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PowerPoint Slides for  
On-Demand Webinar

# Narrative Therapy

Strategies from leading frameworks

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# AGENDA

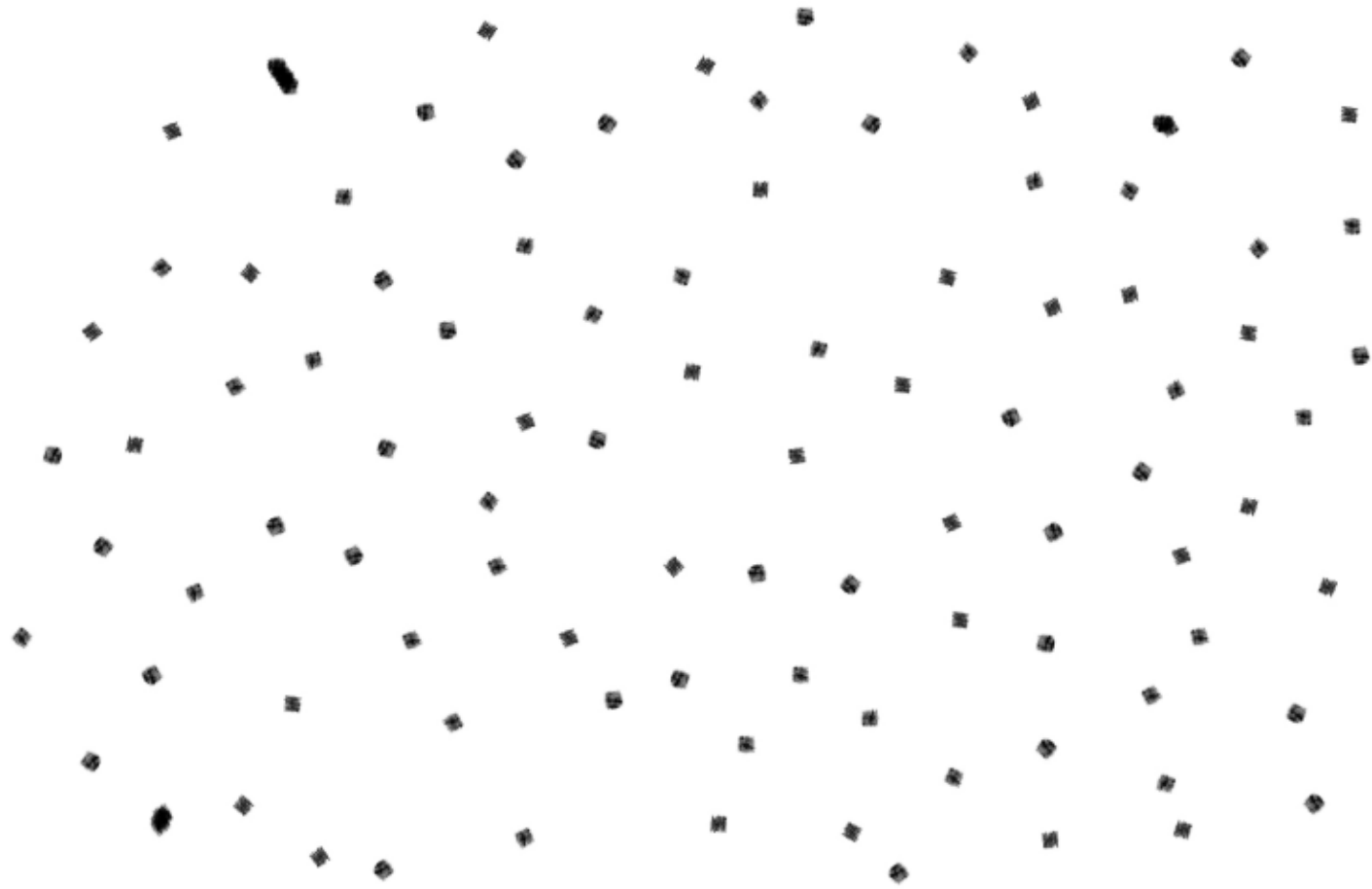
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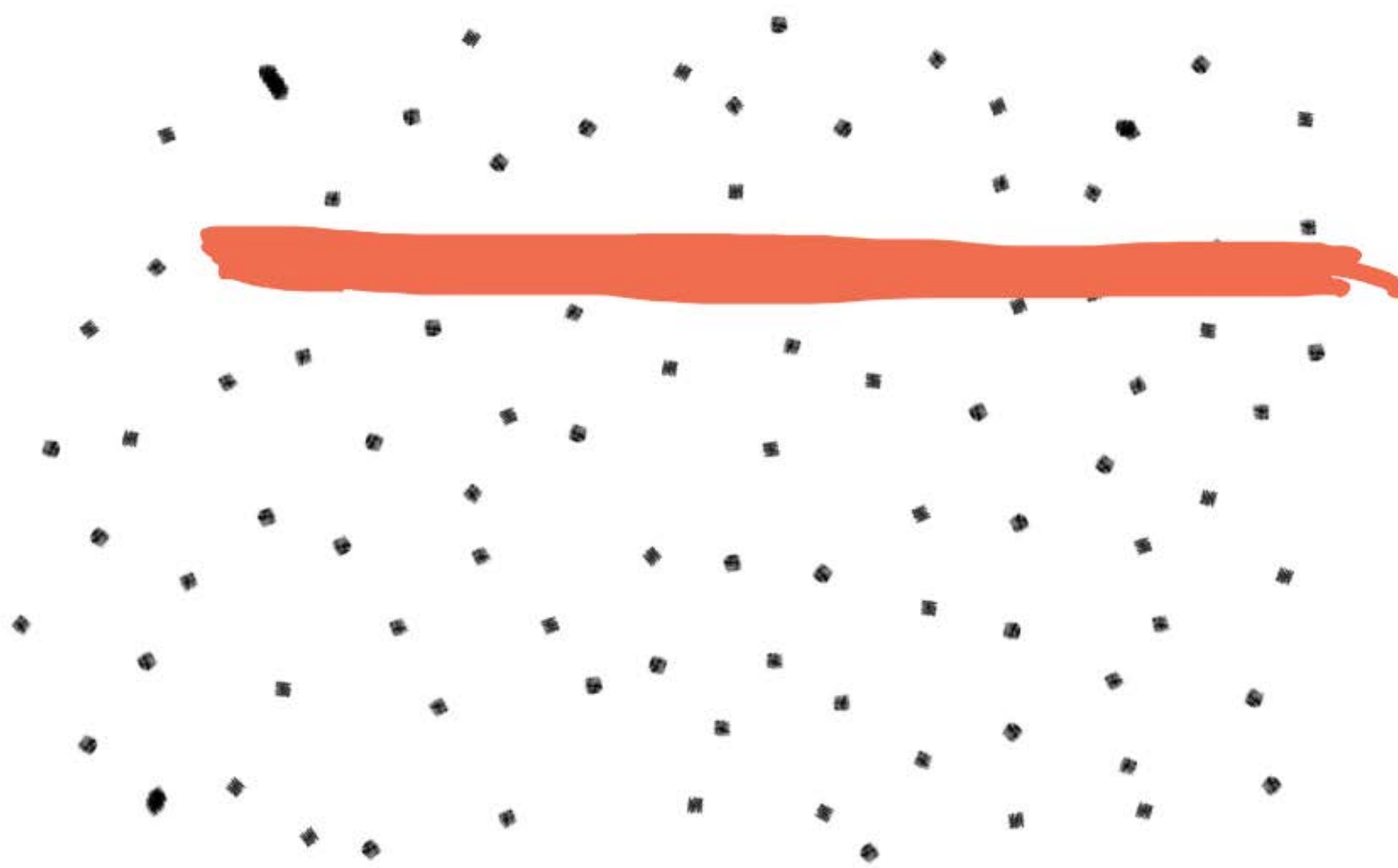
- Narrative Metaphor
- Key Concepts
- Guiding Ideology
- Applications
- Overall Goals
- Strengths/Cautions
- Process
- Strategies

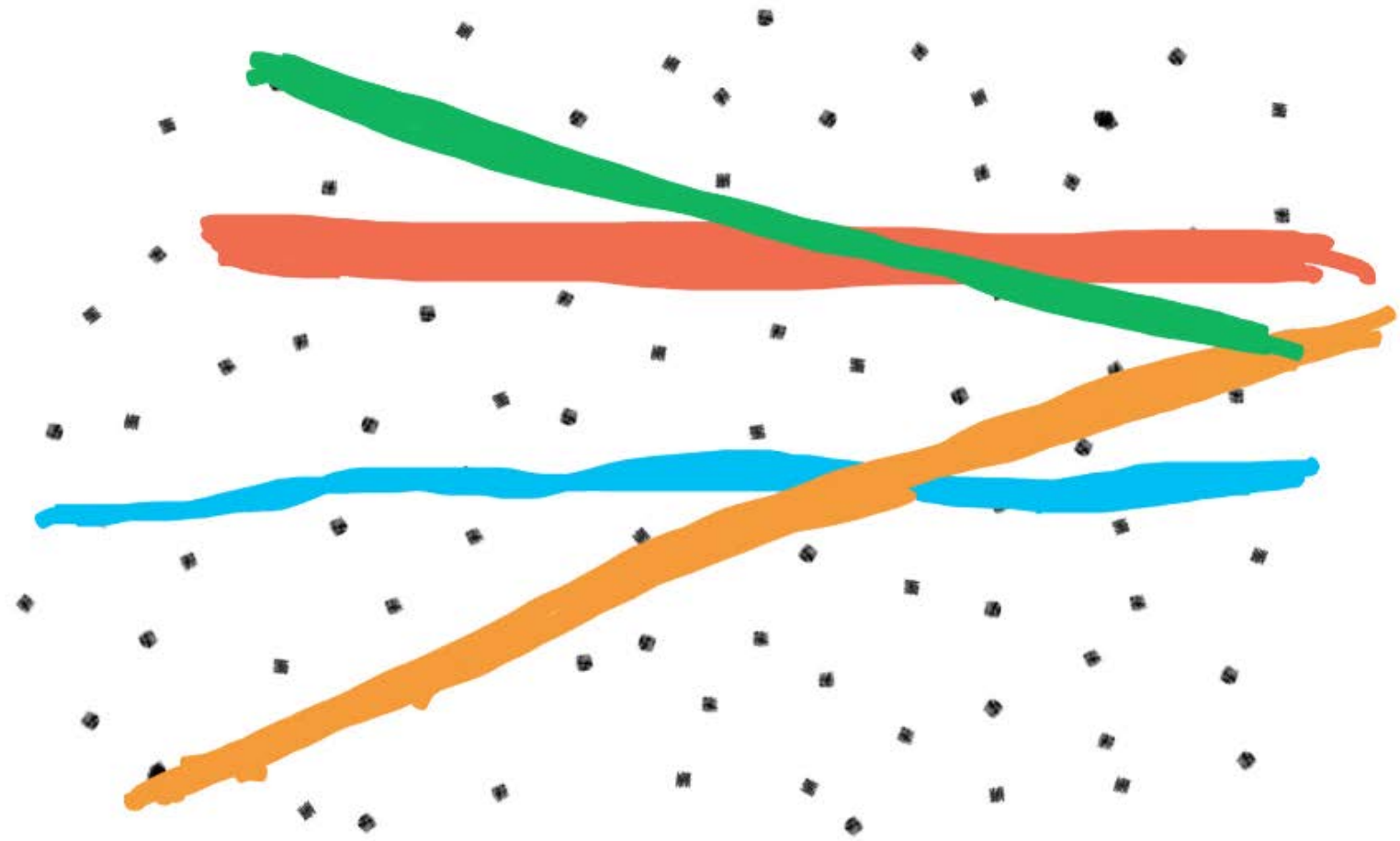
# THE NARRATIVE METAPHOR

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- We present our lives in the form of stories (narratives)
- Narratives are influenced by our relationships, social norms, expectations, and assumed truths
- Narratives omit much of our lived experience through selective memory
- Narratives influence our identity and actions
- When struggling, our narratives can become problem saturated







# NARRATIVE THERAPY

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## Key Concepts:

- Dominant Narrative
- Preferred Narrative
- Self Agency and Empowerment



# THIN VS. THICK NARRATIVES

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**Thin Narrative:** Problem saturated and limited in content

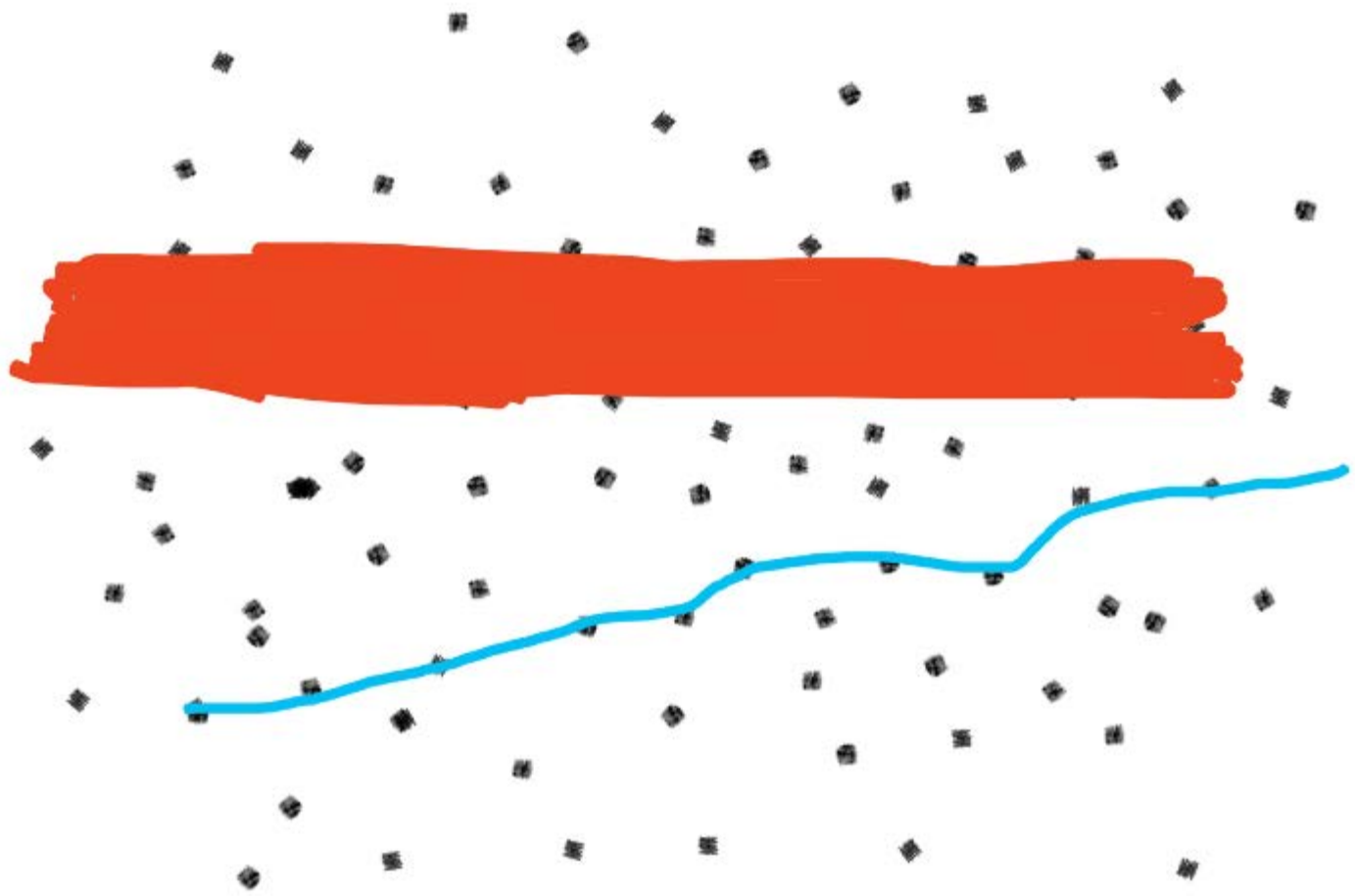
**Thick(er) Narrative:** Expanded view of self, the world, and place and functioning within it

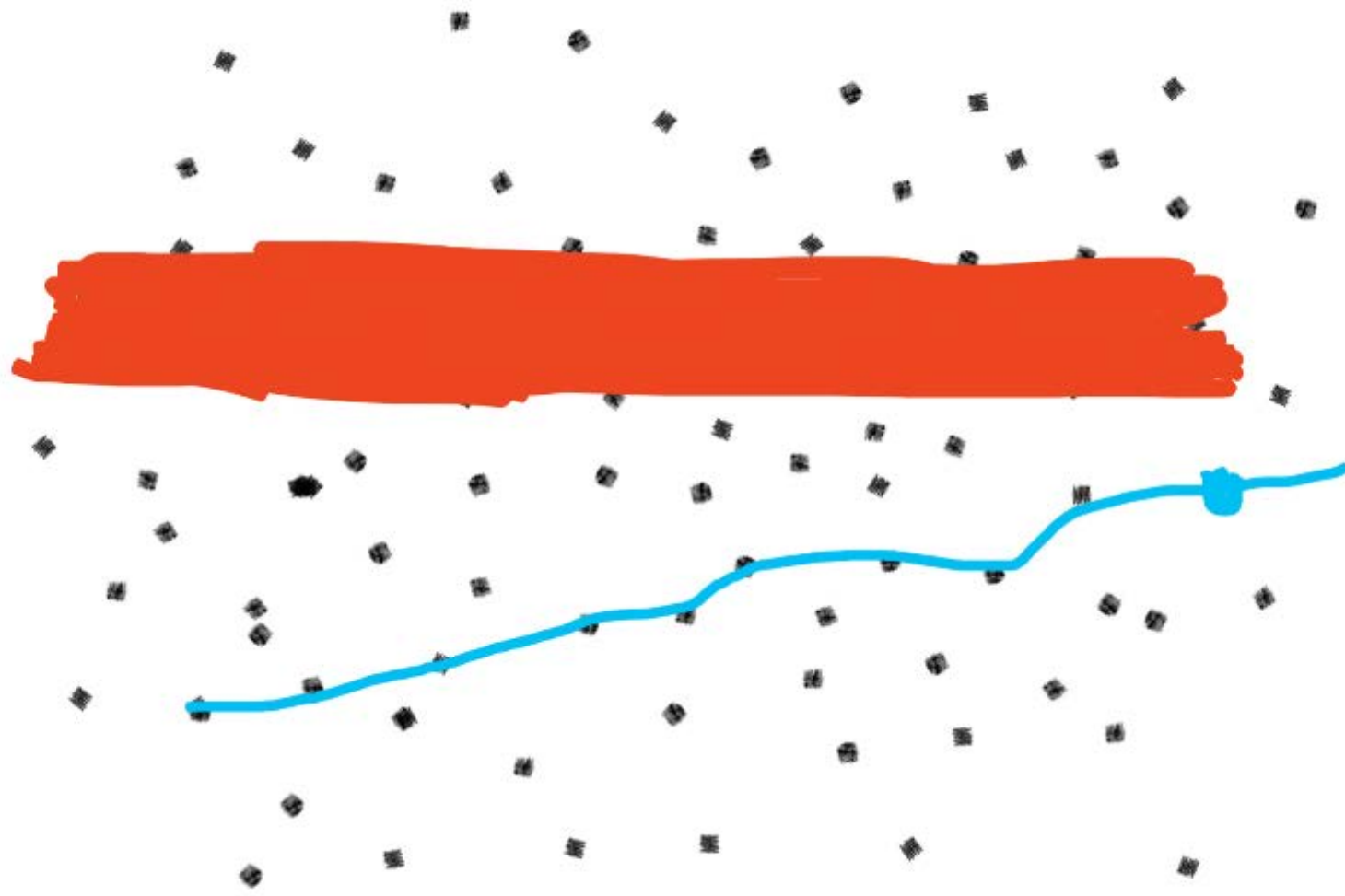


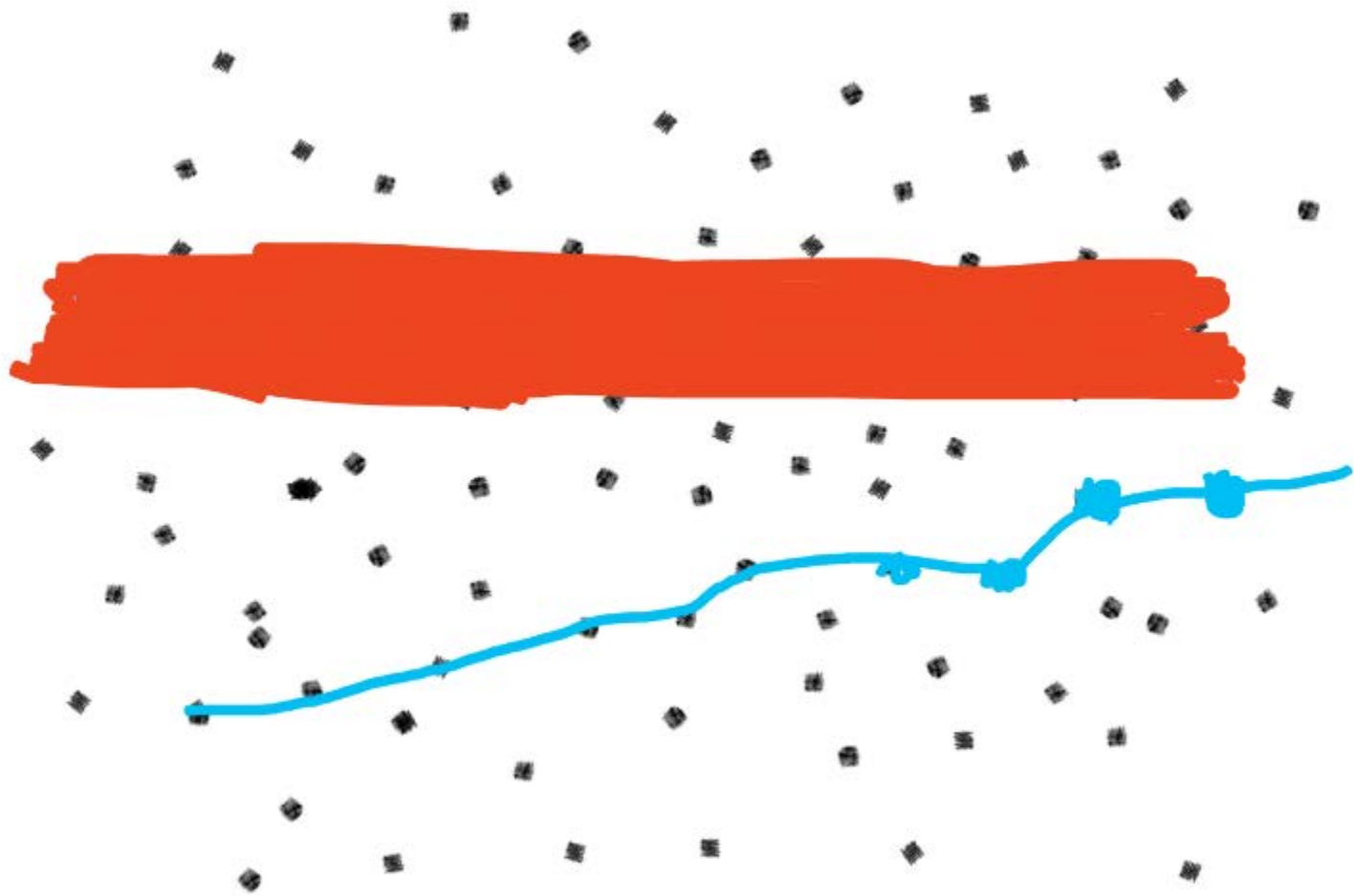
# INTENTIONS

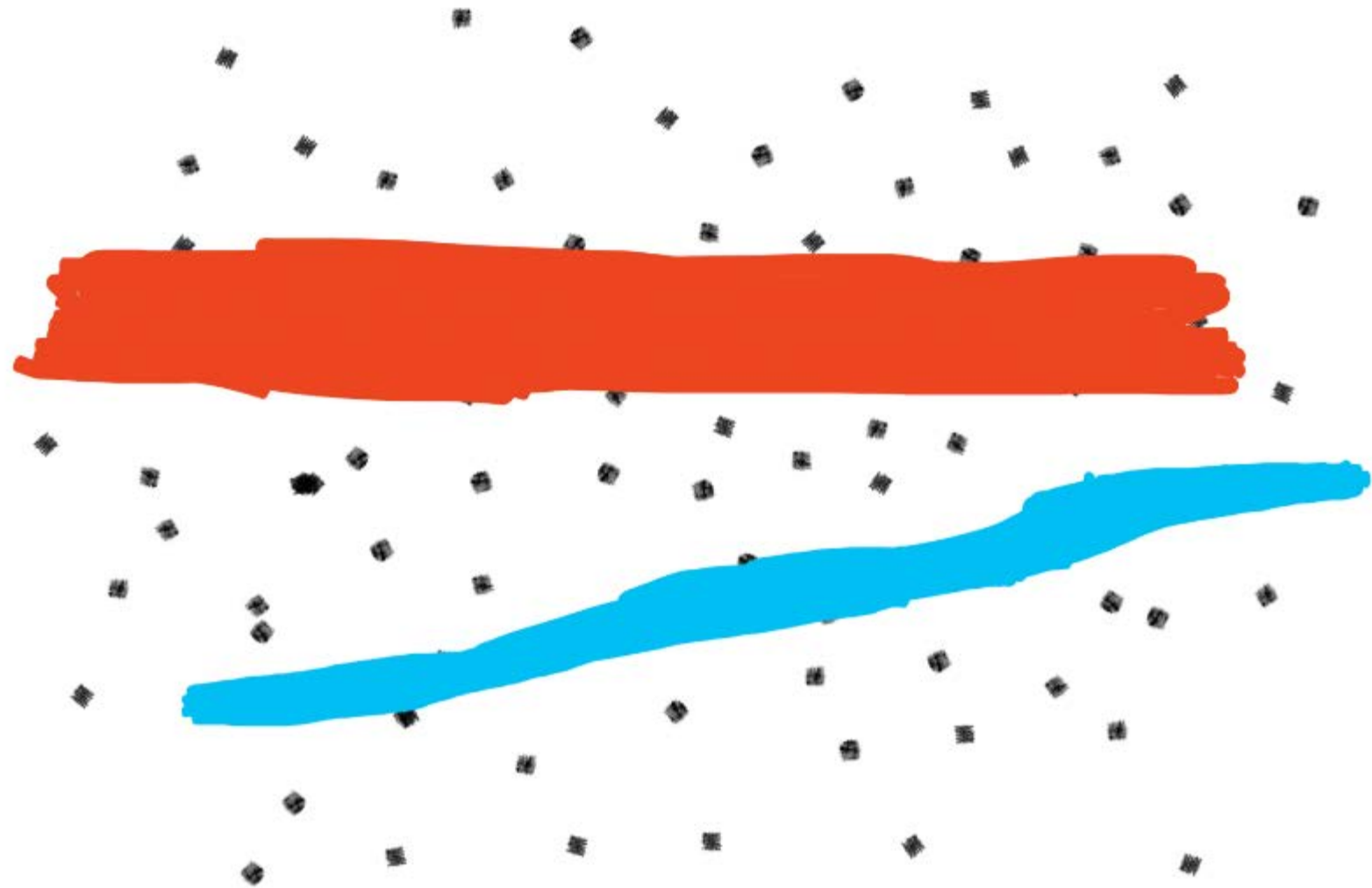
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- Take a “thin” client narrative and “thicken” it
- Create a story that more accurately reflects client’s desired life, existing strengths, capacity for change and growth, and ability to navigate challenges
- Empower clients to embrace narrative development inside and outside of counselling
- Promote ownership and authenticating narratives
- Highlight impact of deficiency-laden narratives







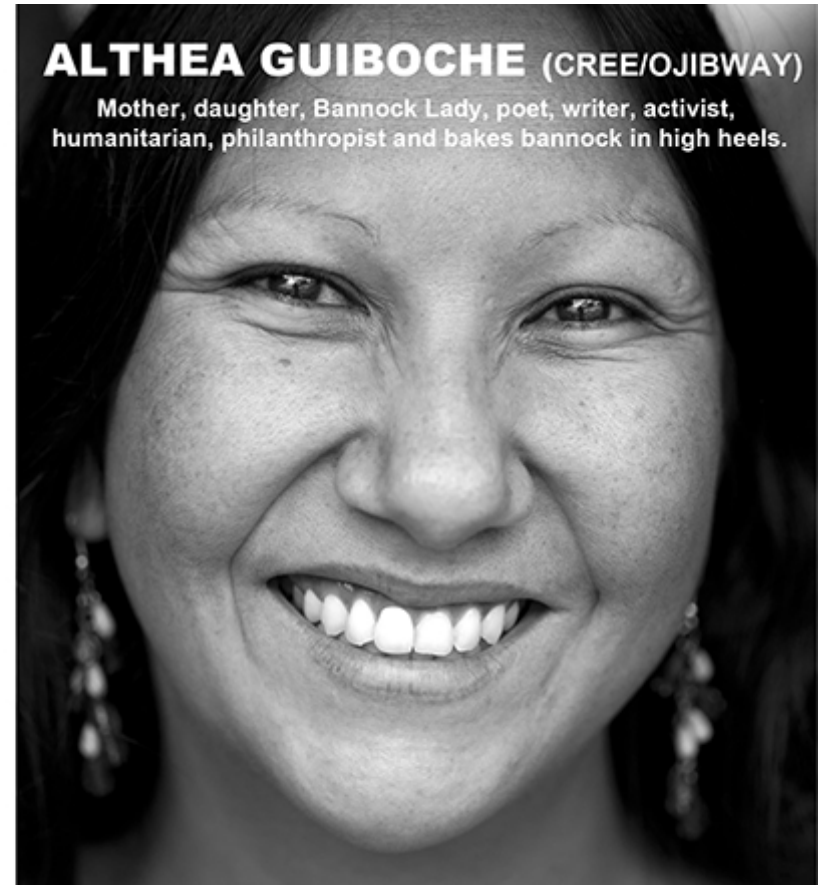
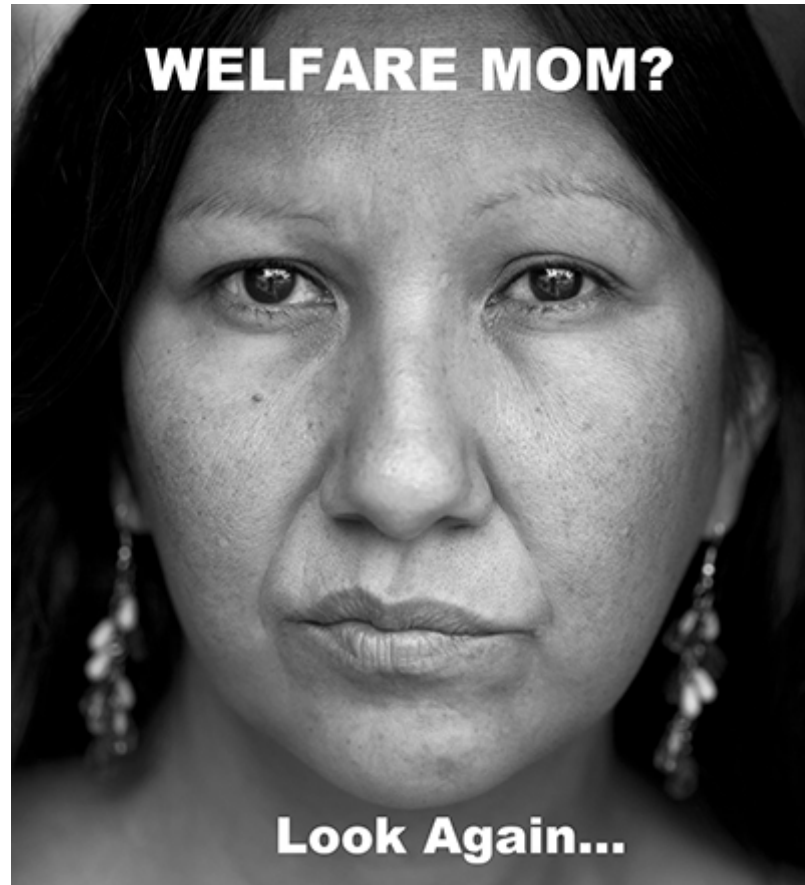


# NARRATIVE THERAPY

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## Guiding Ideology:

- Clash between dominant and preferred narrative
- Conflict between lived narrative and dominant
- Exclusion of significant aspects in life that would be in line with preferred narrative



# REFLECTION

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- What assumptions have people had about you?
- What factors influence these assumptions?
- How do these assumptions fit for how you see yourself?
- How do you prefer to be known?
- Can you share an example of this?



# OVERALL GOALS

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## NARRATIVE THERAPY

- Shed false aspects of the problem
- Tap into preferred and neglected parts of life
- Incorporate these preferred narratives more proficiently into the current narrative
- Create a new narrative that makes room for the preferred narrative

# APPLICATIONS

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- Relational problems
- Addictions
- Mental health concerns
- Trauma



# STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

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## Strengths

- Client at centre of process
- Assumes strengths, skills, resources
- Relational focus = less client blame, shame

## Challenges

- Fairly intellectual
- Can be confusing
- Less on the emotions

# POSITION OF THE HELPER

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- Non-expert (decentralized)
- Co-creator
- Transparency



# NARRATIVE TOOLS

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- Curiosity
- Questions
- Externalizing problems
- Listening intently
- Investigating and highlighting preferred narratives



# USE OF QUESTIONS

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Michael White, a leader in the development and use of narrative therapy, utilizes two categories of questions:

**1. Dual Landscapes of Action:** Exploring the events, sequences, time, and plots of people's narratives.

*(Tell me about your experience with anxiety.)*

**2. Dual Landscapes of Consciousness:** Exploring the meaning, interpretation, experience, and characters in the story

*(What role has anxiety played in your life and the relationships that you have?)*

# PROCESS

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## NARRATIVE THERAPY

### STEPS

1. Externalize the problem
  - *Getting to know the person outside of the problem*
2. Explore history and effects
3. Deconstruct and reconstruct narratives
4. Identify emerging stories
5. Authenticate new narrative

# STEP ONE...TWO...

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## **Externalize the Problem**

The ability to identify, articulate, and externalize the problem

## **Explore History and the Effects**

Working to identify and discover the impact of the past on current narrative(s)



# EXTERNALIZING

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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP

PERSON AS THE  
PROBLEM

PROBLEM AS THE  
PROBLEM

IT'S THE  
RELATIONSHIP WITH  
THE PROBLEM THAT  
IS THE PROBLEM

# GETTING TO KNOW THE PERSON

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## OUTSIDE OF THE PROBLEM

- Interests/hobbies
- Important people in their life
- Appreciations/strengths
- Values
- Preferred direction

# STEPS 1 & 2: EXTERNALIZING

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## AND EXPLORING HISTORY AND EFFECTS

- Do you have a name for this experience?
- What does Anxiety look, feel, and sound like?

# STRATEGIES: NAMING THE PROBLEM

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Presenting Problem	Guiding Question	Explore Possible Labels with Client	Using Client's choice in Practice
Anxiety	If you were able to give this problem a name, what would it be?	The Worries, Scared	Sounds like the Worries are getting in the way of some things.
Depression	If you were able to give this problem a name, what would it be?	Darkness, Helplessness, "The Clouds"	It seems that "The Clouds" often convince you that no one really needs you here.

# STEPS 1 & 2: EXTERNALIZING

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## AND EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP

- What does Anxiety look, feel, and sound like?
- When do you find it hanging around more?
- When do you notice its absence or even it being a bit smaller?
- When did you notice it beginning to cause problems for you?
- How does Anxiety cause problems for you?
  - Does it cause problems for other people as well?

# STEP 3: DECONSTRUCT & RECONSTRUCT

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## NARRATIVE(S)

- Breakdown falsehoods of dominant narratives
- Rebuild existing narratives
- Create vision and space for incorporating preferred narrative(s)

**NOTE:** This step is not pointing out the positive; nothing is pointed out. Instead, the therapist uses questions to solicit a thicker view, increasing the capacity to identify unique or desired outcomes.

# DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING

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- How does Anxiety cause problems for you?
  - Does it cause problems for other people as well?
- How do you make sense of Anxiety?
- What external factors influence Anxiety?
- What do you think Anxiety wants for you?
- What do you think about Anxiety's role in your life?  
(dislikes/is there something it is trying to tell you?)

# DECONSTRUCTING & RECONSTRUCTING

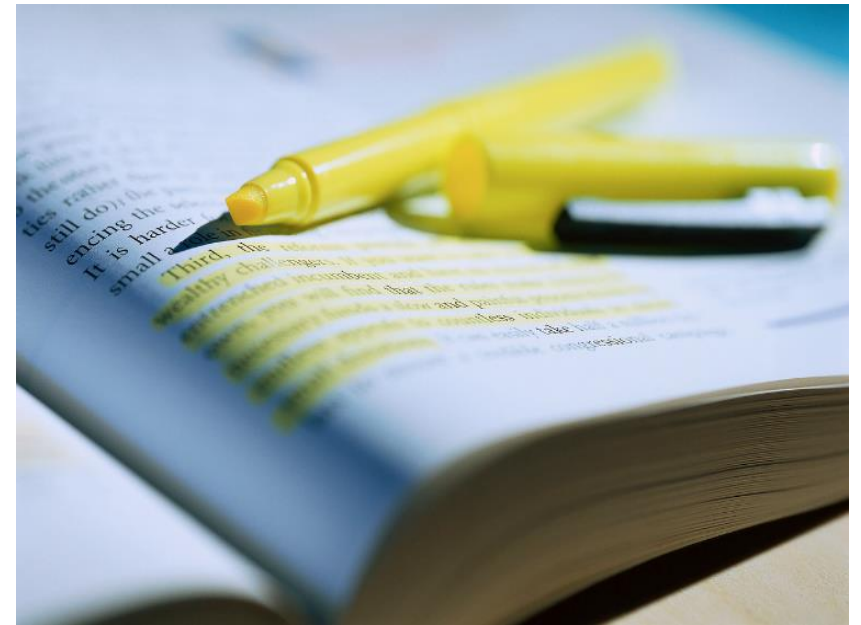
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- Does your Anxiety have any tricks?
- What tricks have you learned in standing up to Anxiety?
- How do you want to be with Anxiety?
  - Can you share an example of this?
  - Why is this important to you?
- Who may stand with you in the face of Anxiety?



## STEP 4: IDENTIFYING EMERGING STORIES

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- Can you share an example of ...
- Where did you catch a glimpse of ...
- How did you notice this?
- What steps led up to this?
- How would you describe this?
- What does this say about you?
- Explore the who, what, where, etc. – root the experience in the senses
  - Thickens the story, highlights the memory
- Was this the first time this occurred or has this happened before?

# STEP 5: AUTHENTICATING

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## THE NEW NARRATIVE

- Identity as socially constructed:
  - We make meaning of ourselves in relationship to others
  - Who we are and how we are are shaped by those around us

# LETTER WRITING

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- As part of the intervention and documentation
- Invite important people to investigate and highlight preferred stories
- Letter to the problem



# OUTSIDER WITNESS

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1. Invite witness to come to session
2. Witness listens without comment to the client
3. Helper invites the listener to reflect/comment:
  - What stood out? (phrase, image, etc.)
  - Why did this stand out? (connection to own life)
  - How might this influence you as you go forward?
4. Client is then interviewed about what stood out from the reflections

# OUTSIDER WITNESS

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The process has shown benefits for all participants, but has been described as particularly useful for the client.

## **Expected Outcomes**

- Validate client's experience and reduce feelings of isolation
- Client acquires new images and knowledge about their issue and alternative narratives and solutions are presented and explored

# ADDITIONAL EVENTS & RESOURCES

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- Other Public Workshops
- On-site Training
- Live and On-Demand Webinars
- Blog Articles
- Free Monthly Webinar

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