

Solution-Focused Question Bank

Helping Students Identify Strengths, Resources, and Next Steps

School Counselor Resource Series

Purpose

Solution-focused questions help students discover their own strengths, recognize progress, and identify practical next steps. Rather than concentrating solely on the problem, these questions encourage students to explore what is working, what they hope will change, and how they can move forward one step at a time.

Use these questions flexibly, selecting those that best fit the student's age, situation, and goals.

Clarifying the Goal

- What would you like to be different?
- If things improved, what would you notice first?
- What would a really good day look like?
- What do you hope happens as a result of our conversation today?
- How would you know things are getting better?

Identifying What Is Already Working

- What has gone well this week?
- What have you done that's helped, even a little?
- When is this problem less noticeable?
- What are you already doing that you should keep doing?
- What strengths have helped you before?

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Discovering Exceptions

- Can you think of a time when this wasn't as difficult?
- What was different then?
- Who was involved?
- What were you doing differently?
- How could you build on that experience?

Scaling Progress

Ask students to rate their current situation on a scale from **1 to 10**, where **1** is "Things couldn't be much harder," and **10** is "Things are going really well."

Follow-up questions:

- Why did you choose that number?
- What helped you get to that number?
- What would move you up one point?
- What would others notice if you moved up one point?
- What support would help?

Exploring Resources

- Who believes in you?
- Who helps you feel encouraged?
- What places help you feel calm?
- What activities help you recharge?
- Who could support you this week?

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Building Confidence

- What is something you've accomplished recently?
- When have you surprised yourself?
- What challenge have you already overcome?
- What personal quality helped you succeed?
- What gives you confidence that you can handle this?

Planning Next Steps

- What's one small step you could take today?
- What's one thing that feels realistic this week?
- What might get in your way?
- How can you prepare for that?
- Who can help you stay on track?

Ending with Hope

- What are you leaving with today?
- What gives you hope right now?
- What would you like us to celebrate next time?
- What's one reason to believe things can improve?
- What are you looking forward to?

Helpful Reminders

- Focus on strengths before barriers.
- Celebrate small successes.

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- Help students recognize their own abilities.
- Ask questions that encourage reflection rather than providing immediate solutions.
- Progress often happens one small step at a time.

Counselor Reflection

The goal of solution-focused conversations is not to minimize a student's challenges, but to help them recognize that they already possess strengths, supports, and opportunities that can become part of the solution.

Part of the Freedom Path Counseling School Counselor Resource Series

These resources are provided free of charge to support school counselors as they invest in the emotional well-being of students and families. Learn more and access additional downloadable tools at **freedompathcounseling.org/school-counselor-resource-center**

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