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Insight Gains of Narrative Case Studies

H. LUIS VARGAS, PH.D.

Editor

Efforts by mental health clinicians to grasp the uniqueness of client experience may often be impeded by the clinician's personal worldview and their respective profession's sanctioned judgments. One way to challenge our generalized preconceptions and to practice thinking critically about our professional judgments is to study and reflect on the variations of experience often detailed in narrative case studies. When rich with context, a narrative case study may prompt perceptions and insights that help temper the overshadowing effect of blanket judgments. Nevertheless, finding narrative case studies grounded in uniquely lived and thoughtfully articulated experience where personal bias transforms into greater meaning is no easy feat. This issue presents articles published for their portrayal of the dynamic context of experience and their value in prompting powerful insight.

Heather Carlson invites readers to consider the beauty and the challenges of being caught between two family life cycle stages. Carlson shares powerful insights gained from her experience as a mid-life adult sandwiched between caring for her young children and aging parents. Carlson's descriptive portrayal of a sandwich generation caregiver offers insight that expands family life cycle knowledge.

Andrew Earle offers a personal account detailing how narrative therapy altered his relationship to shame. Earle shares personal testimony as he delves into the value of narrative thought for creating possibilities to fend off the effects of shame. Earle's testimony may inspire student-therapists and early career professionals to consider the treatment impact clinical theories have on clients who consult them.

As a private practice clinician, Michael A. Kaufman, MA, LMFT, leans on first-hand clinical knowledge and experience to offer a powerful commentary on trauma. Kaufman invites clinicians to consider how clients reporting symptoms of depression and anxiety are most effectively assessed and treated when early relational traumas are explored.

Using a systemic lens, Karissa Moody presents a powerful perspective on the gaslighting effects of social media. Moody details how virtual connections through social media facilitate the manipulation of reality and discusses the relational implications of online gaslighting. Moody offers insight that may be useful in contextualizing the experience of clients relationally affected by social media.

Drs. David Mallo and Ian E. Wickramasekera II present findings specific to the effect of follow-up client contact on psychiatric readmission. According to this study, individuals who had a case management appointment within the first seven days of discharge from psychiatric care, appeared less likely to be readmitted for inpatient psychiatric treatment. This study supports the value of post-discharge client contact.

Drs. Fred Washburn, Meaghan C. Nolte and Angela M. Yoder, used directed content analysis to examine the narrative writings of counselors-in-training during Practicum. Washburn,

Nolte and Yoder found evidence that supports the value of *narrative story telling* as a supervision tool that also serves to help new supervisors maximize gains from counselor training and supervision endeavors.

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