

All the Stories that I Carry

Encountering the Spiritual in Clinical Practice

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Social Workers as

- Special
- Compassionate
- Resilient
- Having a calling
- Competent/Mastery
- Consistent
- Reflective practitioners
- Life long learners
- Privileged (work as a gift)

Causal past (the hero's journey)

- Loss and grief
- Endurance
- Resilience
- Transformation through the work
- Spirituality / religion
- Interest in healing /renewal
- Service

Therapeutic relationship as

- Sacred
- A covenant
- Bearing witness
- Staying present
- A theology of caring
- Connectedness
- ‘Co-pati’ to suffer with (compassion)

Creating meaning

- Building ourselves into the world through
 - ❖ Stories
 - ❖ Myths
 - ❖ Metaphors
 - ❖ Narratives
 - ❖ Beliefs
 - ❖ Values
 - ❖ Attitudes
 - ❖ Character
 - ❖ Sentiments
 - ❖ Motives
 - ❖ Challenges

Stories

- Link
- Empower
- Propel/mobilize
- Awareness
- Order
- Meaning
- Allow us into the life world
- Create mystery/masks

Stories in therapy

- Dominant / Alternate / New
- Often a wish
- Help to
 - ❖ Soothe/ emotional relief
 - ❖ Elicit memories
 - ❖ Express who we are / belief management
 - ❖ Integrity
 - ❖ Coherence
 - ❖ Deflect / resist
 - ❖ Problem identification and solving

Loss narratives

- Universal theme
 - ❖ Homes
 - ❖ Health
 - ❖ Jobs
 - ❖ Pets
 - ❖ Partners/ relationships
 - ❖ Abuse / violence
 - ❖ War
 - ❖ Immigration / Refugee status
- Part of the common discourse

End of Life Themes

- Hope
- Faith
- Release
- Transcendence
- Resurrection
- Loss
- Atonement
- Destiny
- Family bonds
- Peace
- Courage
- Time of the essence
- Vulnerability
- Reincarnation
- Preparing for the journey
- Forgiveness
- Searching
- Humanity
- Suffering
- Rituals
- Reevaluating
- Saying goodbye
- Soul pain
- Trust
- Love
- The examined life

Oh the trouble I've seen

- Compassion fatigue
- Vicarious trauma
- Burnout
- Brown-out
- Caregiver stress
- Boundary violations
- Ethical dilemmas

Wounded healers

- Therapist as fellow traveler (Yalom)
- Helped by our clients
 - ❖ Being effective
 - ❖ Helping someone else
 - ❖ Being drawn out of myself
 - ❖ Contact with others
- Increased efficacy (Jung)
- Work as a pilgrimage (Whyte)
- Clients influence
- Mutual wounds

- What is sacred?
- What has meaning?
- How do we honour the stories ?
- Spiritual aspects of the work
 - ❖ Rituals, memorials
 - ❖ Blessings
 - ❖ Leave-taking
 - ❖ Sustaining, building, growing the spirit
 - ❖ Taking something away ?

Think about the stories that you carry

- Inspire
- Sad
- Tragic
- Aha moments
- Re-parenting
- Working through
- Instruct
- Will always be with you
- Make you better
 - ❖ Professionally
 - ❖ Personally

Healing ourselves while healing others

- How do I grow in connection
- How am I moved
- What do I learn about life when I hear stories of
 - ❖ Hard fought wisdom
 - ❖ Lessons for living and dying
 - ❖ Renewal
 - ❖ Hope
 - ❖ Compassion
 - ❖ Sacrifice
 - ❖ Victory

- Therapist rebirth (Don Juan De Marco)
- Parental bonds
- What is important
- Love
- Saying thank you
- What grief is really like
- How faith sustains.....

Who do you carry with you ?

What did they teach you?