

# A narrative perspective on therapy: “Externalizing The Gambling Problem”

Spontaneous - playful - fun  
- and it's useful too

*10th SNSUS conference on gambling and  
problem gambling  
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# Narrative therapy

- \* Michael White (1948-2008) and David Epston
- \* How you construct meaning in life. People are organizing life after "stories of my life". People becomes the stories they tell about themselves and their experiences.
- \* The externalization of the problem - separate the person and the problem. The person can see the problem as something outside of them (action or thought) that can be considered and done something about. That makes it manageable and soluble
- \* Seek to be a respectful, none blaming approach wich centres people as experts in their own life

# Why?

- \* Common to many problem gamblers
  - \* shame
  - \* loss of control
  - \* feeling of low self esteem
  - \* gone beyond their own values
  - \* isolation
- \* Help the patient distangle from little function thoughts about themselves
- \* Find a more active position to The Gambling Problem

# Why do we engage in externalizing conversations?

- \* Help them examine, evaluate and change their relationship to the problem
- \* A persons believes, skills, principles and knowledge will becomes more visible
- \* Reduce guilt an blame and yet leave room for responsibility
- \* Reduce unproductive conflicts in relationships; gives room for co- operation when problem is not within the identity of the person

# The person is not the problem-the problem is the problem

- \* By focusing on problems effect on lives rather than the problem inside or part of people, distance is created
- \* This makes it easier to investigate and evaluate the problems influences
- \* The therapist is a collaborator -investigating reporter
  - \* Always maintain a stance of curiosity
  - \* Always ask question to which you genuinely do not know the answer

# Exploration and personification of The Gambling Problem

- \* Imagine the problem being a thing/ personifying
- \* Finding a metaphorical name;
  - \* “The Monster”, “The Troll”, “The Devil”, “The Demon”, “The Psychopath”, “The Lover”, “The Fireball”, “The Spirit”
- \* Does it f. ex have a color, size? What does it look like? Is it with you everywhere or in one place/situation?

# Getting to know The Problem

Tricks,  
tactics, way  
of operating

Intentions, beliefs,  
ideas, plans

Way of  
speaking; its  
voice, tone,  
the content  
of what it  
says

Purposes,  
desires,  
motives,


Allies?

# Size?





# Investigate and Evaluate

- \* Describe the relationship with The Problem
  - \* ambivalence , love/hate, oppressive, troubled, conflictual
- \* What type of relationship do you want?
  - \* occasional, relaxed, end the relationship
- \* Mapping the effect on life and the relationship to important others
- \* Evaluating The Problems effects
- \* Why? 

# (Re)- Discovering values, hopes and dreams

- \* What .... do you think have led you to want changes/seek therapy?
- \* What hope, dreams and values has been at the expense of the problem?
- \* What values are important to you?
- \* What type of person do you like to appear as?
- \* What do you want the further story of you/ you life to be?

# (Re)-Discovering values, hopes and dreams

- \* Can help a person in finding a good reason to make the change
- \* Helps him find out who he wants to be
- \* It gives him the *motivation* to change and the *hope* that it is possible to live in harmony with him selves and closer to his own standard
- \* We experience that this focus integrates the change in the person and makes him stronger and more determined in the process of making changes
- \* He will be his own coach and the values are his compass

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