

Chapter 11: Narrative Psychology

Glossary

Chaos narrative: one of the three types of narratives identified by Frank (1995) used by people who have experienced illness; imagining that life will never get better, containing an absence of narrative order and an absence of hope

Critical realism: an epistemological position; data can tell us something about what is going on in the 'real' world but it does not do so in a self-evident, unmediated fashion – data needs to be interpreted to unpack underlying structures or hidden aspects

Cross-sectional analysis: a feature of memory work analysis where co-researchers compare their memories with each other, looking at the social relations within which the memories may be located and the cultural meanings on which they may draw

Emplotment: A term developed by Ricoeur (1984) to describe how narrators try to logically organize sequences into meaningful plots

Memory work: a method of inquiry that looks closely at participants' recollections of the past and elicits, analyses and interprets these accounts; memory work is concerned with what memories tell us about the social relations within which meanings are constructed.

Narrative psychology: concerned with the ways in which people organize and bring order to experience; focusing on the ways in which narratives function in human interactions and the structure and forms stories take which are used by people to narrate their lives.

Narrative therapy: a form of therapy that looks at the constraining, restricting stories that people tell about their lives and helps people to reconstruct new stories that are more fulfilling and freeing

Quest narrative: one of the three types of narratives identified by Frank (1995) used by people who have experienced illness; illness is viewed as part of a journey or quest; illness is accepted and there is a hope that something will be gained from the experience of being ill

Realist orientations: aiming to obtain an accurate picture of the social world; aiming to generate valid and reliable knowledge about reality which exists independently of the researcher

Relativism: an epistemological position; a view that there is no such thing as 'pure experience' and that the aim of research ought to be an exploration of the ways in which cultural and discursive resources are used in order to construct different versions of an experience or reality

Restitution narrative: one of the three types of narratives identified by Frank (1995) used by people who have experienced illness; the endpoint of such a narrative is the expectation of improved health, a belief in the future and a restoration of health.

Saturation: the point at which no new concepts, themes or insights emerge; the topic has been exhausted

Social constructionist orientations: aiming to explore the social construction of 'knowledge' itself and how people construct versions of reality through the use of language; investigating the process of constructing knowledge about a phenomenon and often involving the study of discourses

Symbolic interactionist perspective: 'the world' is a product of human participation and negotiation; social realities are negotiated by human actors and peoples' interpretations of events shape their consequences.

Textual analysis: examining data (e.g. analysis of an individual written memory) in terms of sequences of actions, role relations, clichés and contradictions, statements made and absences that characterize it