

Everyday Narrative

**Build your own team
Letter to a problem**

with David Newman

Externalising

Developed by Michael White in his work with children in the early 1980s.

A **response** to some of the huge success in the west of locating problems within people.

The context of life is emphasised as opposed to for instance the precision of a diagnosis.

The problem is the problem, the person family or community is not the problem

Externalising

- Some practices of externalising:
 - **Turning an adjective into a noun;** ‘I’m a fearful person’ can become ‘the fearfulness’
 - **Creating space between a person and a negative description or definition;** when someone says ‘I do everything wrong’ we can ask ‘is it possible to call that the “wrong thing” or even “self-loathing”?’
 - **Characterising the problem;** letter to a problem or dialogue with a problem

Letters to problems

Dearest Despair,

I know we have spent a lot of time together but I think our relationship has become a bit smothering. It's not you, it's me. I just need some time to find my own life.

I'm sure you will come to visit but these visits will be periodic and short. I am sorry to have to do this, but it's for the best – for both of us.

Care teams and Re-mem-bering



Care teams and Re-remembering

“When we reconnect with those we have lost, and the memories of those we have forgotten, then **we become stronger**. When **we see ourselves through the loving eyes of those who have cared for us** our lives are easier to live.” (Barbara Wingard, 2001, p. 43)