

EFFECT OF SOLUTION – FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY ON PERCEIVED STRESS AND WELL – BEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

University students commonly experience high stress levels, contributing to reduced well being and academic performance. This study examined the effectiveness of Solution – Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) in reducing perceived stress and enhancing psychological well being . A randomized controlled design was used with N = 60 college students assigned to either on SFBT group (n = 30) or a waitlist control group (n = 30) . Participants completed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS – 10) and Ryff Psychological Well – Being Scale (RPWBS) at baseline and after a 6 session intervention. Results indicated significant decrease in stress and increase in well – being in the SFBT group compared to the control group. Findings support the efficacy of SFBT as a brief accessible counseling intervention for students’ mental health services.

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INTRODUCTION

College life in contemporary Indian context presents academic, social and personal challenges, increasing vulnerability to stress and mental health difficulties. Psychological interventions that are brief, solution oriented and resource – focused are well – suited for student populations that have limited time and resources and high demand on their career related challenges.

Solution – Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) emphasizes client's strengths, goal and future oriented change rather than pathology, making it an appealing approach in counseling psychology (Franklin et.al, 2017). Previous studies suggest SFBT effectively reduces stress and emotional distress.

This study evaluates the effectiveness of SFBT on stress and well – being among college students through a randomized controlled trial .

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (I) To determine whether SFBT reduces perceived stress among college students .
- (II) To assess whether SFBT enhances psychological well – being of college students .
- (III) To compare outcomes between intervention and control groups.

HYPOTHESES

- (I) Students receiving SFBT will report significantly lower perceived stress post – intervention compared to control group students .
- (II) Students receiving SFBT will report significantly higher psychological well – being post – intervention compared to control group students .

METHODOLOGY

- (I) Research Design :

A pre – test / post – test Randomised Contolled Trial (RCT).

- (II) Participants :

N = 60 college students (Age range : 18 – 25; M = 20.8) .

Randomised allocation into:

SFBT Group/ Experimental Group (n = 30)

Non-SFBT or Control Group (n = 30)

TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY

(I) Perceived Stress Scale (PSS – 10)

Measures subjective stress levels;

Higher score = Higher stress

(II) Ryff Psychological Well – Being Scale (RPWBS)

Assesses autonomy, personal growth and positive relations;

Higher scores = Greater well – being

INTERVENTION

Solution- Focused Brief Therapy (Conducted following six sessions) :

(I) Goal Setting, Identifying preferred future.

(II) Scaling questions.

(III) Strengths identification.

(IV) Coping – question techniques.

(V) Miracle question and action planning.

(VI) Progress Evaluation/ Self Evaluation and consolidation.

Each session lasted for 45 to 50 minutes.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Pre – test and Post – test scores

Variable	Group	Pre –test (Mean+ - SD)	Post –test (Mean + - SD)
PSS (Stress)	SFBT	24.3 + - 4.8	14.8 + -4.2
	Control	23.9 + - 5.0	22.7 + - 5.1
RPWBS (Well – being)	SFBT	54.2 + - 7.1	66.5 + - 6.4
	Control	55.1 + - 7.4	56.3 + - 7.2

Inferential Statistics

Stress Reduction (PSS)

$t(58) = 7.84$, $P < .001$

Large effect size (Cohen’s $d = 1.94$)

Well – Being Improvement (RPWBS)

$t(58) = 5.98$ $P < .001$

Large effect size (Cohen’s $d = 1.54$)

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Students receiving SFBT showed :-

39% reduction in stress.

23% increase in psychological well – being.

Control group changes were minimal and not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Results strongly support the efficacy of Solution – Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) for reducing stress and enhancing psychological well – being in young adults. The magnitude of improvement aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes the strength based, goal oriented nature of SFBT as particularly helpful for students experiencing psychological stress and pressure of various types in their day to day life.

The brevity of the intervention makes SFBT a practical choice for college/ university counseling centers that face resource limitations and are under continuous pressure to cater to the demands of the students' community.

IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

- SFBT can be integrated into student mental health programs.
- Counselors can use SFBT tools such as scaling, miracle questions and strength mapping for rapid improvement.
- Supports culturally adoptable frameworks suitable for Indian higher education institutions.

DELIMITATION

- Small sample size (N = 60) limits generalizability.
- Reliance on self – report measures.
- Short – term follow – up ; long term effects remain unknown .

RECOMMENDATIONS

Conduct longitudinal studies to examine durability of improvements.

Compare SFBT with other modalities (CBT, Mindfulness based therapy etc.).

Use mixed – method approaches to capture qualitative change.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) is a highly effective short term counseling intervention for reducing stress and enhancing well-being among college university students. Implementing SFBT in counseling services can improve mental health outcomes, strengthen resilience and support academic success leading to significant enhancement in overall effectiveness of higher education system in present Indian context, especially post NEP-2020 scenario where a lot of confusion still creeps in from time to time for almost all stakeholders.

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