

A workshop for SUD professionals

Foundational Story Psychotherapy: Understanding and Co-Changing Clients' Stories

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in Conjunction with The SASSI Institute*



We humans are narrative creatures. Much of our communication, our cognition, our memory, and even our understanding of our self is storied. By late adolescence virtually all of us have developed a life story, a story that helps determine what we expect from others, in which settings we are most comfortable, how we treat ourselves and what we can hope for. Our life story is comprised of smaller vignettes or foundational stories. As a result, the coin of psychotherapy is narrative, and clients tell an average of 4.1 stories in each session.

Despite the ubiquity of narrative, most of us receive very little education in the structure of narrative and its application to substance abuse and mental health counseling. Given our narrative bones, all therapies must deal with narrative, although most of them do so implicitly, focusing on only a limited number of aspects of story.

In this workshop, we will examine the narrative underpinnings of substance abuse counseling and psychotherapy; and we will broaden our understanding and use of different approaches to alter both foundational and life narratives. We will look at the special impact of trauma on clients' life stories and the resultant substance abuse and emotional struggles. Participants will come away with greater ease and more tools to understand and help clients change the problematic stories they live.

This workshop is designed to enable participants to:

1. Define foundational and life stories and describe the relationship between the two
2. Gather and use client's stories to help them understand and change substance abuse and emotional problems
3. Describe the importance of witnessing and demonstrate thematic listening
4. Identify the relationship among substance use, mental illness, and trauma
5. Describe one use of story-based ritual to assist therapists in creating healthy boundaries between work life and home life

[Click here](#) for registration information, provides 4 CEUs.