 2-hour introductory training provided through BHWC open to any agency staff on the philosophy and approach of SFBT
- Training for behavioral health providers working in integrated care (selected by the site) to receive two days (13 hours) of basic training in SFBT
- Reimbursement to cover staff time during 13 hours of basic training at a rate not to exceed $125 per hour
- Distribution of the SFBT Treatment Manual (SFBTA, 2013) to all behavioral health providers receiving SFBT training
- Biweekly e-mails with tips and reminders for providers to use SFBT in sessions
- Provider self-review of their fidelity to SFBT techniques and principles
- Reimbursement to the agency for two hours of staff time per provider to complete client outcome measures during a two-week evaluation period

Enhanced training (“local champion”) will consist of:

- An additional two days (13 hours) of advanced training in SFBT for one local champion identified by your site (following the completion of the basic training)
- Biweekly virtual consultation sessions for local champion with SFBT experts on using and supporting SFBT at funded sites (2 hours per month for 3 months)
- Local champion providing at least one hour per month of internal consultation to all behavioral health providers trained in SFBT for 3 months following the end of basic SFBT training
- Local champions completing individualized fidelity review and feedback sessions with each provider two times or more during the three months following the end of basic SFBT training

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• Reimbursement to cover champion time during two days of advanced training in SFBT, participation in up to six hours of external consultation, up to one hour of internal consultation for each provider trained in SFBT, and two hours of fidelity review and feedback per provider trained in SFBT at a rate not exceed $125 per hour.
• Reimbursement of staff time for up to three hours of receiving internal consultation from the champion and one hour of attending fidelity feedback sessions at a rate not to exceed $125 per hour.

Evaluation
As part of the SFBT training and implementation initiative, each agency will evaluate client outcomes from services during a 2-week evaluation period after the training period. This time period will be set with agencies following training. The evaluation will include a brief questionnaire provided by BHWC and should be completed at the start and end of each session conducted during the evaluation period by providers who received training through the initiative. Any other evaluation measures used by the site can also be administered, but these are not required. Agencies will be asked to submit de-identified packets of client outcomes after the evaluation phase has ended. Additionally, a brief final report specifying the number of staff who completed SFBT training through the initiative and a 1-2 page description of SFBT implementation at the agency should be submitted to BHWC following the evaluation phase.

In addition to the agency program evaluation, behavioral health providers receiving training in SFBT through the training and implementation initiative will be invited to participate in an evaluation of the pilot initiative including surveys regarding their perspectives and experiences with the implementation initiative. This evaluation will consist of provider surveys before and after basic SFBT training and at the end of the implementation period, as well as follow-up focus groups following the agency program evaluation phase. Participation in the pilot initiative evaluation will be voluntary for providers receiving training through BHWC, and participants will be able to receive incentives totaling up to $120 for completion of surveys and focus groups. (This should not be included in site budgets as it will be paid directly to participants). Though provider participation is voluntary, the pilot initiative evaluation includes random assignment to the local champion component, and this will determine whether an agency receives funds for the additional “champion” component. If an agency is not selected for the champion component during the pilot phase of the initiative, and the pilot evaluation shows meaningful benefits of the champion component, the agency will be invited to apply for future funding (if available) to receive the champion component in the next phase of the initiative.
Budget
Applicants may propose a budget of up to $17,295 that will cover training costs and staff time for basic SFBT training and the additional training costs and staff time for the champion component (if selected) for training up to 5 providers per site. Agencies may submit an application for multiple sites through the RFP, but will need to clearly address the availability of at least one champion per site. Please use the provided budget worksheet to estimate funding sought in the application. Funds received from BHWC should only be used for actual costs incurred (training and/or allowed staff time) and must not exceed the specified limits. Total budget estimates based on the number of providers to be trained in SFBT are provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allowed Budget Guidelines</th>
<th>2 Providers Trained in SFBT</th>
<th>3 Providers Trained in SFBT</th>
<th>4 Providers Trained in SFBT</th>
<th>5 Providers Trained in SFBT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training/Time</td>
<td>$4,450</td>
<td>$6,575</td>
<td>$8,700</td>
<td>$10,825</td>
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<tr>
<td>Champion Costs</td>
<td>$4,220</td>
<td>$4,970</td>
<td>$5,720</td>
<td>$6,470</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$8,670</td>
<td>$11,545</td>
<td>$14,420</td>
<td>$17,295</td>
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Fidelity Review
Fidelity to the SFBT model will be assessed using the SFBT Fidelity Instrument (Lehmann & Patton, 2011). This is a brief measure that includes 13 questions. Though the instrument will be included in provider surveys of the evaluation component, copies will also be made available to agencies to support providers’ use of SFBT. Additionally, the champion component will include fidelity review and feedback sessions with SFBT-trained providers.

Sustainability
Applications should include a general plan for how SFBT implementation will be sustained in their organization following the end of the SFBT training and implementation initiative through BHWC. Items in a sustainability plan might include processes and incentives to facilitate continued use of SFBT by providers, retention efforts to encourage providers and champions trained during the initiative to remain at the agency, and/or other funding sources (agency funds or funding sources other than BHWC) for future staff training on SFBT.

Eligibility Criteria
Agencies applying for funding through the RFP must have one or more sites operating as integrated care settings (behavioral health and medical) with behavioral health clinicians providing brief intervention with clients. Each integrated care site should have at least two providers who are willing to participate in SFBT training through the initiative. Additionally, each agency should be able to identify one champion per site who is able to complete the local champion component training and tasks as outlined previously. Up to five providers may be trained per site. Agencies may apply with more than one site if they have multiple sites able and willing to participate in the initiative, but this must be clearly specified in the applications.

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Applicants may submit proposals that do not meet the two providers per site requirement, but the application must clearly specify the availability of one champion out of every five providers trained and outline how the champion would be able to provide support and consultation that would be commensurate with an on-site champion (e.g. availability for check-ins, informal support, etc.). Applications that do meet the two providers per site guideline will be given priority in the selection process.

Requests For Proposals

If your organization meets the eligibility criteria noted above and is interested in pursuing this opportunity, please submit your proposal application by email in PDF format to Sam Carpenter at scarp@uic.edu. Please direct any questions about the evaluation component to Dr. Ray Eads at rayeads@uic.edu. Applications may be up to 8 narrative pages in length, including the budget and budget justification. Please include the following information:

1. Applicant organization(s) name, contact person and contact information (phone, email).
2. Names and locations of site(s) that will be involved in SFBT training/implementation (within the state of Illinois).
3. Description of integrated care services provided by applicants at the IC sites/clinics, including name of integrated care model (if applicable, such as CoCM, PCBH, etc.), description of behavioral health services provided, including brief intervention, psychiatric collaboration, medication-assisted recovery, etc.
4. Characteristics (demographic, cultural, etc.) of population served by the IC sites/clinics.
5. Capacity to complete the “champion” component as specified in the RFP, including an appropriate staff member willing and able to serve as a champion
6. Implementation plan for how your agency will implement and use SFBT during the pilot phase of the training and implementation initiative and consideration of whether your champion (if selected) will have time to conduct fidelity reviews and feedback sessions and internal consultation with staff trained on SFBT.
7. Sustainability plan for how your agency will continue to use SFBT following the end of the pilot initiative, including any plans for retention of staff who received training and/or future plans for staff training on SFBT (without the need for further Center funds)
8. Draft budget and brief budget justification narrative. Please use the provided Excel calculator and budget template for your estimated budget. If you are submitting an application for multiple sites, please submit a separate budget for each site.
9. Financial information for your agency demonstrating capacity to carry out the initiative, such as your most recent audited annual financial statements or the most recent board-approved annual budget

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**Project Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>RFP Release</td>
<td>8/28/2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informational Conference Calls</td>
<td>9/13/2023 at 10 a.m., 10/17/2023 at 2 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications due</td>
<td>10/30/2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awards announced</td>
<td>11/15/2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trainings begin on or after</td>
<td>1/16/2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation phase</td>
<td>5/13/2024 – 5/24/2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program evaluation data due</td>
<td>6/18/2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report due</td>
<td>7/12/2024</td>
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**Informational zoom meetings** will be held at 10 a.m. on 9/13 and again at 2 p.m. on 10/17 to review the SFBT Training & Implementation Initiative, the scope of the RFP and the pilot, and to answer questions regarding application development. Please email scarp@uic.edu for the meeting link.