



2026 Conference of Narrative Therapy and Community Work

“Discovering Resistance, Building Community”

Thursday, Friday and Saturday July 9th to 11th

With pre-conference workshops on

Wednesday July 8th

University of Liverpool Teaching Hub 502, Off Mount
Pleasant, Liverpool

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Welcome Letter

Welcome to Liverpool!

The official history of Liverpool goes back to 1207 when King John decided to grant the area a Royal Charter. Because of its docklands, Liverpool became over the centuries a key financial centre, along with Bristol in the 17th century during the Atlantic Slave trade. By the late 19th century 40% of all the world's trade was passing thru Liverpool's docks.

Currently, the city boasts more museums than any other city in the UK outside of London. These days

Liverpool is noted for its musical heroes, like the Beatles as well as its popular football teams, Liverpool, and Everton. It is a city that has a strong political history devoted to social justice and championing the causes of the impoverished and the working class. A multicultural city for many centuries, Liverpool has the UK's oldest Chinatown and Liverpool's Black community is among the oldest in Europe, with records detailing a consistent Black presence in Liverpool going back to 1717.

Welcome to the Narrative Therapy and Community Work Conference, 2026!

It's great to be back in Liverpool. Following our 2024 conference, it feels especially meaningful to return here, as it was 23 years ago that the UK's first Narrative Conference was held—and it took place right here in this city.

Working with the Dulwich Centre, the Centre for Narrative Practice took on the enormous task of not only introducing narrative approaches to others, but of doing so in ways that remained consistent with the beliefs, principles, and understandings that guide our work with individuals and communities.

We have designed this conference, as well, with consideration for those beliefs, principles and understandings we share as Narrativists. Whether we are working as therapists or as community workers, we are informed by a range of ideas we hold in common and practices which flow from them. These include Feminism, Intersectionality, a commitment to the inclusion of minoritized and subjugated voices, a commitment to working across barriers rooted in sexism, racism, heteroconformity, transphobia, social class, disability, and xenophobia. We attempt to be mindful of issues of privilege and power, locally and globally.

This is not a place for sharp cornered debates or heated arguments. With current events at a fever pitch we intend that this place, this space be a centre for peace, justice, and mercy.

This year's conference is themed around discovering resistance and building community. As members of the Conference Collective, together with our advisory group, we have journeyed far to arrive here today, guided by a shared intention of building community.

We hope that you will find opportunities to explore resistance and that the conference proves to be warm, engaging, informative, transformative, and enjoyable.

We will be inviting you to take part in several collective practices, these will be introduced in the opening and offer a beautiful opportunity to participate in real time, linking lives throughout the conference.

From The Conference Collective

Location and Directions

By Road

From M62 at the end of the Motorway continue straight ahead onto Edge Lane (A5080 then A5047) and follow signs for Liverpool City Centre and the University.

The postcode to use for satnav is L3 5TR.

By Train

The nearest Railway Station is Liverpool Lime Street.

The nearest mainline railway station is Liverpool Lime Street, which is approximately 1km (0.6 miles) or 15 minutes walk from the University.

Buses to the campus run from Elliot Street which is close to the station. Liverpool Central or Edge Hill Merseyrail

Train stations are within a similar travel distance.

[For more information on Merseyrail please click here \(opens new tab\).](#)

[For more information on National Rail Enquiries please click here \(opens new tab\).](#)

For more information and updates on public transport in the Liverpool City Region, please see the Merseytravel website.

[To view the web page described above click here \(opens in new tab\).](#)

Car parking

There is no visitor parking at the site but there are 3 areas for visitor parking:-

1. There is a small car park located on Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5TB adjacent to the 502 HUB.

There are 5 designated Blue Badge parking bays available and clearly marked.

Parking charges apply for all except Blue Badge holders and payment machines are located at the front of the car park and at the main entrance to the car park/502 Teaching Hub. Payment cannot be made by phone.

2. The crypt of the Metropolitan Cathedral across from the Hub has an underground car park which is open to all visitors during Cathedral opening hours only. There are also spaces for disabled drivers which are clearly marked. Parking charges are £1.50 for 1 hour; £3.00 for 3 hours; £6.00 all day. The height restriction for the Cathedral Car Park is 7 foot 6 inches. Postcode is L3 5TQ
3. There is a large NCP car park called Paddington NCP. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A multi-storey car park with 1249 spaces. Elm Grove, L7 3FA

Pre-Conference Workshops – Wednesday 8th July

1. Full day 10.00am – 4.00pm, Wednesday July 8th, Jill Freedman and Gene Combs

Discovering Resistance, Building Community: Inspirations from First Nations, Rwandan, and Prison Abolitionist sources

The work of the Action Therapy team, in Winnipeg, Canada, narrative practitioners in Rwanda, and Prison-Industrial-Complex Abolitionists in the U.S. have inspired our narrative practice. In this workshop we hope to describe what each of these groups gives value to and how that informs their work and lives. We will tell some stories describing how these ideas transport us and contribute to our work as narrative practitioners and community members. Through reflection and structured group conversations we hope to host an interactive exploration about how these ideas offer hope and sustenance as we develop narrative practices suited to the specifics of our diverse communities.

2. Half day 2.00pm – 4.30pm, Wednesday July 8th, Helen Grau:

A Narrative Approach to parents who are grieving a Child – how to help the bereaved to develop and grow a continuing present relationship to the deceased.

For decades conventional grief therapy and the accompanying social practices for grieving in our Western Society has been shaped by Freud's grief hypothesis to reduce the deceased to a set of memories in the past and working towards the acceptance of letting go of the relationship. This often leaves the bereaved parents to suffer the total loss of the relationship. A loss that makes it even harder and more painful to navigate the territory of grief and life. When we lose someone deeply significant, we cannot simply end the relationship; *we cannot not relate*. When what we are allowed to relate to is restricted to static memories of the past, the relationship becomes painful, as every memory speaks to what have been lost, a reminder of the absence – of what can no longer be.

In this workshop I will demonstrate a narrative approach to grief. One that views people whose grief does not subside but continues to grow, as a testimony of protest to let go of the relationship, longing for the deceased felt presence in their continuing life.

I will demonstrate by use of transcription, to show how these responses can be recognised and dignified as a reflection of parents' preferred identity and create openings to a continuing and active relationship to the deceased child. I will demonstrate how we can construct those relationship through delicate questions that allows the parents to sense the child's physical presence in the relationship and experience their child as their closest ally in how to navigate in their ongoing life. This approach reveals how grief changes as they get access to a continuing relationship. This approach to grief will be useful in responding not only to parents but people who are grieving a close relationship.

3. Full day 10.00am – 4.00pm, Wednesday July 8th, Emma Highfield and Suzy MacKechnie

Reconnecting with Narrative Ideas.

This practical interactive workshop will provide an introduction to the basics of narrative therapy whereby participants can become familiar with or refresh key foundational concepts including non-structuralism and Bruner's text metaphor. There will be opportunity to learn about core narrative maps including externalising conversations, and re-authoring, via live demonstrations, video excerpts and skills practice.

Suzy and Emma are aiming for a friendly and supportive day that will help people connect with core narrative ideas prior to hearing about wider applications and innovations during the main conference.

Timetable – Day 1 Thursday 9th July

Timetable Day 1: Thursday 9 th July					
08.00 – 09.00	Registration, Tea and Coffee				
09.00 – 09.15	Opening and Welcome Emma Highfield and Danny Angus				
09.15 – 09.45	Planting Seeds for eco-remembering Expanding our club of life Estelle Asselin and Susanna Wilford				
09.45 – 10.25	Keynote: Hope and determination in the face of the gathering storm. Jill Freedman and Gene Combs				
10.25 – 11.00	Plenary 1: From autistic and isolated to being important. My Story of how I became a young leader and how it helped me stay motivated. Nathan Stanton ‘My Life My Choice’				
11.00 – 11.30	Tea/Coffee				
11.30 – 13.00	Morning Workshops				
<u>Workshop 1 – TR1</u> The Wonderfulness Interview: Helping Children Show Up with Their Gifts and Magic—and Bringing What You Learn into Future Conversations: Helle Spure	<u>Workshop 2 – TR4</u> The Art of Resistance — From Story to Stage: Mo Cohen	<u>Workshop 3 – TR3</u> Two community projects with people with learning disabilities to explore experience of harassment and uncovering stories of resistance: Paula Grant, Lisha Shiel, Sandra Baum	<u>Workshop 4 –TR5</u> Give Sorrow words: working with older people to give voice to what is precious in supporting helpful conversations around trauma and loss: Rosslyn Offord; Polly Kaiser; Jane Grant	<u>Workshop 5 – TR6</u> Reflecting on Individualism in Narrative Therapy: From Preferred Identity to Social Contribution: Marie-Nathalie Beaudoin	<u>Workshop 6 – TR7</u> From I-identity to We-identity: A CMM-informed Narrative Approach. Creating antidotes to life diminishing stories of identity with children, adults and their communities Rachel Ames and Glenda Fredman
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch				
14.00 – 14.35	Plenary 2: From Imbeleko to O.U.T.T.R.A.G.E.D: African Indigenous Wisdom and the Decolonisation of Narrative Practice Ncazelo Ncube				
14.35-15.10	Plenary 3: Freedom from Torture: experience in the therapy room Borry Jarju, Jeremie Diatapakola				

15.10-15.40	Tea/Coffee				
15.40-17.10	Afternoon Workshops				
<u>Workshop 1 – TR1</u> Making Sense Together: Sharing Complex Information with Children, Families, and Wider Systems: Dr Chandri K Gedara, Dr Lizzie Neely, and Dr Sophie Hills	<u>Workshop 2 – TR4</u> Building bridges between faith/community networks and a Family Therapy training course: attending to marginalised narratives: Gillian Hughes, Heleni Andreadi, Sofia Robinson, Sylvia Metzer	<u>Workshop 3 – TR3</u> Responding to grief-protesting cultural norms of letting go by growing and cultivating the strength and power of the relationship to the deceased Helene Grau	<u>Workshop 4 –TR5</u> From Separation to Connection: Narrative Practice in Family Reunification Work: Michael Galbraith and Hasan Waheed (Just Psychology)	<u>Workshop 5 – TR6</u> 'Community Hackathons: A collective narrative practice for shared challenges': Rachel Sparrow, Abi Davison -Jenkins and Jaymie Huckridge	<u>Workshop 6 – TR7</u> Discourse maps as collective narrative practice: Maria Qureshi and Miloni Patel
17.10-18.10	Break and refreshments				
18.10-18.45	Plenary 4: Voices that Carry and Connect over Time. Judy Rathbone				
18.45-20.30	The Art of Resistance – Conference Performance facilitated by Mo Cohen				

Timetable – 2 Friday 10th July

Timetable Day 2: Friday 10 th July					
08.30-09.00	Registration, Tea and Coffee				
09.00-09.40	Keynote: The Relationship outlives Grief and its Discourses: Helene Grau				
09.40-10.15	Plenary 5: A guide to resistance and community: our queerzine James McParland and Jaymie Huckridge				
10.15-10.50	Plenary 6: Book Launch – Narrative Therapy and Older People Rosslyn Offord, Elizabeth Field and Polly Kaiser				
10.50-11.20	Tea/Coffee				
11.20-12.50	Morning Workshops				
<u>Workshop 1 – TR1</u> Standing with Mothers: Narrative responses to norms of motherhood: Kate Lindley	<u>Workshop 2 – TR4</u> Narrative Couple Therapy with couples and Conflict (including video over lunch) Mark Hayward Helper: Amanda	<u>Workshop 3 – TR3</u> Ending as celebration: co-creating ‘Graduations’: Lucy Casdagli, Halina Flannery, James McParland	<u>Workshop 4 – TR5</u> Travelling across unfamiliar and polarising territories: Resisting assumptions, building communities: Sara Portnoy, Charlotte Valentino, and Gretchen Siglar	<u>Workshop 5 -TR6</u> Bringing together the wonderful worlds of dementia care and narrative therapy: Adventures in community and clinical practices: Elizabeth Field & Rosslyn Offord	<u>Workshop 6 – TR7</u> Rhythms of Resistance: Building “Mental Health Wellbeing Voices” KTV Songlist Community: Franklin Choi Chin Fai
12.50-13.50	Lunch				
13.50-14.35	Afternoon Workshops				
<u>Workshop 1 – TR1</u> Weaving a sense of coherence with children, youngsters and adults after trauma in childhood: Sabine Vermeire	<u>Workshop 2 – TR4</u> Pirates, Sea Monsters, and Brave Sailors: Exploring Safety and Security Through the Sea Voyage Interview: Szymon Chrzastowski	<u>Workshop 3 – TR3</u> From the Known and familiar to the possible to know: 30 years of learning and teaching Narrative therapy Amanda Redstone.	<u>Workshop 4 – TR5</u> The Waters We Swim In: Fish Tank Mapping as a Narrative Practice Lindsay Hampson	<u>Workshop 5 -TR6</u> What’s in a name? Sharing Stories of our Lives Rachel Marfleet and Nicky Gorb	<u>Workshop 6 – TR7</u> A Psycho-spiritual approach for recovery in post war Armenia for collective trauma: Nazeli Kirakosyan
2.35-4.05(Tea and coffee during 3.15pm) – 3.45pm	Poster Plenary and Networking session Hosted by Mariangels Ferrer and Nathalie Bond With tea and coffee				

<p>Poster 1 Integrating Narrative Therapy into paediatric pathways for restricted eating Emma Girling</p>	<p>Poster 2 It could be the slight little crack in injustice’s grip on people’s lives and identities”. Exploring how narrative-informed practitioners draw on creativity Jessica Stubbs</p>	<p>Poster 3 Engaging Religious Tension to Facilitate LGBTQ+ Family Acceptance: Solution-Focused Narrative Therapy with Christian Parents Jo Angeli Zertuche-Kasper</p>	<p>Poster 4 Stories of Suffering in Bibliotherapy: Narrative Possibilities of ‘Difficult’ Texts Mariana Casale</p>	<p>Poster 5 Identity, Belonging, and Resilience in Indigenous Students’ University Journeys in Chile Marta Alejandra Silva Fernandez</p>	<p>Poster 6 Weaving Narrative Therapy into Biomedical Care of Children & Young People (CYP) with Clinical Voice Conditions (Dysphonia) Nicky Gorb</p>
<p>Poster 7 Retelling strength and hope: Collective documentation with families living with drug use Sharon Leung and Angela Tsun On-Kee</p>	<p>Poster 8 The C Factor Group - Building Community with People Going Through Cancer Sue Gibbons</p>	<p>Poster 9 Co-creating safe spaces: narrative cards for professionals Mariangels Ferrer</p>	<p>Poster 10 Nourishing your connection to narrative: The Manchester supervision group Hugh Fox, Lisa Nicholson, Rhian Hughes, Joanne Murray & Mariangels Ferrer</p>	<p>Poster 11 Narrative Family Therapy in Rebuilding Patient's Identity in Palliative Care Joanne Leung</p>	<p>Poster 12 Reclaiming the Self, Together Against Sexual Violence. Pang Fung Yee (Frances)</p>
<p>Poster 13 A psychospiritual narrative approach to support recovery from collective trauma. Nazeli Kirakosyan</p>	<p>Poster 14 Planting Seeds for eco-remembering Expanding our club of life Estelle Asselin and Susanna Wilford</p>	<p>Poster 15 Who is Holding the Family Stress Ball? Re-authoring the “Problem Child” referral in Narrative-Systemic Therapy Sophia Churney</p>			
4.05-4.40	<p>Plenary 7: A Collaborative journey with young people and their significant others in responding to internet addiction Sharon Leung</p>				
4.40-5.25	<p>Plenary 8: From Struggle to Strength: Resilience at the Intersection of Faith, Race, and Community David Bussue and SACMHA</p>				
5.30	<p>Close</p>				

Timetable – Day 3 Saturday 11th July

Timetable Day 3: Saturday 11 th July				
08.30-09.00	Registration, Tea and Coffee			
09.00-09.40	Keynote: Understanding narratives that hurt. Alexis Quinn			
09.40-10.15	Plenary 9: Positioning Theory and Maps of Narrative Practice (online) Ovidiu Gavrilovici			
10.15-10.45	Tea/Coffee			
10.45-12.15	Morning Workshops			
Workshop 1 – TR6 Narrato: entering the space between game and therapy. Luc Van Den Berg and Sabine Vermeire	Workshop 2 – TR4 Repotting: Creativity, Evidence and Practice Sue Colegrave	Workshop 3 – TR3 Facilitating cultural change in schools - and other group settings: Martin Nevers	Workshop 4 – TR1 Narrative practice at the edge of understanding: Responding to unshared experiences and unusual stories: Helena Rose	
12.15-12.50	Plenary 10: Voices from the margins, collective art practices as social action of resistance and connection Sabine Vermeire			
12.50-13.00	Closing and thanks			

Key Note & Plenary Speakers' Bios

- **Emma Highfield**

Emma Highfield became enchanted with narrative ideas during a workshop delivered by Hugh Fox as part of her Foundation in Systemic Family Therapy in 2014. This led to her excitement to know more and her journey to learn, immerse herself in the ideas, develop her practice and become a narrative therapist. Emma completed the Diploma in Narrative Therapy with Int in 2021.

Emma is a registered nurse in mental health, worked in the NHS for over 30 years & now for the human rights restraint reduction network charity. She weaves narrative approaches into her work in systems where stories of disorder are dominant, distress is pathologised and teams become saturated with hopelessness and fatigue. Emma is passionate about reducing restrictive practices, helping those who are out of sight (in terms of how they are cared for) and supporting the linking of lives and amplification of voices standing against exclusion, marginalisation and human rights breaches.

Emma also delivers a small amount of work outside of the NHS in teaching, supervision, and narrative therapy. She is honoured to be part of the Conference Collective and to have recently taken up a new role working for the Institute of Narrative Therapy.

- **Danny Angus**

Danny Angus is Associate Director for the National HOPE(S) Programme at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, where he provides strategic leadership to drive a national shift towards human rights-based, least restrictive care.

A qualified mental health nurse, Danny has dedicated his career to reducing restrictive practices and improving outcomes for people experiencing distress. He has played a key role in implementing a No Force First approach at organisational level, transforming culture, and clinical practice to prioritise safety, dignity, and therapeutic engagement.

Danny specialises in the proactive, trauma-informed support of people with complex and diverse mental health needs. He is co-author of the HOPE(S) clinical model of care, an evidence-based, recovery-focused framework designed to reduce long-term segregation. The model is now implemented across health settings nationally, supporting services to deliver sustainable, rights-based improvement.

Internationally, Danny has worked as a consultant with the World Health Organization, delivering QualityRights training and supporting system-wide service transformation across Europe to eliminate coercion and reduce restrictive interventions. Danny is a passionate advocate for co-production, championing the voices of people who use services and their families to shape compassionate, effective care.

- **Estelle Asselin**

Estelle Asselin was born on the shore of the longest river of France. Almost 20 years ago, she crossed the Channel and settled along the banks of the Thames, in London. And for about a decade, she has been working there as a counsellor in private practice, integrating nature into her work with individuals and groups.

- **Susanna Wilford**

Susanna Wilford's migration to New Zealand in pursuit of learning permaculture runs parallel with an important thread that saw her move from her first career in theatre to narrative therapy; tracing the principle of supporting people in the construction of new possibilities for identity and relationships. Returning to the banks of the Thames 20 years on, her work continues.

- **Jill Freedman and Gene Combs**

Live in the Chicago area, are co-directors of Evanston Family Therapy Center. They teach locally and internationally, and have co-authored three books including Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred realities, and more than 30 papers and book chapters. They have been practicing narrative therapy and supervision, as well as consulting to schools and social service agencies, for 35 years. Jill and Gene are Honorary Associates of the Taos Institute, and they were awarded the Innovative Contribution to Family Therapy Award of the American Family Therapy Academy.

- **Nathan Stanton**

Nathan is a trustee of My Life My Choice, a 100% user led, self advocacy charity for adults with learning differences and/or autism in Oxfordshire. He is a co-trainer delivering Oliver McGowan Training, an active campaigner for disability rights and he helps to run both the MLMC Games Club and Walk and Talk Group.

- **Ncazelo Ncube**

Ncazelo Ncube-Mlilo is an internationally renowned psychologist and narrative therapist based in Johannesburg, South Africa. With a degree in Psychology from the University of Zimbabwe and a master's from the University of Melbourne, she has dedicated her career to developing culturally sensitive mental health interventions. She co-developed the Tree of Life methodology in 2006, a narrative therapy approach now used in over 40 countries globally. Ncazelo is the founder of PHOLA, which delivers community-based healing and resilience programs and corporate packages to enhance team cohesion.

Her leadership has earned global recognition: in April 2025 she won the People's Choice Award for Non-Profit and Social Enterprise, the Women in Therapy and Counselling Services Award, and was runner-up for the Golden Heart Award at the Women Changing the World Awards in London. She will also host the Women Changing the World Global Awards – South Africa.

- **Borry Jarju**

Borry Jarju a former client and volunteer of Freedom from Torture, who joined as a staff member in 2021 as a Service User Engagement Coordinator. In this role, I have led initiatives that bring survivors together to inform, co-design, and improve services. Currently transitioning into a Peer Practitioner role, delivering Narrative Exposure Therapy under clinical supervision while continuing to support clients' engagement work.

I was a teacher by background having taught for fifteen years before moving to the UK in 2010. I started as a client in Freedom from Torture in 2011-14 and later founded the PEER SUPPORT NETWORK where Ex clients support each other.

- **Jeremie Diatapakola**

Jeremie Diatapakola is a former service user of Freedom from Torture who joined the organisation in 2018 as a Service User Engagement Coordinator. In this role, he has led initiatives that bring survivors together to inform, co-design, and improve services. He is currently transitioning into a Peer Practitioner role, delivering stabilisation work under clinical supervision while continuing to support clients' engagement work. Drawing on both lived and professional experience, Jeremie has developed over 14 years of expertise working with interpreters across one-to-one and group therapy settings. He co-authored a chapter titled "Service Users' Perspectives on Receiving Talking Therapy Through Interpreters" in the second edition of Working with Interpreters in Mental Health (Tribe & Thompson, 2026). Jeremie holds a BSc in Criminology and Sociology with

Quantitative Methods (2021) and an MSc in Applied Quantitative Methods (2023) from Manchester Metropolitan University. He is also a pastor and human rights activist, passionate about supporting others and improving people's lives.

- **Judy Rathbone**

I have worked for many years within CAMHS in the North West as a Family Therapist and Systemic Supervisor. I'm currently retiring / 're-wiring' to embrace regular holidays in Scotland and a new identity as a potter! I bring with me to the conference the voices of my 35 year old son and my husband who lived with MND until 2009.

- **Mo Cohen** is a narrative coach and transformational dramaturg who works at the intersection of autobiographical theatre and personal transformation. He has a PhD in solo autobiographical theatre and teaches MA students at the Institute for Contemporary Music Performance. Mo has successfully facilitated solo autobiographical theatre workshops at the previous two Institute of Narrative Therapy conferences, exploring narrative approaches to self-transformation through performance and embodied storytelling.

- **Helen Grau Kristensen** is a Narrative Therapist who for years has studied and developed Narrative Practice, especially re-membering practices where she has worked with families who experience and live with grief, suffering from the loss of very close and significant relationships. Her work with parents who lives with grief has for years been international known for it's significant development of re-membering conversations. She has been trained by Michael White, Maggie Carey, David Nyland, Stephen Madigan and Lorraine Hedtke. She has a private practice in Copenhagen Denmark, and has been teaching Narrative Therapy at Copenhagen University. She is currently part of the teaching faculty at Vancouver School for Narrative Therapy, where she teaches re-membering conversations. She has held keynotes and workshops at International Narrative Conferences.

- **James McParland**

James McParland (he/him) is a consultant clinical psychologist working with people living with health conditions at University College London Hospital. He is interested in the ways anti-oppressive practice and social justice can be foregrounded in professional healthcare contexts. His practice includes group work, to create connections between people and build community

- **Jaymie Huckridge**

Jaymie Huckridge (he/him) is a clinical psychologist working across paediatric healthcare and specialist adult gender services. His work draws on narrative therapy to explore how community, identity, and collective action can support people to resist problem-saturated stories. He is particularly interested in anti-oppressive practice, queer wellbeing, and creating groups and resources that help people build connection, belonging, and hope

- **Rosslyn Offord**

Rosslyn Offord grew up in Nottingham and trained as a clinical psychologist in Sheffield. She was drawn to working with older people through the passion of older adult psychologists and her personal experience of dementia. Narrative therapy has offered her a collaborative way of working with people living with dementia, highlighting their retained skills and knowledge. Her desire to champion this led to the publication of Narrative Therapy and Older People, which she co authored and edited. Rosslyn lives on the south Wales coast, where she loves walking and sea swimming, and works as the clinical psychology lead for dementia in Cardiff and the Vale.

- **Elizabeth Field**

Elizabeth Field grew up in Ouagadougou and London. As a teenager she noticed the marginalisation of both younger and older people in her community which led to friendships with women in their 80s. She became a clinical psychologist working with older people and those with dementia, then discovered narrative therapy. She loves listening to people telling stories in ways that make them stronger and more engaged with life. She co-edited Narrative therapy and Older People so more people could experience the hope this way of working can bring. She now lives and works in East Kent as a Lead for Psychological Practice.

- **Polly Kaiser**

Polly Kaiser is an old age clinical psychologist, retired from NHS, who works as a consultant and supervisor. She is a published author and advocate for older people. Her work focuses on ageing, mental health, identity, and lived experience. She has extensive experience facilitating reflective and creative group work, including workshops exploring storytelling, poetry, and narrative approaches to wellbeing and connection.

- **Sharon Leung**

Sharon is a narrative practitioner, researcher, teacher and supervisor. She served as the Director of the Centre for Youth Research and Practice at Hong Kong Baptist University until 2020, where she taught social work and narrative practice for many years. She first encountered narrative practice when Michael White gave an inspiring workshop in 2001 in Hong Kong. She then studied narrative at Dulwich Centre, Adelaide and the University of Melbourne. In the last two decades, Sharon has been particularly interested in collaborating with various NGOs to support indigenization of narrative practice in Hong Kong around issues of substance use, social withdrawal, special educational needs, prison rehabilitation and bereavement. Sharon is now based in the UK but continues to be involved in narrative practice and training in Hong Kong and China and is an associate faculty member at Vancouver School for Narrative Therapy.

In this plenary session about young people struggling with the label of 'internet addiction', Sharon and her colleague Angela will present how their project creates spaces where young people can explore their identity with confidence, embrace their individuality, and find their own sense of purpose in life together with their significant others. Sharon believes that every young person has a unique story worthy of being heard and respected. They deserve the opportunity to grow in an environment that values understanding, support and inclusion.

- **Angela Tsun On-Kee** is currently a narrative practitioner, researcher, trainer, and supervisor. She is also an International Faculty Member of the Dulwich Centre, and an Honorary Associate Professor at the University of Hong Kong.

In the mid-1990s, she began to question the counselling and family therapy theories she had been practicing and teaching, particularly the expert position of therapists. She therefore searched for something different. In 2001, Angela had the privilege of inviting Michael White to Hong Kong and learning from his open workshops and intensives. Since then, she fell in love with narrative ideas.

In the past 25 years, Angela has endeavoured to promote narrative ideas in Chinese communities. Besides the introductory course and intermediate course in narrative therapy, she developed the one-year certificate course in narrative practice in 2021 and the one-year intensive course in 2022. In 2025, the one-year intensive course was offered in mainland China. In the past 25 years, she has conducted workshops and courses in narrative practice for over 30 NGOs, universities, and government departments in Hong Kong, mainland China, Macao, and Taiwan. In addition, she has been enjoying the privilege of conducting and documenting narrative co-research with local NGOs.

- **Pastor David Bussue** is a respected faith leader, community advocate, and keynote speaker whose work sits at the intersection of ministry, mental health, wider adult social care, research, engagement, co-production and social justice. As Associate Pastor at the Church of God of Prophecy in Sheffield and an Ordained Minister, David's leadership is grounded in servant-hearted principles that inspire transformation in both church and community settings.

David serves as Chief Executive of the Sheffield African Caribbean Mental Health Association (SACMHA), where he champions culturally responsive mental health services and leads initiatives addressing critical issues such as Black male suicide and health inequalities. His voice is frequently sought in national conversations on poverty, wellbeing, and community empowerment.

Pastor Bussue's wider leadership includes his role as a national trustee within his denomination and his appointment as an Ecumenical Canon at Sheffield Cathedral—recognition of his commitment to unity, collaboration, and public service across Christian traditions.

A compelling and insightful speaker, he brings a unique blend of pastoral insight, executive leadership, and lived experience, challenging audiences to engage meaningfully with issues of faith, justice, and human flourishing.

- **Alexis Quinn**

Alexis Quinn is a former schoolteacher, professional athlete and author of two books: her groundbreaking memoir, *Unbroken*, and *Autistic & Expecting*, a guide for autistic parents to be. Alexis speaks on neurodivergence, trauma, restraint and mental well-being. She is a psychotherapist and works as Manager of the Restraint Reduction Network.

- **Ovidiu Gavrilovici** I am Ovidiu Gavrilovici, Ph.D., I am professor in psychology at "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi (UAIC), Romania and founding president of Psiterra Association. I teach counseling and narrative therapy in BA and MA academic programs and narrative therapy level one and two, via Psiterra Association; also collaborating with Hugh Fox (INT UK) in offering level three narrative therapy courses in Romania. Also, I am a private practitioner in clinical psychology, and I am supervisor and trainer in clinical psychology and narrative therapy. In the last three years I started to teach Qualitative Research Methods in our Doctoral School Program, and I started to reach out for more opportunities for learning and expanding teaching on this topic. In the last 10-15 years, I initiated small scale qualitative evaluation studies within social and psychological intervention projects in healthcare or in community and psychological services in my hometown, Iasi, Romania. The intersection between positioning theory and narrative work attracted my attention both from John Winslade's article published more than 10 years ago, and from the recent specialization in positioning theory and positioning analysis as a qualitative research method.
- **Sabine Vermeire** is member of the staff Interactie-Academie, a training and therapy centre in Antwerp, Belgium. She works as a trainer, psychotherapist and supervisor in Narrative, Systemic and Collaborative Therapy. She works with children, youngsters and families in multi-stress contexts and opens doors and windows of conversations in playful and creative ways when speaking becomes difficult. She is also associated trainer of The Institute of Narrative Therapy and Faculty member of Dulwich Centre.

Thursday Morning Workshops

1. The Wonderfulness Interview: Helping Children Show Up with Their Gifts and Magic—and Bringing What You Learn into Future Conversations: Helle Spure

This workshop invites participants into the practice of the wonderfulness interview, developed by David Marsten and David Epston, and explores what it can make possible for children and their families in therapy. Drawing on transcripts and presentations of amazing children and families, I will show how beginning conversations with the wonderfulness interview can gently shift understandings of children from problems or lacking influence toward children showing up in ways that reflect skills, agency, dignity, connection, and hope. The workshop also illustrates how therapists' positioning of children, questions and attention support families in moving from constraining stories toward preferred stories.

2. The Art of Resistance — From Story to Stage: Mo Cohen

There is an art to resistance - it requires imagination, courage, and the ability to re-story our lives in ways that reclaim agency and possibility. This workshop invites participants to create and perform their own stories of resistance through solo autobiographical theatre. Building on the success of previous conferences, we'll explore how embodied performance - combining short monologue, meaningful props, and movement - can become a powerful form of narrative re-authoring. During the morning session, participants will develop their individual pieces (1.5-3 minutes each), working with the raw materials of their own experiences of resistance. The art lies not just in what we resist, but in how we give it form, voice, and presence. Time outside the formal conference programme will allow for individual and ensemble development, rehearsal, and collaborative refinement of the work.

3. Two community projects with people with learning disabilities to explore experience of harassment and uncovering stories of resistance: Paula Grant, Lisha Shiel, Sandra Baum

People with learning disabilities (LD) are both marginalised and targeted through normative processes and operations of power. In response to this, developing means of resistance is often central to their lives, yet their stories are rarely heard. In this workshop, practitioners from an NHS LD service in South East London present two community narrative projects. The first challenges stigma through community education in schools and football clubs. The second, developed with Transport for London, supports people with LD to document experiences of harassment on public transport through

photography, art, and testimony culminating in a gallery exhibition. Drawing on Wade, Bronfenbrenner, CMM, and collective narrative practice, we explore how stories told at the margins can shift meaning at the centre.

4. Give Sorrow words: working with older people to give voice to what is precious in supporting helpful conversations around trauma and loss: Rosslyn Offord; Polly Kaiser; Jane Grant

Trauma is often unvoiced; ageism can silence further. Loss and trauma can be constructed and languaged differently by older people, who rarely use the language of 'trauma' and may have buried traumatic memories. Challenges in later life, including loss, illness and cognitive change, may reignite these. We will share our experience of telling stories in ways that make us stronger within this context. We will be bringing the voices of older people we have learned from to consider how discourses of ageing may intersect with experience of loss and trauma and creating opportunities to re-member older people in our lives.

5. Reflecting on Individualism in Narrative Therapy: From Preferred Identity to Social Contribution: Marie-Nathalie Beaudoin

This presentation invites practitioners to extend conversations beyond the common therapeutic ending focused on re-authoring preferred identity narratives. While immensely helpful, notions of "preferred identity" carry ties to individualism, a tendency difficult to avoid in Western contexts. Building on narrative therapy's emphasis on relational identities and social activism, practitioners can take an additional step by supporting the emergence of a more "magnanimous" version of clients (Beaudoin & Monk, 2024). Exploring clients' magnanimous inclinations expands possibilities for well-being, resonates with collectivistic cultures, and aligns practice with narrative therapy's commitment to addressing dominant discourses. A transcript and examples of guiding questions will also be shared.

6. From I-identity to We-identity: A CMM-informed Narrative Approach. Creating antidotes to life diminishing stories of identity with children, adults and their communities: Rachel Ames and Glenda Fredman

Our We-identity Daisy approach has emerged from our practice in public services, where we are frequently called to work with individuals and pulled towards internal understandings of self. Approaching identity as relational, distributed, performed and fluid, the Daisy has offered an antidote to individualized and potentially pathologizing ways of describing people's experience, opening opportunities to include wider networks of relationships. It has made a difference with children with disabilities, couples and families, having wider reach to supervision and consultation practices.

We will share examples of our personal stories and professional practice and give you a chance to practice and experience the We-identity Daisy approach.

Thursday Afternoon Workshops

1. Making Sense Together: Sharing Complex Information with Children, Families, and Wider Systems: Dr Chandri K Gedara, Dr Lizzie Neely, and Dr Sophie Hills

This workshop explores ways of transforming complex professional knowledge into child-friendly, collaborative conversations and documents. In work with children, families, and wider systems, practitioners often communicate assessments, formulations, diagnoses, and professional opinions using language that can feel overwhelming or silencing. Drawing on narrative practice, we will demonstrate approaches for translating complexity into developmentally accessible explanations, therapeutic documents, and collaborative summaries that highlight strengths and agency. Through experiential exercises, participants will practice adapting technical language into meaningful communication with children and families. The workshop aims to support ethical, relational knowledge-sharing that fosters clarity, hope, and shared understanding across family and professional contexts.

2. Building bridges between faith/community networks and a Family Therapy training course: attending to marginalised narratives: Gillian Hughes, Heleni Andreadi, Sofia Robinson, Sylvia Metzger

A project supporting Black and Asian communities within church and mosque settings has been running in two London boroughs providing systemic practice training to faith and community leaders in the hope that this would help marginalised communities - who are not well served by current systems - access mental health support. The idea came from within the community itself and the training, which was co-produced with Prudence Skynner, drew on faith and spiritual narratives that were significant for the clients accessing the service. The project is ongoing and there have been some inspiring stories from both clients and the trainers.

3. Responding to grief- protesting cultural norms of letting go by growing and cultivating the strength and power of the relationship to the deceased: Helene Grau

For years cultural understandings of grief, death and what constitute relationships, has made it complicated to grieve close relationships in Western society. Yet those complications have been rendered invisible as cultural and normative products. They have been internalized as reflections of deficits in individuals, pathologizing their grief.

Their love becomes symptoms of grief, rather than seen as actions of protest against the cultural demand of letting go.

In this workshop I will show through transcriptions how re-remembering conversations helps the bereaved to grow continuing and present relationship to the deceased – easing the complications of grieving.

I will demonstrate how questions can construct the deceased as an ally, allowing the deceased to continue to be active and present, helping and supporting the bereaved.

This workshop will demonstrate how we can balance the pain of grief, re-establish the deceased as an ally and create an entry point to create the experience of the deceased felt physical presence.

4. From Separation to Connection: Narrative Practice in Family Reunification Work: Michael Galbraith and Hasan Waheed

Just Psychology's early intervention/prevention offer aims to support families navigating the complex emotional and relational difficulties of reunification after periods of separation caused by serial migration. Family reunion groups are multi-generational (parents and children) and multi-family. We use the Tree of Life to invite families to reflect on strengths, challenges, hopes, and shared values while negotiating new dynamics in an unfamiliar cultural context. The groups foster connection between family members as well as other families with similar experiences allowing for a collective supportive space. We hope to share the learning from the project and present a culturally competent way of working across cultures.

5. Community Hackathons: A collective narrative practice for shared challenges: Rachel Sparrow, Abi Davison -Jenkins and Jaymie Huckridge

In this workshop, we introduce the Community Hackathon - a creative collective narrative practice inspired by the hackathons of the tech industry, where communities come together to pool their knowledge and skills to create responses to a shared challenge. We'll share how the practice works, its narrative therapy underpinnings, and the communities and connections that have grown from it, before taking you on a gallery tour of past creations. Then it's your turn to experience a Community Hackathon first-hand, tackling a challenge suggested by conference attendees, and drawing on the collective wisdom and experience of everyone in the room. You'll leave with a practice ready to take back to your own context.

6. Discourse maps as collective narrative practice: Maria Qureshi and Miloni Patel

This workshop will share efforts our team has been making to work with groups in addressing and deconstructing discourses that challenge and limit the experiences of local communities. Our team drew on the discourse map developed by Walther, Redstone & Holmgren (2013) and adapted it for use in a group format and in community settings. This workshop will share the learning and adaptations to the map to consider discourses that affect groups and collectives of people. We will share examples from our work and will invite participants to try out the discourse map in a group setting.

Friday Morning Workshops

1. **Standing with Mothers: Narrative responses to norms of motherhood: Kate Lindley**

Standing with mothers often means standing against powerful cultural stories about what a “good mother” should be. Drawing on narrative therapy’s understandings of modern power, including how normalising judgement, surveillance and responsabilisation shape people’s lives, this 90 minute workshop invites practitioners to deconstruct contemporary norms of motherhood and examine how these norms can unintentionally organise our questions, documentation and institutional practices. Through brief input and skills based exercises, we will explore ways of centring mothers’ knowledges and developing richer, more supportive conversations that cultivate resistance, solidarity and community with mothers in diverse contexts.”

2. **Narrative Couple Therapy with couples and Conflict: Mark Hayward**

Narrative Couple Therapy needs to be different from Narrative Family Therapy and this workshop examines those differences. From Michael White’s early comments about working with couples to the changes in gender roles and expectations this workshop explores the why and the what of those differences and special considerations for positioning and intervening with couples in conflict.

3. **Ending as celebration: co-creating ‘Graduations’: Lucy Casdagli, Halina Flannery, James McParland**

We will share adapting definitional ceremonies to celebrate endings as ‘graduations’ for young people with complex health conditions who have a network of professionals around them. Young people co-create what their graduation looks like; for those who’ve missed formal educational ceremonies these are powerful and fun. Outsider witnessing enables professionals to acknowledge their transformation, sharing what they have learned, how their practice has developed as well as a chance to say goodbye. We will share examples, inviting workshop participants as outsider witnesses to young people’s journey’s and think about ways to incorporate this into their practice, creating their own graduations.

4. **Travelling across unfamiliar and polarising territories: Resisting assumptions, building communities: Sara Portnoy, Charlotte Valentino, and Gretchen Siglar**

Have you ever felt you were on an ‘Alien Planet’, moving into really unfamiliar territory, or maybe you have worked with someone who has described this to you? There are many contexts where we’ve noticed this, including: talking about experiences in bereavement, working in multi-disciplinary teams, working in polarizing contexts, and other situations where people’s values and identities are questioned. We will explore this landscape together, starting to create a ‘Rough Guide to Interplanetary Travel’. We’ll share some of our ideas and experiences, and invite ‘fellow travellers’ to share theirs, to begin creating a document of what to look out for during these travels, and how to navigate through contested territories.

5. **Bringing together the wonderful worlds of dementia care and narrative therapy: Adventures in community and clinical practices: Elizabeth Field & Rosslyn Offord**

Narrative practice has exciting potential for supporting people living with dementia and their care partners by centring the person and working with retained storytelling abilities to build collaboration and a sense of agency that is often diminished by dementia. It invites curiosity about the social discourses that devalue their ongoing abilities and contribute to isolation. Even with an estimated 139 million people expected to live with dementia by 2050, stigma and misconceptions persist. We hope to develop conversations in our narrative community and make more visible the joys and possibilities of this exciting work in challenging stigma, supporting connection and building hope.

6. Rhythms of Resistance: Building “Mental Health Welling Voices” KTV Songlist Community: Franklin Choi Chin Fai

Our Men’s KTV Project, developed in Hong Kong, engages conversations about masculinity and suicide through collective narrative practice. Building on this experience, the workshop invites participants to contribute to and enrich stories shaped by culturally resonant and everyday-life metaphors, such as musical elements and KTV. This workshop is significant not only for those experiencing mental health struggles but also for fostering collective solidarity and community through shared storytelling, mutual witnessing, and a shared commitment to care.

Friday Afternoon Workshops

1. Weaving a sense of coherence with children, youngsters and adults after trauma in "Weaving a sense of coherence and belonging after trauma"

In contexts of trauma during childhood, the trauma tentacles sometimes lash out wildly. Not only is the person affected, but also the many relationships and community. They often get stuck in time and in fragmented, incoherent and solidified stories. 'How can we rediscover and facilitate a sense of agency, belonging and coherence?'

We leave the beaten track using life review interviews and creative timelines to open up new paths. In cocreating beads of pain as well of responses and resistance, we weave kaleidoscopic strings of resilience. Together with a team of support we facilitate recognition and a sense of belonging.

2. Pirates, Sea Monsters, and Brave Sailors: Exploring Safety and Security Through the Sea Voyage Interview: Szymon Chrzastowski

A sense of security is not only expressed through stories but also created within them. How can we talk about security and threats in ways that generate narratives that are dense, meaningful, and useful for clients? This workshop introduces the Sea Voyage Interview, a series of open-ended questions based on the metaphor of a sea journey used to explore experiences of security, danger, and coping.

The approach incorporates playful elements, including kinetic sand and figurines of pirates and sea monsters. In this way, the workshop invites playful engagement with serious issues (cf. Freeman, Epstein, & Lobovits, 1997). After an introduction and examples of the interview, participants will explore the sea-voyage metaphor themselves.

3. From the Known and familiar to the possible to know: 30 years of learning and teaching Narrative therapy: Amanda Redstone

From the known and familiar to the possible to know. Teaching to learn and learning to teach Narrative Therapy, a 29 year journey. I hope to share some of my learnings from my travels through the landscapes of teaching Narrative Therapy. I will reflect on being just one step ahead from the people I was 'teaching' in 1997 to developments and understandings along the way to the present day when my teaching practices continue to be invigorated by the participants.

4. The Waters We Swim In: Fish Tank Mapping as a Narrative Practice: Lindsay Hampson

This workshop explores how practitioners can hold onto narrative practice within fast-paced, target-driven systems. Using the fish tank metaphor (Tate, 2013), participants will learn to make visible the cultural norms, power structures, and emotional climates shaping our work. The Fish Tank is a metaphor that helps us and those around us understand the narratives and power structures shaping systems rendering them visible and therefore subject to repositioning in relation to.

5. What's in a name? Sharing Stories of our Lives: Rachel Marfleet and Nicky Gorb

""The story of your name""

Based on the work of John Prowell and Vikki Reynolds, we invite you take part in a workshop exploring the stories of your name that have your life and identity across time, place, people and politics. We hope that this workshop will be an opportunity to connect with your history, ancestors and culture to explore values and actions of living."

6. A Psycho-spiritual approach for recovery in post war Armenia for collective trauma: Nazeli Kirakosyan

This workshop presents a psycho-spiritual narrative approach developed in post-war Armenia to support recovery from collective trauma. Building on narrative therapy practices of re-authoring personal stories, the approach extends narrative work toward cultural continuity and collective resilience. Drawing on the Armenian Revival Journey program, participants will explore how individual narratives can be connected with cultural memory, ancestral resilience, and shared histories of survival, supporting renewed agency and a future-oriented identity. Through a brief case illustration and experiential exercise, the workshop invites narrative practitioners to reflect on how psycho-spiritual meaning-making and collective narratives can enrich narrative practice in trauma-affected communities.

Saturday Morning Workshops

1. Narrato: entering the space between game and therapy: Luc Van Den Berg and Sabine Vermeire

The board game Narrato invites players to explore the many meaningful domains in their lives. It can be played solo, with a partner, with (a) friend(s), with family, with co-workers. Players collaboratively explore a diversity of domains of meaning: neighbourhood, relationship, free time, family, work, friends and school. During hikes the player face questions and challenges.

Narrato gets its inspiration from narrative practice and systemic therapy. Players not only are encouraged to remember rich stories but they will also write new ones.

We explain how Narrato is conceived as a narrative practice, and we offer the occasion to try it out.

2. Repotting: Creativity, Evidence and Practice: Sue Colegrave

This workshop will critically examine how creative, relational practices can act as ethical and therapeutic alternatives to structural evidenced-based approaches and manualised interventions.

The workshop positions creative approaches as forms of resistance—not to evidence itself, but to restrictive interpretations of evidence that may marginalise young people's voices, cultural contexts, and lived experience.

Using the tree of Life participants will be invited to explore their relationship with creative practices, reflecting on personal histories and values in the context of institutional demands. I will share my own experience of running a creative arts group in CAMHS, how it has taken root in my own practice and what happens when creative practice enters the research frame.

3. Facilitating cultural change in schools - and other group settings: Martin Nevers

This workshop introduces a narrative approach to working with school culture and class-based distress. Instead of locating problems inside individuals, Martin will show an example from a class intervention, that draw upon narrative logics, decentered influence, collective meaning-making, and the role of outsider-witness practices. Participants will experience micro-practices that shift conversations from deficit-based talk to agency-rich stories, enabling students, teachers, and parents to co-author a more sustainable class culture.

4. Narrative practice at the edge of understanding: Responding to unshared experiences and unusual stories: Helena Rose

In this workshop I will describe and demonstrate some narrative practices with people who hear voices and experience extreme states or distressing unshared beliefs (also called psychosis). I hope to show how bringing together the relational externalising practices of Johnella Bird with the literary concepts of magical realism and chronotopes can help us to co-create new conversational possibilities within the liminal landscapes of these unshared experiences. We will also see how we might create space for richer, more responsive, and respectful conversations with people when experience defies conventional psychologising language.

Poster Presentations

1. **Integrating Narrative Therapy into paediatric pathways for restricted eating - Emma Girling**

This project explores the integration of novel Narrative Therapy practices within an NHS Community Paediatric Psychology service supporting children with severely restricted eating (sometimes called ARFID - avoidant restricted food intake disorder) many of whom have developmental differences such as autism. Some families experience limited progress with standard multidisciplinary approaches involving paediatric and dietetic input. Many also experience frustration, stress, and experiences of judgement. Narrative Therapy offers a strengths-based framework that may complement existing care. Narrative-informed practices included co-created documents, training adaptations, and metaphor-based interventions such as the "Cupboard of Life," supporting broader identity conversations, and shared documents including the "Book of Judgements and Thanks for That's" capturing unhelpful comments received by families and young people, and the "Book of Wisdom," capturing skills, ideas, and successes.

2. **It could be the slight little crack in injustice's grip on people's lives and identities". Exploring how narrative-informed practitioners draw on creativity - Jessica Stubbs**

This poster explores a project that interviewed 26 narrative-informed practitioners across different contexts and countries about how they draw on a creative stance in their practice to disrupt dominant discourses and engage in anti-oppressive practices. The project was Jess' clinical psychology thesis, supervised by Chelsea Gardener and Hannah Stringer.

The poster explores what creativity means in practitioner's own lives and histories and what their relationships with creativity has made possible in their practice. Recognizing the multiple and evolving meanings, the poster presents some of what a metaphor of creativity evokes for practitioners, exploring creativity and resistance, critiquing and questioning, slowing down and expanding awareness to look beyond what is immediate and expand what is available, centring deep connection and honouring life as precious, co-creating and collective action, drawing on play and imagination to disrupt "shoulds" and rules, and practices of presence and listening. The poster draws on a metaphor of water 'finding the cracks', exploring how a creative stance can help people to locate movement in the face of problems and injustices.

3. **Engaging Religious Tension to Facilitate LGBTQ+ Family Acceptance: Solution-Focused Narrative Therapy with Christian Parents - Jo Angeli Zertuche-Kasper**

This poster presents findings from doctoral research exploring Solution-Focused Narrative Therapy (SFNT) with conservative Christian parents of LGBTQ+ youth. Through mixed-methods research with 10 parents across the United States, the study revealed a counterintuitive finding: directly engaging religious tension, rather than avoiding it, led to more meaningful therapeutic outcomes. The adaptation of Metcalf's (2017) "Crafting a New Chapter" protocol emerged as a promising intervention that honors both family faith values and parent-child relationships, demonstrating how narrative approaches can create "both/and" spaces in seemingly impossible binaries.

4. **Stories of Suffering in Bibliotherapy: Narrative Possibilities of 'Difficult' Texts - Mariana Casale**

This poster refers to the practice of Narrative Bibliotherapy (which combines bibliotherapy and narrative therapy). In this context, it considers the use of 'difficult' literary texts to bear witness to and help to articulate narratives of suffering; and to, in turn, support the re-authoring of alternative stories. Through a short piece of experimental prose, it invites you to explore the possibilities that this may open to begin non-retraumatising conversations about suffering and to embark on a journey of re-authoring, exploring and honouring fragmentariness, meaninglessness and silence.

The aim is to find hope in a seemingly hopeless narrative by identifying and articulating small acts of resistance, potentiating wisdoms that underpin difficult decisions; finding words to name preferred narratives that may seem hidden or non-existent. The intention is to show ways in which literature can inspire and support people as they regain a sense of agency and feel that their voices can and should be heard; while shared reading provides a refuge, a space for collaborative meaning making and community cohesion.

5. Identity, Belonging, and Resilience in Indigenous Students' University Journeys in Chile - Marta Alejandra Silva Fernandez

This poster draws on life-history interviews with Indigenous university students in Chile to explore how their university journeys are shaped not only by experiences of discrimination, socioeconomic barriers, mental health difficulties, and the demands of university life, but also by resilience, continuity, and a strong sense of identity. Using a narrative lens and the practice of double listening, I attend not only to challenges but also to the values, commitments, relationships, capabilities, and preferred identities that help give these stories meaning. The project highlights how students remain connected to family, territory, memory, and Indigenous ways of knowing as they make their way through university, and considers how these narratives may contribute to wider communities of acknowledgement, belonging, and recognition.

6. Weaving Narrative Therapy into Biomedical Care of Children & Young People (CYP) with Clinical Voice Conditions (Dysphonia) - Nicky Gorb

Innovations using Narrative Therapy with Children and Young People (CYP) with complex airway conditions (voice, functional breathing) in an NHS, paediatric complex airway service. The impact of paediatric clinical voice conditions has been widely reported (Connor et al 2008). Narrative Therapy is used alongside biomedical interventions in one-to-one and group therapy, documentation and multi-media projects.

The poster showcases:

- Polyphony Project to Re-Author Preferred Vocal Identity
- Ways of inviting CYP into biomedical consultations in non-pathologising ways and make visible competencies and agency to engage in therapy.
- Therapeutic documentation for conversation endurance (Cooper 2024)
- Collective Narrative Practices in Voice Groups.

7. Retelling strength and hope: Collective documentation with families living with drug use - Sharon Leung

This poster presentation explores the use of collective documentation to record families' wisdom in coping with the chaos created by a member's drug use. The 2026 document was produced through the retelling of an earlier collective document created in 2007. Although the group of participating families has changed over time, the act of retelling has generated richer stories about their coping practices, knowledge, skills, and values in resisting the effects of drug use. The resulting collective document now serves as a shared source of strength, solidarity, and hope, supporting families as they continue navigating the challenges of a loved one's drug use.

8. The C Factor Group - Building Community with People Going Through Cancer - Sue Gibbons

An eight session group exploring the emotional effects of going through cancer. With storytelling through an actor, with playful exercises and group discussions. For people going through cancer.

9. Co-creating safe spaces: narrative cards for professionals - Mariangels Ferrer

This poster presents a set of tactile, beautifully designed Narrative Cards that create territories of safety within therapeutic and supervisory conversations. Used as playful paper prompts, the cards invite movement from what is known and familiar toward what becomes possible to know through story-rich conversations. They help connect people to preferred stories, relationships, histories, and sources of meaning, fostering well-being and imaginative expression. In groups, couples, families, or supervision contexts, the cards support reflective practice and shared meaning-making. Through the metaphors of Islands, Archipelagos, and Continents of Safety, the cards strengthen connection, coherence, and possibilities for change.

10. Nourishing your connection to narrative: The Manchester supervision group - Hugh Fox, Lisa Nicholson, Rhian Hughes, Joanne Murray & Mariangels Ferrer

The Manchester narrative supervision group would like to present a poster describing the group in the hope that any local narrativists who would benefit and contribute to our monthly group might join us.

11. Narrative Family Therapy in Rebuilding Patient's Identity in Palliative Care - Joanne Leung

Narrative family therapy is navigated to rebuild people's identity beyond the patient identity in palliative care. People's lifetime stories are dominant and saturated with their illnesses and impending death at end stage of life. Their identity is losing to the suffering and determinacy of death. Narrative family therapy helps people to construct their narratives with indeterminacy, holistic identity, diverse roles, personal agency and unique outcome. A family story of a father suffering from muscular dystrophy in non-cancer palliative care service is narrated.

12. Reclaiming the Self, Together Against Sexual Violence - Pang Fung Yee (Frances)

"People who perpetrated sexual violence (PPSV) are often labeled as "perverts", "abnormal", or "out of control", saturating them with shame, negative identity conclusion and social exclusion. In narrative therapy, "the person is not the problem—the problem is the problem". Each carries local knowledge and wisdom from resisting it.

Since 2021, a collective sharing platform invites PPSV as insider witnesses to share problem-resisting experiences, grounded in shared beliefs and dedicated to resisting sexual violence. Through witnessing with resonance, they are co-constructing new experiences and identities, reclaiming agency, and gradually co-creating a community for standing against sexual violence gradually.

13. A psychospiritual narrative approach to support recovery from collective trauma - Nazeli Kirakosyan

This poster presents a psycho-spiritual narrative approach to support recovery from collective trauma. Created in Armenia, it is rooted in the Armenian historical experience of survival and revival, while remaining adaptable across cultures facing similar post-traumatic hardship. Grounded in narrative therapy, particularly the re-authoring of personal stories, the approach extends narrative practice toward cultural continuity and collective resilience. It illustrates how individual narratives connect with cultural memory and ancestral strength. It emphasizes developing agency, coherence, and social belonging, contributing to a stronger pro-future mindset, and showcases methodological elements that enrich trauma-informed narrative practice.

14. Planting Seeds for eco-remembering Expanding our club of life - Estelle Asselin and Susanna Wilford

'Eco-remembering' - is a term that has been generated for the purpose of the opening session facilitated by Estelle Asselin & Susanna Wilford to describe an action of inviting the INT 2026 NT conference participants to consider incorporating the landscape, our environment as a 'member of our community', as a 'member of our club'. Drawing on M White's 're-remembering' work (1997), and that of Jane Speedy (2003), of 'pursuing poetic language' we hope to produce some rescued speech from the words captured during this introduction session

This is an experiment with narrative documents in which we hope to discover resistance and build community through eco-re-remembering using the written / drawn words collected from participants.

15. Who is Holding the Family Stress Ball? Re-authoring the “Problem Child” referral in Narrative-Systemic Therapy - Sophia Churney

The poster presents an anonymised narrative-informed family case study from a charity-based service supporting families experiencing socioeconomic adversity. Although therapy began with concern for 'Joe', aged 10, who described himself as “sick with worry” and whose family described him as a 'born worrier', the work gradually revealed worry and anger as shared experiences across the whole family group. Drawing on systemic dialogical practice, externalising language, circular questioning and particularly metaphor, therapy explored distress as relationally and socially situated rather than individually located. A co-created “Family Stress Ball” metaphor helped the family develop shared language for stress, connection, mutual understanding, coping and liberation from stigmatising narratives and labels. The poster will reflect on therapeutic change, ethical practice, supervision, boundaries and reflexive learning.

Conference Collective



Hugh Fox is a director of the Institute of Narrative Therapy where he is on the teaching faculty. He is a member of the Conference Collective and has extensive teaching experience both nationally and internationally.



Emma Highfield became enchanted with narrative ideas during a workshop delivered by Hugh Fox as part of her Foundation in Systemic Family Therapy in 2014. This led to her excitement to know more and her journey to learn, immerse herself in the ideas, develop her practice and become a narrative therapist. Emma completed the Diploma in Narrative Therapy with Int in 2021.

Emma is a registered nurse in mental health, worked in the NHS for over 30 years & now for the human rights restraint reduction network charity. She weaves narrative approaches into her work in systems where stories of disorder are dominant, distress is pathologised and teams become saturated with hopelessness and fatigue. Emma is passionate about reducing restrictive practices, helping those who are out of sight (in terms of how they are cared for) and supporting the linking of lives and amplification of voices standing against exclusion, marginalisation and human rights breaches.

Emma also delivers a small amount of work outside of the NHS in teaching, supervision, and narrative therapy. She is honoured to be part of the Conference Collective and to have recently taken up a new role working for the Institute of Narrative Therapy.



Anita Franklin, BA, MA, PhD is a narrative practitioner who has worked in educational and community settings. Anita uses narrative ideas in adult education to support women whose lives have been affected by domestic violence, trafficking and other difficulties. She served as co-director of the Centre for Narrative Practice in Manchester from 2002 to 2009 and has been cultural consultant to a number of national and international narrative events in the intervening years. She has contributed to the Dulwich Centre's Race and Privilege project and to its Feminisms and Narrative Practice project. Anita joins

the INT team as an educational consultant to the training programme, to help maintain and improve the quality of teaching and learning for trainees and staff. Anita brings with her over 30 years' experience as a lecturer, course leader and examiner in higher education in the UK. She has retired from the University of Sheffield's School of Education. She is an Associate Artist for Vanitas Arts and writes/performs for audio drama and theatre.



Mariangels Ferrer-Duch. Mariangels Ferrer-Duch, Chartered Clinical Psychologist, MSc Systemic Family Therapy-Systemic Supervisor, MNCW Narrative Therapy.

Mariàngels Ferrer Duch is a psychologist with extensive experience across therapeutic, supervisory, and training contexts since 1993. As Joint Director of Riverbank Psychology & Atelier Narratiu, she offers therapy, supervision, training, and develops creative tools such as the Narrative Cards and Team of Life resources. She is a faculty member at the UK Institute of Narrative Therapy, teaching narrative practice and facilitating online supervision groups. Her interests include narrative supervision in genetic counselling, alongside research into

narrative interventions in genetics. She cohosts podcasts for the Whitworth Group and the European Society of Human Genetics and is currently pursuing a PhD at UVicUCC.



Suzy MacKechnie. Suzy has been inspired by narrative therapy since 1999 when she worked in Australia as a newly qualified clinical psychologist, and trained at the Dulwich Centre with Michael White. Throughout 27 years working as a clinical psychologist and family therapist in CAMHS and private practice in the UK, she has been sustained and enthused by narrative ideas, conferences and training days. Her role as one of the INT Conference Collective continues to be a privilege and honour and an opportunity to inspire hope and solidarity in response to difficult times in the world.



Donna Coleman is Lead Administrator for the Institute of Narrative Therapy, providing business support and leading on conference administration alongside her full-time NHS role. She brings over 20 years of experience in administrative and project management roles and is currently Project Manager for the Children and Young People's Alliance Team, where she supports work addressing long-term health conditions.

This is Donna's second time supporting an Institute of Narrative Therapy conference, having thoroughly enjoyed her involvement in 2024. She particularly valued meeting in person those she had previously connected with by email and finds it rewarding to see participants progress through the three levels of Narrative Therapy training and complete the diploma.

Feedback

Your voice matters to our community

As a conference focused on sharing ideas, building community, and strengthening narrative practice, your feedback is an important part of this collective learning experience.

Please take a few moments to complete our feedback survey by following the link provided. Your reflections will help shape and improve future conferences and ensure they continue to meet the needs of our diverse community.

<https://forms.gle/jW1MkZghkmrZB75n7>



