

A list of solution-focused questions

Opening questions

What do you enjoy?
What are you good at?
What does it take to be good at that?

Direction-setting questions

What are your best hopes from our work together/talking/coming to see me?
How would you know this had been useful?
What difference are you hoping this will make?
What would you notice different about yourself if this turns out to be helpful?
How would you know this wasn't a waste of (your) time?

Do you want to be happier/more settled/...?

Preferred future questions

If you woke up tomorrow and (your best hopes* had been met), what's the first thing you'd notice about yourself?
Imagine a miracle happens tonight while you're asleep, and (your best hopes are met) but you are asleep when this miracle happens, so you don't know it's happened. What's the first thing you'd notice about yourself, that would start to tell you that this miracle had happened?
What else would you notice about yourself?
What's the next thing that you'd notice, if...?
And after that?
What's the first small sign that would tell you that...?
How would it start to show?
What would be happening instead?
What would you be doing/thinking/feeling (instead)?
How would you know?
What would you notice about yourself, that would tell you that?
How would that show?
Who else would notice that...?
What's the first thing they would notice about you (that would tell them)?
What else? What's the next thing they would notice?
How would they see that?
What effect might that have on them?
What would you notice different about them?
What difference would that make?

Instances questions

What bits of (your preferred future*) have you noticed happening most recently?

How did you manage to do that?
What did you do that helped?
What else?

What did it take?
What does that say about you, that you were able to do that?
What skills or strengths did you draw upon?

How did you think of doing that?
Where did you get that idea from?

What difference has that made?
What difference is that making?
What are you doing/thinking/feeling differently since you...?

Who else has noticed?
What have they noticed?
How have they been able to tell that...?

What pleased you most about being able to do that?

Scaling questions

On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is (insert client's hoped-for-outcome) and 0 is the worst/furthest away you've been from 10, where are you now?
What puts you there and not at 0?
What is different?
What have you noticed/are you noticing that is different, now that you're at that point?
What are you doing/thinking/feeling differently?
Who else has noticed differences in you, since you've been at that point? What do you think they have noticed?
What difference has that made?
How have you got to this point?
What have you done that's helped?
What has it taken?

How would you know that you were a point higher?
What would you notice different about yourself?
What would you notice yourself doing differently?
Who else would notice and what would they notice?
What else? What else? What else? What else? What else? What else? What else?

Coping questions

How are you keeping going?
How are you getting by at the moment?
What is it that you do that helps you to get through?
Where do you get the strength from to even get up in the morning?
That sounds so tough – how are you managing to hang on in there?

*It's best not to use the phrases 'best hopes' and 'preferred future' with the client. Use their actual words.