Trainings and Workshops

3rd Annual Contemporary Narrative Therapy Conference, November 5th – 7th, 2026, San Diego, CA

What is a good question – and what does it do?

Narrative therapy has always taken questions seriously—not as techniques, but as acts with consequences. CNTC 2026 opens once again with a keynote by **David Epston** (presenting from New Zealand over Zoom), an honor that reflects a continuing conversation at the heart of narrative practice. Together with **Michael White**, David has long argued that narrative therapy relies more than any other therapy on the art of asking questions—questions of literary and ethical merit that invite people into what they do not yet know but may come to know. This year's theme draws on Michel Foucault's enduring provocation: "*We know what we do, but do we know what our doing does*?" and brings into focus the shaping effects of our questions—how they organize meaning, invite moral positioning, and participate in the making of lives.

We are excited to announce that **Cheryl Mattingly** will be one of our keynote speakers at the conference. Cheryl Mattingly is a renowned medical anthropologist whose groundbreaking work on narrative, morality, and lived experience has profoundly shaped how story is understood far beyond psychotherapy. Her book *Healing Dramas and Clinical Plots* has been deeply influential in **David Epston's** thinking—and in his call to return good storywork to the heart of narrative therapy—making her presence as a keynote speaker a rare and significant honor.

Across three days, conference presenters will labor this question in practice. Through transcripts, therapeutic documents, and close reflections on their own work, speakers will share the actual questions they ask—and trace what those questions *do* in the lives of the people who respond to them. Opening the conference, David Epston's keynote will return us to the ethical heart of

narrative therapy: a careful attentiveness to how our questions act in the world. CNTC 2026 is an invitation to slow down, study our words, and refine our responsibility as practitioners whose asking shapes what becomes possible for others.

Confirmed Speakers for this event include: David Epston, Cheryl Mattingly, Travis Heath, Iman Dadras, Sanni Paljakka, and Tom Carlson.

For more information, please visit: https://www.socalnarrativetherapy.com/event-details-registration/contemporary-narrative-therapy-conference-2026

Apprenticeship in the Artistry of Narrative Practice with David Epston, Kay Ingamells, and Tom Carlson

Immerse yourself in this unique year-long apprenticeship with David Epston's narrative therapy practice. This is the only place in the world where you can learn directly from the co-originator of narrative practice together with his closest colleagues. We use a unique pedagogy developed over decades for teaching advanced narrative therapy practice. Nowhere else can you experience such intensive training that takes place within a very detailed story of your own therapy sessions and that of others.

This is a boutique learning experience, with between 6-10 apprentices in each cadre. The next group will begin in September 2026 for our Level II cohort. The course will take place in an online learning community made up of like-minded, skilled narrative practitioners from all over the world. For more information see the ad in this release or go to: https://narrativeapprentice.com/.

Learn Narrative Therapy From it's Co-inventor

The Apprenticeship in the Artistry of Narrative Therapy.
A year-long Program

Join Our Introduction

July 8th
12 -1:15 pm PDT

To register, email
narrativetherapytraining@gmail.com
For more information visit:
www.narrativeapprentice.com

Program begins November 2026

- Learn through a unique immersive pedagogy
- Bring the artistry of David's practice into your own
- Be part of an international narrative therapy community

Foundations in Contemporary Narrative Therapy: Advanced Clinical Application
Calgary Narrative Collective | Sunalta Community Centre, November 26 – 28, 2026

Due to high demand and a sold-out Part One in February, capacity for this training has been expanded. Early registration is encouraged.

While described as an advanced applications training, this is not a move into technique, nor a departure from foundations. Rather, it is an extension of them.

This two-and-a-half–day training opens with a keynote address by David Epston (joining from New Zealand via Zoom) and serves as Part Two of the Certificate Program in Contemporary Narrative Therapy.

While it follows *Foundations in Contemporary Narrative Therapy: Theoretical Foundations*, it has been intentionally designed to stand on its own as a meaningful and rigorous experience.

Those continuing from Part One will deepen the conceptual and ethical ground established there. Those joining for the first time will be welcomed through structured teaching that situates clinical practice within contemporary narrative therapy.

Participants may complete the certificate by attending both trainings in any order.

This training is intended for therapists at all levels who are seeking a more thoughtful, ethically grounded, and practice-oriented engagement with narrative therapy.

Contemporary narrative therapy does not begin with technique—it begins with a particular understanding of the person, relationship, and ethical responsibility.

In Part One, we asked: **Who is the person in narrative therapy?**

In Part Two, we ask: **What becomes possible in practice when we take this question seriously?**

This training is devoted to the clinical life of narrative therapy.

Rather than focusing on methods, it examines how therapeutic conversations are shaped by the therapist's orientation to the person, to story, and to the effects of their actions.

Clinical work will be engaged through transcripts, live interviews, and therapeutic documents, including letters and poems that extend conversations beyond the session.

A Map of Client Authorship

This training does not offer a map of what the therapist should do.

Many approaches organize practice around therapist action or technique. These contributions are significant. At times, however, they leave less clearly articulated how authorship becomes available to the person themselves.

Here, we begin elsewhere.

We offer a map of client authorship—one that integrates practice and moral inquiry while focusing on how people participate in shaping their lives.

This map traces a movement:

- from global descriptions where authorship is suspended
- to experience-near accounts of what a person is up against
- to the emergence of their own actions and responses
- to an explicit engagement with values and moral positioning
- to deliberate, ethical authorship taken up on purpose

The task of therapy, then, is not to move through steps, but to participate in conversations that make authorship visible, ethically grounded, and available to be taken up on purpose.

In this training, participants will be invited to:

- Examine how their understanding of the person shapes clinical decisions
- Engage deeply with clinical material, including transcripts and live demonstrations

- Develop practices of listening that attend to complexity and unfolding storylines
- Work with therapeutic documents (letters and poems) to extend conversations
- Engage moral inquiry as it emerges within lived responses to life
- Reflect on their participation in shaping the stories people come to live by

Whether continuing from Part One or joining for the first time, this training offers a rigorous engagement with contemporary narrative practice—grounded in its ethical foundations while opening new clinical possibilities.

Presenters

Sanni Paljakka & Tom Carlson

Fees

Professional – $600

Provisional – $450

Student – $300

Event Times

Thursday, November 26 – 4:00–7:00pm

Friday & Saturday, November 27–28 – 10:00am–5:00pm

Certificate Pathway

Participants may complete the Certificate Program by attending Part One and Part Two in any order.

Register here: https://www.showpass.com/foundations-of-contemporary-narrative-therapy-part-two/