

USING STORIES TO BUILD BRIDGES WITH TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN

KIM S GOLDING

"...OUR CHILDHOODS LEAVE IN US ...STORIES WE NEVER FOUND A WAY TO VOICE BECAUSE NO-ONE HELPED US TO FIND THE WORDS. WHEN WE CANNOT FIND A WAY OF TELLING OUT STORY, OUR STORY TELLS US, WE DREAM THESE STORIES, WE DEVELOP SYMPTOMS, OR WE FIND OURSELVES ACTING IN WAYS WE DON'T UNDERSTAND."
(GROSZ, 2013, P10)

*Once
Upon
a Time*

THE STORY: UNIVERSAL FORM OF EXPRESSION

- THE STORY IS A UNIVERSAL FORM OF EXPRESSION, FOUND IN ALL CULTURES.
- STORY IS IN ALL OUR COMMUNICATION – ANECDOTES, MEMORIES, JOKES, RELATING DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE.
- HUMANS ARE STORYTELLERS!
- THERAPEUTIC STORY TELLING RESTS ON THIS ANCIENT PRACTICE.
- USING STORIES THERAPEUTICALLY IS ABOUT FINDING THE STORY FOR THE PERSON YOU ARE WORKING WITH.
- STORY SITS IN THE SAFETY OF A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STORYTELLER AND LISTENER.
- STORIES ARISE OUT OF RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE SAFE AND CONNECTED.

THERAPEUTIC STORY TELLING

- STORIES PROVIDE A FICTIONAL WORLD THAT THERAPIST AND CLIENTS CAN VISIT TOGETHER, "A PLACE THAT ONE CAN GO TO EXPLORE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT REALITY BRINGS AND TO RETURN STRONGER AND MORE CONFIDENT. (KILLICK & BOFFEY, 2012, P2)
- USE THERAPEUTIC METAPHORS BASED ON UNDERSTANDING OF EXPERIENCE
- WRITTEN WITH EMPATHY (CF ALLEGORIES SUCH AS AESOP'S FABLES WHICH ARE HARSH AND JUDGEMENTAL – TEACH BUT DON'T HEAL)
- USE A LANGUAGE THAT WE CAN ALL SHARE
- BUILDS TRUST AND RELATIONSHIP AS THE CLIENT EXPERIENCES BEING KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD WITHOUT JUDGEMENT
- THE POWER OF THE NARRATIVE OFFERS NEW INSIGHT AND HOPE

STORIES AND DDP

- STORIES ARE AT THE HEART OF DDP.
- STORIES ARE THE HEARTBEAT IN INTERSUBJECTIVITY
- A STORY EMERGES AS EMOTION IS REGULATED AND EXPERIENCE IS EXPLORED.
- STORYTELLING BRINGS THE REFLECTIVE (CONTENT OF THE STORY) TOGETHER WITH THE AFFECTIVE (EXPERIENCE OF THE STORY)
- THE VERBAL IS ENRICHED BY THE NONVERBAL

STORIES AND DDP

- EXPERIENCE IS MADE CLEARER THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVES THAT ARE NEITHER LECTURES NOR PROBLEM SOLVING. BUT ARE SIMPLY STORIES
- STORIES ARE SOMETIMES PLAYFUL, SOMETIMES SERIOUS BUT ALWAYS COMPASSIONATE.
- STORIES ARISE FROM CURIOSITY.
- STORIES ARE COLLABORATIVE OFFERING UNDERSTANDING WITH EMPATHY AND ACCEPTANCE
- LEADS TO INCREASED SECURITY AS POSSIBILITIES FOR WHAT CAN BE ARE OPENED UP.

THREE T'S MODEL OF STORYTELLING & DDP

MODEL OF STORY TELLING SUGGESTED BY STEVE KILLICK AND MARIA BOFFEY (2012):

- THE TELLING = INTERACTIONAL, VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL PROCESS OF TELLING THE STORY
- THE TALE = CO-CONSTRUCTED NARRATIVES RELATING TO CURRENT AND PAST EXPERIENCES
- THE TALK = EXPRESSION OF CURIOSITY, ACCEPTANCE AND EMPATHY THAT COMES OUT OF THE TELLING OF THE TALE.
- PLAYFUL AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL SHARED STORIES.
- PACE IS PART OF DDP AND STORYTELLING

STORIES AND CHILDREN

- STORIES MEET THE CHILD WHERE THEY FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE IN IMAGINATION INSTEAD OF COGNITION
- "A THERAPEUTIC STORY CAN ACT AS AN ADMISSION TICKET INTO A CHILD'S INNER WORLD" (SUNDERLAND, 2000, P10)
- SAFE DISTANCE ALLOWS CHILD TO STAY WITH PAIN OR DISTRESS INSTEAD OF HIDING OR RUNNING FROM IT.
- OFFERS SENSE OF NOT BEING ALONE, SHARED DIFFICULTIES AND NEW PERSPECTIVES.
- FACILITATES INTEGRATION OF PAST WITH PRESENT
- ESPECIALLY HELPFUL FOR CHILDREN LIVING AWAY FROM BIRTH FAMILIES - TOLERATE THINKING ABOUT EXPERIENCE AT ONE REMOVE
- STORIES PROVIDE A FICTIONAL WORLD THAT WE CAN VISIT TOGETHER, "A PLACE THAT ONE CAN GO TO EXPLORE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT REALITY BRINGS AND TO RETURN STRONGER AND MORE CONFIDENT. (KILLICK & SOFFEY, 2012, P12)
- AS CHILD ENGAGES AND EMPATHISES WITH CHARACTERS THEY ALSO CONNECT WITH THEIR OWN INNER CONFLICTS, THUS FINDING SOLUTIONS THAT THEY PROBABLY WOULD NOT REACH IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

"STORIES ARE A VERY ANCIENT WAY OF SOOTHING AND CALMING AND TALKING TO THE IMAGINATIVE MIND, PROVIDING NEW AND MORE USEFUL IMAGINATION, UNCOUPLING THE OLD ASSOCIATIONS AND PUTTING IN PLACE NEW, MORE POSITIVE ONES"
(PARKINGSON, 2009, P52)

STORIES AND PARENTS

- EXPLORES OWN PARENTING AT A DISTANCE
- HELPS TO DEVELOP CAPACITY FOR MENTALISATION AND MIND-MINDEDNESS AS ENTER IMAGINATIVELY INTO CHILD'S INNER WORLD.
- FACILITATES A DEEP EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH THE CHILD WHICH IS UNCONDITIONAL
- PROMOTES HEALING IN THE RELATIONSHIP

STORIES AND PRACTITIONERS

- WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER AND THERE ARE STORIES FOR ALL OF US.
- STORIES CAN HELP THOSE GIVING AND RECEIVING SERVICES TO HAVE A BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WE CAN OFFER INSECURE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES,
- "PERHAPS STORIES CAN HELP US TO KEEP THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT THE CENTRE OF THIS PROVISION, HOWEVER RESTRICTED WE ARE BY BUDGETS, RESOURCES AND TIMESCALES."
(GOLDING, 2014, P183)

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER



CONCLUSION

- STORIES ARE PART OF BEING HUMAN
- WHETHER FORMAL OR INFORMAL WE ARE ALL STORY TELLERS
- TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS CANNOT ALWAYS GIVE VOICE TO THESE STORIES
- THE CHALLENGES OF PARENTING THE CHILDREN CAN LEAD TO STORIES HARDENED IN PAIN AND REJECTION AND LIMITED BY DESPAIR AND CHALLENGE
- TOGETHER STORIES CAN BE CREATED BASED ON MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES AND TOUCHED BY THE HOPE THAT CAN COME FROM SUPPORT

CONCLUSION

- STORIES ARE SAFE STRUCTURES TO HELP WITH ANXIETIES AND BURDENS AS ANXIETIES ARE EXTERNALISED WITHIN THE NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION THE BURDEN CAN BE LIGHTENED (JENNINGS, 2004)
- CAN HELP OTHERS TO MOVE AWAY FROM ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND THINKING THAT IS UNPRODUCTIVE AND LIMITING TO A MORE REFLECTIVE STANCE INFUSED WITH HUMOUR, IMAGINATION, CURIOSITY AND RENEWAL (PARKINSON, 2009).
- STORIES AS PART OF THE THERAPEUTIC PROCESS CAN CHANGE FAMILIES' LIVES, THE CHILDRENS' CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES MAY CONTINUE BUT FAMILY MEMBERS CAN FIND A WAY OF LIVING TOGETHER THAT OVER TIME WILL BUILD SECURITY AND HELP CHILDREN TO REACH A STATE OF PEACE WITH THEIR PASTS

" WHAT BETTER WAY CAN WE COMMUNICATE THAT WE ARE KEEPING SOME ONE IN MIND THAN BY LETTING THEM SEE THAT WE HAVE ENTERED THEIR DREAMING WORLD, THEIR INNER LANDSCAPE OF HURTS, WISHES AND FEARS, AND SHARING OUR INNER IMAGINATIVE WORLD TOO? IN A THERAPEUTIC WORLD INCREASINGLY DOMINATED BY 'OUTCOMES', IT IS VERY GOOD TO BE REMINDED OF THIS."

(STEVE KILLICK, 2014, P17)