

Narrative & Solution-Focused Approaches

“An innovative Strategy of strengths based client-centred care in Public Health Nursing” .

**Toronto Public Health
Mental Health Team
June 15th, 2010**

Participants will gain an understanding of Toronto Public Health's (TPH) Narrative Solution Focused Approaches program developed by the Mental Health Team.

Participants will have an understanding of how NSFA provides a basis for building on clients' strengths.

Participants will learn about how the NSFA program impacts public health nursing on a practice level.

What do we mean by narrative?

- **Social Constructionism**

- **“Societies construct the ‘lenses’ through which their members interpret the world”**

Freedman & Combs (1996, p.16).

- **Post Modernism**

Why would public health nurses need to know about narrative approaches?

Traditional Problem Solving vs. NSFA approaches

Traditional Problem Solving

Assesses problems

Focus on: History, symptoms, frequency, hypothesis, prognosis

Solutions to match problem

Determine what the individual needs

Professional as expert, prescriptive

Determines when individual is non compliant

Narrative Approaches

Emphasizes collaboration, having a conversation rather than an interview

Listens to what the person's story is with a 'not knowing' approach: looks for exceptions, coping strategies, hidden resources, past successes, alternative stories

Identifies what the individual would find useful/helpful, co-developing goals

Uses the person's frame of reference/person's language

- History and context for the NSFA program
- Ongoing program development

- Staying open and tentative
- Staying in the not knowing/not making assumptions (Remaining curious)
- Starting Where The Individual Is At
- Looking for and build on strengths
- Staying Client-Centred in Conversations
- ‘Thinking small’ & ‘going slow’
- Engaging in Self Reflective Practice

Assumptions of NSFA

- Realities are socially constructed
- The client is the expert in their own life
- The 'problem' is the problem (not the person)
- Nothing is perfect
- Change is constant
- If it's working, don't fix it
- If it doesn't work, try something different

- Over 45 Workshops delivered to staff
- Workshops delivered to Managers
- Workshops delivered to external agencies when appropriate
- Integrated into the Mental Wellness Assessment (MWA) Tool used with clients
- Provides the theoretical foundation for the team's consultation approach as well as the Community Crisis Response team's approach
- Formative evaluation results shared across the organization

- The Mental Health Promotion Team actively work with staff to keep narrative approaches alive in practice through:
 - **Consultations (clients, team building)**
 - **Facilitating quarterly NSFA reviews: working in challenging situations**
 - **Attending team meetings and doing case reviews/education**
 - **Attending professional narrative workshops**
 - **Developing and delivering additional NSFA workshops based on PHN needs (i.e. depression, trauma, conflict resolution)**
 - **Documenting joint home visits to reflect assumptions of NSFA on the MWA**

The usefulness of 'Narratives' in Public Health Nursing Practice

People make sense of their lives through telling their stories.

We can better understand the client by listening to their story.

By telling only one 'story' the person has left others out. What are the alternative stories that might be helpful to hear?

- NSFA program integrates RNAO Best Practice Guidelines (Establishing Therapeutic Relationships/Client Centred Care)
- Knowledge Transfer to various levels of organization and beyond (i.e., multidisciplinary staff /Managers/Directors)
- Incorporated in the TPH BPG Woman Abuse practice guidelines (taking a client-centred approach)-as part of the RNAO BPSO

Integration of CHNAC Standards of Practice Using NSFA

Narrative approaches are useful in PHN integration of the CHNAC Standards of Practice through:

- **Building relationships**
- **Use of multiple types of knowledge to have helpful conversations with clients**
- **Recognizing the impact of the socio political environment on clients in helping to empower them**

- Survey to assess needs of past and current participants
- Development of an 'Advanced' NSFA workshop series
- Policy/Guideline development to integrate in TPH practice

Thank you for your participation

Questions/Feedback

“Nothing feels so good as being understood, not evaluated or judged. When I try to share some feeling aspect of myself and my communication is met with evaluation, reassurance, distortion of my meaning, I know what it is to be alone.”

Carl Rogers, Psychologist

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