



A Meaning-making Approach to Work With Trauma

Counseling session

Material Projectable

In this psychotherapy session, Dr. Jeanne M. Slattery demonstrates an empathic counseling approach with a 29-yr-old, White, bisexual woman who presents with anxiety about the future and feeling tired of living due to trauma in her past. The client presents with a significant history of childhood sexual abuse by her stepfather, emotional abuse by her stepmother, subsequent substance use, hospitalizations due to suicide attempts and severe suicidal ideation, a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, and persistent self-injurious behaviors. The client, now an undergraduate psychology major, is in recovery after residential treatment and twelve-step programs. Throughout the session, Slattery respectfully and gently prompts the client to generate meaning of the client's trauma using a narrative approach. Multiple themes are explored, including religious conflict and spirituality, coping behaviors, familial and romantic relationships, pain, and sexuality. At the end of the session, Slattery suggests that the client write down the positive aspects of her story as a helpful reminder of her strengths and resilience

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