



DIPLOMA IN NARRATIVE PRACTICES 2024 (IN-PERSON)

Curriculum

We will be exploring the following narrative ideas and practices over the course of 10 months.

❖ **Key Ideas**

An exploration of the key ideas/ key assumptions/ theoretical underpinnings of Narrative Practice and a brief overview of the Maps of Narrative Practice as described by Michael White. Where have Narrative Practices come from history and key thinkers along with an introduction to Michael White and David Epston.

❖ **The narrative metaphor/ Stories**

Exploring what we mean in the context of narrative ideas when we refer to "stories", and how do these stories influence our lives/ shape lives of people and starting to develop an understanding of dominant and preferred stories and identity as multistoried.

❖ **Discourse and Deconstruction**

Narrative practice is always interested in the context of people's lives. We will explore the role of 'power' and 'politics of experience' in the context of Narrative Practice. We will refer to Micheal Foucault's work on Modern Power Systems and Derrida's work on Deconstruction.

❖ **Externalizing conversations or statement of position map -1**

In this session we will be discussing how narrative ideas and practices think about problems, struggles and hardship. We will explore the central idea that 'the person is not the problem, the problem is the problem'.

❖ **Re-authoring conversations**

In this session we will focus on exploring preferred territories of people's lives. We will explore the reauthoring map as described by Michael White. The map draws significantly from the work of Jerome Brunner's exploration of the narrative metaphor and analysis of literary texts. Together we will explore ways in which skills, know-how can be made visible and explore the identification and co-creation of alternative story-lines of identity. The idea of rich story development and its relevance to our work will be explored .

❖ **Re-membering Conversations**

In this session we will explore remembering conversations which are based on the idea that identity is socially constructed rather than based upon a core self and the relevance of supportive voices in the development of multi-voiced, preferred identities. We will draw from the work of cultural anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff and Michael White's ideas of "saying hello again" in responding to grief and loss of loved ones.

❖ **Outsider Witness Practices and Definitional Ceremonies**

We will explore the idea of structuring 'ceremonies' and 'performances' that provide a context of supporting rich story development. Drawing from the work of cultural anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff the significance of an audience's contribution to story development will be introduced. Stories need an audience to live on... and ways in which this can be structured.

❖ **Absent but Implicit**

Michael White used the term "absent but implicit" to convey the understanding that in the expression of any experience of life, there is a discernment we make between the expressed experience and other experiences that have already been given meaning. We will explore how the concept and practice of the "absent but implicit" offers possibilities for bringing forward these often neglected territories of life. The practice of the Absent but Implicit has a particular usefulness when we are working with people's experiences of difficulty and trauma in their lives, where we clearly do not want to re-traumatize that person. The Absent but Implicit supports us as therapists to bring forward story lines that serve to make sense of the on-going painful experience of trauma or of difficult experiences. This practice and its links

with recent findings from the field of neuroscience that can be helpful in our work will also be explored

❖ **Creative and Collective Documentation**

Michael White proposed that since written documents have come to take such an influential place in a person's life, in describing individuals' in their absence, or preceding the persons themselves in several situations, (such as files, forms, CVs), alternative, local and popular documentation practices could redescribe persons in their preferred ways highlighting their skills and know-hows of navigating through life and also have the potential of recruiting an audience to support these stories. Letters, certificates, poems, songs, collective documents of communities, beings and people's specific know-hows, skills, hopes and dreams are a part of these alternate documentation practices. These could be shared with a wider audience, inviting more witnesses to support the survival of these preferred stories and connect to other people and communities who might resonate in solidarity.

❖ **Working with people who use violence**

In this workshop we will reflect together on what are some of the dominant discourses that inform masculinity. We will explore notions of sex, gender and sexuality and how patriarchy proposes the myth of a stable dichotomy. We will use queer theory as a tool of analysis to destabilize these rigid dichotomies, exploring the effects of patriarchy on the relationship we have with ourselves, with others, with memory and hope. We will see the links of complicity between patriarchy and neoliberal ideology and consider how narrative practices can subvert these discourses by storying resistance and the nurturing of actions that make life possible.

❖ **Community Work**

The circumstances in which people are born, grow up and live are determinant in their health and wellbeing. The lack of equity, food or housing, the practices and policies that exclude or discriminate have a profound impact on our ability to keep our physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing. In our daily work, we hear our youth and adults talking about their problems, diseases and concerns. We help and support them with therapeutic practices, social services, educational programs and more. Very often, we are left unsatisfied and frustrated because we know that what we are

doing is not enough. We know that those persons who experience marginalisation will have many difficulties navigating a world that lacks equity, opportunities and justice. We will engage in conversations from our various positions and identities in life, examine opportunities to change the circumstances and create better and safer communities as we involve and accompany those same communities in the process.