

Re-Writing my Narrative

Grades 4-7

Physical and Health Education, Language Arts and Arts Education

Purpose of the lesson

Narrative therapy focuses on your life story and reflects on the stories you tell. Likely this life story changes depending on who is asking us, our moods, and whether we feel we are at the beginning, middle or end of our most important story.

The goal of narrative therapy is to uncover opportunities for growth, development, finding meaning, and understanding ourselves better. We use stories to inform others, connect over shared experiences, say when we feel wronged, and even to sort out our thoughts and feelings. Stories organize our thoughts, help us find meaning and purpose, and establish our identity in a confusing and sometimes lonely world. Thus, it is important to realize what stories we are telling ourselves, and others, when we talk about our lives.

Narrative therapy was created by Michael White and David Epston in the 1980s. The purpose of this lesson is to highlight narrative therapy techniques by using a timeline to help students become more self-aware of their important life stories. Then asking students “what if we were to rewrite this life story where you are the hero of your own life, rather than the victim?” <https://positivepsychology.com/narrative-therapy/>

Curriculum Competencies:

Physical and Health Education

- ◇ Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being (Grade 4)
- ◇ Describe factors that positively influence mental well-being and self-identity (Grade 4)
- ◇ Identify and apply strategies to pursue personal healthy-living goals (Grade 7)
- ◇ Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grade 5/6/7)

Language Arts

- ◇ Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create texts for a variety of purposes and audiences (Grade 4/5)
- ◇ Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literary and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audiences (Grade 6/7)

Arts Education

- ◇ Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences in creative ways & through the arts (Grade 4/5/6/7)

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- ◇ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story
 - *See last page for description of read aloud Dipnetting with Dad*
- ◇ Learning requires the exploration of one's identity

Step-by-Step Lesson plan

- 1. Discuss the curricular objectives for this lesson with your class.** Point out we all have a story to share and how this connects with the First Peoples Principles of Learning- (for example, often story is used in across family generations to teach lessons). *Check if your library has the read aloud: [Dipnetting with Dad By Willie Sellars](#) if not play the Youtube read aloud [HERE](#)*for more authentic first peoples resource options view the attached PDF. Below are some **guiding questions** you could ask after or during the read aloud:
 - What do you notice about story-telling in the first people's culture?
 - Why might this story be important to the main character?
 - Was this experience a significant life event for the main character?
 - What meaningful stories can you remember from your family?*
- 2. Follow-up Activity:** See below for the timeline instructions. ***See attached document "My Timeline"*** (print in landscape view so students have more room to print their timelines).
- 3. Other Suggestions:** Have your students check out the **inspirational stories section** of the toolkit on their own personal time. Listening to others personal struggles with mental health can help to de-stigmatize mental health disorders and encourage students to seek help with overwhelming feelings. You can find the inspirational stories section [HERE](#) Have student write **a reflective journal** using this question: "what if we were to re-write this life story where you are the hero of your own life, rather than the victim?" *Students may want to write this entry in a personal journal at home to keep private.
- 4. Lesson Closure:** Share some coping strategies that students can use to seek help with their personal stories- seeing the school counsellor to explore their life story further, seeing an outside agency counsellor or getting involved with a community program (support groups or art therapy online), writing about their experiences in a journal, creating a scrapbook of positive experiences to relate back to when they are feeling down, making a photo album with pictures & happy memories of a loved one that has passed away, creating a playlist they can listen to when reflecting on memories/emotions (self-esteem, grief, sadness, anger- for workouts) doing some art to express their story with painting & words etc. ***Caution-** Please refer any students to the school counsellor if they are triggered by this lesson or want to talk about their life story further*

My Timeline Instructions

Print my timeline in landscape view and photocopy for each of your students

Mark the beginning of your timeline with your birthday and the end of your timeline with today's date

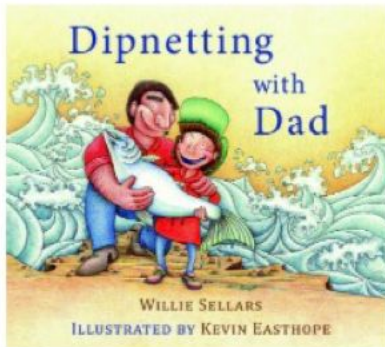
Mark the important events in your life on the timeline consider these examples below:

- For example, moving homes or schools, family members entering your home or passing away, pets passing away, sibling births in your family, vacations, new friendships, memories that stand out, any challenging life events/injuries that you are comfortable sharing with classmates etc. (see your school counsellor to reflect more on traumatic events for support with your feelings)

Encourage students to add details & doodles to their timeline using the below guiding questions:

- What is a difficult moment that you reflected on from your timeline? How could you re-write that story to make yourself "the hero" or allow that experience to become a learning lesson?
- What is a happy memory from your timeline- how did that moment make you feel?
- What moments from your timeline made you feel sad?
- What moments from your timeline made you feel mad?
- What moments from your timeline made you feel worried?
- Is there anything from your timeline that is similar to one of your classmates?
- Are there any differences from your timeline from your classmates?
- What did you learn in reflecting on your timeline? How could you be more optimistic/positive moving forward with your life experiences?

Dipnetting with Dad book description



978-1-927575-53-6 / 1-927575-53-2

Hardcover

9.5" x 8.5", 48 pages, colour illustrations throughout
Children's Literature, Fiction, First Nations

GET THIS BOOK:

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Caitlin Press is distributed by **University of Toronto Press** as well as **IPG (US)** and **Gazelle (UK)**.

Dipnetting with Dad

Willie Sellars

Illustrated by Kevin Easthope

BUMP, BUMP—SLAP, river sockeye salmon are pulled onto shore!

Set in the beautiful landscape of the Cariboo Chilcotin region, *Dipnetting with Dad* is a delightful and colourful story of a father teaching his son the Secwepemc method of fishing known as dipnetting. Together they visit the Sweat Lodge, mend the nets, select the best fishing spot, and catch and pack their fish through rugged bush back to the family home for traditional preparation.

In his first book, Williams Lake Indian Band member Willie Sellars captures family values, the importance of storytelling, community living and coming of age in one of BC's oldest cultures. Debut artist Kevin Easthope's contemporary and dynamic illustrations bring the characters to life as they jump off the page and pull you into their world.

Colouring Sheets

Download two colouring sheets from *Dipnetting with Dad*:

[Chased by Grandma](#)

[Chopping Salmon](#)

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My Timeline

