

# Sample: Solution-focused coaching conversation



Not sure how to get the conversation started using solution-focused coaching?  
Here is a sample conversation you can try:

## Elements of a solution-focused coaching conversation

## Example of the solution-focused coaching conversation

**Contracting:** The teacher and student agree on what to talk about based on the student's priorities.

The student can express what is important to them; the teacher and student have an agreed-upon starting point for their conversation.

**Teacher:** So, what's going to be most helpful for you today?

**Student:** I'm having a hard time focusing in class. It's loud and I get headaches and I can't pay attention so I just want to put my head down and then I miss what you are talking about.

**Teacher:** So if we came up with some strategies to help you focus, would that be helpful?

**Student:** Sure.

**Exploring the preferred future:** The teacher asks questions to support the student to think about what will be different when things are better.

The student generates their own vision of what they want to be different, based on what's important to them. This makes it easier to see that positive change is possible.

**Teacher:** Suppose tomorrow you had a good day and you were able to focus in class, what would be different?

**Student:** I would know what you were talking about, so I wouldn't be so confused.

**Teacher:** And what difference would that make?

**Student:** I wouldn't feel so behind or so frustrated all the time.

**Teacher:** What would you be feeling instead?

**Student:** I don't know. I guess calm and on top of my work.

**Teacher:** Who else would notice a difference?

**Student:** Maybe my parents.

**Teacher:** What would they notice?

**Student:** That I can stay at school longer and that I don't come home and just crash in my room all afternoon.

**Teacher:** What else?

**Student:** I wouldn't be getting upset and feeling overwhelmed with school.





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## Example of the solution-focused coaching conversation

### Exploring precursors:

The teacher asks questions to support the student to identify past successes, when things were already a bit closer to what they want.

The student identifies their existing strengths, resources and ideas.

Ideas and strategies that have worked in the past begin to emerge.

**Teacher:** Think back to a recent time when you were feeling a little more calm and on top of your work. What was happening then?

**Student:** Last week wasn't too bad. I actually paid attention in English and got my work done.

**Teacher:** Wow! How did you do that?

**Student:** It wasn't as loud in class that day, so it wasn't too overwhelming.

**Teacher:** Let's say on a scale from 10 to 1, where 10 is you're doing really well and 1 is the opposite, where are you now?

**Student:** I'm at about a 3.

**Teacher:** How did you get to be a 3 and not lower?

**Student:** It's been helpful that some teachers let me go to the library if I need some quiet.

**Teacher:** What else helps you be a 3?

**Student:** Sitting in the front row closer to the teacher so that I can focus more in class.

**Teacher:** Good. I'm glad that's helping. What else?

**Student:** Knowing I can have extra time for tests and homework takes some of the pressure off.

**Progress clues:** The teacher asks questions that support the student to think about small, realistic steps that will get them closer to what they want.

The student and teacher start to develop a plan that is tailored to their situation.

**Teacher:** And what would be different if you were one point higher on that scale?

**Student:** Maybe I wouldn't get so many headaches each day.

**Teacher:** Ok. Tell me about times when you don't have headaches.

**Student:** I don't usually get a headache in math.

**Teacher:** What's different about math?

**Student:** The teacher is strict, so people are pretty quiet.

**Teacher:** What else will be happening when you're one point higher on the scale?

**Student:** I could concentrate for maybe 10 or 15 minutes in a row when the teacher is doing a lesson before I needed a break. Ummm... I could write a short paragraph answer for social studies again, especially if the room is quiet or if I'm in the library.

**Teacher:** So it sounds like being able to do your work in a quiet room is helpful?

**Student:** Yeah.

**Teacher:** Would it be helpful if I arranged for you to be able to work in the library when you need to?

**Student:** Yeah, that would be helpful.

