



The Value & Impact of Narrative Practice

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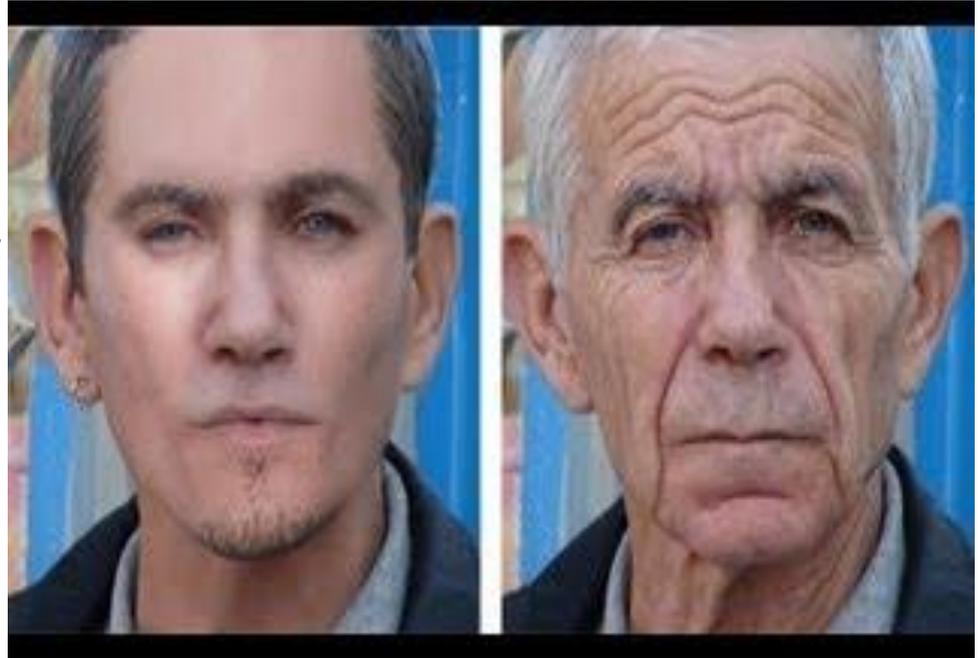
www.lifestorynetwork.org.uk

So what is narrative practice

- “Narrative practices place emphasis on stories and conversations in contrast to relying on pathology to tell us about clients” (Stewart 2011).
- Using narrative approaches celebrates a persons’ individuality, their experiences, their culture, their passions, and their interests and is a foundational basis for establishing a **relationship** with the person that begins with **respect**.
- Narrative practice and approaches
 - Centres on people as the experts in their own lives.
 - Enables us to view the problem as separate from the person
 - works from a strengths basis, believing that people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives.

Why stories?

*“Story telling is one of the most powerful means of communication that has existed for centuries. **Stories well told capture our hearts, our minds and our imagination.** They allow us to build up a picture and set of **values and beliefs** around the **individual person.**”*



Who we are – our story....



We are a network of individuals and organisations dedicated to sharing knowledge and promoting the value of using narrative approaches, including life stories to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of individuals and keeping them connected in their local communities.

Our story continued.....

- **DH funded project 2011-2012 – Your Story Matters**
 - Training in life story work for 496 health and social care staff, volunteers and family carers of people with dementia
 - Piloted '**Family Carers Matter**'
- **Your Community Matters**
 - Using LSW as a **process for connecting** with families and the wider communities
 - Work more specifically with Housing Sector
 - Work with Transport companies, including Virgin Rail, Mersey Rail and some bus and taxi companies
- **Embedded organisational model**
 - Links with triangle of care
 - Value based leadership & practice
 - NICE guidelines on the Mental Wellbeing of Older People in Care Homes

'A diagnosis of dementia is given not just to one person – it is given to a spouse, a partner, a child and the extended family'

Alistair Burns



Providing timely support, information and respite can make the difference between swimming and drowning

Why focus on family carers?

The 'Dementia UK' report (2014) highlights that the overall economic impact of dementia in the UK is £26.3 billion, working out at an

- average annual cost of £32,250 per person.
- £4.3 billion spent of healthcare costs, of which around £85 million is spent on diagnosis.
- £10.3 billion is spent on social care for people with dementia in the UK.
- Social care is either publicly funded (£4.5 billion; 17.2% of the overall total cost of dementia) or privately funded (£5.8 billion; 22.9% of the total).
- The **cost of unpaid care for people with dementia** in the UK is £11.6 billion, working out as **44% of the total cost of dementia**.
- The total number of **unpaid hours of care** provided to people with dementia in the UK is **1.34 billion**.
- £111 million is spent on other dementia costs



Our approach to using life stories

- Helping people tell and capture their stories so that those supporting them **understand them better**
- Enables the right support to be provided **now as well as future** planning, based on what matters to the individual
- More than reminiscence
- Any format – whatever suits the person
- Builds **relationships** based on empathy, dignity and mutual respect
- Recognises the **uniqueness** of individuals
- Provides a common platform for **meaningful communication**
- Embraces the **value of the whole person**
- Enables individuals to stay **connected in local communities** and be **active citizens**

Using life stories with family carers

- Piloted in 2012 as part of our initial 'Your Story Matters' DH funded work
- Refined it working with family carers in Tyne & Wear
- Have now run a number 'Family Carers Matter' programmes with family carers
 - Tyne & Wear
 - Rochdale
 - Halton Borough Council
 - Liverpool
 - Mersey Care NHS Trust
 - Greater Manchester NHS Foundation Trust
 - Hartlepool Carers Centre

Impact of using life stories from family carers

“Day 1 (of the course) was a catalyst, an impetus to do something – not go and interrogate Dad & get frustrated. I used to teach primary school children & encouraged them to keep a book (not a diary) to put down how they felt that day. We should go further & encourage to write down as you grow older – for the benefit of their children.”

“Dad was admitted to hospital and I filled out ‘This is Me’ whilst there. It struck me as a good idea and it has been well thumbed. It was fortuitous that it happened then and I joined this course so it’s sunk in. It enthused me to do Dad’s life story but so much more I will do my own (aged 67) for my children. It’s been a blessing to me that it occurred (the course) when it did when Dad was most in need.”

Impact of using life stories from family carers

“It felt very emotional, looking back at how the person was (before dementia). We’re all coming out feeling happy & better for it (the course) even if we had our ups and downs.”

“I’m hoping now I’ve got more things to talk to Harold about. I’m three quarters way through his life story already (but had stalled) so I’ll get on with it now. Now perhaps I’ll look again at him as my husband. Today reminded me of what I had; made me re-evaluate my thinking – he is still with me as my husband. I need to re-evaluate how I am with him. I visit him (in care home) on my way home from work when I’m stressed so I need to think about that. Today has been therapeutic; it’s brought me back to where I want to be.”

Impact of using life stories from family carers

“Talking to other people in a similar situation. Talk to family members but don’t tell them everything as it won’t help them so today has been valuable. Don’t feel on your own as there is a lot of support. At times I’ve got worked up when it builds up – recognising the need to look after yourself as well.”

“We should talk to our Mum’s and partners about their hopes and dreams. I’ve never given that any thought; only thought about the present and support to my Dad and give him respect and dignity. It never occurred to me that Mum may have dreams and hopes.”

Outcomes

- Increased confidence
- Re-ignited valued personal relationships between family carers and the person being cared for
- Improved sense of well being
- Reduced stress levels
- Reduced the feeling of isolation as a carer
- Improved ability to advocate for the person being cared for
- Enjoyable time with the person being cared for
- Sense of real connection and basis for communication
- Engaging other members of the family
- Sense of support and connection with other local family carers
- Increased resilience in their caring roles
- Increased ability to sensitively address behaviours, which may be challenging at times.

- So using stories creates the power to
 - Comfort
 - Connect
 - Destroy
 - Transform &
 - HealEveryone has a story to tell!

Bobette Buster – Do Story – How to tell your story so the world listens (2013)

Good practice

“Life story work has been promoted as a tool to enhance the care provided to older people, particularly those with dementia”

Rachel Thompson,
Dementia Project Lead, RCN



*Life Story work is a fantastic intervention which underscores a **person-centred** approach to the care of people with dementia, by allowing conversations to be initiated.*

Alistair Burns, National Clinical Director
for Dementia



Thank You!

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