

# Children's Community Mental Health Services and Wraparound Milwaukee



HOW DID WE COME TO BE, WHO ARE WE, AND WHO WILL WE BECOME: HEARING THE LIFE STORY

Leanne Delsart, MS  
Integrated Services Manager of Strategic Initiatives  
Children's Community Mental Health Services and Wraparound Milwaukee  
[Leanne.Delsart@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Leanne.Delsart@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

1

So, what do you do?



2



# Frames and Lenses



3



# 1<sup>st</sup> Big Idea

RESEARCH TELLS US  
INSTILLING HOPE LEADS TO  
BETTER OUTCOMES



4



5

Life Stories

The job of the writer is to balance documentation requirements with telling the new story. Families deserve to have accurate information documented that both meets the requirements but also holds meaning to their life. It should set the stage for them to receive real help, in the right way at the right time.



6



How  
often do  
you floss?



7

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Big Idea



IT IS NOT YOUR "CASE-FILE" IT IS THE STORY OF A FAMILY'S LIFE AND  
WE NEED TO EARN THE PRIVILEGE OF HEARING IT

8




# Life story

Who would you let write your biography?

How many chapters would it be?

When would the story begin?

**What would be your opening line?**

9



**Looking back to better understand how to move forward**

Consider a person's experiences throughout development to help identify unmet needs related to relationships and connection, stress management and resilience, and development, and understand how they came to be and the function of behavior.

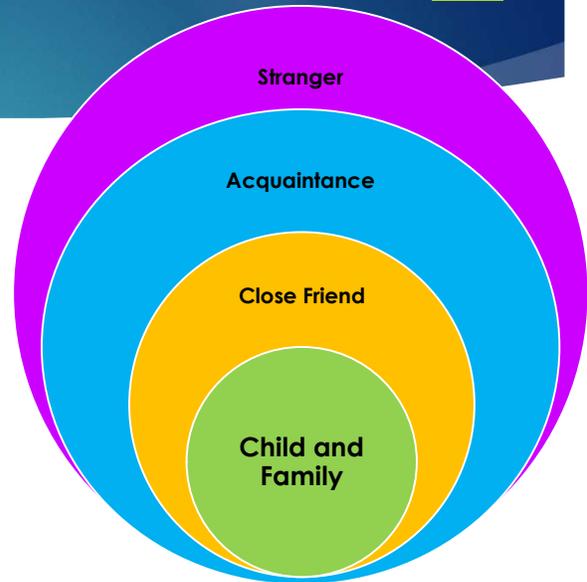


copyright © 2007 Bill Flynn

10

## Where do you fit in?

- Get to know the family as individuals as well as a unit
- Each person has an individual history and perspective that are interconnected
- The details are not always necessary
- Relationship comes first
- We have to earn trust



11

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Big Idea



WOULD YOU DOCUMENT IN THE SAME WAY IF YOU WERE WRITING ABOUT A RESPECTED COLLEAGUE OR A LOVED ONE?

12

What's  
the  
story?



**THE DAILY NEWS**  
www.dailynews.com THE WORLDS FAVORITE NEWSPAPER - since 1879 -

**MAN KILLS DOG**



**Lorem Ipsum** In libris  
græcis appetere mea. At  
vim odio lorem omnes, pri  
id iuvaret partiendo. Vivendo  
menandri et sed. Lorem  
volumus blandit cu has. Sit  
cu alla porro fusset.

Ea pro natum invidunt  
repudiandae, his et facilis  
vituperatoribus. Mei eu  
ubique altera senerit,  
consul eripuit accusata has  
ne.

In libris græcis appetere  
mea. At vim odio lorem  
omnes, pri id iuvaret  
partiendo. Vivendo menandri  
et sed.

In libris græcis appetere  
mea. At vim odio lorem  
omnes, pri id iuvaret  
partiendo. Vivendo menandri  
et sed.

In libris græcis appetere  
mea. At vim odio lorem  
omnes, pri id iuvaret  
partiendo. Vivendo menandri  
et sed.

13

How does the  
story change?



**THE DAILY NEWS**  
www.dailynews.com THE WORLDS FAVORITE NEWSPAPER - since 1879 -

**MAN KILLS DOG ATTACKING BABY**



**Lorem Ipsum** In libris  
græcis appetere mea. At  
vim odio lorem omnes, pri  
id iuvaret partiendo. Vivendo  
menandri et sed. Lorem  
volumus blandit cu has. Sit  
cu alla porro fusset.

Ea pro natum invidunt  
repudiandae, his et facilis  
vituperatoribus. Mei eu  
ubique altera senerit,  
consul eripuit accusata has  
ne.

In libris græcis appetere  
mea. At vim odio lorem  
omnes, pri id iuvaret  
partiendo. Vivendo menandri  
et sed.

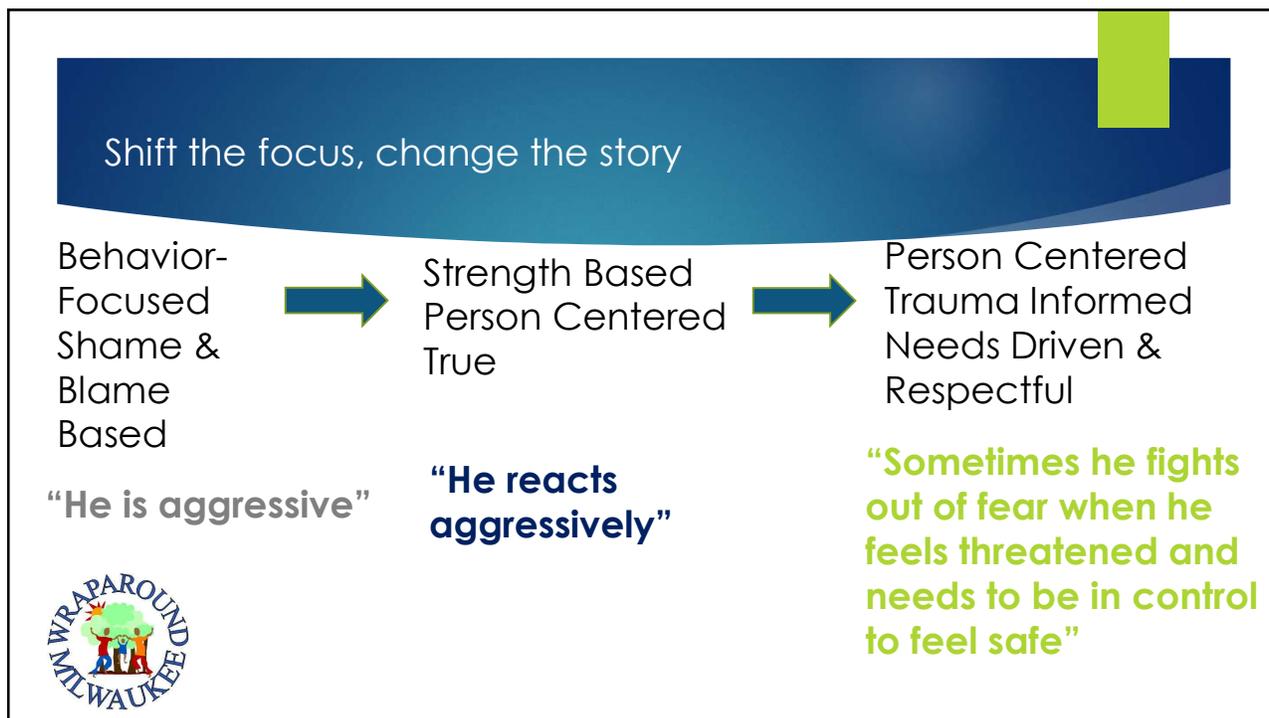
In libris græcis appetere  
mea. At vim odio lorem  
omnes, pri id iuvaret  
partiendo. Vivendo menandri  
et sed.

In libris græcis appetere  
mea. At vim odio lorem  
omnes, pri id iuvaret  
partiendo. Vivendo menandri  
et sed.

14



15



16

# Language does matter

Avoid	Utilize	Do not refer	Refer	Use
Avoid bureaucratic or provocative language and jargon.	Utilize strength-based and family friendly terminology.	Do not refer to youth by calling them by their diagnosis or disability.	Refer to parents by their given name, not "Mom" or "Dad" unless they agree because it is their story	Use shared language without overstepping respectful boundaries.



Traditional System Centered Language	Individualized Person Centered Language
Acting out/uncontrollable/out of control	Emotionally dysregulated, needs help to calm down/cope, triggered
Has anger management problems	Threatened (perceived or real), sensitized survival (fight, flight) response, fearful, mistrusting, self-protective
Willfully naughty, makes bad choices, bad on purpose	Adaptive patterns of behavior to ensure safety and control
Pushes buttons	Creates predictable responses based on worldview
Manipulative	Seeks to get needs met or communicate through behavior
In need of consequences to motivate change	Needs effective interventions to heal and learn new skills
Doesn't follow through, uncooperative, resistant, noncompliant	Mistrusting/suspects a hidden agenda, rule conflict, stages of change, uncertain about the unknown, lacks skills or confidence or support, the cost is greater than the benefit of change
Confrontational, belligerent	Relational template wired with threat, crossed the intimacy barrier
Pathological, dysfunctional, inappropriate behavior	Adaptive/generalized stress response, misunderstood, functional behavior displayed outside the original context, feels good
Checked out, disinterested, doesn't care	Dissociative stress response, re-experiencing, triggered
Attention seeking, needy	Relationship seeking, needs attunement, opportunity for co-regulation or soothing

Normalization:  
Reframe to  
reduce blame



# 4th Big Idea



LANGUAGE SHAPES PERSPECTIVE.

19

All children and families have strengths – it is our job to discover and name them.

A family-centered agency culture drives family-centered documentation.

You don't really know someone if all you know is the bad stuff.

Change is supported by building on existing or new-found strengths.

Basic Values and Assumptions



20

## Documenting a family's story

- ▶ The family is the author, we are the scribe
- ▶ Use information you have available
- ▶ Be sure to confirm reports with the family prior to adding the information to the narrative
- ▶ Reframe other reports to reflect a broader context and truth...dig deeper and explore with a family
- ▶ Creates a robust picture of the who the family is and what they have experienced over their lifetimes, across generations, individually and collectively in every domain



21

## A few ideas on how...

- ▶ Use MI:
- ▶ Create time and space
- ▶ Share a meal
- ▶ Invite supports
- ▶ Give a heads-up
- ▶ None ya
- ▶ Respect the ice has been broken
- ▶ Write their own
- ▶ Practice asking the tough questions



22

# Dance

*like nobody is watching*

**Text and email**

*like it will be read in court someday*



**And the family is the judge....**

23



CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND WRAPAROUND MILWAUKEE  
LIFE STORY WRITER'S GUIDE

**Introduction to the life story:**  
We all have a story to tell that describes how we came to be, who we are, and who we want to become. Because Wraparound is a partnership and I am here to support you and your family to make whatever changes you want to make in life, it is helpful for me to understand who you are, what is important to you, what you want for yourself as a young person and parent, and what you want for your family. If you are open to sharing with me, I would appreciate the opportunity to get to know you better.

If you are not comfortable sharing yet, that's ok; we don't really know each other yet. If I ask a question you are not comfortable answering, no problem, just say pass and I will skip it. This might feel like a lot, because it is, so if at some point you've had enough, let me know and we will pick it up again another day. I understand that it might feel a bit intrusive, so I will do my best to make it a conversation between us rather than an interview. Please let me know if you would like me to clarify or ask something in a different way to make sharing your experiences a little easier.

It's not fair that I ask you to share who you are without going first, so if it's ok, I would like to tell you a little bit about me, and perhaps we will find some things in common. *Share what you are comfortable sharing with the family about: where you grew up, why you chose this field, how you define yourself as a helper or support to the families you serve, what your interests or hobbies are, if you have children, what your strengths and skills are that help you to be good at what you do and how they can serve the family.*

I have a bunch of questions here to help us guide our conversation, and it is broken up into different categories like, family, education and work, mental health, culture and spirituality, etc. I can start by asking some questions or if you would rather just start by telling me about yourselves and your family, I can just listen. Whichever way you are more comfortable works for me too. Also, I want to make sure that I get it right, so do you mind if I jot down some notes as we go so I can remember everything. Following our meeting I will type your story up so you can read it and tell me if it is correct and complete. I appreciate that you are taking the time to share your story and I want to make sure I don't miss anything or leave something out.

[www.wrapmke.com](http://www.wrapmke.com)

24

## Contact information

[wraparoundmke.com](http://wraparoundmke.com)

For more information about training or to schedule a site visit  
Email: [resourceextension@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:resourceextension@milwaukeecountywi.gov)



To make a referral for services, please call the Resource and Referral Line: 414-257-7607