



Journal of Contemporary Narrative Therapy

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About This Release

We are pleased to tell you of this most recent release of the Journal of Contemporary Narrative Therapy. We highlight two lengthy case stories, one by Sasha Pilkington and another by Kay Ingamells. Sasha was the editor of a previous special release of the journal on death and dying and if you have not read it, I recommend you return to Release 1, 2021 and in particular, Sasha's 'Narrative Therapy with Someone Expecting Significant Loss and Grief: An Illustration with Reflections on Practice, 58-97. especially if you work in palliative care of assisted dying as she does.

Kay's story, entitled 'Wrapped in Care: Narrative Therapy in the Time of Covid' begins: "My nana died from Covid. She died four months ago. I am still crying every day. I'm not getting over it." To my way of thinking, this is one of the most poignant exemplars of Narrative Therapy of a loved one dying under the limiting circumstances of a lock down here in New Zealand.

Sasha's case story, 'Deciding how to Die: Narrative Therapy in palliative care with someone considering stopping dialysis,' begins:

"The referral in front of me had "urgent" written across it in large letters. It was from one of the community nurses at the hospice where I worked.

"Please would you see Mr Fionn Williams as soon as possible. He has end stage kidney disease and is having dialysis three times a week. Fionn is being cared for at home by his son Liam, and Liam's partner Pete. Every week Fionn decides to stop dialysis only to change his mind at the last minute. This has been going on for months and he and his family are very distressed. Fionn describes himself as "tortured" by his indecision. Dr White has discussed stopping dialysis with Fionn and his family a number of times. Fionn knows he doesn't have long to live and his quality of life is very poor, however his indecision continues. Fionn has refused counselling support every time it has been offered but yesterday, he changed his mind. His family are relieved he has accepted counselling and are waiting for your call."

This poignant story is wonderfully augmented in two distinctive ways. Firstly, although Sasha has written it so it can be read without interruption as a story, she has footnoted in considerable detail at every turn of her thinking which then allows for a second stop-and-start reading. I recommend you approach 'Deciding how to Die, etc' in such a fashion. As well, the





eminent scholar/activist/bio-ethicist, Arthur Frank, has added a commentary given Sasha had referenced his theorising of 'rightness' in choosing one's death as compared to moral logic. Art is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Calgary and currently lecturer in the legendary 'Narrative Medicine' programme at Columbia University(New York). No one I know has closer connections to Narrative Therapy theoretically than Art, especially in his career-long considerations of personal narratives as counter-stories to the medicalisation of the lives of cancer sufferers. See for example A.W. Frank, *At the Will of the Body: Reflections on Illness*(1991; 2002); *The Renewal of Generosity: Illness, Medicine and How to Live*(2004), and most importantly, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics*(1995; 2013). I also recommend Art's earlier paper, *Notes on Socio-Narratology and Narrative Therapy*, *Journal of Narrative Family Therapy* (now known as *Contemporary Narrative Therapy*), Release 2, 2018, 3-19. As well Kay and Sasha's papers extend upon the special release of the *Journal of Contemporary Narrative Therapy*, 2021 Sasha edited including her paper, *Narrative Therapy with Someone Expecting Significant Loss and Grief: An Illustration with Reflections on Practice*, 58-97. I recommend this paper to be read alongside her above-mentioned paper.

This Release introduces what we hope to be a regular feature: autobiographical accounts of Narrative Therapy veterans and those retiring who were there at the beginning of Narrative Therapy and might be considered to be foundational to it in the late 1980s/1990s. We are grateful to Colin Sanders from Vancouver for pioneering this genre and are hoping that Jeff Zimmerman will follow him in the next release. We would like to think these stories of their engagements with Narrative Therapy will be of interest both to veterans as well as newcomers.

