

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THERAPY CONFERENCE 2025



NOVEMBER 6TH - 8TH

Alliant International University
10455 Pomerado Rd, San Diego, CA 92131

**PRESENTED BY SOCAL NARRATIVE THERAPY
CO-SPONSORED BY ALLIANT INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND THE
JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THERAPY**

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THERAPY 2024



DAY 1

Thursday, November 6th- 4pm
Alliant International University, MacDonald Hall



KEYNOTE ADDRESS- THERAPY OF A LITERARY MERIT- 4:00 - 5:30PM

David Epston- Co-Founder Narrative Therapy

In this keynote address, David will return to one of the very first questions that he and Michael White asked, "Can therapy be a literary practice?" David will speak to this topic by way of asking another question, "What is a good question?" and will answer the question by way of a practice story that shows the power of good questions in the life of a young boy whose life was on the line.

DAY 1

Thursday, November 7th

OPENING SOCIAL- 5:30 - 7:00PM

Join us after the keynote address for a time of connection and conversation. We will provide drinks and light dinner snacks in the outdoor atrium right next to our conference venue.

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THERAPY 2024



DAY 2

Friday, November 7th

Alliant International University, MacDonald Hall

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR DISASTER: MUSIC, CHATGPT, AND OUTSIGHT IN NARRATIVE THERAPY- 9:00 - 12:30PM

Travis Heath



This workshop invites participants on a therapeutic journey into the practice of oversight, weaving together real-world practice stories, reflective interviews, letters, music, and the interactive possibilities of ChatGPT. Through these different mediums, we will explore how helping clients witness themselves can spark creativity and expand possibilities. The hope is participants will leave with fresh perspectives and practical ideas for integrating oversight into their work.

DAY 2

Friday, November 7th

Alliant International University, MacDonald Hall

BENDING TIME: NARRATIVE PRACTICE IN THE LIMINAL, THE DEFUTURED, AND THE NOT-YET 1:30- 5:00PM

Chrsi Hoff



What if time is not a line to follow but a field to wander?
What if the stories we live are not only shaped by the past, but also by the futures we dare to imagine, and the strange folds of time we find ourselves caught within?

This unfinished project invites practitioners into the poetic and political work of bending time in narrative practice. Drawing from Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotopes, Eihei Dōgen's Uji (Being-Time), Bruno Latour's Compositionist Manifesto, and the generative threshold of liminal space, we will explore how therapy becomes a site of temporal improvisation where past, present, and future co-mingle in the service of becoming.

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THERAPY 2024



DAY 3

Saturday, November 8th
Alliant International University, Campus Commons



KEYNOTE: THE UNFINISHED PROJECT OF NARRATIVE THERAPY: A FOUCAULDIAN CRITIQUE- 9:00 - 10:30AM

Iman Dadras

This presentation frames narrative therapy's unfinished project as a call to reclaim its Foucauldian philosophical roots. It urges a return to a praxis that does not merely reauthor but deconstructs and problematize that situates subjectivity within the socio-political matrices of its emergence, and that resists neoliberalism's seductive endorsement of hyper-individualization. Additionally, this presentation aims to invite those clinicians who practice narrative therapy to re-examine their foundational theoretical knowledge with a critical differentiation from dominant normative evidence-based therapeutic models. Only through such a re-engagement can narrative therapy fulfill its promise as a transformative critique of the subjugating stories we are made to live by and die for.

DAY 3

Saturday, November 8th
Alliant International University, Campus Commons



THE PERSON IS NOT THE PROBLEM- BUT WHO IS THE PERSON IN NARRATIVE THERAPY? 11:00- 5:00PM

Sanni Paljakka & Tom Carlson

Narrative therapy is famous for knowing who the person is not through its central motto: "the person is not the problem, but the problem is the problem." However, treating the person as "not the problem" carries significant unintended consequences when considered within narrative therapy's broader political and philosophical commitments. Among these unintended effects are: 1) the tendency to treat persons as passive recipients or victims of the problems they face, and 2) the diminishment of people's agentic capacities as protagonists who are already responding to and shaping the events of their lives. While Michael White referred to the notion of an agentic self, especially in a post-structural context where people are both subjects and agents, very little has been written about what it means for a person to be a person in narrative therapy. The purpose of this workshop is to take up this "unfinished business" in narrative therapy and explore a more complex, nuanced understanding of who the person is within narrative practice. Drawing on both post-structural and literary theory, we will consider how persons might be understood as agentic protagonists—figures always already responding to life according to their moral purposes and commitments. Through discussion, examples, and participatory exercises, the workshop will invite practitioners to reimagine their therapeutic conversations as sites of literary and ethical creation, where clients' actions, language, and intentions are foregrounded as expressions of meaning and moral agency.



List of Restaurants

Board & Brew – Scripps Ranch
9880 Hibert St E-3, San Diego, CA 92131 (10 – 11 minutes from campus)
10:00 am – 9:00 pm
<https://boardandbrew.com/locations/scripps-ranch/>

California Thai Café
9550 Black Mountain Rd, San Diego, CA 92126 (8 – 10 minutes from campus)
11:00 am – 3:00 pm; 4:00 – 9:00 pm
<https://www.californiathaicafe.online/>

Fay's Diner
10006 Scripps Ranch Blvd, San Diego, CA 92131 (6 minutes from campus)
6:30 am – 3:00 pm
<http://www.faysdiner.com/>

Grill House Café
9494 Black Mountain Rd, San Diego, CA 92126 (8 – 10 minutes from campus)
11:00 am – 8:30 pm
<https://grillhousecafesd.com/>

Isabela's Mexican Food
10006 Scripps Ranch Blvd, San Diego, CA 92131 (6 minutes from campus)
8:00 am – 9:00 pm

Junction Bar & Grill
9860 Carroll Canyon Rd, San Diego, CA 92131 (8 – 10 minutes from campus)
9:00 am – 11:00 pm
<https://junctionbars.com/>

Loving Hut Plantbase Vegan
9928 Mira Mesa Blvd, San Diego, CA 92131 (9 – 11 minutes from campus)
11:30 am – 8:30 pm
<https://lovinghut.us/sandiego2/>

Pho46 & Bahn Mi
9508 Miramar Rd, San Diego, CA 92126 (7 – 10 minutes from campus)
8:00 am – 7:00 pm

Punjabi Tandoor (San Diego)
9235 Activity Rd #111, San Diego, CA 92126 (8 – 10 minutes from campus)
11:00 am – 9:00 pm
<http://www.punjabitandoor.com/>

SMACK'N Guamanian Grill
9506 Miramar Rd, San Diego, CA 92126 (7 – 10 minutes from campus)
11:00 am – 7:00 pm
<http://www.smackngg.com/>

Starbucks
10000 Aviary Dr, San Diego, CA 92131 (5 minutes from campus)
5:00 am – 7:30 pm
<https://www.starbucks.com/store-locator/store/14110/>

Todo Sushi
9823 Carroll Canyon Rd, San Diego, CA 92126 (6 – 8 minutes from campus)
11:00 am – 8:30 pm
<http://www.todosushisd.com/>