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**8 "...and they Lived Happily Ever after!":  
Therapeutic Storytelling with Children**

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**ABSTRACT**

Importance of stories and storytelling has long been acknowledged by anthropologists in every culture. Myriad pedagogical implications of storytelling have received much attention from practicing therapists, psychiatrists and parenting experts.

Storytelling therapy involves the use of stories in psychotherapy in diagnosis of problems and illuminating path to change. Stories as a part of expressive art therapies and as an adjunct to medical treatment can be seen as a healing medium. The importance of storytelling as a healing medium is a result of a more holistic view of the realm of human cognition and recognition of imagination as a way of learning and knowing.

Storytelling therapy fuses one's cognitive and the emotive functioning. It is a sensitive tool to elicit children's thoughts and sentiments, the exploration of their cognitive and emotional experiences. Neuroscientist Daniel Siegel and parenting expert Tina Bryson buttress the idea that by helping children tell and retell their challenging experiences as stories we help their developing brain integrate experiences by processing the emotional and cognitive. Once these parts of the brain are integrated, the child can resume normal functioning.

Positive results from several case studies, clinical reports and theoretic reviews support the effectiveness of storytelling in child psychotherapy. This paper is an attempt to understand the process and outcomes of using storytelling techniques with children. It discusses how storytelling can be used effectively with children's problems. In doing so, it explores the current literature and research that supports the use of storytelling therapy. The paper highlights the relevance of storytelling techniques with child populations in different settings such as schools, hospitals and child care centers, where it has been successfully implemented.

**Keywords:** Storytelling Therapy, Children, Child Psychotherapy, Expressive Therapy

*"If we are storytelling beings, The propensity for meaning is written into our genes.  
Our brains drive us to make meaning of our experiences, resolve conflicts,  
and prepare for future."  
—Badenoch (2011)*

Story telling is recognized as the 'ur' form, the base of all the arts (Mellcott, 2005). It is considered as the oldest way of communicating across cultures. Anthropologists have acknowledged the importance of stories and storytelling since the beginning of recorded history. Long before the written word, storytelling was used to share and pass on actual or imaginative experiences. Stories were a source of shared understanding and wisdom. Many spiritual and religious teachers of the world have used story as a way of passing on their

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