

2-MINUTE TIP: THERAPEUTIC METAPHORS AND STORIES

2 MORE FAVORITE METAPHORIC THERAPY STORIES III

Sharing some favorite metaphors - Part III

- 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.

#5 **Multiple Selves Exercise** is an exercise I came up with around 1980 and published in an obscure book. It's an interactive spatial metaphor for understanding parts of identity or even part selves, why they are there, what they are doing internally. I prefer to do this using the floor space. But it can be done imaginally. In the example, I'll call the client Sue.

- Imagine a circle with you in the middle. You have the emotional states we have talked about: _____. Pick one part of yourself or one state. Leave your real self, the one you were born as, in the middle and let this part or state step onto that circle, where it feels right to step. In that place, how old are you? What is your name? When did you first appear in Sue's life? What was happening then? Let's consider your role, your job, in Sue's life
- Now stay there. Sue, step back into the middle -- where you are your born, real self. What does that place feel like now? Now, let's identify another part or state you experience. Leave your Real Self in the middle and let this other part find a spot on the circle. [Repeat the questions and process until there are no states either of you are aware of.]
- Now, back in the middle, where you are your most real, born self, what's that like now?
- Let's look at the map I've drawn of the parts and states around the circle. We can understand your present as interactions of the parts on the circle with each other interacting with the world. Lastly, step OUT of the circle without touching it, kind of jumping out of it. What does that feel like? [Elaborate.]

#6 **A Walk Through a Childhood Home** is helpful for someone who reports little in the way of childhood memories.

- Let's imagine we are going on a trip together to a home or apartment where you lived as a child. If you recall the street we can look up a picture of it. You the guide. Take us through the door. Now, explain the layout of the place, where the rooms are, Living Room, Kitchen, Bathroom, Dining Room if there is one, Bedroom. Where is your room? Show me what is in your room? Books? Stuffed animals or dolls? Pictures? What else? [Elaborate] At this point, if the recall is adequate, you can go into who are the people in the place, what they are doing, and some interaction. You can be introduced to them. Join with the imaginary family in order to learn. The important thing is recapture of the dynamic within the memories.

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