

The Story You're Carrying

Narrative identity, reframing, and writing as a way of processing what you've lived

What this workshop covers

- Six modules on the relationship between the stories we tell and the lives we live
- Narrative therapy is not about changing what happened — it is about changing what we make of it
- You will write in this workshop. Not to produce something — to discover something.
- The source material is your own experience — specifically the story you've been telling about your struggle, your work, or your stuck place
- Workshops 2 and 3 go deeper into re-authoring and transition — this one establishes the foundation

Module 1

Stories shape how we heal

Not what happened. How you've been telling it.



We are the stories we tell about ourselves — and we can always tell a different one.

— Michael White

White co-developed Narrative Therapy with David Epston in the 1980s. The central premise: the story is not the person. The person is always larger than the story.

What narrative therapy is

- Narrative therapy is a form of therapy that centers on the stories people use to make sense of their lives
- It was developed by Michael White and David Epston, drawing on the idea that our identity is constructed through narrative — not fixed, discovered, or inevitable
- The key move: separating the person from the problem. You are not anxious — you are a person who has an experience of anxiety.
- When we change how we tell the story, we change our relationship to the experience — and often, the experience itself begins to shift
- It is used for trauma, grief, identity transitions, relationship breakdown, and any situation where a person feels defined or limited by their past

How stories shape what we see

- Every story has a lens — it highlights certain events and obscures others
- The dominant story — the one we've been telling longest — gets reinforced each time we retell it
- If the dominant story is 'I always fail at the things that matter most,' we notice the failures and explain away the successes
- The brain's confirmation bias is not a flaw — it is the mind maintaining narrative coherence. The problem is when the coherent story is limiting rather than liberating.
- Narrative therapy identifies the dominant story and asks: what would a different story, equally supported by your life, look like?