

AAPT “BOARD BLAST”—Members Only!

FEATURING COMMENTS FROM

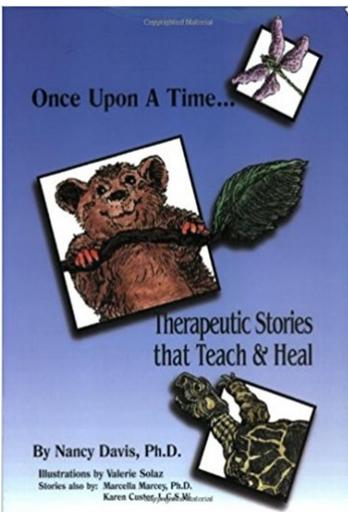
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Registration Co-Chair**

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

FOR: Counselors/Therapists and Supervisors

TITLE: Once Upon a Time: Therapeutic Stories that Teach & Heal

AUTHOR: Nancy Davis, Ph.D.



BRIEF DESCRIPTION: A collection of 108 therapeutic stories with a variety of themes (chapter heading). Stories range from those appropriate for young children to those designed for adolescents and adults (sample stories). Each story is accompanied by a cover page describing the meaning of symbols and metaphors used in the story, the types of problems for which it can be effective, suggestions for tailoring the story for a particular listener, and information on the reason the story was originally designed. Soft cover; 589 pages; published in 1996.

IMPACT ON MY PRACTICE:

This book is helpful particularly for children as well as teens and adults. It is valuable for providing empowerment/encouragement as well as treatment for the following: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), child abuse/trauma, self-regulation of emotions, court proceedings, nightmares, grief/loss, family issues, foster care, and school-related issues. I will select the narrative that fits the child’s need and read it aloud in our therapy session(s). Additionally, I request that the parents/guardians read the story several times aloud at home. The stories help treat the right side of the brain using metaphors and symbols. These stories allow the client to heal without having to verbalize details. Victims may not be able to talk about his/her experiences due to the level of trauma or their young age. These stories allow them to make more sense of their personal narrative and develop healthy coping skills.

FAVORITE QUOTE:

Garry Landreth’s Quote: “What’s most important may not be what you do, but what you do after what you did!” ----Useful for parents to guide them on how to handle their parenting mistakes.

FAVORITE ACTIVITY

I enjoy using narratives to help children build social skills, manage anger and heal from all types of trauma and anxiety. I may make up a puppet narrative to role play how to handle anger or ways to get along better with their school peers. If a child is healing from a specific trauma, fear or ongoing nightmare, I may create a therapeutic narrative to use during our therapy sessions and for them to use at home. (The book mentioned above has several narratives that are suitable for a variety of symptoms.)

Here are two samples of narratives I have created:

A child dealing with a fear of owls coming to their window at night:

Once upon a time an owl lived in a tree near a family's house. The owl was a special treat for the family to see when they looked out the window. The owl was different type of sleeper. It slept during the day and at night it was busy flying from one tree to the next one. Its eyes can see really well at night. When it flew its wings stretched out far.



It liked to sit on a branch near the little girl Sandy's window. At first Sandy was really scared of the owl. She thought it might try to fly into the house. She did not know what she would do if that happened.

Then Sandy realized the owl was part of nature. It did not want to be inside houses and loved being in the trees and flying through the night. The owl really liked the bright moon and liked flying really fast and very high.



Sandy would close her eyes at night and say good-night owl. Have fun flying while I sleep. Then she would wake up and say now it's time for you to sleep. You have had a busy night.



A child dealing with high anxiety/PTSD symptoms due to injury from gun violence in his home:

Once upon a time there was a bear family that lived deep in the woods. They were a happy family and had a nice cozy house. There was a mama bear, grandparent bears and a little bear. They had fun times together. They loved to pick blueberries and make blueberry pancakes. Also, they liked to race each other. Baby bear liked to see if he could get up the tree first.



One evening, they came home after a long walk and run in the woods. There was a big storm that night. There was loud thunder, and the wind was howling. Little bear woke up to a tree falling near his bed. A branch hit his arm and broke it. Mama bear rushed him to the hospital. He went to the hospital and had to get a cast.



He went home and slept in his own bed but now he felt scared at night. He wasn't getting enough rest either. Sometimes he did not want to go outside and play. He got really scared when the rain pounded on the roof. The little bear was scared that it would happen again. He would ask, "What's that sound?" His family would say it's just the rain, and you are safe. He felt better then. However, he still got scared. He did not like to sleep when his mama was away from home.



His aunt came to visit and shared what he could do to be less scared:

She said imagine that you are in a safe place. Your mama and grandparents are here to protect you.

You are a strong bear. You have muscles and sharp claws. You are brave too. Little bear agreed and said, "I am brave. I can go up the tree all by myself." He remembered how much fun it was to play outside.

Breathing exercises and stretches help too.

At night time, it's sleeping time. Little bears need lots of sleep to help them grow and learn. So he reads books at night and prays that his fears would disappear. He even imagined how he could be brave and fight his fears. He would let a loud growl, and then he felt better and stronger.



Now the little bear is sleeping through the night and playing outside. He is no longer scared of storms. He knows he is safe.