

# Three possible categories of counterstorying and some counterstorying practices within narrative questions.

## **Category 1: Valourising the person**

### **Wonderfulness enquiry**

One way of beginning a narrative therapy conversation with the re-claiming of the person and the territory of the conversation from the problem. These enquiries express a fundamental ethic of a narrative practice: to lay down a story of appreciation for the person as the foundation stone for the therapy conversation. Like most adventurous enquiries they will begin with a prefacing question.

### **Internalising a virtue**

Why externalise when a quality or ability or attribute is something that speaks well of someone's identity. David Epston said to me many years ago when noticing I had externalised a quality in a transcript of a session with a client: "Why are you externalising? Why not bring this ability closer to the person rather than further away?"

### **Eliciting wisdom**

When someone's wisdom or insider knowledges are actively sought and researched.

### **Recruiting virtues**

When a virtue (quality, ability, attribute, value, wonderfulness, wisdom etc.) is actively recruited into the counter-storying .

### **Recruiting allies**

When others, either present in a session or not are actively brought in to the conversation to support counter-storying.

## **Category 2: Undermining & loosening the hold of the problem**

### **Making fun of and demoting the problem**

When problems are very deliberately undermined by the therapist to reduce their significance and power in the eye of the client.

### **Smoking out the problem**

When the problem's tactics and intentions are brought out into the open so that it is hard for them to remain unseen.

**Kay Ingamells 2017**

### **Building companionship for the person**

Bringing in accounts of others who have experienced similar problems and using their experience and insider knowledge to companion the person.

### **Seizing power from the problem**

Beginning a conversation, especially at the start of a session in such a way that the problem loses its power to direct the conversation and counter-storying takes centre stage.

### **Dramatising the problem**

Bringing the problem to life by using metaphor, poetic language so that its character is better seen and it can be more easily resisted.

## **Category 3: Composing, dramatising and testing the counterstory**

### **Gathering**

In a gathering question, the 'story so far' is gathered up and pre-presented to the person in the hopes that the problem and its antidote may be glimpsed more keenly:

### **Picking up a thread of possible counterstory**

This is when a unique outcome or an alternative to the problem's version of events is picked up and incorporated into a question to see if it appeals to the person.

### **Headlining**

A counterstory is summed up in a headline, rather like a newspaper headline. This can help focus the counterstorying and is useful for the practitioner as a way of being clear about the counterstory.

### **Proposing a counterstory**

A counterstory is proposed to the person inside a question to see if it has validity for the person and appeals to them.

### **Shielding the counterstory**

A counterstory is proposed or explored in a tentative way so that if it proves to be unappealing to the person, it can be withdrawn easily and re-shaped.

### **Embroidering a counterstory**

The counterstory is brought to life by speculating about its character, intentions and effects, usually using poetic language.