## **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 fearfullness'
  - Creating space between a person and a negative description or defintion; 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

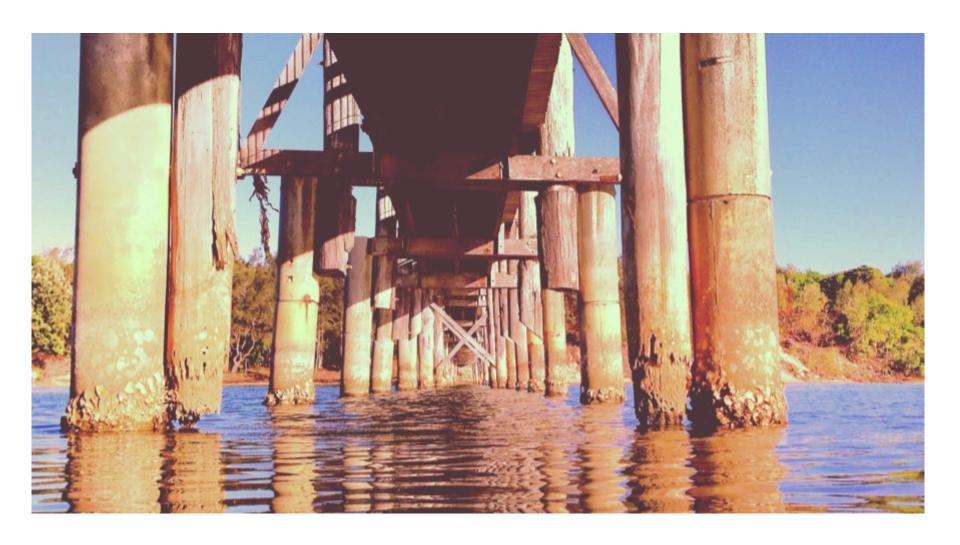
## Letters to problems

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-membering



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