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Personal Narratives Across Diverse Cultures

Guest Editor: Trisha Self, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-CL





#### Telling Our Stories: Developing Cultural Identity

Carol Westby, PhD, CCC-SLP

Moderated by: Amy Hansen, MA, CCC-SLP, Managing Editor, SpeechPathology.com





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#### Telling Our Stories: Developing Cultural Identity in partnership with the ABCLLD

Carol Westby, PhD
Bilingual Multicultural Services
Albuquerque, NM
mocha@unm.edu

#### continued

- Presenter Disclosure: Financial: Carol Westby is a consultant for Bilingual Multicultural Services in Albuquerque, NM. Nonfinancial: Carol is a member of the American Board of Child Language and Language Disorders.
- Content Disclosure: This learning event does not focus exclusively on any specific product or service.
- Sponsor Disclosure: This course is presented by SpeechPathology.com.





#### **Learning Outcomes**

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the foundations of personal narratives and why personal narratives are a critical aspect of development.
- Describe influences of culture on personal narratives.
- Identify strategies to promote telling of detailed, coherent personal narratives.



#### Why are personal narratives important?

- Narratives are a universal genre -- a primary mode of thought
- Narratives are important for establishing and maintaining social relationships.
  - · Most conversations involve telling personal stories
- The ability to produce coherent personal narratives is associated with the development of self-identity and psychological well-being
- · The stories we tell ourselves guide our behavior









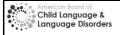
#### Ways narratives vary across cultures

- · Reasons for telling stories
- · Who tells stories
- How children are socialized to storytelling
- How stories are structured or organized
- Types and frequency of story content and themes









#### Significance of cultural variations in narratives

- If educators and speech-language pathologists are unaware of cultural variations in narratives, they may evaluate students' narratives inappropriately
- If culturally/linguistically diverse students are unable to comprehend and produce personal and fictional stories with the expected Euro-American functions, structure, and content, they are at risk for academic difficulties
- If schools focus on only Euro-American stories, students not from that cultural background do not see themselves validated in schools, which may affect their development of a positive self-identity
- If schools value stories from only mainstream culture, mainstream students do not learn of the larger world



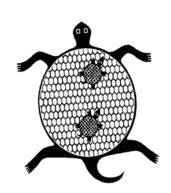


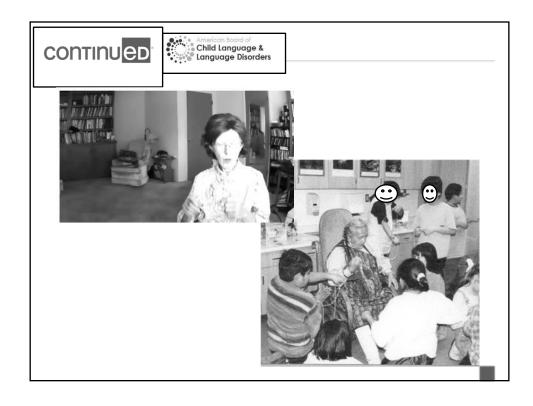
# Project TALES (Talking about Life Experiences and Stories)

The Turtle Storyteller represents grandmothers passing down traditions. The baby turtles represent rebirth and life learning experiences of the next generation. Turtles are the symbols of Mother Earth and wisdom to the people of the Pueblos.

A Pueblo elder has said:

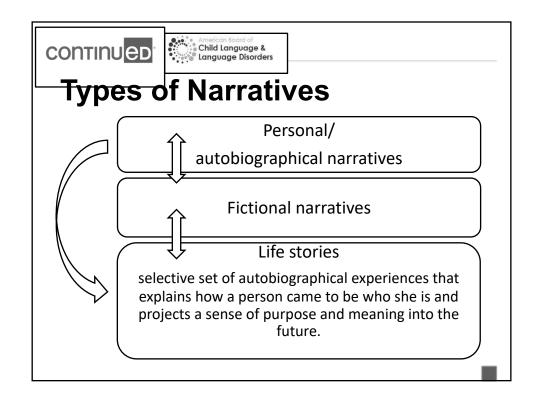
"As long as turtles are around the village, the Pueblo will thrive."

















#### Tomi Adeyemi: Nigerian-American author



- Adeyemi: I've been writing since I was a kid, but I didn't realize until I was 18 that in all the stories I would write that I would only make my characters white or biracial. And so when I was 18, I was like wow, you don't even think you belong in your own imagination. It's damaging, but it was also sad. But I also realized I needed to use writing to correct it in myself and hopefully help other people imagine themselves on the dragon and getting the romance and putting out the fire.
- Interviewer: Why do you think that was?
- Adeyemi: We didn't see it. We have stories, we have magazines, we have movies, we have television, but if you don't ever see someone who looks like you your subconscious goes, "Oh, I don't belong there." So you're writing and you're like "I don't belong in my own imagination." I had to reteach my brain. So I use my books to teach people, you can be your own protagonist, you deserve to be your own protagonist.





# Autobiographical Memory Foundation for Personal Narratives







#### Autobiographical Memory

- Memory of autobiographical events (times, places associated with emotions, and other contextual knowledge) that can be explicitly stated
- Properties of autobiographical memory:
  - · Semantic: Knowing facts
  - Episodic: Remembering a feeling that is located in the past



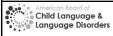
Annapurna base camp, Nepal Alt: 14,000 ft



Fivush, R. (2011). The development of autobiographical memory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *2*, 559-582.

Q8





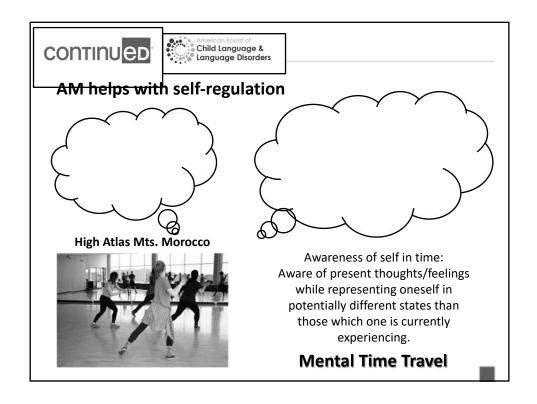
## Autobiographical Memory

## **Mental Time Travel**



Michaelian, K., & Sutton, J. (2019). Collective mental time travel: remembering the past and imagining the future together. *Synthese*, *196*, 4933–4960.







# —— Quotes about AM from adult with hearing loss

 Everything gets confused or muddled together, mushed together. I have a vague idea of where I was but when people talk about actual specific places, like a highlight of a trip, it didn't really stick with me. All the camping trips we took became one big camping trip even if they didn't happen in the same year.

Brien, A., Hutchins, T., & Westby, C. (in press). Autobiographical memory in ASD, ADHD, hearing loss, and childhood trauma: Implications for social communication intervention.







#### **Cultural Variations in Autobiographical Memories**

#### **Eastern Cultures/Collective**

#### · Story likely focuses on others more than self; more attention to context, social engagement, moral correctness

- General description that may combine Detailed description of a specific elements of several events
- May recall memories through an observer (third person) point of view

#### Western Cultures/Individualistic

- · Story focuses on self; more references to self, personal evaluations, autonomy
- event
- · Recall memories through a participant (first person) point of view

Carmiol. A.M., & Sparks, A. (2014). Narrative development across cultural contexts: Finding the pragmatic in parent-child reminiscing. In D. Matthews (Ed.), Pragmatic development in first language acquisition (pp. 279-293). John Benjamín.

Cohen, D., Gunz, A. (2002). As Seen by the Other ... : Perspectives on the self in the memories and emotional perceptions of easterners and westerners. Psychological Science, 13 (1), 55-59.

Martin, M., Jones, G.V. (2012). Individualism and the field viewpoint: Cultural influences on memory perspective. Consciousness and Cognition, 21(3), 1498-1503.

Wang, Q. (2013). The autobiographical self in time and culture. Oxford.





#### **Perspective**



1st person (intensifies emotions) Participant perspective



3rd person Observer perspective More likely in collective cultures





#### **Attention to object/person or context**



Nisbett, R.E., & Masuda, T. (2003). Culture and point of view. PNAS, 100, 11163-11170.



# Personal Narratives Foundation for Agency and Identity





#### What is agency?

- The person's role in pursuit of goals who is doing what to whom?
- Quality that enables a person to initiate intentional action in order to achieve goals that are valued

Bamberg, M. (2012). Why narrative? *Narrative Inquiry, 22*(1), 202–210. Mashford-Scott, A., & Church, A. (2011). Promoting children's agency in early childhood education. *Research on Youth and Language, 5*(1), 15-38. McAdams, D., et al. (1996). Themes of agency and communion in significant autobiographical scenes. *Journal of Analytical Psychology, 64*(2), 339-377.



#### **Development of 3 aspects of self in narratives**

	Social actor	Motivated agent	Autobiographical author		
Emergence	2-3 years	7-9 years	15 years		
Contents	<ul> <li>Interacts with the world in social roles – daughter, sister</li> <li>Developing awareness of physical and personality traits</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Has personal goals, plans, hopes, fears</li> <li>Makes decisions with hopes of producing desired outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Reflects on dispositional personality traits</li> <li>Integrates experiences from the past with ideas about the future to form a narrative self</li> <li>Autobiographical reasoning</li> </ul>		

McAdams, D.P. (2013). The psychological self as actor, agent, and author. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 8,* 272-295.







#### **Autobiographical Reasoning**

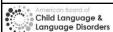


- Goes beyond autobiographical remembering by creating coherence between events and the self
- Process of self-reflective thinking or talking about the personal past that involves forming links between the elements of one's life and the self in an attempt to relate one's personal past and present

#### **Development of Self-Identity**

Habermas, F., & Kober, C. (2015). Autobiographical reasoning is constitutive for narrative identity: The role of the life story for personal continuity. In K.C.McLean & M. Syed (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of identity development* (pp. 149-165). Oxford University Press.





#### Modes of agency

- Direct personal agency (individual self)
  - People bring their influence to bear directly on themselves and their environment in managing their lives
- Proxy agency (relational self)
  - People rely on others to act on one's behalf to secure desired outcomes
- Collective agency (collective self)
  - People act together to shape their future
  - Exercised through socially coordinated and interdependent methods

Bandura, A. (2002). Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Journal of Applied Psychology: An International Review, 51,* 269-290.

Q3





#### **Types of Agency**

- Agency: extent to which the narrator has the power to affect his/her own life
  - Self-mastery (of a physical or psychological skill)
  - Impacts others through persuasion/manipulation
  - Victory/achieves goal or increase in prestige
  - Takes responsibility
  - Empowerment (made better through an interaction with something larger and greater than the self).

McAdams, D. (2002). *Coding systems for themes of agency and communion*. https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/foley/instruments/agency/

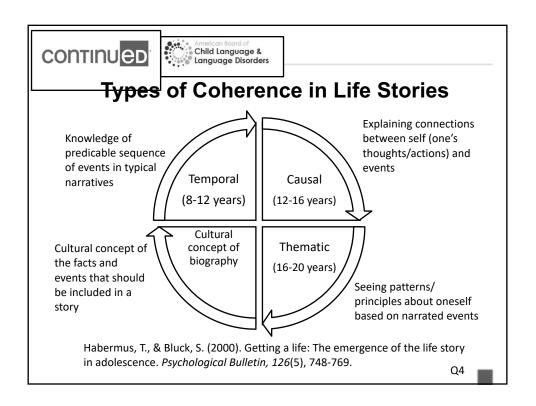


#### A Positive Outcome of Agency is:

- Communion: the narrator is motivated to form connections with others:
  - · Love/friendship
  - Reciprocal communication
  - Caring for/helping another
  - General feeling of unity/togetherness with the others.

McAdams, D. (2002). *Coding systems for themes of agency and communion*. https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/foley/instruments/agency/







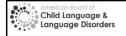
#### **Evaluation Dimensions for Personal Narratives**

- **Topic maintenance**, or the relation of utterances to a central topic or theme.
- Informativeness refers to the completeness of a narrative
  - presentation of the essential facts of an experience
  - presentation of optional details that serve to elaborate a narrative
  - description (e.g., use of adjectives or adverbs), action, and evaluation (e.g., the subjective significance of an event

Bliss, L. & McCabe, A (2012, Oct). Personal narratives: Assessment and intervention. Perspectives on Language Learning and Education. 19:130-138







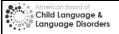
#### Evaluation Dimensions for Personal Narratives

- Event sequencing -- presentation of events in chronological or logical order (e.g., "He fell down and hurt himself").
- Referencing -- appropriate identification of individuals, locations, features, and/or events
- Conjunctive cohesion -- use of words or phrases that link utterances and events (e.g., and, then, because, but, and so) for two purposes:
  - Semantic role: the literal meanings of conjunctions (e.g., coordination, adversative, causality, and temporal)
  - Pragmatic role: initiate or close a passage, signal a chronological change in ordering or change the focus of the discourse.
- · Fluency -- manner of production

Bliss, L. & McCabe, A (2012, Oct) Personal narratives: Assessment and intervention. *Perspectives on Language Learning and Education*. 19:130-138

Q





#### 



I actually saw two spiders in my house. I thought one was alive and one is alive but the other one isn't and the other one was. I actually blew it. So I make sure it wasn't alive. So it was. Once it was hiding from me. And once I came back and brush my teeth. I was looking myself in the mirror and making sure like . . . and . . . well and finally a spider came on my face. And I actually get it off. It was creepy.





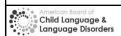


#### Autobiographical event about spiders

I actually saw two spiders in my house. I thought one was alive and one is alive but the other one isn't and the other one was. I actually blew it. So I make sure it wasn't alive. So it was. Once it was hiding from me. And once I came back and brush my teeth. I was looking myself in the mirror and making sure like . . . and . . . well and finally a spider came on my face. And I actually get it off. It was creepy.

- · Macrostructure: unorganized leapfrog narrative
  - · Confusing order of events
    - Claimed spider alive before blowing on it to check if alive
    - Did he go to brush his teeth and then see the spiders
  - Missing goals (e.g., blowing on the spiders to determine if they were alive and trying to get rid of the spider).
- · Unclear referencing
  - · How many spiders
  - · When and where was the spider(s) hiding
- · Lack of conjunctive cohesion
  - · Confusing time sequence
  - · No explicit causal relationships
- · Gave some evaluation: "It was creepy."





#### Telling his story...





Why D goes to LA twice a year. What D is good at; Why he is in a lower grade; What accounts for differences in abilities; What D had to overcome; What made him gain weight? How he felt about being called D Bear; How he communicated in signs?







#### Reminiscing: Being Afraid to Try Something

"then I decided to do it"







#### Aspects of Self and Identity

- Unique self: involves an exploration and celebration of personal attributes including likes and dislikes, values, opinions, family norms, and culture
- **Positive self:** involves building of internal resources and identification of strengths and successes
- Coherent self: emphasizes examination of self across multiple aspects of experience
  - · Before, during, after illness/trauma
- Future self: involves building of child's capacity to imagine the self in the future and to explore possibilities

Blaustein, M.E., & Kinniburgh, K.M. (2019). *Treating traumatic stress in children and adolescents* (2nd Ed). New York: Guilford







#### Achieving Eagle Scout Rank







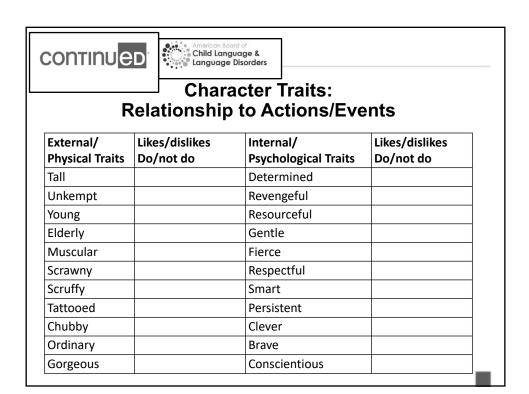
Only 4% of Boy Scouts earn the rank of Eagle Scout

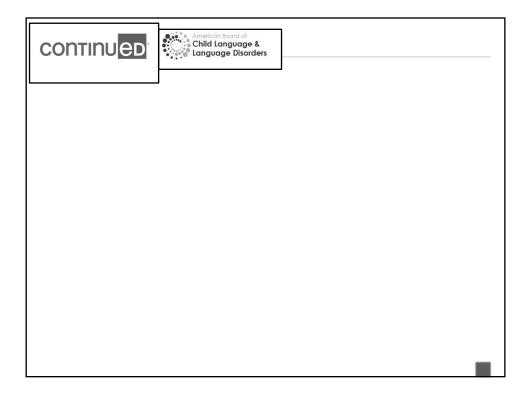




# Identifying Traits Becoming Autobiographical Authors







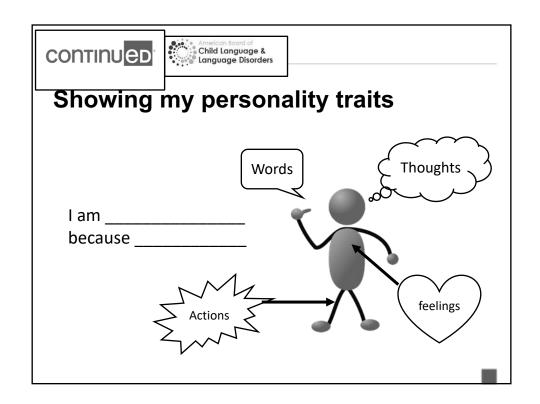




#### Characteristics of Matthew Henson: Linking traits and events

- Curious/adventuresome: read as much as he could; joined the crew of a ship, traveled the world
- Helpful/responsible/conscientious: cooked, cleaned, and mended clothes; did whatever was necessary
- Persistent/tenacious: continued toward the pole despite severe hardships
- Tough/strong: when the dogs gave out, Henson and Perry threw the dog leashes over their shoulders and pulled the sleds themselves

#### Provide evidence to support the trait





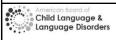




# Microstructural signals of temporal/causal coherence

Temporal	Causal
Connectives: when, while, then, next, meanwhile, before, after	Connectives: because, so, however, therefore, as a result, for, although, ifthen
Age	Other words: reason, result, conclusion, consequence, cause, effect, outcome
Calendar dates: years, months	
Seasons, holidays	
Life periods: preschool, early elementary	
Historical events	





# Language for Temporal & Causal Coherence



Character	When	Feeling	Why		
Roz	she awoke on the island	curious	because she didn't know where she was and what the bright light was		
Fink the Fox	Roz removes porcupine needles from Fink	grateful, trusting	because the needles were painful & he couldn't remove them himself; he realized Roz wasn't dangerous		
Brightbill the goose	Roz is taken off the island by the airship	heartbroken, worried	because Roz is the only mother he has known, he doesn't know what will happen to her or if he will ever see her again		







#### 12th grade student with LLD

When I was little I was wild like bam-bam in the flintstones. I never liked school ever since I started at an young age. During school I never did anything in class...but what kept me in school was sports I always wanted to be an star for basketball for a school. I change my life around when I got to my sophomore year because I knew that if I wanted to graduate I gotta change the way I act and be more professional when I speech to older people because they'll respect as much. About me I talk a lot and like to joke around that's just me. As growing up in Chicago a tough neiborhood a lot of those kids played ball and some dealing drugs here gun shots here and there people that I looked up too where doing good for awhile keeping positive vibes but after awhile they just took the wrong path. Albuquerque changed my life around also my mom always wanted me to graduate and go to college and do what I like and that's play ball.

Temporal Coherence Causal Coherence Thematic Coherence

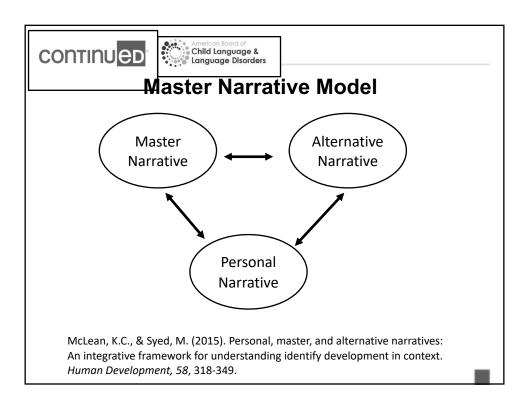
Westby, C.E., & Culatta, B. (2016). Telling tales: Personal event narratives and life stories. *Language Speech and Hearing Services is Schools*, 47, 260-282.

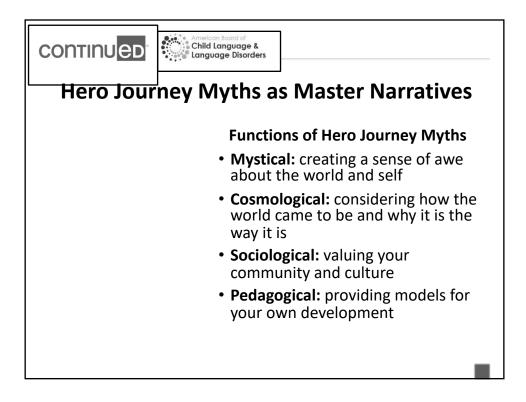




In the future-what I wanted to do is go to the military and serve my country just like my great grandfather and my brother in law. It's always gonna be my dream to be a professional basketball player, but I felt like i am not good enough to play at the next level yet that's why I change my mind to go to the military they get paid good money and get discounts from some stores. I decide not to go to college after I graduate cause don't wanna start school again right away again I already did 12 years just to graduate and it was stressful for me in 11th and 12th grade. I thought college is gonna be more challenging then high school and more work to do research. I decided to help my father out with his business out in Chicago designing and building big houses, guarding to putting up gates, As i grow older i'll be taking over my father's company but I also want to go to the military with my cousins and brothers and serve my country I always wanted to experience that from my own perspective.













#### Independence/Interdependence Individualism/Collectivism

#### Collectivism

#### Individualism

- · Learn to depend on others
- · Be responsible for others
- · Personal goals secondary to goals of the group
- Relationships more important than tasks
- · Social and cognitive skills integrated

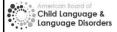
- · Develop early independence
- · Responsible for self
- · One's own goals take priority
- · Tasks more important than relationships
- · Cognitive skills independent of social skills

Collectivism

Individualism

Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.





#### Characteristics of Hero Journey Stories Western

#### Eastern

#### · Usually have a strong mentor

- · Work in teams with all genders, races, ages
- · Focus on internal struggles; greater use of verbs of mental
- Greatest fighters typically portrayed as gurus respected for the wisdom they have gained through martial arts



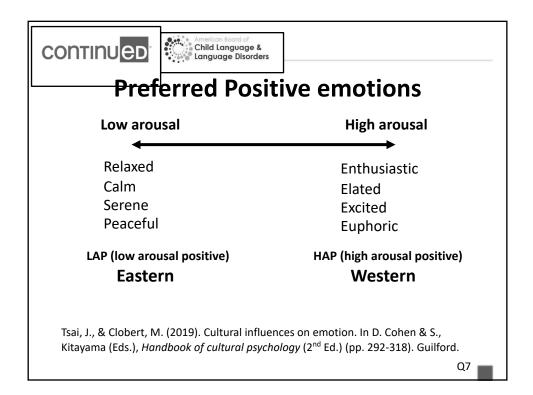
#### Mentors are absent or dead

- Fight lonely battles; usually white, straight male
- Focus on external struggles; greater use of action verbs
- Fighters achieve through their physical prowess; portrayed as skilled athletes respected for their physical abilities



Q2







#### **Ideal Emotions**



Ashley likes to float in the swimming pool.

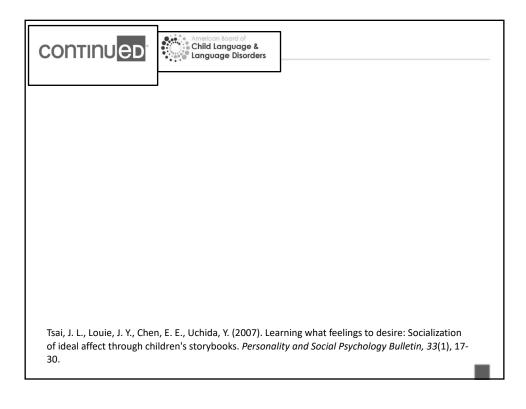


Maria likes to jump and dive.

#### Are you more like Ashley or Maria?

Tsai, J. L., Louie, J. Y., Chen, E. E., Uchida, Y. (2007). Learning what feelings to desire: Socialization of ideal affect through children's storybooks. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 33*(1), 17-30.

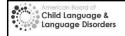




Tsai, J. L., Louie, J. Y., Chen, E. E., Uchida, Y. (2007). Learning what feelings to desire: Socialization of ideal affect through children's storybooks. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *33*(1), 17-30.









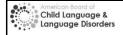
American President Barack Obama



Chinese President Xi Jinping

Tsai, J. et al. (2016). Leaders' smiles reflect cultural differences in ideal affect. *Emotion, 16*(2), 183–195.

continued





Tell me a story about a time when you had a problem and you had to fix it. Tell me all about what happened and what you had to do to fix it.





#### Frequent Topics/Themes

	Taiwan		United States		Australia		Britain		NZ	
8	Academic achievement	11	11 Peer Relationships (7 fighting/ aggression; 4 inappropriate behaviors)	10	Peer Relationships (5 fight/ disagree; 3 left out, 1 injured, 1 bullied)	8	Peer Relationships (6 argue/fight; 2 falling out/ bragging)	13	Peer relationships (6 aggression /fighting/ dislike; 3 left out /feeling hurt)	
4	School responsibilities	5	Problem making/fixing something	2	Caused damage	4	Problem with school task	2	Problem with school task	
3	Helping others	2	Lost item	2	Problem with school task	3	Illness/injury	2	Family events	
3	3 peer relationships (1 help with work; 2 protect from bullies)	1	Problem with school task (sister, not narrator)	1	Injury	2	Caused damage			
1	Lost item	1	Caused damage	1	Lost (dog)	1	Lost item			

Chen, K., & Westby, C.E. (2019). Thematic variations in children's personal narratives across cultures. IALP Congress, Taiwan.



#### **Cultural Dimensions**

- Interdependent/collective vs. independent/individualistic: People's selfimage defined in terms of "we" or "I"?
- **Power Distance:** relationship between those in power and the subordinates
  - · High power distance: must respect & obey those in power
  - Low power distance: power equally distributed; persons must earn respect
- Uncertainty avoidance: extent to which persons feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these
  - High uncertainty avoidance: rules/expected behaviors to avoid uncertainty; pressure to conform
  - · Low uncertainty avoidance: few rules; freedom not to conform

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.







#### Educational Philosophy



#### Confucian/Eastern

- Collective
- High power distance
- High uncertainty avoidance

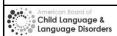


#### Socratic/Western

- Individualistic
- Low power distance
- Low uncertainty avoidance

Jen, G. (2017). *The girl at the baggage claim*. New York: Penguin Random House. Li, J. (2012). *Cultural foundations of learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.





#### **Educational Philosophy**

#### Confucian/Eastern

- Purpose of education to achieve social harmony
- Academic success achieved through hard work
  - Human ability is malleable; can be improved through effort
- Respect authority
- · Education is teacher-centered
- Joy comes from reaching educational goals

#### Socratic/Western

- Purpose of education to develop critical thinking
- Academic success more influenced by innate ability than effort
- Question authority; student opinion valued; learn through argument
- Education more student-centered
- · Learning itself should be enjoyable

Jen, G. (2017). *The girl at the baggage claim*. New York: Penguin Random House. Li, J. (2012). *Cultural foundations of learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.







#### **Possible Cultural Influences on Taiwanese Stories**

- Confucian Philosophy
  - History and value of educational testing in Asian cultures (e.g., college entrance exams) and academic achievement
    - Academic success depends on hard work, study, persistence
    - Historically, high educational performance essential for entering most prestigious universities, which is essential for gaining best governmental/business positions







#### Possible Cultural Influences on Taiwanese Stories

- Power distance/Uncertainty Avoidance
  - Respect for authority of teachers/parents; honor/meet their expectations
    - Teacher/parents help to solve problems
  - Education path avoids uncertainty
- Interdependence/Collectivism
  - Collective hierarchy: parent-child, "ruler-subject," (teacher-student; boss-worker); husband-wife, elder-younger, friend-friend.
    - Family takes priority; Important to do well for the family

Harter, S. (2012). *The social construction of the self*. New York: Guilford. Huang, G., & Grove, M. (2012). Confucianism and Chinese families: Values and practices in education. International *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *2*, 10-14.







#### Possible Cultural Influences on English Stories

- · Educational Philosophy
  - Academic performance primarily due to innate abilities
- Independence/Individualism
  - Persons responsible for solving own problems
  - · Have to be verbal to connect with others
  - Speak your mind; your needs, rights, desires take priority over others
    - Important to establish who you are; arguing is a way to establish yourself

Bergmuller, A. (2013). The relationship between cultural individualism-collectivism and student aggression across 62 countries. *Aggressive Behavior*, 39, 182-200.

Harter, S. (2012). The social construction of the self. New York: Guilford.

Mashford-Scott, A., & Church, A. (2011). Promoting children's agency in early childhood education. *Research on Youth and Language*, 5(1), 15-38.





- The ability to tell coherent personal stories is important for:
  - · Agency/Self identity/mental health
  - Social interactions
  - Self-regulation
- Trauma affects ability to tell coherent stories



### KIDNET (Narrative Exposure Therapy)

Schauer, M. et al. (2017). Narrative exposure therapy for children and adolescents (KIDNET) In, M.A. Landolt et al. (eds.), Evidence-based treatments for trauma related disorders in children and adolescents. Springer.

Q1





## Components of Autobiographical Memories for Trauma Events

### Associative Memory (Hot Memory)

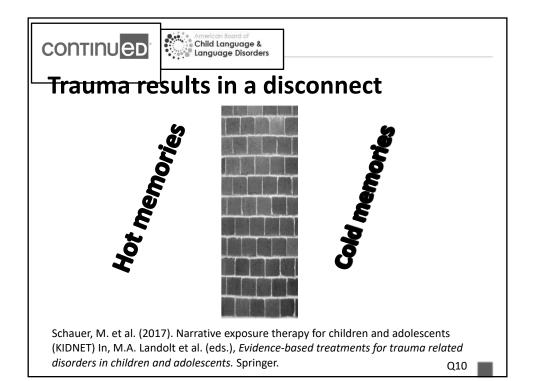
- Automatically activated by cues
- Sensory, emotions, & physiological perceptions
- > Fragmentary reports
- Sensation of "here and now"

### Context Memory (Cold Memory)

- > Deliberately retrievable
- Knowledge about the event in the context of life, time, & space
- Chronological report

nd adolescents (KIDNET) In, M.A. Landolt

Schauer, M. et al. (2017). Narrative exposure therapy for children and adolescents (KIDNET) In, M.A. Landolt et al. (eds.), Evidence-based treatments for trauma related disorders in children and adolescents. Springer.



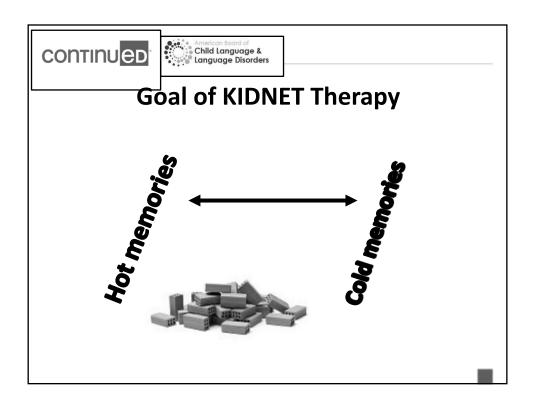




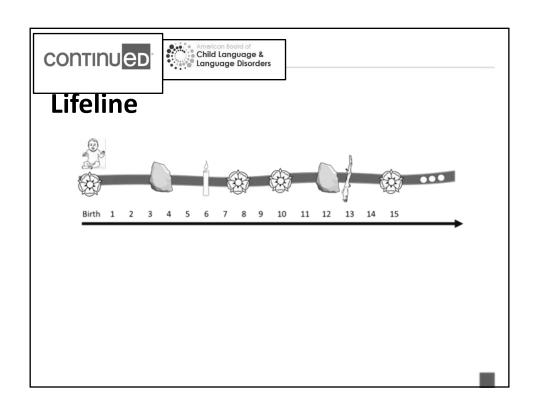
# Quotes about AM from adult with hearing loss

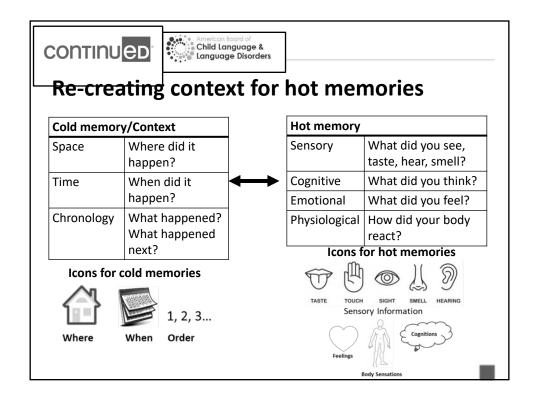
 Every once in a while there is like a splinter of a memory that comes in. It just pops up out of nowhere. I didn't even know it was there. I remember remembering, but the memories are not connected; they're like floating unattached. How do you capture a memory that doesn't have a time or place to attach it to. It's just free floating.

Brien, A., Hutchins, T., & Westby, C. (in press). Autobiographical memory in ASD, ADHD, hearing loss, and childhood trauma: Implications for social communication intervention.

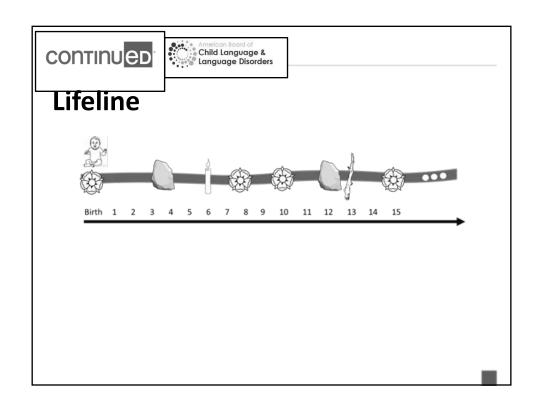
















## PTSD/Developmental Trauma Disorder Closet Metaphor



NET intervention involves:

- Slowly taking things out of the closet
- · Examining them carefully
- Folding them neatly
- Putting them back in the right place



Ehlers, A, Clark, DM (2000). A cognitive model of PTSD. *Behaviour, Research and Therapy 38,* 319–345 Trickey, D (2013). Post-traumatic stress disorders. In P. Graham & S. Reynolds (Eds.), *Cognitive behaviour therapy for children and families* (3rd Ed.) (pp. 247–249). Cambridge University Press.





You don't have anything if you don't have stories.

Ceremony, p. 2 Leslie Marmon Silko Member of the Laguna Pueblo

