

WHAT ARE THERAPEUTIC LETTERS?

(White & Epston, 1990)

- Letters from therapist to the client
- Supplement narrative therapy
- Letters keep the client connected to their emerging alternative narrative
- Since the client can keep the letters, they can revisit them as many times as they would like, helping them to stay immersed in the re-authoring process
- Consistent with egalitarian, collaborative approach to client/therapist relationship, therapist's thoughts are not kept secret but are out in the open to be affirmed or challenged by the family

ELEMENTS OF A GREAT THERAPEUTIC LETTER

(Epston & Lobovits, 1997; Nylund & Thomas, 1994)

1. **RECONNECTION** between the client and the previous therapy session, done in the introductory paragraph
 2. **VERBATIM QUOTES** from the clients
 3. **DESCRIPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROBLEM**, which usually includes a variety of comments that reinforce externalization of the problem from the family, and what the person has lost/suffered during their relationship with the problem
 4. **QUESTIONS**
 - Instead of direct statements regarding areas that were underexplored in the session
 - In order to emphasize unique outcomes and client agency
 - *"What do you think....?"*
 - In order to encourage the client to evaluate meaning
 - *"Does this mean that....?"*
 5. **JOKE AROUND** in an appropriate and lighthearted way, using positive humor and puns.
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