



What's the Story...?

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4th BIENNIAL TRAUMA CONFERENCE

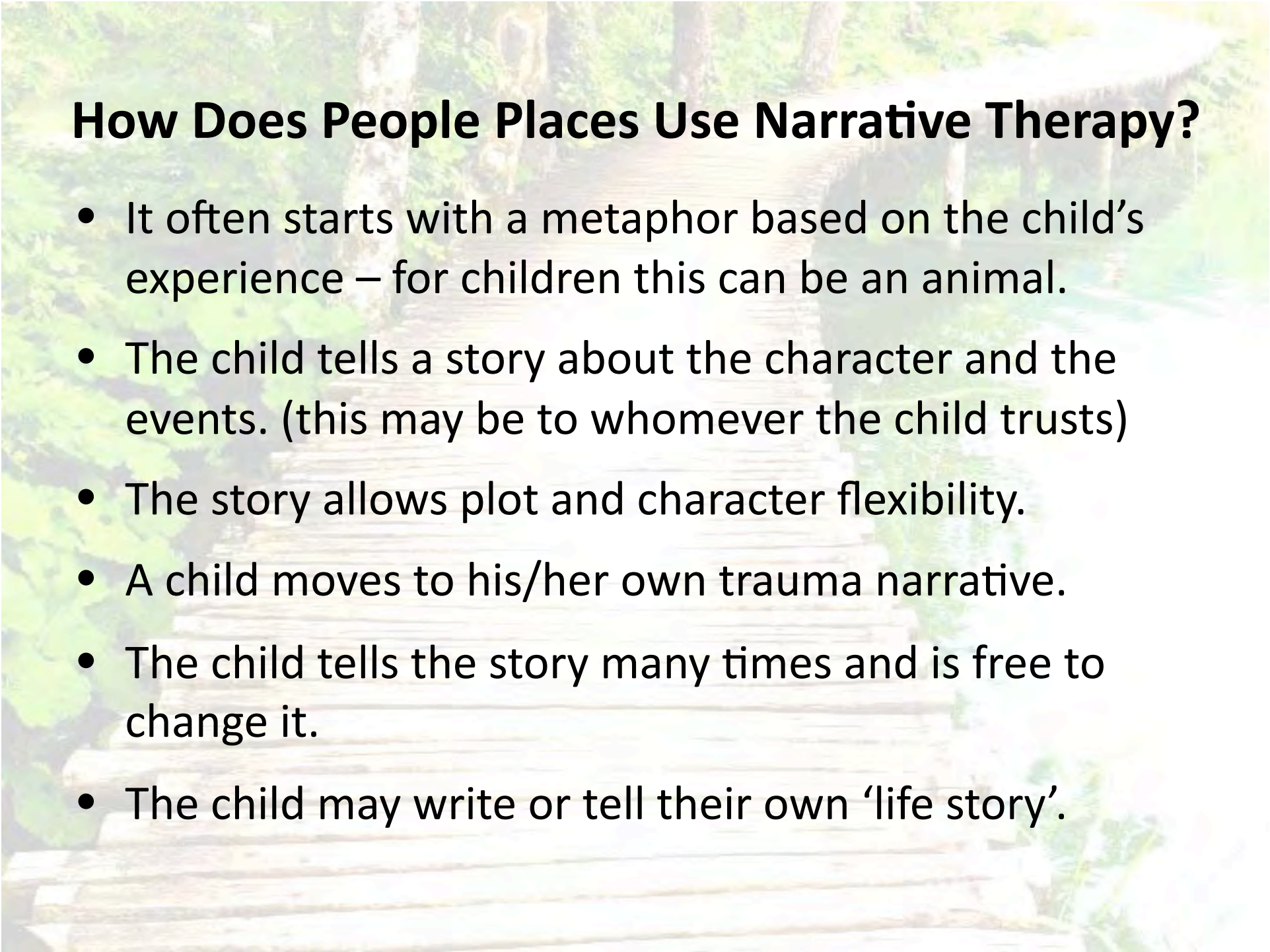
Addressing Trauma across the Lifespan: Integration of Family,
Community, and Organizational Approaches

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Principles of Narrative Therapy

- A respectful, non-blaming approach which centers on people as the experts in their own lives.
- Problems are separate from people... who are equipped to handle them.
- No assumptions – Be Curious.
- There is no single correct direction or story line.
- The person telling the story plays a significant part in determining the directions that are taken.



How Does People Places Use Narrative Therapy?

- It often starts with a metaphor based on the child's experience – for children this can be an animal.
- The child tells a story about the character and the events. (this may be to whomever the child trusts)
- The story allows plot and character flexibility.
- A child moves to his/her own trauma narrative.
- The child tells the story many times and is free to change it.
- The child may write or tell their own 'life story'.

A human brain is shown from a lateral view, with various regions highlighted by text. A large purple arrow on the left points upwards, indicating a developmental timeline from bottom to top. The text is arranged in layers, with 'In utero' at the bottom, followed by 'Infancy', 'Early childhood', and 'Childhood' at the top. The text 'can compromise later development' is written in a large, blue, semi-transparent font across the bottom half of the brain.

Language, reasoning, problem-solving, planning

Childhood

Trauma and the brain

Memory, emotion regulation, attachment

Infancy

Basic physiology - body temp., heart rate, etc.

In utero

Head injury, early trauma, the region...

Depends on the health of previous regions
can compromise later development
and at different times in a developing life



Treasure Activity

- How did you come into possession of this item?
- What meaning does it have to you?
- Who else knows about this item?
- How do they know?



Threat

We React to Cope,
Defend, Survive

We Learn Rules
for Reacting to
Threat

Prime Rules

Directives

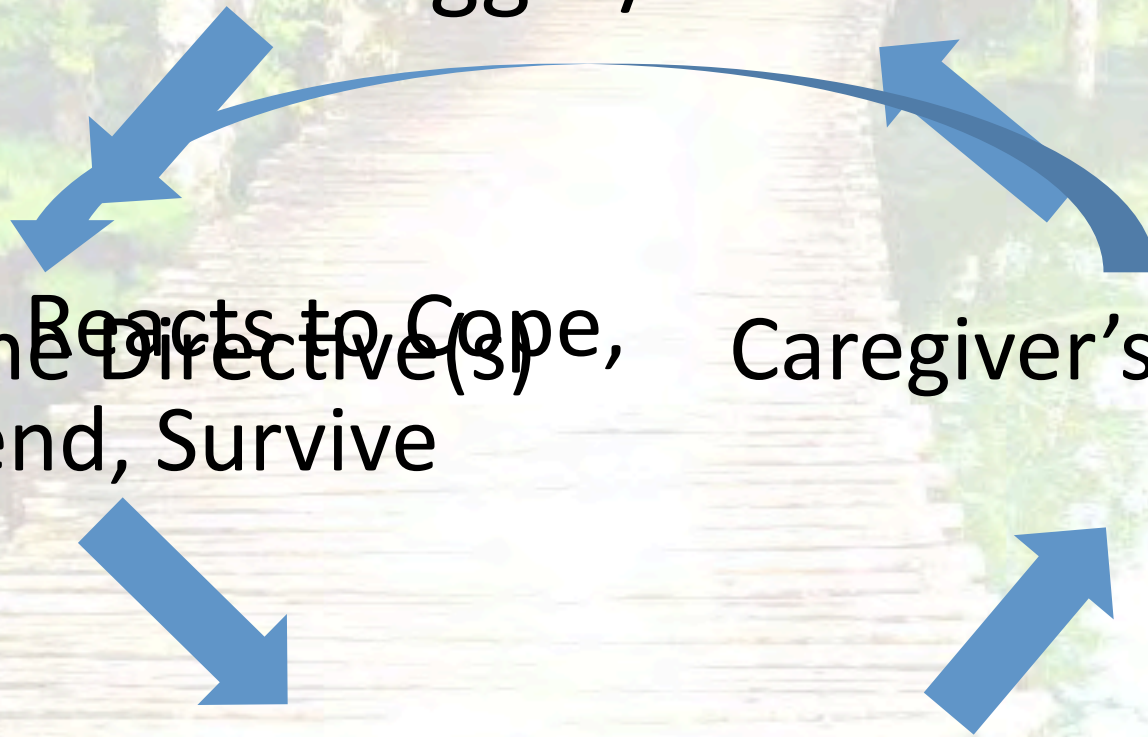
Our Behavior Helps Us Manage the Threat

Child's Early Experiences
Trigger/Threat

Child Reacts to Cope,
Prime Directive(s)
Defend, Survive

Caregiver's Reaction

Child's Behavior



For Example...

Mom's boyfriend sneaks in
and molests me

*"I must protect
myself"*

Caregiver makes me
sure the bath is
away the knife

I take a uniform away
I don't bathe



True Listening - A Story Needs a Listener

- ***Listen.*** Wait your turn; show interest. Do not judge the speaker for what he or she says. Accept the person.
- ***Watch.*** Pay attention to the speaker's non-verbals. Do not communicate judgment through your own.
- ***Feel.*** Use your 'gut' as well as your ears. Try to sense what the other is feeling as well as what they are saying. Strive for empathy.
- ***Check.*** Ask, wonder, be gently curious about what the speaker feels and means. Replace judgment with curiosity.

David: The Old and New Me

The Old Me

- Learned to deal with stress by getting high & huffing
- Thought about getting high a lot.
- Learned this behavior with my dad. I thought about him a lot.
- 'I am stupid' made me vulnerable to criticism & pressure... so I got high to avoid it.

The New Me

- I work hard now and am proud of myself.
- I have learned to deal with stress by saying "I disagree" or "I'm wrong" or "Can I give my opinion?"
- I love my dad but accept his short-comings and my own anger toward him.
- I am less scared. I have hope for the future.

Stories...

- Help the challenge to become externalized.
- Allow reinterpretation of trauma experience.
- Must both be told *and* heard.
- The teller and the listener must feel safe and trusting in their relationship.
- Judgment creates problems versus solutions.
- Caregivers can be well-suited to developing trusting relationships with children.
- Staff can be helpful, especially through modeling.
- It really does take a village...