

Request for Proposals

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

**Updated and Reissued 12/5/2025*

Introduction

The Illinois Behavioral Health Workforce Center (BHWBC) is pleased to offer another round of funding and support for implementation of solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) in integrated care settings across Illinois. The BHWBC SFBT initiative started in 2023 to support IC settings in increasing access to care for Illinois residents through the provision of effective and efficient brief therapy models for behavioral health services provided in IC settings. 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. SFBT was originally designed as a brief therapy approach and has shown favorable implementation outcomes for IC settings in three prior rounds of the initiative.

This RFP is being issued by the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) to identify organizations to receive funding to participate in the next round of training and implementation of SFBT in IC settings. Agencies that have previously received funding through the initiative are welcome to apply through this RFP. Training is provided through live virtual trainings with a nationally renowned training provider in SFBT. For the upcoming round of the SFBT initiative, new providers who have never participated in the initiative previously will be eligible for a 2-day SFBT basics training as well as an 8-session solution-focused learning collaborative component. Providers who have previously received the 2-day SFBT basics training will be eligible for the learning collaborative component. Successful applicants will receive funding to cover training costs and staff time for providers selected to participate in the initiative. Additionally, the upcoming round will introduce a new version of local champions where a maximum of 2 clinical supervisors or senior-level providers at the agency who have previously received the learning collaborative may be selected to receive funds for training costs only to become fully certified in SFBT and serve as onsite experts and consultants for their agency.

SFBT Training and Implementation Initiative

Based on evaluation findings from prior rounds of the BHWBC SFBT Training and Implementation Initiative, further funding is being made available to expand training opportunities in SFBT for providers in integrated care settings through live virtual online trainings and live virtual learning collaborative sessions. The present round of the initiative will include full implementation of the solution-focused learning collaborative that was previously piloted and will offer a new way of

supporting local champions of SFBT. During the application, agencies should identify new providers who will attend 2 days of basic SFBT trainings and participate in an 8-session learning collaborative meeting twice per month. Applications may also identify previously-trained providers who will receive the learning collaborative only as well as up to 2 eligible clinical supervisor or similar level staff who are interested in becoming certified in SFBT and serving as a local champion and expert on SFBT for their agency. With the exception of champions, staff time for participation in the training and learning collaborative will be covered by funds in the initiative to account for time spent away from reimbursable client activities.

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

For all agencies:

- A 2-hour introductory training provided through BHWC open to any clinic staff on the philosophy and approach of SFBT. Live virtual 2-hour trainings are scheduled for March 18 (1-3 p.m.) and April 10 (9-11 a.m.). Registration instructions will be provided upon receipt of an award.

For new providers (who have not previously completed SFBT training through BHWC):

- Training for behavioral health providers who conduct direct care services in integrated care (selected by the site) to receive two days (13 hours) of basic training in SFBT. Trainings will take place on consecutive days from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on March 10-11, March 12-13, and March 16-17. Registration instructions will be provided upon receipt of an award.
- Twice monthly solution-focused learning collaborative sessions (1 hour each) with a BHWC-facilitator and other providers in integrated care settings across the state. The sessions (8 total) will include the use and modeling of SFBT techniques and philosophy in the facilitation of the collaborative by an SFBT expert with an emphasis on a co-constructive process that facilitates peer-to-peer learning on how to best implement SFBT in integrated care. Learning collaborative sessions will start after the completion of basic trainings.
- Reimbursement to cover staff time during 13 hours of basic training and 8 hours of learning collaborative participation (21 hours total) at a rate not to exceed \$125/hour
- Distribution of the recently updated 3rd edition of the SFBT Treatment Manual 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

For returning providers (previously received SFBT training through BHWC but not the learning collaborative):

- Twice monthly solution-focused learning collaborative sessions (1 hour each) with a BHWC-facilitator and other providers in integrated care settings across the state. The sessions (8 total) will include the use and modeling of SFBT techniques and philosophy in the facilitation of the collaborative by an SFBT expert with an emphasis on a co-constructive process that facilitates peer-to-peer learning on how to best implement SFBT in integrated care.
- Reimbursement to cover staff time during 8 hours of learning collaborative participation at a rate not to exceed \$125/hr
- Tips and resources on effective practices for implementing SFBT

For clinical champions of SFBT (who have previously completed the 8-session learning collaborative and have demonstrated a commitment to serving as a certified SFBT expert for their agency):

- Funds to cover the costs of training, required consultation, and exam fee for the process of becoming certified in SFBT through the initiative's training provider
- Limited logistical support in connecting with the trainer to arrange the certification process

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 by the agency** to BHWC following the implementation phase.

Identifying Providers and Calculating Budget

This RFP is open to both new participants and those who have already participated in previous rounds of the SFBT Implementation Initiative. For new agencies who have not previously received funding for SFBT training, each staff member identified in the application will receive a 2-day SFBT basics course (13 hours) conducted through live virtual training by the BHWC-selected training provider as well as 8 biweekly learning collaborative sessions. For agencies who have previously received funding for SFBT training, please identify whether each provider in the application is new to the initiative (i.e. has not received any prior SFBT training) or has previously received training through the initiative (e.g. the 2-day SFBT Basics course). New providers will receive the 2-day SFBT basics course. Providers who have previously received SFBT training will participate in 8 sessions of the solution-focused learning collaborative to continue to support their learning, use, and sustainability of SFBT for integrated care settings. If a provider has previously completed the 8-session learning collaborative they are welcome to join an ongoing monthly learning collaborative free of charge (no staff time covered), and they are eligible to be submitted as a clinical champion for SFBT certification.

In addition to training and the learning collaborative, the upcoming round of the initiative will introduce funding for training costs for up to 2 individuals per agency to become fully certified in SFBT through the training provider to serve as a clinical champion of SFBT and local expert consultant for the agency. Appropriate staff for this role include clinical supervisors who still see patients (using SFBT in practice is part of the certification process) or other senior-level providers who have demonstrated a commitment to SFBT and are willing and able to serve as local experts and consultants to support other providers at the agency in the use of SFBT. The proposed clinical champion will need to submit a personal statement as part of the application process detailing their interest in solution-focused practice and their plans for supporting other providers in using SFBT in integrated care throughout and after their certification process.

Other than for clinical champions, training costs are covered or paid directly by BHWC and are not included in the budget for an agency application. Budget amounts for these providers are based on the number of hours spent in the trainings or learning collaborative sessions at the hourly rate specified in the application (maximum of \$125/hr.), totaling 21 hours for new providers and 8 hours for returning providers. The budget amounts for a proposed clinical champion consists of training and support costs for certification only and may not exceed \$2,825. A breakdown of maximum allowable budgets is provided in the table below.

Allowed Budget Guidelines (maximum)	New Provider (21 hours of staff time)	Previous Provider (Learning Collaborative Only – 8 hours staff time)	Certification of Clinical Champion (Training Only)
Training Costs	N/A	N/A	\$2,825
Staff Time	\$2,625	\$1,000	N/A

Fidelity and Sustainability

SFBT fidelity measures will be made available to providers to assist self-review of their fidelity to SFBT techniques and processes and support providers' use of SFBT. Applications should also 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 provider identified for funding in the application should be willing to participate in the solution-focused learning collaborative if not previously

completed, and proposed clinical champions (maximum of two per agency) must submit a personal statement of their interest in serving as a local expert and consultant on SFBT. There is no limit on the number of total providers that can be included in an application and the RFP is open to providers who previously received SFBT training through the initiative. However, based on funding levels we may not be able to fund all providers in an application and priority will be given to new providers who have not previously received SFBT training.

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 Adriana Scurto at ascurto@uic.edu. Please direct any questions about the RFP to Dr. Ray Eads at rayeads@uic.edu. Applications may be up to 8 narrative pages in length, including the budget and budget justification but not including champion personal statements. Please include the following information:

1. Applicant organization 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. Names, licensure and roles of specific providers who will receive training through the initiative. For each provider, please identify whether they have previously received the 2-day SFBT basics training. Please include a statement that each provider is aware of and willing to participate in the solution-focused learning collaborative twice per month over the course of the implementation phase (8 sessions total).
4. Identification of up to 2 clinical champions (if applicable) and description of their qualifications for serving as a champion. To be eligible for SFBT certification, the champion must have previously completed both the 2-day SFBT basics training and the first 8 sessions of the learning collaborative. Appropriate individuals to serve as a clinical champion include clinical supervisors, senior-level providers, and other natural leaders who are able and willing to serve as the local expert and consultant at the agency on the use of SFBT. In addition to describing the qualifications of the proposed champions in the application, a 1-page personal statement from each champion should be appended to the application detailing their interest in pursuing SFBT certification and their plans for supporting the agency's implementation of SFBT during and after their certification process.
5. Description of integrated care services provided 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. This description can be general and does not need to be specific to each individual provider.

6. Implementation plan for how your agency will implement and use SFBT during the implementation phase of the initiative
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 BHWC funds)
8. Draft budget and brief budget justification narrative. Please use the provided Excel calculator and budget template for your proposed budget.

An Informational zoom meeting will be held at 2 p.m. on 1/8/2026 to review the SFBT Training & Implementation Initiative, the details of the RFP, and to answer questions regarding application development. Please email ascurto@uic.edu for the meeting link.

Project Timeline

RFP Release	12/5/2025
Informational Conference Call	1/8/2026 at 2 p.m.
Applications due	2/5/2026
Awards announced	2/15/2026
Trainings begin	3/10/2026
Learning collaborative begins	4/1/2026
Award invoice due	4/30/2026
Final report due	7/24/2026