



NARRATIVE THERAPY IN A POSTMODERN LENS

By Sophie Matthews



Postmodernism VS modernism

Modernism

- Scientific period
- One universal law that combines culture, science, and history to explain everything and represent all knowledge

Postmodernism VS modernism



Postmodernism

- Movement that has been changing the way people approach art, music, literature, politics and philosophy since the late 20th century
- Postmodernists assume there are multiple truths
- Rejects modernistic views of focusing on past experiences and rejects objective historical truth
- No single reality, reality created depends on social interactions with others

Narrative theory

Todorov, T., & Weinstein, A. (1969)

- Everyone is in an ongoing process of constructing a life story that determines their understanding and positions in the world.
- These stories told about ourselves and others create the psychological and social realities.
- The way we speak and the things we speak about are determined by our cultural heritage (Currie, M.,2010).

Before we move on...



‘The stories we tell
ourselves
create our reality’

White & Epston, (1990).

Please could you all take a piece of paper
and a pen and write a quick story of your
personal future and where you want to be in
the next 5 years.



Michael White
&
David Epston



Narrative therapy

- 1970's-80s
- Emerged due to the influence of postmodern movement in philosophy and psychology (Carr, 2006)
- Narrative therapy separates the person from the problem and is useful when dealing with trauma and addictions and does not place blame. (Madigan, S., 2011)



Goal of narrative therapy

The goal of narrative therapy is to uncover prospects for growth and development within the client, find meaning, and help aim to understand oneself better.

The therapist draws out stories that clients hold of themselves and helps them rewrite this dominant story to help them create new meanings and retell their stories to overcome the discourses that have troubled them.

Culture perspective of Narrative Therapy



The counselling paradigm of Narrative Therapy gives a say to those who need counselling and diminishes cultural differences



This approach allows the client to be seen from within their culture which in turn creates a healthy racial identity without them feeling they will be profiled or stereotyped



Problems such as internalized racism are placed outside the client. This stance enables clients to experience freedom on an individual level (O'Hanlon, 1994)



Narrative therapy aims to sort through the impact of the persons problems enforced by cultural narratives of identity (Hoyt, 1996)

Externalization

- Externalization creates distance between the person and the problems as they view the problems as external, instead of an unchangeable part of themselves.
- While this distance occurs, people have a better focus on changing unwelcome behaviours rather than feeling they, the person is the problem.
- While this is happening its possible to see that the individual is capable of change and begin feeling invested to head toward healing.

Carey, M., & Russell, S. (2002).



Deconstruction

Some problems can feel overwhelming or unsolvable, but they are never truly unsolvable (Bishop, 2011).

- Deconstruction is used to help people gain clarity in their individual story and aims to reduce the problems a client is experiencing making it easier for them to understand the whole picture.
- A narrative therapist would work with the client to break down the story into smaller parts, to help clarify the problem and help it become more approachable.

EXAMPLE; An African American woman needed narrative therapy to address emotional damage caused by the client's struggle with internalized racism. The client was helped to deconstruct the influence of the dominant story of cultural narratives of herself and her life, was helped to externalize the problem, change the story and live by a new life narrative. (Semmler & Williams, 2000).

Critiques of Narrative therapy

The client is expected to know which direction they want their lives to take and are the source of the solution to their own problems.



This may lead to the client losing trust in their therapist due to the roles being reversed and the client providing their own knowledge and guidance.



Lack of supportive studies and researches against narrative therapy.

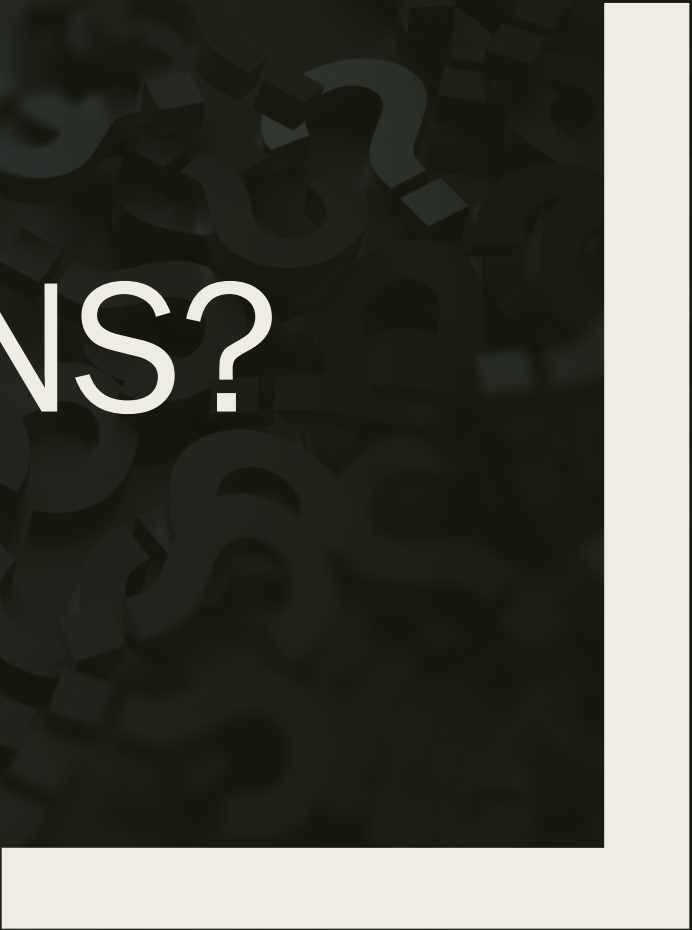


More research is needed to prove narrative therapy helps people that suffer from behaviour and psychological problems.

Due to the story telling nature of the therapy...



Therapists need to make quick assessments to assist clients in helping them with new goals and enable them to use effective interventions.



ANY QUESTIONS?

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