

**IDENTITY REREFERENCING:**  
**THE PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION OF A**  
**NARRATIVE MAP FOR THERAPEUTIC PRACTICE**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the  
degree of

Master of Arts

In

Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

This study introduces a map for a therapeutic conversation and assesses its effectiveness. The evidence for this proposal is provided by the study reported, in which a number of measures were taken to ascertain whether the therapeutic process promoted useful change in clients with maladaptive assumptive systems (problem narratives), and whether those changes were sustained over time. Nine clients out of a sample of twenty- three responded and all nine respondents reported sustained changes over a period of 6-24 months. Michael White (2007) suggests that Narrative maps are few, but are important so that processes used by clinicians do not become lost, and are at the same time able to be evaluated, assessed and implemented by other professionals. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was taken to analyse the adaptive client narratives that occurred immediately post therapy, and which remained 6 - 24 months later. A number of themes emerged that revealed a spiritual or 'wairua' approach to assuming the adaptive narrative, and there was evidence to suggest that a more resourceful state of beingness (adaptive identity) had emerged and evolved as a result this. The themes point to new initiatives for dealing with the problem emerging via the processes of innovative moments and adaptive reframing. The proposed therapeutic map appeared to be successful and empowering for the respondents as they came to understand they have the power to 'change the meaning they had assigned to the problem issue, without being defined by the problem issue as they were previously'. The individual seems to be able to perceive the problem through the eyes of the all-knowing self (higher self or spiritual self). When the meaning making and reconstruction emerges from within the client in this way, the writer proposes change is both significant and lasting- Identity Re-Referencing. It is not known if the clients who did not respond did so because they did not experience significant change, however the results would suggest that further research is warranted.

Keywords: Narrative Therapy, Reframing, Re-authoring, Identity Re-referencing, Map of Narrative Practice, Wairua (spirit)



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Ko te Amorangi ki Mua

May your God **ble**ss you and protect you for all time.

## CANDIDATES DECLARATION

I, Vicky Scott, candidate for the degree of Masters of Psychology at Massey University Palmerston north, do hereby certify that:

1. The papers and thesis contained herein comprise entirely my original work towards the degree,
2. This work has not been submitted to any other university or institution for a higher degree,
3. The thesis including papers is less than 150 pages in length, excluding tables, references and appendices,
4. Ethics approval for the research was obtained by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 14/35.

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Vicky Scott

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