PRACTICE EXERCISE: SCALING QUESTIONS

People often make the mistake that Solution Focused Brief Therapy is all about the future; in fact it is also about the past. Traditionally, we look at the past for the ‘history’ of our problems which often leads to us developing a dim view of ourselves. However, when we find the history that fits with our desired future it can become a very life-enhancing experience and one that is likely to drive us towards those desires. One of the most useful frameworks for Solution Focused conversations is the scale in which 10 represents the fulfilment we are seeking from therapy and 0 its opposite. By identifying a number on the scale we can immediately see how close to or far we are from our hoped-for future. Though the scale can be used as a means to look up to the future we are seeking it is often more productive to look down and see how far we have come and how we have managed either to get so high or stopped ourselves slipping to the bottom. All the answers to questions like “How did you get to 7?” and “What is stopping you slipping back to 0?” provide valuable information about the history of your better future.

So here is a trial exercise – a simple career review. Ideally, find someone to practice with, each taking a turn to interview the other using this simple framework. If you can’t find a partner then do it to yourself.

**The Interview: Job Satisfaction**
(This could also be level of satisfaction with college, with life, with a relationship but ‘job’ might be a safer starter)

Imagine a scale on which 10 represents total job satisfaction – you are just at the right place in the right time with your career, not necessarily where you will want to stay but just right for now. 0 represents such a lack of job satisfaction that you give up your job tomorrow. What number would you say you are on?
If the answer is 4 or above ask “What puts you that high?”
If the answer is 2 or below ask “What stops you hitting zero?”
If the answer is 3 decide for yourself which one of the above might work best.
In both cases the task of the interviewer is to elicit at least 25 positive answers: 25 things the person has done to stop things getting worse or 25 things they have done to get them as high as they are.
When you have reached 25 stop the interview: don’t try to push them up the ladder, don’t try to discover what’s stopping them moving and DON’T GIVE ADVICE

ZERO! Ask your partner to choose an issue which puts them higher than zero on the scale. This is just a starter exercise – we’ll be covering ZERO on the course!