Humor and Story Telling in Psychotherapy

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Functions of Humor

- Open an issue.
- Facilitate an insight.
- Change a perspective.
- Build an alliance.
- Reduce tension.
- Undermine resistance.
- Imagine possibilities.
Functions of Humor

- Playfulness-regression in the service of the ego.
- Paradoxical intention.
- Corrective emotional experience.
- Modeling.
- Taking the power out of the narcissistic fantasy.
Other Uses

- Humor is the highest and most mature of all defenses.
- “Thoughtful spontaneity”: using humor when the benefits outweigh the risk.
- Humor is useful for therapists to manage our feelings outside of the session.
Humor is

- The discrepancy between expectation and reality.
- Incongruity: when an idea or an object is out of place.
- Pain + psychological distance.
- Risk + surprise.
Narrative is one of the main ways we make sense of our lives.

We are hungry for new stories.

Many people are socialized to tell stories.
Using Narrative with Clients

• “Tell me a story.”

• Move beyond the entertainment mode by highlighting emotional themes.
Using Narrative with male clients

- “Tell me a story.”
- Move beyond the masculine mode by highlighting emotional themes.
One Sexuality Story

The Paternal Awkward Lecture Series.

From Crimes Against Nature

https://vimeo.com/139330024