

Family Narrative Guide

Consider the various therapeutic functions of the family narrative process. Work with the family to determine which meet the needs of the family and to make decisions about how to proceed.

Therapeutic Functions

family storytelling/narrative

- strengthening the family's communication/narrative process
- co-regulate emotions
- incorporating perspectives from each family member
- improving the ability to discuss difficult topics
- building and repairing relationships
- improving collaborative problem-solving

family trauma narrative

- gradual exposure with response prevention
- transforming traumatic memories into narrative memories
- filling in missing pieces
- correcting misinformation
- clarifying interpretations and attributions
- integrating the pieces into a cohesive whole
- attaching meaning
- reworking the trauma(s) and finding new endings
- creating a family identity less tied to trauma(s)
- dealing with secondary stressors and sequelae

Decision Points for Family Trauma Narrative:

Which traumatic event(s) to incorporate in the narrative -

Which trauma to begin with and how to sequence the discussion -

Whether all family members are aware of the details of the event(s), whether to limit the discussion of certain specifics -

Are there family secrets related to the trauma? what purpose are the secrets filling? -

Whether each family member present has the requisite skills and readiness to participate in constructing the trauma narrative -

Consider:

Notes or Comments

<input type="checkbox"/> Where are family members in their reactions or course of recovery?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there dyssynchrony that will affect the narrative process?• Is there anyone in the family who will be significantly triggered by participating in the narrative process?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The role and place of each member in the family and how these will be enacted during the narrative process.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Is everyone in the family 10 years of age or above with essentially adult storytelling skills?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the narrative skills of children younger than 10 years.• What ways can the narrative be adapted to include young children?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The family's storytelling skills including listening, reflectivity and meaning making skills.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The family's ability to include affect and co-regulate its expression.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The collaboration skills that the family uses in telling stories or working on activities.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The flexibility shown in family storytelling	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Using Your Coping Resources

Sometimes after talking about bad things that have happened, you and your children may feel anxious or worried or upset, like crying or yelling, irritable and tired. You might even start to think more about what happened.

Here are some tips to help you feel better:



Do your relaxation exercises more often.



Eat regularly.



Get enough sleep.



Be active, get exercise.



Talk to a friend.



Do something fun (make a funny face, bake cookies, or whatever makes you happy).



Make use of your spiritual resources.



Give yourself permission to “put it away” until the next time group meets.



Tell your therapist that you are having trouble.