



Narrative Approaches in Social Work Practice: A Life Span, Culturally Centered, Strengths Perspective

Edith M. Freeman

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The purpose of this book is to explain the process in which individuals tell and retell their narratives, especially during developmental and other transitions in order to create meaning and continuity in their lives. The other goal is to clarify the nature and types of narratives that emerge in people's natural environments during such transitions and during counseling sessions with social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, nurses, and other service providers. Further, it also describes practical narratives and approaches and includes relevant case examples to illustrate how those approaches have been applied effectively in social work and other helping professions. The text is organized in two sections. Part One is focused on the theoretical foundations of narrative practice and on five basic principles. The five chapters of Part Two demonstrate the application of advanced narrative skills in practice with clients who are challenged by various life span transitions. Clients' narratives are included in each chapter to illustrate particular advanced narrative skills and major discussion points. The cultural context of such narratives may involve a combination of such factors as clients' race and ethnicity, language, religion and spirituality, gender, age, sexual orientation, disabling conditions, social class, and location. Tables and figures included in each chapter illustrate specifically how particular narrative strategies can be used with clients and also clarify how to use those approaches in combination with other practice frameworks, including family systems, task-centered, crisis, solution-focused, group mutual aid, cognitive behavioral, and brief theoretical approaches. In addition, to the individual, family, community, organizational, and cultural narratives, the book also includes other story forms such as poetry, metaphors, proverbs, parables, letters, personal journals, art, and music.

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