

2-MINUTE TIP: THERAPEUTIC METAPHORS AND STORIES

2 MORE FAVORITE METAPHORIC THERAPY STORIES II

Sharing some favorite metaphors

- From time to time, I want to share metaphors I often use in therapy. Over 5 decades at a therapist, the last 3 at Shorehaven, I've come up or borrowed with many metaphors and stories 've have used many times.
- Do you have favorite metaphoric stories? Put them in the comments. This thread can be a bit of a storehouse. Would it not be wonderful to collect favorite stories from many therapists and put them on a site we could all access. I'll gladly collect them and do that.

#3 **The Interrupted Race** is about using criticism and self-criticism t motivate new behavior and how ineffective it is. Have you noticed how commonly people go to criticism rather than request the behavior they want to see?

Harsh criticism is like running a horse race and you have a horse in the race. The horse is running near the back of the pack. Maybe the jockey has not maneuvered the horse into position to surge ahead. Whatever it may be, you run out onto the track and the jockey sees you. You have stopped the horse. You yell, criticize, blast, denigrate, excoriate, dismiss, and rage at the them. Now, instead of having a chance to finish the race or catch up, what have you done? Blocked its progress. What does the jockey and the poor horse experience now? What about in the next race they run for you? All they can do is worry about being criticized. Does that mean they are fully present in the race? Can they run their best race? Did your criticism help them run the 1st race or any race?

#4 **Mediated Catharsis** is a method from the great Leopold Bellack. The client may have difficulty explaining feelings or reactions, which may be suppressed or preconscious. They may not have the words or the familiarity with how to share their inner life. The "many people" in mediated catharsis is metaphoric and represents your observations about that person and what possible feelings he or she may have. You can present a single feeling or negative belief or kind of multiple choice.

Many people who have [alternative: I knew someone who] experienced something just like that -
- _____ - tell me the feeling is _____. Many people who experienced that and felt _____ started to think _____ about themselves. What fits for you?

Example: So, you find it a challenge [don't say 'hard'] to identify just yet just what you feel about your mother ripping into you and turning away saying something so hurtful. Many people who have experienced that would feel tiny or so hurt or unloved or even rejected. I can think of more feelings even as you might. Some people I've know would think they were unlovable or unworthy or might have lost their voice to speak up or struggle to earn approval ever after. What fits for you in that? [The closer your 'multiple choice' fits for the client's possibilities the more likely it will be to elicit valuable memories, details, and insights.]

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