



SUPERHERO THERAPY: OUR EXPERIENCE USING ACT AND POP CULTURE IN A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

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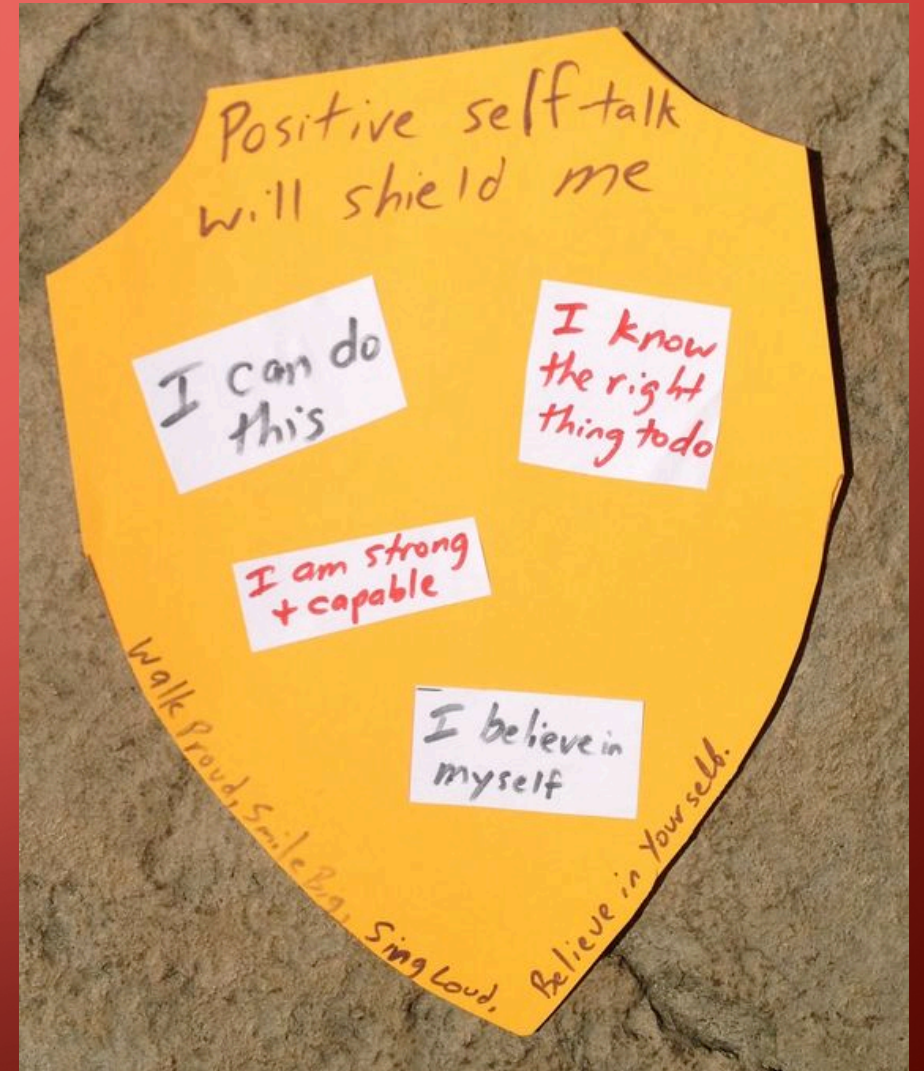
PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES:

- Identify ways to incorporate heroic archetypes and pop-culture references in therapy.
- Identify benefits of using cultural references to describe psychological concepts in therapy.
- Learn how creating an origin story can assist clients in identifying personal vulnerabilities and strengths.

OUR EXPERIENCE

18-week Superhero Therapy group at NMPRC:

- Who is in the group?



What makes a hero?

- ◆ Doing something nice for someone
- ◆ Rescuing
- ◆ Bravery
- ◆ Powers
- ◆ Strong personality
 - ◆ Physical and emotional
- ◆ Curious
- ◆ Fame
- ◆ Knowledge
- ◆ Keep fighting – resilient
- ◆ Good morals and ethics
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Fair
- ◆ Wisdom
- ◆ Honesty

- ◆ Courage
- ◆ Intelligence
- ◆ Forgiveness
- ◆ Friendly
- ◆ Patience
- ◆ Alert
- ◆ Overcoming challenges
- ◆ Humor
- ◆ Compassion
- ◆ Humility
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Physical strength
- ◆ Winner
- ◆ Protectors
- ◆ Role-models/ mentor

- ◆ Energy
- ◆ Trauma survival
- ◆ Making sacrifices
- ◆ Being ordinary
- ◆ Emotions
- ◆ Race/cultural background
- ◆ Hopefulness
- ◆ Signature move
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Stepping out of comfort zone
- ◆ Humble
- ◆ Modest
- ◆ Lovable
- ◆ Dependable
- ◆ Trustworthy

ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY

Present Moment
Awareness

Acceptance

Contact
with
Values

Defusion

Committed
Action



Self as
Context

WHAT IS SUPERHERO THERAPY?

- Dr. Scarlett's Origin Story:

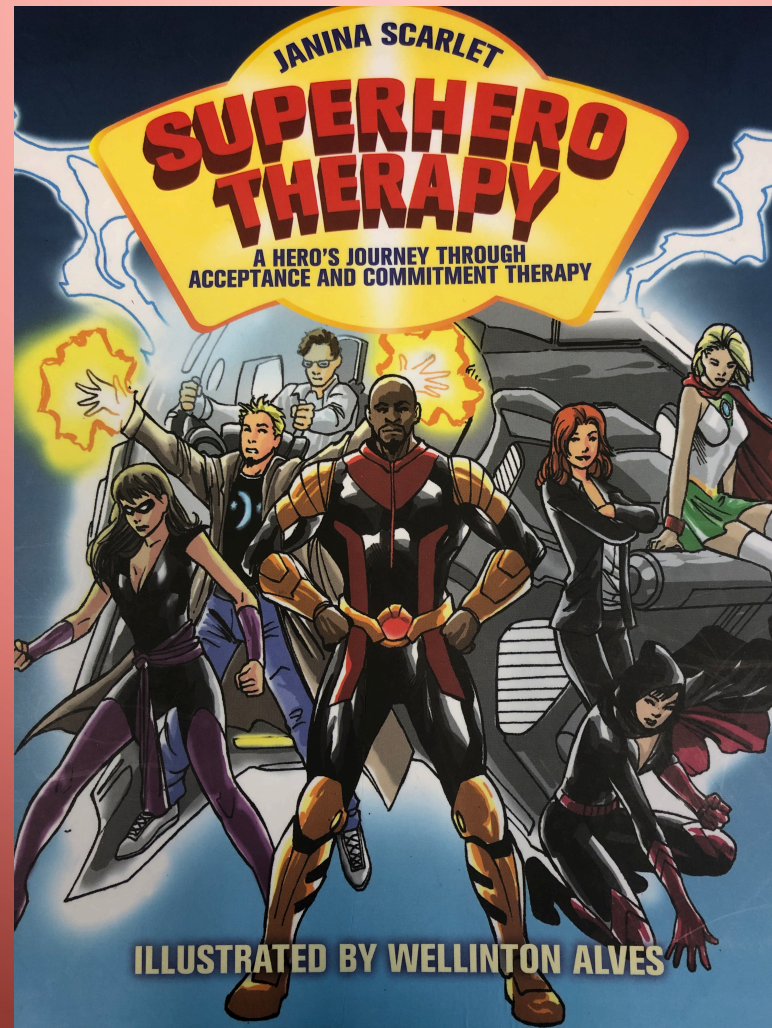


HERO ARCHETYPES

- Joseph Campbell myth cycle



FUSION OF ACT AND POP CULTURE



EXPERIENTIAL AVOIDANCE VS. ACCEPTANCE

SUPERHERO TEXT

- Experiential Avoidance
 - Join the D.O.T.S.



MONSTERS (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT):
ANXIETY, SHAME, ANGER, AND DEPRESSION

EXPERIENTIAL AVOIDANCE VS. ACCEPTANCE

ACT HEXAFLEX

- Acceptance- Dropping the struggle with uncomfortable feelings and sensations and choosing to take valued action

ACCEPTANCE

≠

COMPLICITY

***Accepting the Monster
doesn't make you a Monster**

INFLEXIBLE ATTENTION VS PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS

SUPERHERO THERAPY

- Mindfulness
- Darth Vader breath

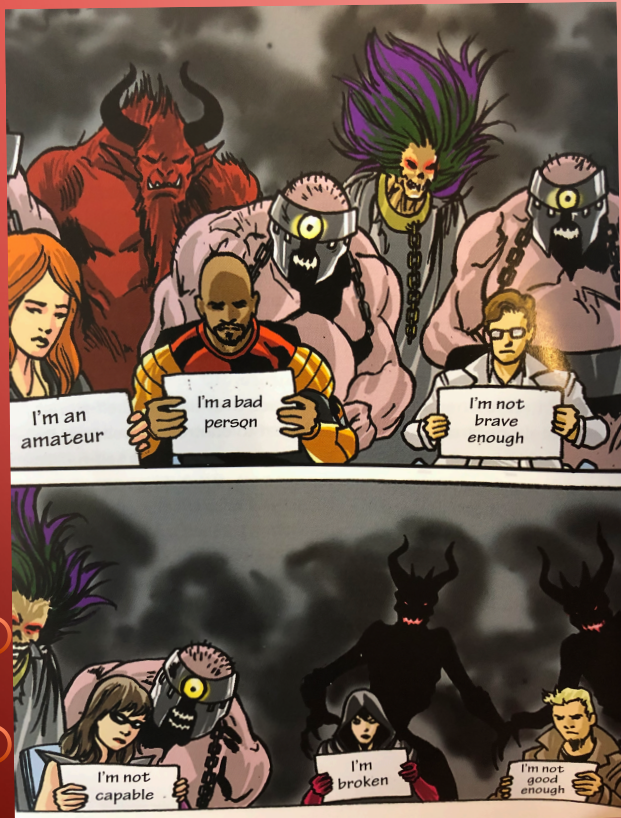
ACT HEXAFLEX

- Present Moment Awareness
 - Be. Here. Now.
- Ujjayi breath



PRACTICE!!!

ATTACHMENT TO CONCEPTUALIZED SELF VS SELF-AS-CONTEXT



SUPERHERO THERAPY

- Your Superhero Self
 - Self stories
 - Self Fulfilling Prophecies

ACT HEXAFLEX

- Self as Context-The 3 “Selves”
 - Self-as Content
 - “I am....” experiential activity
 - Handout
 - Self-as-Process
 - Self-as Context /Self-as-perspective

VALUES

SUPERHERO THERAPY

- Identifying Core Superhero Values

ACT HEXAFLEX

- Contact with Values
- “What do you want to stand for in the midst of all of this?”
- “What power do you have to do so?”

INACTION, AVOIDANCE, OR IMPULSIVITY VS. COMMITTED ACTION

SUPERHERO THERAPY

- The Ultimate Weapon- The Sword of Willingness

ACT HEXAFLEX

- Committed Action
 - Changing behavior OR persisting in a behavior
 - Many forms with caveat
 - Question: increase or decrease
 - 4 STEPS

Mindful Action Plan

I am here now,
accepting the way I feel and noticing my thoughts,
while doing what I care about. ** ACT in 1 sentence*

Addressing Internal-World Issues

I Am
Notice if you are being influenced by any unhelpful self-descriptions. Let go of any problematic thoughts that you are believing about yourself.

Here Now
Center your situational awareness on what you are doing. Notice what is happening here and now, and rather than getting wrapped up in events not in your present control, let go of these distracting events. Focus on what is relevant to your actions.

Accepting
Allow yourself to acknowledge any emotions you are having without trying to control the emotions. Be willing to simply have those feelings while moving forward with valuable actions.

Noticing
Prepare to simply notice thoughts that arise while moving forward with your valued actions. Let those thoughts go if they are not helpful. Treat distracting thoughts as disconnected from action while choosing to act in a meaningful manner.

Doing
To-Do List

What I Care About
Values-Based Motivation
-- Personal Values: Describe your motivation for engaging in your chosen actions and why you aim for optimal performance.

Designing Success with Performance Management

- Make sure all required resources for successful actions have been acquired.
- Publicly announce your commitment to meet performance goals.
- Alert your accountability partner about your commitment and goals.

Describe incentives, performance criteria, and deadlines:

Domain: Important Life
Employment, Education, Health, Recreation, Spirituality, Family, Parenting, Intimate Relationships, Social/Friendships, Community

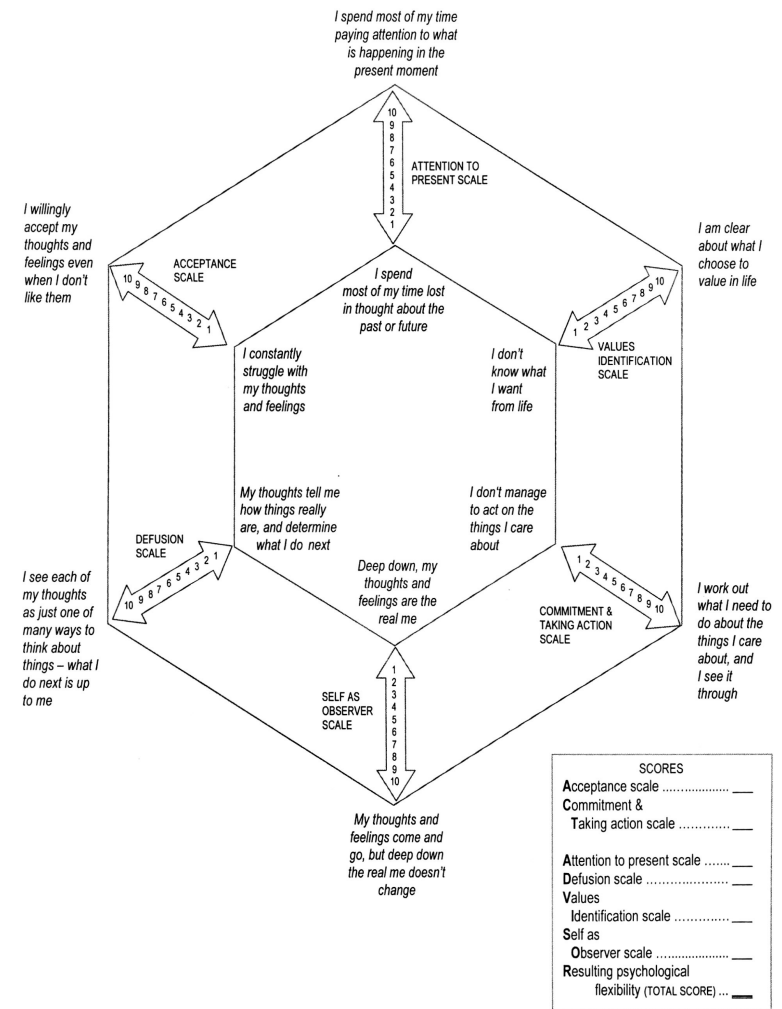
Value: Quality of Action
Freely chosen qualities (ways of behaving) that I want to engage in a given domain (i.e. What to stand for as a human being)

Action: Workable Behavior
Specific, realistic, and readily accessible actions in the service of my valued direction (i.e. What I can do with my current resources)

TUFS (Thoughts, Urges, Feelings)
that I'm willing to make room for

ACT ADVISOR Psychological Flexibility Measure

In this diagram there are six double-headed arrows, each with contrasting statements at either end. The arrows represent sliding scales, numbered 1-10, between each set of statements. For each scale, choose whereabouts you would place yourself (i.e., at which number), depending on how closely, or otherwise, you feel the statements apply to you. If you feel that the statements apply equally, or that neither statement applies to you, score 5. Enter your scores in the box below, then total them to give a Psychological Flexibility score.



LEVELING UP

ORIGIN STORIES- BATMAN

HOW WE USE THE CLIENT ORIGIN STORIES-ARCHETYPE LIFE CYCLE

BENEFITS (STIGMA, STRENGTHS, SURVIVOR'S GUILT, YOUTH/VETERANS)



FIGHTING OUR OWN MONSTERS

- Administrative Challenges
- Wide varieties in group diagnoses and functioning levels
- Participant buy-in



- Our level up

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