

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
What Do We Mean by ‘Constructive Social Work’?	6
Introduction	6
Constructive social work	10
Some central themes in constructionism	13
The ‘postmodern’ turn	18
Conclusions	24
CHAPTER TWO	
The Nature of Contemporary Social Work and its Knowledge Base	27
Social work as a ‘practical-moral’ activity	30
The changing nature and context of social work	35
Uncertainty and ambiguity in social work	43
CHAPTER THREE	
Some Theoretical Orientations of Constructive Social Work	46
Narrative and spin	47
Power	51
The text analogy	53
Understanding and misunderstanding	54
Mind your language	56
Conversations: for good or ill?	58
Change, difference and agency	59
Past, present or future?	60
Resistance	61

CHAPTER FOUR**Further Orientations Towards****Constructive Practice 63**

How problems happen 64

Not knowing 66

Maintaining curiosity, while not asking 'why?' 67

Being expert/non-expert 68

Goals 69

Building solutions 71

Utilisation 72

Emotions, meanings and actions 73

Trust and confidentiality 75

Reflexivity 76

Art or science? 78

CHAPTER FIVE**The Art of Resistance 80**

Validating 81

Externalising 82

Metaphors for externalisation 89

Storytelling 92

CHAPTER SIX**Discipline for Possibilities 96**

Introduction 96

Exceptions 98

Exceptions-finding questions 100

Negotiating goals with various service users 101

The 'miracle question' 103

Scaling questions 104

Some other potentially useful questions 106

The break: planning an intervention/feedback 108

Second and subsequent meetings 113

Questions – too few or too many? 114

Does brief mean fast? 117

CHAPTER SEVEN**Constructive Social Work: Two Examples
of Practice 118**

Case study: 'And then the dog died' 119

Case study: Letting go of a baby 129

CHAPTER EIGHT

Constructive Assessment	134
Theoretic issues	137
The content of assessments	140
Risk	146

CHAPTER NINE

Does It Work?	152
Evaluating SFBT	153
Constructive evaluations	155
Comparative studies	159
How does it work?	160
Does it address emotions?	163
Is constructive practice gender-sensitive?	164
Conclusion	169

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusions: Some Central Issues for Constructive Social Work	170
Objectivity, realism and relativism	170
Moral responsibility, truth and social work	178
Constructive social work: the key characteristics	183

<i>Appendix 1: Student Strengths Scale (for Children at School)</i>	188
---	-----

<i>Appendix 2: Signs of Safety Scale</i>	192
--	-----

<i>Appendix 3: Survival of Poor Parenting Scale</i>	195
---	-----

<i>Appendix 4: Recovery Scale for Starting a New Life After Abuse</i>	197
---	-----

<i>Appendix 5: Scale for Reclaiming Life after Drugs</i>	199
--	-----

<i>Further Reading</i>	201
------------------------	-----

<i>Bibliography</i>	207
---------------------	-----

<i>Index</i>	226
--------------	-----