

# **Narrative and Solution Focused Approaches**

‘Supporting change through a helpful conversation’

Toronto Public Health  
Mental Health Team  
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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 have the opportunity to reflect on how NSFA fits with their practice

History and context

Program development and evolution

- 38 Workshops delivered to staff
- 4 Workshops delivered to Managers
- 2 Workshops delivered to external agencies
- Currently have 100 on wait list
- Integrated into the Mental Wellness Assessment 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

# What we mean by ‘Narrative’

People make sense of their lives through telling their story.

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

By telling one 'story' the person has left others out, what are the other stories that might be helpful to hear?

**Social Constructionism, a postmodern view, provides the philosophical foundation for Narrative & Solution-Focused approaches.**

(cont'd)

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

Freedman & Combs (1996, p.16).

**We need to look at the influence of these social realities if we want to understand the meanings people give to their experiences, hence their lives.**

**Assesses: problems**

**Focuses on: History, symptoms, frequency, hypothesis, prognosis**

**Provides: solutions to match problem**

**Prescribes: treatment strategies to become well**

**Determines: what the patient needs**

**Identifies: when patient is resistant/non compliant**

**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**

**Uses the person's frame of reference/co-develops goals**

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

Remember--You are your own best tool

Consider the lens you bring

Try to stay open and tentative

Remain curious

Look for and build on strengths

'Think small' & 'go slow'

Engage in Self Reflective Practice

Provides a basis for current 'Mental Wellness Assessment' tool (documentation)

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)

Survey to assess needs of past and current participants

Development of an 'Advanced' NSFA

Policy/Guideline development to integrate in TPH practice

# Questions/feedback

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12. [www.brieftherapynetwork.com/links.htm](http://www.brieftherapynetwork.com/links.htm)
13. [www.dulwichcentre.com.au](http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au) \* Michael White's workshop notes from this site are excellent.
14. [www.narrativeapproaches.com](http://www.narrativeapproaches.com)
15. [www.narrativetherapylibrary.com](http://www.narrativetherapylibrary.com)
16. [www.rnao.org](http://www.rnao.org)