The Therapeutic Use of Metaphor - Trauma
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Metaphor - A definition
Greek word *metapherein*, to transfer.
Metaphor is defined in Costello (1991, p.52) as the “application of a word or phrase to an object or concept it does not literally denote, suggesting comparison to that object or concept”. *Meta* - above/over, *phorien* - to carry from one place to another.

"There is more wisdom in your body than the deepest philosophy"
Nietzsche

van der Kolk
Van der Kolk (1994;2003) embraces new therapies that incorporate action rather than words. These include: Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), somatic therapies, movement therapies, theatre groups and martial arts.

Whilst controversial, he believes that the less language oriented are appropriate as the body stores traumatic memories and verbal therapies will not release the victim from this condition.
He states that talking through the traumatic memory is essential for those who were too young to understand, those who weren’t believed or those who want to make sense of what happened.

Neuroimaging scans reveal that when someone remembers a traumatic event the left frontal cortex shuts down and areas of the RH which are responsible for emotion and danger light up, (Solomon & Heide, 2005). Therefore the person has trouble thinking and speaking. This links to Lee & Dapretto (2006) and the engagement of the RH with metaphor.

Research

• The results of a large study conducted among Southern Sudanese refugees in Cairo, Egypt. “Illness talk” and body metaphors are the focus...The use of embodied metaphors to understand and cope with their current and past traumatic experiences was echoed in narratives that were non-illness related. Understanding the role that the body plays in experience and communication within a given cultural context is crucial for physicians and others assisting refugees.” Cocker (2004, p.15).

David Grove

• The late New Zealand Counselling Psychologist

• Pioneered the use of metaphor specifically in counselling and psychotherapy in the 1980’s, particularly for working with clients who have suffered a trauma. Child abuse – Vietnam vets.

• Found that his clients often used personal embodied metaphors to describe their painful emotional states and traumatic memories (knots in stomach etc).

• Discovered that the metaphors had form and structure that had a consistent internal logic.

GROVIAN MODEL OF TRAUMA RESOLUTION - DVD & DISCUSSION

BREAK

Origination discussion
Clean Language

• Clean Language offers a template for questions that are as free as possible of the questioner's inferences.

• Clean Language also is the basis of symbolic modelling, a stand-alone method and process for psychotherapy and coaching, which was developed by James Lawley and Penny Tompkins. - Clean Workshop

Clean Questions

• Is there anything else about that?
• What kind of ....is that?
• Where is.....?
• Is it on the inside or the outside?
• What happens next?
• What's happening now?

Experiential - Metaphor "Light"

• JDL example

• In pairs - asking clean questions
• "What would you like to have happen?"
• Identify & develop the metaphor.
• Confess it's strength.
• Externalise (if possible.)
• "Client" "I feel strange", Clean reply "where do you feel strange" or "Strange like what?"

CASE STUDIES - finding your own way

• Examples
• *Knife in Chest*
• *Monster inside*
• *Cults*
• *Whale in the*
• *Your examples?*

Questions & Discussion?
Affect Bridge
Experiential

"The Coach"

Any Questions?

References/Further Reading


References/Further Reading


Warning

Not the universal answer

Some clients don't get it - AS/BPD

Time is needed in the session & before you consider working this way?

Can’t be forced on clients, needs to fall on ‘fertile ground’.

Best if it is a co-constructed and mutually developed metaphor?

However...can be very positive & flexible in terms of usage
ANY QUESTIONS?