Healing Trauma Through Storytelling

Kate Miles, LMSW
Clinical and Program Manager,
Solace House
Grief-Focused Components of Narrative Therapy

• Grief Narrative Psychoeducation
  – Explain the purpose of dealing with/talking about the event/trauma
  • There is a choice to leave a wound and hope it gets better or clean out the debris and germs so that it can stop hurting and heal quickly
    – First choice works sometimes, but other times it becomes infected
    – Better choice to clean it now. Might hurt initially, but eventually it will be worth it once it is healed.
    » Never should hurt more than a little and the work will be done in a way to ensure that it is done at the speed of the client.
Grief-Focused Components of Narrative Therapy

• Grieving the Loss and Resolving
  – Remember, identify, and name things that were done with and for each other.
  • “What I Miss”
    – Doing with loved one
    – Places I miss going with loved one
    – Special rituals that we did together
  • Anticipating “Loss Reminders”
    – What will I miss in the future
    – How will I cope
Grief-Focused Components of Narrative Therapy

• Preserving Positive Memories
  – Memory Project
    • Memory Book
    • Memory Box
    • Memory Collage
    • Videotapes
    • Slide Shows
      – favorite clothes
      – funny habit
      – hobbies
      – best time together
      – favorite things my loved one gave me
      – Nicest things my loved one ever did for me
      – favorite expressions/jokes
  – Letters of their Name
    • Fill in or illustrate a memory for every letter of the loved ones name
Grief-Focused Components of Narrative Therapy

• Redefining the Relationship w/ the deceased and committing to present relationships
  – Circle of Life
    • Child fills out memory for each date that may serve as a trauma, loss or change reminder in the coming years.
Grief Focused Art Therapy

• Psychoeducation
  – Gives the child a language to tell their story that they can use and understand.
  – Shared language between client and therapist that both understand. This gives the client a feeling of being less alone in their pain. Allows the client to use the body and hands to speak about what happened, using colors and textures.
Grief Focused Art Therapy

- Grieving the Loss
  - Draw a Safe Place
    - Visualize place where client feels safe
      - Real or imagined
    - Can be used for thought interruption and for self-soothing
    - Teach client thought-interruption techniques and how to use their safe place to interrupt negative thoughts
Grief Focused Art Therapy

- **Draw Your Body**
  - Draw a life-size outline of the client’s body or draw an outline on a smaller sheet of paper
  - Color in or draw the areas of the body that feel hurt, pain, or various feelings
    - Use colors to represent various feelings or hurts
    - Use band-aids to represent hope for healing.
Reference