

Safer Interviewing Double Listening

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Natural Disasters

Snapshots

Multiple Listening

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John Stott (1992): Double Listening

Listening to both the Word of God and to the world, but in different ways.

We listen to the word of God with humility and reverence, seeking to understand, believe and obey.

We listen to the world with a spirit of critical alertness, also seeking to understand, sympathising and seeking grace to understand how the gospel relates to the concerns and issues of the people around us. Stott sees double listening as indispensable to Christian discipleship and mission (p27-29).

Michael White (2006): Double Listening

The importance of therapists hearing whatever it is that people want to say about their experience of trauma.

On the other hand, listening for any indication of what the person has continued to give value to in life despite what they have been through.

Listening for any indications that provide a hint of the person's response to trauma. These responses will be based on what a person gives value to in life (p28).

From Natural Disaster to Personal Disaster:

God, Culture and Elders

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Areas of Interest:

Trauma and abuse often attacks a person's sense of identity.

Talking about trauma/abuse can leave people feeling unsafe.

How have experiences of trauma and abuse affected a person's story of self (identity), life and relationships?

How might we collaborate in further negotiating these stories – in redeeming experiences of trauma and abuse?

And how might we do so in a way that contributes to a sense of safety?

Matthew

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Matthew

What might be Matthew's story about these events and about himself – his story of identity?

How might these stories shape his life?

Some Possibilities:

Guilty, to blame, responsible

Feeling unsafe, threatened. Intrusive memories

Abandoned, alone

Super responsible, 'rescuing'

Disconnected – 'attachment' issues

Aggression – in defence of self or others, in conflict situations

Narrative Approaches to Trauma

Denborough, David (Ed) 2006. *Trauma. Narrative Responses to Traumatic Experience*. Dulwich Centre Publications. Adelaide. South Australia.

In particular, chapters by Michael White:

'Working with People who are Suffering the Consequences of Multiple Trauma: A Narrative Perspective.'

And

'Children, Trauma and Subordinate Storyline Development.'

p28 'No one is a passive recipient of trauma. People always take steps in endeavoring to prevent the trauma they are subject to, and, when preventing the trauma is clearly impossible, they take steps to try to modify it in some way or to modify its affects on their lives.'

'People's responses to trauma are based on what they give value to, on what they hold precious in life.'

p 148 '...the negative consequences of trauma do not represent the whole story of children's lives...'

Subordinate or Alternative Stories/Narratives

Our narratives or stories are not able to account for all of our lived experience.

There will always be events that do not fit with the dominant narrative or story....

These represent subordinate stories. They can be seen as a foundation for building alternative stories.

Subordinate Stories (Continued)

Obtaining a fuller picture or story of the person's response to trauma or abuse, and their affects.

A fuller picture of the person's life – beyond their experience of trauma and its affects

Incorporating: Values, principles, commitments, intentions, hopes, dreams

p149 'The accounts of what children hold precious, and of what they intend for their lives that are featured in subordinate story line development can be thought of as concepts about life and identity.'

p150 'Subordinate story line development provides a safe place for children to stand in the context of giving voice to the trauma they have been subject to, and to the consequences of this trauma.'

'Subordinate story line development also provides a foundation for action for children to proceed with their lives.'

'Subordinate story line development restores children's sense of personal agency.'

P154 '....within these conversations people have the opportunity to experience being at one with a range of positive identity conclusions that displace many negative 'truths' of identity that they have been recruited into as an outcome of the traumas they have been subject to.'

Alternative or subordinate story lines – including stories of identity – have implications for action.

Identifying values, commitments, personal qualities etc does not make trauma less traumatic – but it does provide alternative ground for people to stand on in their ongoing responses to trauma.

Matthew:

Guilty, to blame, responsible, disconnected, aggressive

Vs

No hurting, brave, helpful, trust God

Grandmother Care Giver

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Alternative Readings

Video - Helen

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Reflections on Biblical Teaching

We are created in God's image – for love.

We are all battered and buffeted through living in this sin cursed world.

Abuse is a violation of love. Church related abuse is a particular kind of violation and battering.

Somehow God can redeem suffering e.g. Romans 8:28

We are taught in the bible to be on the lookout for things we can be thankful for e.g. Philippians. Double Listening fits...

Hazards

People feeling their experience is minimised.

People feeling not heard or listened to.

People feeling this line of inquiry could undermine efforts to be compensated.

Confusing information gathering with counselling.

Conclusion

Double Listening can:

assist in developing more empowering and hopeful narratives or stories of self, of experiences of trauma, and sometimes of God. This might include a person's values, commitments, strengths, resilience, skills...

- contribute to the development of more solid ground to stand upon in responding to abuse and other forms of trauma, and to a safer experience of being interviewed.

