Narrative approaches to supervision

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Key themes of narrative supervision ...

• Supervision as re-authoring conversation

• Re-membering and professional lives

• Outsider witness practices and group supervision

• Alternative ways of understanding ‘vicarious trauma’
... but I’m not going to talk about any of these!
If you would like to know more about them, email me and I will send you published papers about them.
• Supervision as re-authoring conversation by Michael White

• Re-membering and professional lives by Michael White

• Outsider-witness practices and group supervision by Hugh Fox, Cathy Tench & Marie

• ‘How can you do this work? Responding to questions about the experience of working with women who were subjected to childhood sexual abuse’ by Sue Mann
Also a free video on narrative supervision on www.narrativetherapyonline.com

See Friday Afternoons at Dulwich Centre section

And go to:

Using narrative ideas in supervision by Hugh Fox
One story from the work of Michael White

Six practical methodologies from my supervision practice in contexts of profound social suffering
two way account of therapy
Six methodologies:

Collective timelines
Maps of history
Collective documents of worker skills
Songs of sustenance
Tree of Life
Team of Life
1. What is drawing you or driving you to work as a ... ? (a particular hope, commitment, dream, or value)

2. What is the history of this hope, commitment, dream or value? What date did this come into your life? Who or what introduced this to you? How have you kept connected to it? What is the story that explains your commitment to work as a ... ?

3. Who would be least surprised to know that this is important to you?

4. When you think of this theme, what image comes to mind? What picture could we include on the timeline to symbolise this?
Collective timeline
Map of women’s history

6. Where did this hope, commitment, dream or value come from ... what place?
‘To know it gives us strength, satisfaction and makes us want to move forward.’

‘heritage of achievement’

‘a usable past’
‘the invention of unity in diversity’

Paulo Freire, 1994,
Pedagogy of hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the oppressed.
New York: Continuum. P. 157
Collective documents of worker skills

• One skill that you bring to your work with those who are suffering?

• Tell a story of a time when this skill was of assistance to others

• What is the social history or foundation of this skill/value? From whom or with whom did you learn this? Who would be least surprised to hear about this (this can include people from personal history and/or co-workers or former clients)

• Is this linked in any way to collective/cultural traditions?
Skills of connection, culture and history

The Special Skills and Knowledge of Indigenous Health Workers

This document was created from a conversation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and community practitioners in Cairns on the 2nd of April 2007. On this day, in the morning, Cairns experienced its first tsunami warning. By the afternoon, however, we were immersed in stories of connection, culture and history. It is hoped that this document may be shared with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous Health Workers so that we can talk more about the special knowledge that we bring to our work.

Honouring country, culture and those who have passed away
Some of us have developed valuable skills in introducing ourselves and our country. When people visit us, we welcome them to our country. And when we visit other lands, when we go onto other people’s country, we acknowledge this. We acknowledge the traditional owners, we acknowledge their country and that we are only visiting. We also acknowledge those who have passed on. We carry their knowledge with us. These are ways of honouring country and culture that are important to us. We have learnt this from different people, from our sisters, from our parents, from our communities.

Making connections
The skill I value most in my work is making connections. Some of us seem to have that extra bit of energy to connect with others. We learnt this in different ways. For instance, my mum worked in Brisbane and in my early years colour was not in our vocabulary. We connected with everyone from different cultures. It was only when I was eleven that I realized I was ‘black’. And this was quite a culture shock. Being black meant nothing to me at the time, but it meant a lot to others. One day, my brother said to me ‘Be proud of who you are’. And his words meant a lot. When I go to the communities now, I carry my brother’s words with me. I also bring with me the skills of connection I learnt as a young boy when living with my mum, many sisters and aunties. Because of these histories, I am able to connect with my countrymen without judgment. This is the skill I value most in my work.

A strong sense of identity
We, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a strong sense of identity. Even if every now and then we may go through an identity crisis. I remember as a grade 3 child, I took the Aboriginal flag and talked to it in front of my class. I knew I was Aboriginal but did not know what this meant. As I grew older, I made more and more connections. These connections made me feel strongly Aboriginal.
‘Like a sunrise’
The Remote Area Child & Youth Mental Health team
We honour country and our culture
And remember those who’ve passed away
We’ve got roots like the mango tree
And the richest histories
Some connections just cannot be explained

We use our past even the hardest parts
And when they realise that we’ve been there too
It’s like a sunrise
And in our hearts too
We carry with us knowledge of our past
Skills of silence and skills of language too
Good stories we know all about them
Good stories we know their value

He came into my office
Angry and upset
Then he left with a smile on his face
I hold the sound of laughter in my mind
It carries me through the sorrow times
I wouldn’t survive if I wasn’t a nutter
I wouldn’t survive without humour in the gutter
Won’t you laugh along with me

If the only thing we offer in our work
Is a sense of hope then that is something
There’s hope in resistance and in never giving in
So today together we all sing
Tree of Life
History and broader context

* Folk cultural narrative methodologies
* Cross-cultural inventions
Key principles:

* ‘Riverbank’ position
* Double-listening
* People always respond
* Implicit in responses are skills, values, abilities and special knowledges
* There is always a social history to these
* Rich story development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story of what has been / is being endured</th>
<th>Story of response / resistance / sustenance (what has survived)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hardships</td>
<td>• Responses &amp; implicit skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Losses</td>
<td>• What the person / community holds precious despite hardships – beliefs, values, hopes, dreams, commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Injustices</td>
<td>• Social history of these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Histories of these</td>
<td>• To whom these are linked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continuing obstacles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What effects these have had / are having on people’s lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tree of Life

Born from a collaboration between REPSSI and Dulwich Centre Foundation and between Ncazelto Ncube & David Denborough
Part One
- Drawing a Tree of Life
- ‘Riverbank’ position
Roots: Where we come from
– rich textual heritage

Or:
– our deep rooted survival skills
Ground:
Where we live, what we choose to do each day

The present / landscape of action
Trunk: What is valued / skills

- what people value/care about
  - think collectively
- through the eyes of others
  - trace the histories
  - rich stories
maths
write
dance
swimming
drawing
reading
running
skipping
computer
Branches – horizons

“The branches to me are about how I want to do this thing. To love and be loved.”

Our hopes, dreams & wishes
- combination of big hopes and smaller
  - self, family, community
- hopes have a history (trace them!)

Leaves: Re-membering lives
Those who are special to us
- Alive or no longer living
Fruits: Legacies bequeathed to us
What those special people have given to us

Seeds: Legacies we wish to leave
Gifts we wish to give to others
Part One
- Drawing a Tree of Life
- ‘Riverbank’ position
Part Two: Forest of life
- Moving from individual to collective
‘the invention of unity in diversity’
Paulo Freire  (1994, p.157)

Pedagogy of hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the oppressed.

New York: Continuum.
‘communitas’ Victor Turner

a shared sense of unity among individuals which …

‘preserve individual distinctiveness’

‘is not a merging in fantasy’

do not depend on ‘in-group versus out-group’ opposition

Part Three: The storms of life
- Externalising the problem
- Collective disclosure
- Eliciting responses
1. The *name* of a special skill, knowledge, practice or value that gets you or your family through hard times

2. A *story* about this skill, knowledge, practice or value

3. The *history* of this skill, knowledge, practice or value. Who did you learn it from/with? Who would be least surprised to hear you talk about this?

4. Is this linked in some way to *collective* traditions (familial/community) and/or cultural traditions? Are there proverbs, sayings, stories, songs, images from your family, community and/or culture with which these skills and knowledges are linked?
Part Four: Celebration, certificates & song

This certificate is awarded to:

[Name]

For proving to her/himself and others that she/he has skills and abilities that have and continue to sustain him/her in her life. He/she also has special people in his/her life and has special dreams and hopes for the future.

Skills and abilities include:

[Skills]

Reading, Writing, and Communication

And her/his hopes and dreams are to[ Specify hopes and dreams ]

She/he would like to appreciate the following special people in her/his life:

[Appreciation]

Note: Any errors or omissions are to be corrected in due course.

[Signatures]
The Team of Life: Giving young people a sporting chance
Part One: Creating our Team of life
Part Two: Goal map
Coming To Australia
Staying together hard time
Ibrahim

Grace Emmanuel

me

Abdi

Sadik

Salam

Mohamud

Hassan

Mohamed
Climbing
Shouting
Cheering
dramas
Hugging
Crying
Black flip
Take the shirt off
Climbing on each other
Sliding on the ground
High five
Hi five
everybody ran in
Passing on the back
Fly kissing
Thumbs up
My next goal...

to bring my half family to Australia

How I am training to achieve this...

to ask the government for help

Who I am going to involve...

Case worker

Migration agent
My next goal is to score more. I want to get help from a friend in Adelaide.

How I am training to achieve this... I am training with my friends at soccer at afternoons.

Who I am going to involve... my coach and some soccer stores to play.
My next goal is to be around the #2 goal.

Pilot

How I am training to achieve this... Stay to school and read hard.

Who I am going to involve... My teacher and my parents.
Part Three: Tackling problems
Skills in Tackling Problems

This is a Document to acknowledge James’ achievements in tackling problems and in particular “meeting new people” over the last year.

James would like to appreciate his brothers Peter and Samuel who have taught him “not to push too much” because life is “not all about winning” and his father - who taught him: “Not to get angry if you lose or too happy if you win because it’s more about having fun”

JAMES’ TIPS TO OTHERS IN MEETING NEW PEOPLE:

Together with a friend or family member, get a football and invite others to play.

Focus on the game... on fun, and enjoying the game together.

Take you time, concentrate, be patient, talk and listen to others.

Witnessed by The Team on Monday 4 August 2008
Collective conversations about ‘tackling problems’
Part Four: Celebration
Building on sporting ritual
One story from the work of Michael White

Six practical methodologies from my supervision practice in contexts of profound social suffering

Collective narrative timeline map of history collective document of worker skills song of sustenance Tree of Life Team of Life
• Use counsellors’ histories in ways that can propel them forwards

• Construct ‘supervision’ as a project

• How can the counsellors make a contribution to the lives of others?

• Use of documentation (writing, imagery and song)

• The methods we use in ‘supervision’ are then also used with ‘clients’
For more information:

www.narrativetherapylibrary.com
www.dulwichcentre.com.au
Email me and remind me to send you those papers!

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