IDENTITY REREFERENCING:
THE PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION OF A NARRATIVE MAP FOR THERAPEUTIC PRACTICE

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of

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In

Psychology

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ABSTRACT

This study introduces a map for a therapeutic conversation and assesses its effectiveness. The evidence for this proposal is provided by the study reported, in which a number of measures were taken to ascertain whether the therapeutic process promoted useful change in clients with maladaptive assumptive systems (problem narratives), and whether those changes were sustained over time. Nine clients out of a sample of twenty- three responded and all nine respondents reported sustained changes over a period of 6-24 months. Michael White (2007) suggests that Narrative maps are few, but are important so that processes used by clinicians do not become lost, and are at the same time able to be evaluated, assessed and implemented by other professionals. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was taken to analyse the adaptive client narratives that occurred immediately post therapy, and which remained 6 - 24 months later. A number of themes emerged that revealed a spiritual or 'wairua' approach to assuming the adaptive narrative, and there was evidence to suggest that a more resourceful state of beingness (adaptive identity) had emerged and evolved as a result this. The themes point to new initiatives for dealing with the problem emerging via the processes of innovative moments and adaptive reframing. The proposed therapeutic map appeared to be successful and empowering for the respondents as they came to understand they have the power to 'change the meaning they had assigned to the problem issue, without being defined by the problem issue as they were previously'. The individual seems to be able to perceive the problem through the eyes of the all-knowing self (higher self or spiritual self). When the meaning making and reconstruction emerges from within the client in this way, the writer proposes change is both significant and lasting- Identity Re-Referencing. It is not known if the clients who did not respond did so because they did not experience significant change, however the results would suggest that further research is warranted.

Keywords: Narrative Therapy, Reframing, Re-authoring, Identity Re-referencing, Map of Narrative Practice, Wairua (spirit)

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Ko te Amorangi ki Mua
May your God **bless** you and protect you for all time.

CANDIDATES DECLARATION

I, Vicky Scott, candidate for the degree of Masters of Psychology at Massey University Palmerston north, do hereby certify that:

1. The papers and thesis contained herein comprise entirely my original work towards the degree,
2. This work has not been submitted to any other university or institution for a higher degree,
3. The thesis including papers is less than 150 pages in length, excluding tables, references and appendices,
4. Ethics approval for the research was obtained by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 14/35.

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Vicky Scott

Table of Contents

Copyright ii

Abstract iii

Acknowledgements iv

Candidates Declaration vi

Table of contents vii

List of Tables xi

CHAPTER **PAGE**

1. Overview 1

Introduction 1

Theoretical Background 4

Systems Theory 5

Feminist Theories 6

Cross Cultural Investigations 7

Social Constructionism *8*

Deconstructionism 9

Knowledge, Power and Discourse 10

Narratology 12

2. Narrative Therapy 15

Principles of Narrative Therapy 15

Five basic Principles of Narrative Therapy 16

Externalizing Conversations 17

The Absent but Implicit 18

Maps of Narrative Practice 18

The Delphi Panel 18

3. Identity Rereferencing 20

The Focus of Inquiry and Its Significance 20

A Map for Therapeutic Conversation's 21

Innovative Moments (IM's) 22

Maladaptive Assumptive System 23

Adaptive Framework 24

Components of the Identity Rereferencing Therapeutic Map 24

Identity Rereferencing Therapeutic Map 27

Summary 28

Identity Rereferencing Client Map 30

4. Modes of Enquiry 31

Theoretical Framework of the Research 31

Reflexive Statement of Research and Personal Stance 31

Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Wha 32

Qualitative Research 32

Ethnography 33

Grounded Theory 34

Phenomenology 35

Hermeneutic phenomenology 37

Methodology 38

Plan of Inquiry 38

Procedural Flow Chart 42

Participants & Participant Selection 43

Cultural & Ethical Considerations 44

Analysis 44

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis 44

Beck's depression Inventory affective subscales 46

Wagner's Enneagram Psychology of Personality 46

The Enneagram and identity 46

5. Participant Narratives 49

Hannah: Recovering from rape 49

Hannah Data 50

Andrew: Failing at school 53

Andrew Data 54

Annie: Leaving a violent relationship 57

Annie Data 58

Sarah: Self sacrificing, playing the martyr 60

Sarah Data 60

Mary: Leaving a violent relationship 63

Mary Data 63

Deborah: Long term depression 67

Deborah Data 68

Veronica: Grief 71

Veronica Data 72

Walter : Self worth 74

Walter Data 75

Francis : Self worth 78

Francis Data 78

6. Interpretation and Findings 82

A note on Reflexivity, Honesty and Integrity 82

Naïve Reading: First Understandings 83

Emerging Maladaptive Themes 83

Emerging Adaptive Themes 84

Structural Analysis 86

A: At time of therapy (6-24 months ago) 86

Sub-themes and Themes of Maladaptive Narratives 86

Sub-themes and Themes of Adaptive Narratives 87

B: Current responses 89

Sub-themes and Themes of Adaptive Narratives 89

C: Comparison of Initial and Current Adaptive Reframe Responses 91

Initial and Current Adaptive Narrative Themes 91

D: From Maladaptive to Adaptive Identity Reframes 93

Clients Reframes of Initial Maladaptive Identities 92

E: Spiritual (Wairua) Themes that emerged 94

Spiritual (Wairua) Themes that Emerged from Adaptive Themes (with reference to Table 4.1, p.46) 95

7. Discussion and Conclusion 97

Critical Interpretation and Reflections 97

Methodological Considerations 99

Conclusions 100

References **102**

Appendices **113**

Appendix A Declaration confirming content of digital version of thesis 115

Appendix B Information Sheet 116

Appendix C Participant Consent Form 119

Appendix D Confidentiality Sheet 120

Appendix E Problem Review Sheet 121

Appendix F Future Pace Guidelines 123

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Five Basic Principles of Effective Narrative Practice 16

Table 4.1 The Enneagram and Identity 46

Table 5.1 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Hannah 50

Table 5.2 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Andrew 54

Table 5.3 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Annie 58

Table 5.4 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Sarah 60

Table 5.5 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Mary 63

Table 5.6 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Deborah 68

Table 5.7 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Veronica 72

Table 5.8 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Walter 75

Table 5.9 Data from the 'Problem Review Sheets' Francis 78

Table 6.1 Emerging Maladaptive Themes 83

Table 6.2	Emerging Adaptive Themes	84
Table 6.3	Sub-themes and Themes of Maladaptive Narratives	86
Table 6.4	Sub-themes and Themes of Adaptive Narratives	89
Table 6.5	Initial and Current Adaptive Narrative Themes	91
Table 6.6	Clients Reframes of Initial Maladaptive Identities	93
Table 6.7	Spiritual (Wairua) Themes that Emerged from Adaptive Themes (with reference to Table 4.1, p.45)	95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Identity Re- Referencing Therapeutic Map	27
Figure 2	Identity Re- Re-Referencing Client Map (simplified)	30
Figure 3	Procedural Flow Chart	42