

Teaching Statement | Jeeyeon Hong, LCSW

As a solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) practitioner and researcher, I approach teaching as a collaborative process that fosters growth through partnerships. Guided by SFBT's core principle of "*doing more of what works*," I see the teacher's role as discovering and amplifying students' existing strengths and possibilities. This philosophy shapes how I build collaborative learning environments, provide strengths-based feedback, create opportunities for students to practice and discover what works, and encourage them to draw on diverse perspectives and experiences. I aim to prepare reflective, culturally responsive social work practitioners who recognize clients' strengths and the broader contexts that shape their lives.

I believe that a student-centered approach begins with building collaborative relationships and creating safe, inclusive learning environments. Consistent with SFBT's emphasis on clients' preferred futures and their expertise in their own lives, I begin the course by inviting students to share what they hope to gain from the course and what will help them achieve these goals. Recognizing that students enter the classroom with diverse experiences and levels of preparation, I serve as an active partner in their learning by remaining accessible through office hours and one-on-one meetings. A central component of my teaching is providing personalized, strengths-based feedback that helps students recognize their existing competencies while further developing their clinical skills. As a teaching assistant (TA) for the *Solution-Focused Brief Therapy* course, I provided detailed feedback on MSSW students' recorded therapy sessions and reflection papers. Guided by the SFBT approach, I highlighted students' clinical strengths by identifying what they were already doing effectively and building on those competencies, while offering concrete suggestions to deepen their therapeutic interventions. I provided specific examples of SFBT questions that students could use in their given scenarios and elaborated on how these strategies could facilitate client change. In teaching evaluations, many students identified individualized and detailed feedback as one of the most valuable aspects of their learning experience, and I received an average teaching evaluation score of 4.9 out of 5.0 in both Fall 2024 and Fall 2025.

My solution-focused approach also shapes my commitment to developing reflective and culturally responsive practitioners. I encourage students to examine how their own social identities, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences shape therapeutic relationships with clients. As the instructor of *Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families*, I designed the course to begin with a clinician self-assessment assignment that invites students to reflect on these influences while identifying their own strengths and areas for growth as clinicians. Through this self-reflection, students are better equipped to engage clients with greater self-awareness and cultural humility. Building on this foundation, I then help students apply ecological systems theory to understand clients' experiences multidimensionally and consider how structural and systemic inequities shape the challenges and resources present in their lives. During my guest lecture in *Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, I used case scenarios involving immigrant families navigating the mental health system to encourage students to analyze clients' experiences through an ecological systems lens. Students then worked collaboratively in small and large groups to develop culturally responsive intervention strategies at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels while reflecting on how their own identities and perspectives might influence their clinical decisions. Consistent with a solution-focused approach, I encourage students to look beyond problems and deficits to explore clients' strengths, internal and external resources, and possibilities, while remaining attentive to the structural

barriers that may constrain them. I then encourage students to translate these strengths and possibilities into small, concrete, and actionable steps that clients can take. I believe this step-by-step approach—from self-reflection to client assessment and intervention planning—helps students develop reflective practice, cultural responsiveness, and critical thinking, all of which are essential for effective social work practice.

Experiential learning is another cornerstone of my teaching. To create an engaging learning environment, I emphasize hands-on activities such as role-plays, simulations, small-group discussions, reflective exercises, demonstrations, and creative activities. For example, during a guest lecture in the SFBT course, I introduced art- and play-based techniques of solution-focused group therapy, illustrating how SFBT can meet children in their own language by building on forms of expression they already use and enjoy. Students then worked in small groups to practice and adapt these techniques to hypothetical cases across different practice settings. Similarly, as a TA for *Foundations of Interprofessional Collaborative Practice*, I facilitated simulations with students from medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and social work to practice communication and collaborative decision-making across professions. In course evaluations, students reported that these simulations helped them feel more prepared for practicum and that they enjoyed the energy of the class.

Finally, as an international scholar and a licensed clinical social worker in both Korea and the United States, I bring cross-cultural and global perspectives into the classroom. I am passionate about engaging students in discussions about how culture shapes mental health, help-seeking, and therapeutic practice. For example, when teaching creative techniques in the SFBT class, I explained how several of these approaches are informed by SFBT research from Korea. I discussed how, in cultures where mental health stigma remains prevalent, indirect and expressive interventions can provide culturally responsive ways to engage clients in conversations about mental health. Similarly, as the instructor of *Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families*, I draw on my clinical experience working with immigrant and refugee families to help students understand how clients' cultural, religious, and spiritual backgrounds influence their engagement with mental health services. Through clinical examples and guided discussions, I model how to initiate conversations about mental health while respecting and utilizing clients' cultural values and strengths to collaboratively build solutions. By integrating international perspectives with evidence-based practice, I encourage students to think critically about how social work practice can be thoughtfully adapted across diverse cultural contexts.

Embracing the philosophy of SFBT, I aim to create learning environments where students' existing strengths become the foundation for continued growth. I work to ensure that every student feels supported, challenged, and empowered while developing the knowledge and skills needed for effective clinical practice. This philosophy also guides my approach to mentorship. In my teaching roles, I have mentored students by meeting with them outside the classroom and supporting them in achieving their self-identified academic and professional goals. Drawing on my clinical, teaching, and research experience, I am well prepared to teach foundational and advanced clinical practice courses, as well as electives in my areas of expertise, including SFBT, school mental health, crisis intervention, community-based intervention research, and meta-analysis. Ultimately, my goal is to prepare future social workers with the reflective practice, critical thinking skills, and clinical competencies needed to advance mental health and social justice in the communities they serve. As an educator, I will continue to serve as a collaborative partner in their growth as clinicians, scholars, and advocates.