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Narrative Care

Manuale delle Metodologie Autobiografiche

Incontrarsi • prendersi cura • apprendere da sé stessi

Programma Erasmus + - Settore Educazione degli Adulti - Attività KA2 -
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NARRATIVE CARE

Transformative practices in storytelling that heals

Savino Calabrese

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The articulation of the Narrative Care project

NARRATIVE CARE was a research-training course using the autobiographical method: research because it intended to investigate and observe - through professional stories, therefore within the materiality of social work - if and how individual stories are accepted, and in what way they contribute to co-constructing the socio-educational intervention; training because, through group work, a process of collective co-construction of existential and professional meanings is elaborated. The use of Autobiographic Methodologies, as a tool for self- and other knowledge, was developed within a broader context, that of "MY LIFE in EUROPE: a new Methodology to insert Your Life IN the EUROPE contest", by NKEY srl of Santa Croce sull'Arno (Pi), "on the therapeutic, social and cultural value of autobiography" (quoted from the website mylifeineurope.nkey.it).

The recipients of the project were social workers from different areas of intervention, both public and private, who favour the pedagogical-educational approach in their professional and voluntary commitments.

The training group was heterogeneous, as it was made up of individual operators from different services/bodies/organisations, but united by their interest in autobiographical practices and their intention to adopt these methodologies in the ordinary practice of their social commitment.

The partner organisations were: "Don Bosco" Orientation Centre - Lead Organisation (Andria, Italy), Bit Association (Debrecen, Hungary), Viva Femina (Rzeszow, Poland); - all organisations are engaged in training and educational activities. In particular, the Lead Organisation (Italy) has been using autobiographical methodologies for some time. The aforementioned partner organisations address targets for whom the LIFE Narrative can have not only an educational but also a therapeutic value. The experiences, which the three partners have realised, will constitute methodological know-how that has already been tested and recognised in both academic and social work environments.

The training course focused on three specific objectives

- learning the theoretical and methodological foundations of writing practices and the autobiographical interview (the trainees wrote their own 'professional autobiography' or volunteering autobiography, which will be published on the Narrative Care website)
- to know how to accompany the users of their organisations to write their own autobiography, experiencing the potential of self-care and relationships thanks to life stories (these biographies, due to issues of confidentiality and protection of pain stories, will not be published, but have been returned to the protagonists)
- share learnings and good social work practices with their partners and the respective local and national communities (this objective was achieved by continuous comparison during the various workshop sessions).

Phase 1

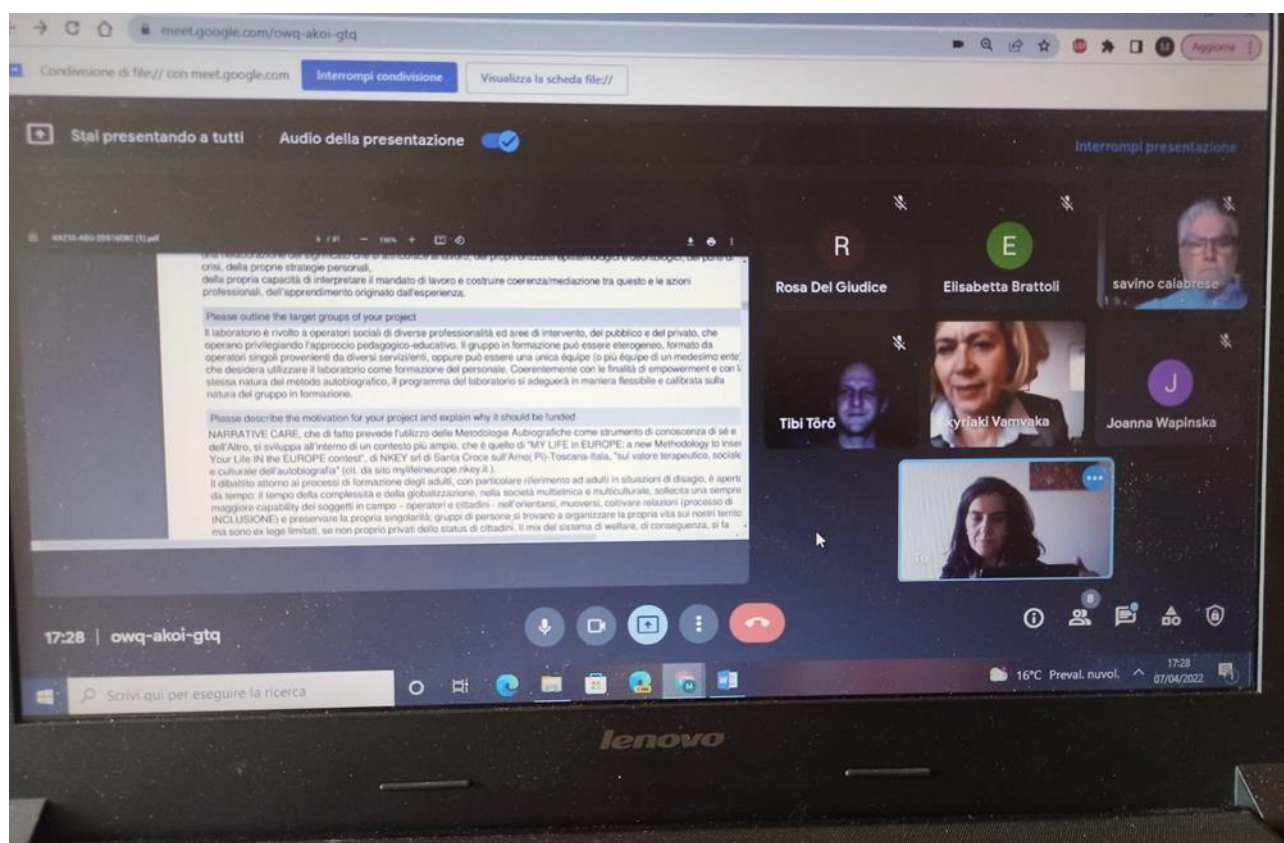
Focus groups among representatives of partner organisations

The focus group activity was organised in 4 meetings, centred on the knowledge and deepening of the proposed topics.

It was attended by:

- the three legal representatives of the partner organisations: Rosa Del Giudice (Italy), Joanna Wapinska (Poland), Tibi Toro (Hungary);
- the teacher responsible for the project's training process: Savino Calabrese;
- the designer: Marianna Porro;
- the person in charge of drafting the minutes, from which the reflections offered by each contact person emerge: Rossana Forlano
- the translator: Giada Piccolo;

The focus group activity allowed the partners not only to focus on the topic, but also to learn in detail about the experiential background of each participating organisation.



Phase 2

Training course for social workers of partner organisations

The core of the project idea was represented by the theoretical-experiential training, (remotely), carried out on Autobiographical Methodologies by Savino Calabrese, lecturer at LUA (Libera Università dell'Autobiografia) in Anghiari. The social workers involved, who were previously identified by the partner organisations, are usually engaged in education and inclusion activities for subjects in situations of hardship.

The training steps are summarised as follows

- 1) Writing about the Self - 6 meetings;
- 2) Writing about the Other - 4 meetings;
- 3) Comparison on the texts produced - 3 meetings;
- 4) Reflections - 3 meetings

The training course, with its teaching/learning developments, enabled the trainees to implement their skills. The skills acquired were the viaticum for building relational bridges between the operators trained in Autobiographical Methodologies and the end users, i.e. all the categories at risk or in situations of distress, with whom organisations interface in their daily social work. The specific training of the trainees was the aim of the project, as it enriched the range of professional services offered by the operators and organisations they work with. The target group of the activity was identified with the operators, previously trained and professionally prepared, (Level I), and with the end users, who were interviewed for the writing of their LIFE Narrative (Level II).



Phase 3

Operators work in the field

The activity fostered the meeting between the real protagonists of NARRATIVE CARE: the social workers and the end users, i.e. subjects at risk and/or in situations of distress. The choice of subjects to be interviewed and the initial approach were made with a sense of ethics, sensitivity and respect. Inclusion was the overriding aim. The activity involved the mobility of the trainer and trainees in various partner countries: Hungary, Poland, Italy. Under these circumstances, he was able to support the practitioners in the initial approach to the interviews. This "supervision" was aimed at

the continuation of the dialogue between the trainer, on the one hand, and the trainees and the contact persons of the organisations involved, on the other, so that each contact, in addition to implying suggestions and practical input, could provide the trainer with new keys to understanding.

Hungary (Debrecen)





Phase 4

Dissemination event

The activity included a meeting in Italy between representatives of the Narrative Care partner organisations: Italy, Poland and Hungary. The opportunity was offered by the event "Become an ambassador of 'MY Life in Europe': therapeutic and social benefits of autobiographical writing-Multiplier event", organised by ASHI for Nkey srl, held in Bologna on 11 January 2023 as part of the MY LIFE in EUROPE project.

The event allowed the NARRATIVE CARE team to meet, discuss and take stock of the project, also in the light of the significant contributions made by the numerous conference participants. The representatives of the NARRATIVE CARE partners were able, before and after the event, but also during it, to share experiences of visiting places and moments of conviviality.

Bologna



Phase 5

Development of the Narrative Care manual

The concluding activity of NARRATIVE CARE saw the co-production by the partners of a single digital manual/guide, in English, Italian, Polish and Hungarian, in which what had been carried out and emerged throughout the life of the project found its appropriate place. The work resulted in the drafting of a fully-fledged project report, including all the stages of NARRATIVE CARE. It includes GOOD PRACTICES in approaching Autobiographical Methodologies in the different participating countries, also in view of their replicability in other contexts. The manual represented not only a point of arrival for the project, but also a restart phase to continue the research and in-depth study. The final event contributed to the conclusion and confirmation of the validity of the work carried out, which made it possible to disseminate the project and the final product on the occasion of its presentation in Andria, the city where the Don Bosco Orientation Centre, the lead agency, operates. The conference was held in the auditorium of the Diocesan Museum on 24 March 2023, at 6.30 p.m. It fostered a meeting between representatives of the partner organisations and the realities present in Andria's associationism. This provided an opportunity to illustrate to the local community the stages of the project and all the activities carried out, as well as to consolidate the bonds of friendship, solidarity and collaboration between the participants. The general observations, points of reflection, and testimonies collected by the operators and referents were a valuable contribution to the development of an idea, as shared as possible, of an approach to Autobiographical Methodologies.

1. The reasons for participation of each partner organization

MOTIVATIONS FOR JOINING (Centro di Orientamento Don Bosco, Italia)

A plurality of factors contributed to motivating the Italian volunteers to join: first and foremost, the validity and innovative nature of the project, with the expectations associated with it; secondly, the desire to get involved and the aspiration to deepen self-knowledge, reflecting on the choices of commitment in volunteering, with a view to attention and improvement in relations with others.

WAYS OF INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS (Centro di Orientamento Don Bosco, Italia)

As president of the lead organisation, I personally contacted the BIT Association (Hungary) and Viva Femina (Poland), already partners of the Centre in the last European project. The abstract of the pathway was sent to them, the contents of which registered their availability. Following INDIRE's communication of the approval of the project idea and the consequent granting of funding, I personally met with the heads of a number of Andria's volunteer associations, to whom the contents and phases of the project were illustrated. They expressed their convinced support: three volunteers from the Don Bosco Centre, one volunteer from Caritas, one volunteer from FIDAPA, one volunteer from AIMC, one volunteer from 'La Compagnia del sorriso', and one volunteer from the St. Riccardo Parish Oratory. The Italian group was joined by the Hungarian and Polish volunteer groups, after their organisations finally decided to join and participate in the partnership.

METHOD OF IDENTIFYING THE PERSON(S) TO BE INTERVIEWED (Centro di Orientamento Don Bosco, Italia)

The Italian volunteers either directly identified the person(s) to be interviewed or indirectly through the contact persons of voluntary associations to which the subjects living in situations of precariousness and marginality are referred.

However, beyond the direct or indirect approach, the criteria adopted were homogeneous and identified with

1. The complexity of an experience, already known to the association leaders;
2. The natural predisposition to dialogue and interlocution;
3. The willingness to tell and narrate;
4. The inclination to listen to others;
5. The desire to express one's feelings, even negative ones, overcoming the reluctance to speak of the "personal";
6. clarity of exposition

MOTIVATIONS FOR JOINING (Fondazione Vivafemina, Poland)

Viva Femina has joined the Narrative Care project in order to learn new methods of working with people with disabilities and people excluded in society and labour market. Our social and training work consists of providing assistance to those who, for various reasons, are unable to independently solve the difficult situation in which they find themselves. Very often these people are socially alienated, misunderstood and poorly communicating with the environment. In many cases, the written form and telling about themselves and their story is easier for them than talking. The biographical method gave us the opportunity to learn and understand, on the one hand - the uniqueness of each participant, and on the other - their interrelationship with the environment, social, economic and cultural.

Our participants taking part in the project are people on the autism spectrum, victims of domestic violence and people with social phobia. They showed great motivation and interest in the biographical method and shared with us their stories, often very intimate and painful.

So, let's give voice to our participants:

Werka: *"During the story, I will call myself Werka - because that's what I was called since I was a child and that's what I called myself in my mind. I'll probably be too long and too detailed - that's one of my autistic personality traits"* she explained.

Liger seems to be a person with extraordinary abilities for retrospection and introspection. She did speak at length - very descriptive and extremely detailed, using rich vocabulary. Her deep interest in psychology and the intricacies of human relationships was evident. Many of her memories are in the shape of images, full of emotions and thoughts. She spoke about traumatic events with the calmness of a person who is at peace with herself. Sometimes she gave the impression that she was about to "drown" in a given memory - as if that memory was actually going to draw her into another time and space."

Mateusz: *"He was quite sceptical when explaining what the project was all about. It is not about the questions themselves, but even the facial expressions when he asks them. Nevertheless, he agreed. Apparently, he likes to try new things and support all kinds of initiatives.*

"Without trying something at least once, it's hard to form an opinion - whether a given technique is effective or not, and above all - whether it works for me."

He seemed to have a million thoughts at the same time and as if he wanted to spit out all the stories at once - on the other hand, the answers were simple and straightforward, without colour or description."

2. The narrative that heals: the outcomes of the project and theoretical justification (Savino uses the biographies and afterwords). Quotations from the biographies here will be 'read' on the evening of 24 March)

3. Exercises and writing practices for each module, preceded by a brief theoretical justification (Savino). In closing, indications for their replicability and suggestions for good practice

MOTIVATIONS FOR JOINING (Bibliai Ismeretterjesztő Társulat Egyesület Association, Hungary)

The BIT Association (Bibliai Ismeretterjesztő Társulat Egyesület - Biblical Educational Society Association) is one of the first civil organizations in Hungary. Since its establishment, we have been focusing on the education and development of professionals working in the social field. Our main goal is for these professionals to learn, grow, and acquire new knowledge through the Association, which they can use to perform their work at a higher level of quality.

We decided to participate in the Narrative Care project for several reasons. One reason is the topic itself, as the participants can learn methodologies that they can apply in their work, thereby helping their own clients and target groups. The project idea aligns completely with the basic activities of our association, so when the Don Bosco organization approached us, we gladly accepted the cooperation.

Another reason we decided to participate in the project is that we have known the Don Bosco organization, its leaders, and employees for a long time. We have previously collaborated with them and the Polish partner organization (Viva Femina) on the Inmates Social Inclusion project, also under the Erasmus+ framework. The Don Bosco and Viva Femina employees were a kind of guarantee for us that this project would also be of high quality and achieve its goals. When we received the invitation to join the project and saw who we would be working with, there was no

question that we would participate in the program. Our preliminary expectations were fully met, as the meetings and online discussions went smoothly, and there were no problems that would have disrupted the cooperation. We would like to thank the leaders, employees, and volunteers of both organizations for their positive and constructive attitudes that made the project successful. The third reason we decided to participate in the project is that the active operation of the BIT Association declined due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the restrictions on movement and the prohibition of community events here in Hungary, it was difficult to carry out any educational or community development activities. Therefore, we were pleased with the invitation because we thought that our organization could gain a new impetus through this program. At the end of the project, we can say that our expectations were fully met.

WAYS OF INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS (Bibliai Ismeretterjeszto Tarsulat Egyesulet Association, Hungary)

The selection of project participants was carried out as follows. Andrea Diebel, a member of the BIT Association and a colleague at the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Debrecen, is in daily contact with university students and social professionals who study there. When the BIT Association joined the Narrative Care program, we first asked Andrea Diebel to inform the professionals and students she is in contact with about the opportunity to participate in the project. In the first round, we selected 10 people (about 15-20 people applied in total), and after a personal and telephone conversation.

We initially selected 10 people (out of a total of approximately 15-20 applicants), and after personal and phone interviews, the participants were chosen. It was important for us to select individuals who would use the methodology in their work or studies in the future. Our experience has been that the selection of program participants was largely successful, although there was one participant who did not continue with the program, but was replaced by another participant. In the future, we will place greater emphasis on participant selection in order to ensure that individuals who are active from beginning to end are chosen for the project.

Overall, the BIT Association was completely satisfied with the implementation and organization of the project, and we believe that communication between partner organizations went well. Don Bosco staff always responded quickly and clearly to our questions, listened to our suggestions, and applied them. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to work with Don Bosco and Viva Femina again, and we hope to have the opportunity to implement a joint project in the future.

METHOD OF IDENTIFYING THE PERSON(S) TO BE INTERVIEWED (Bibliai Ismeretterjeszto Tarsulat Egyesulet Association, Hungary)

N. Bodonyi

When selecting the interviewee, a crucial factor was to find someone whose life path includes deviant behavior, such as addiction and/or crime. We have a connection with one of the rehabilitation institutions in HBVM, and by pure chance, we stumbled upon a "discharge" session where a person who successfully completed rehab participates in a final group session. One of the tasks was to prepare and present a life story resume for others to reflect on. Upon hearing this, I thought that it would make for a great life story interview on how one fell into the cycle of deviance. I have had work relationships with many inmates and ex-convicts, and I know that there

are crucial turning points that determine whether someone takes a less conformist path. Therefore, the decision was made to conduct an interview with the individual, which we could potentially use in our symbolic restitution program as a preventative lecture.

E. Bihari

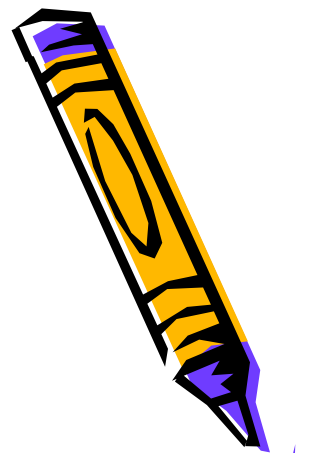
When selecting the interviewee, I took several factors into consideration. The first factor was to choose someone whom I already knew, someone whose personal problems and life history I know. The other selection criterion, due to the length of the interview, therefore, I did not choose a workplace client but rather someone I knew from my personal life.

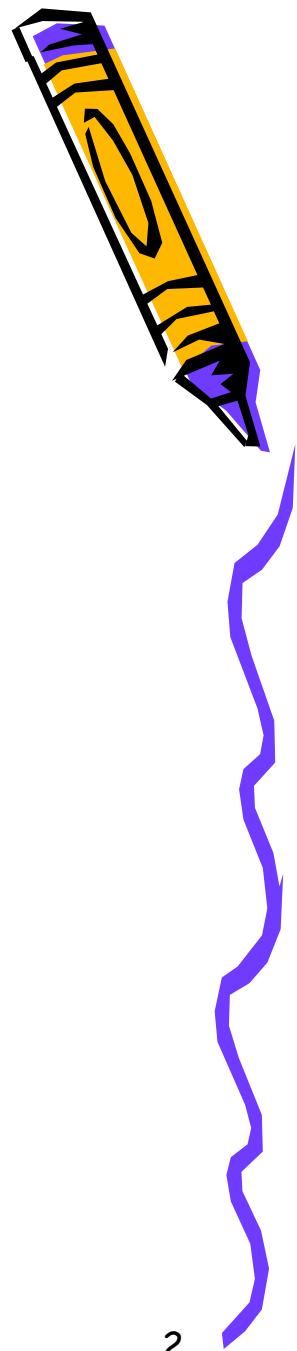
D. Tóth

When selecting the interviewee, I took into account several criteria, some of which were related to exploring possible traumas that may have occurred during their life journey. The peripheral location of their residence, the various job positions they held, and a specific trauma were the three factors I considered when selecting the interviewee. At the time of the interview, the interviewee lived in a rural town, which greatly influenced their employment opportunities, as well as their values and norms. The different job positions they held were important for their coping strategies and identity formation. While I did not determine the type of trauma during the selection process, in this case, I considered the near-death experience as the most recent trauma the interviewee had experienced. During the interview, I aimed to uncover the connections between these three aspects.

2. Notes on autobiographical theory and methodology

The autobiographical theory





Savino Calabrese - NARRATIVE
CARE - 2022

The autobiographical theory

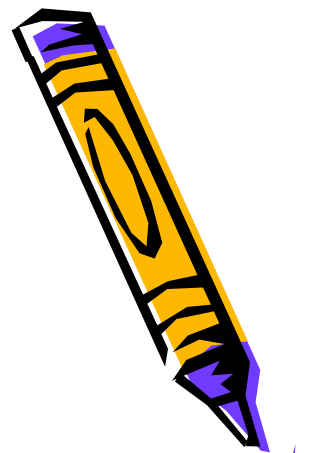


There is a time in life when you feel the need to tell him/herself differently than usual

The story in first person to resist the oblivion of memory



The autobiographical theory



The set of memories, of what has been done and what has been is a secret company, meditative, communicated to others only through fragments of memories.... unless it becomes an autobiography



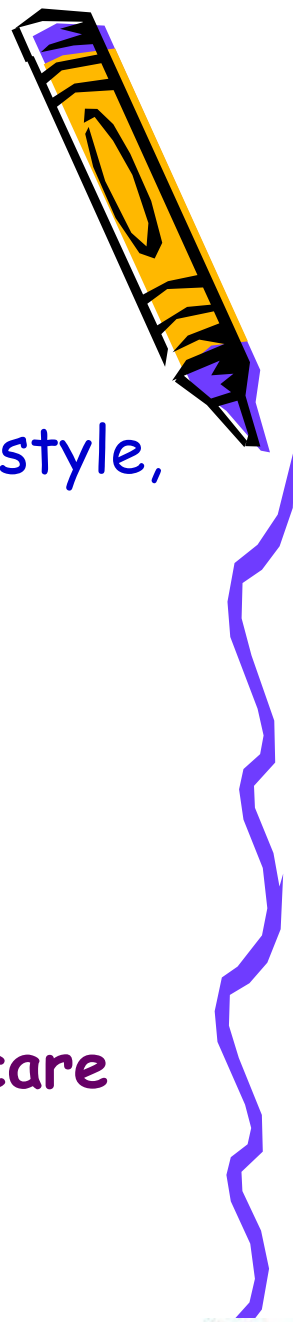
The autobiographical theory

This way of thinking about oneself becomes a style, a philosophical and meditative exercise if it becomes an everyday exercise.

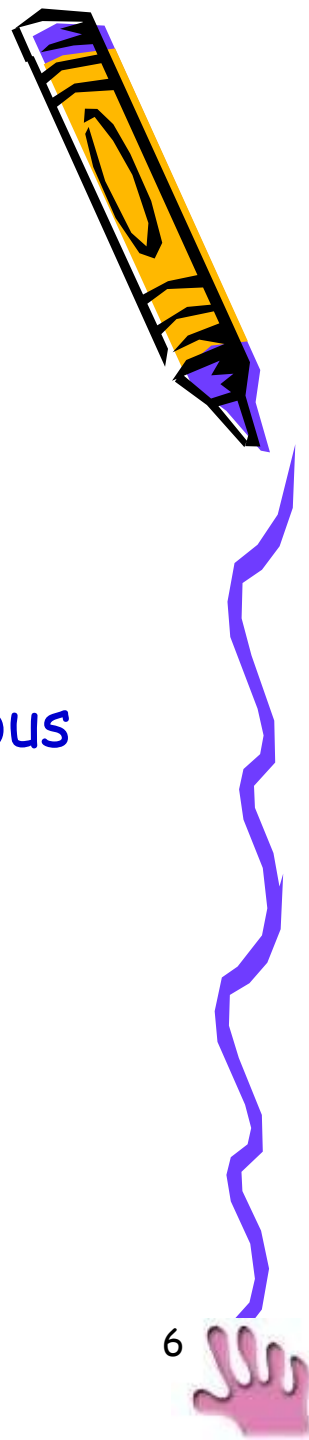
He answers questions all the time:

Who am I? Who have I been?

It is an interior place of well-being and care



The autobiographical theory



Autobiographical thinking, even when it passes through painful places and defeats, is a continuous reworking with what it has been. A process of reconciliation

It is cultivating the first and last love
that is given to us:

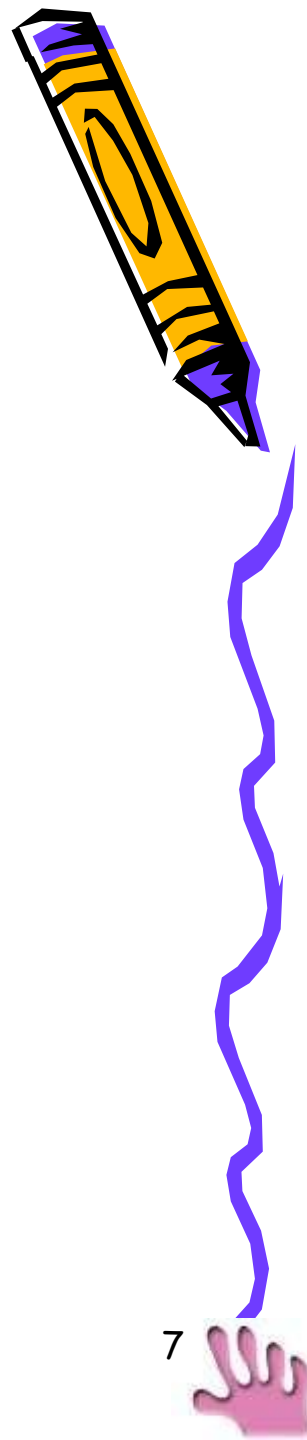
OUR LIFE



The autobiographical theory

Tell each other is

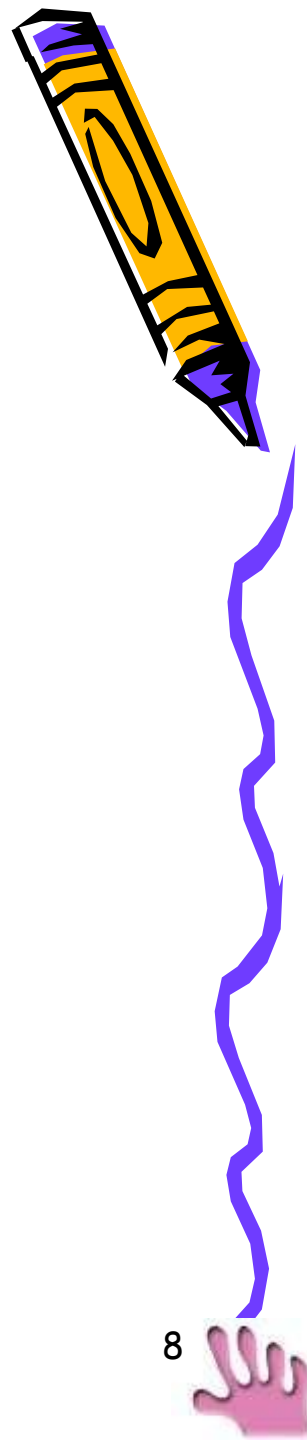
take care of yourself



The autobiographical theory

Tell each other is

Create (the) Self



The autobiographical theory

Tell each other is

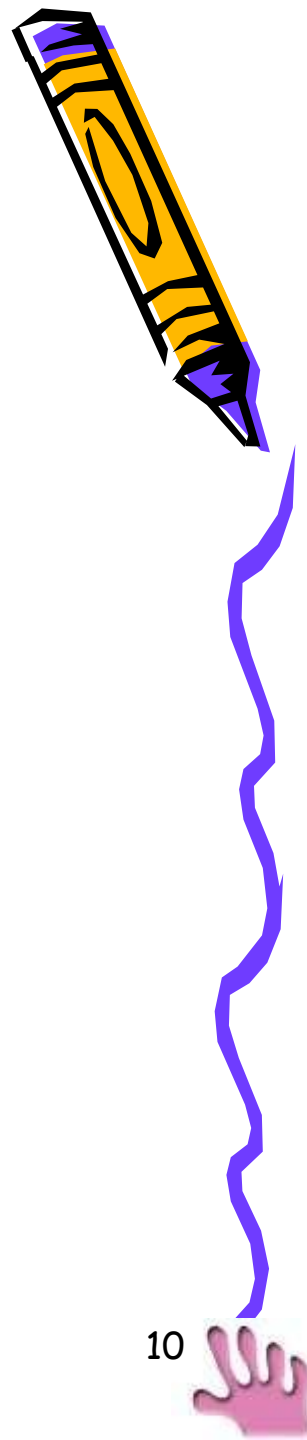
Take charge themselves



The autobiographical theory

Tell each other is

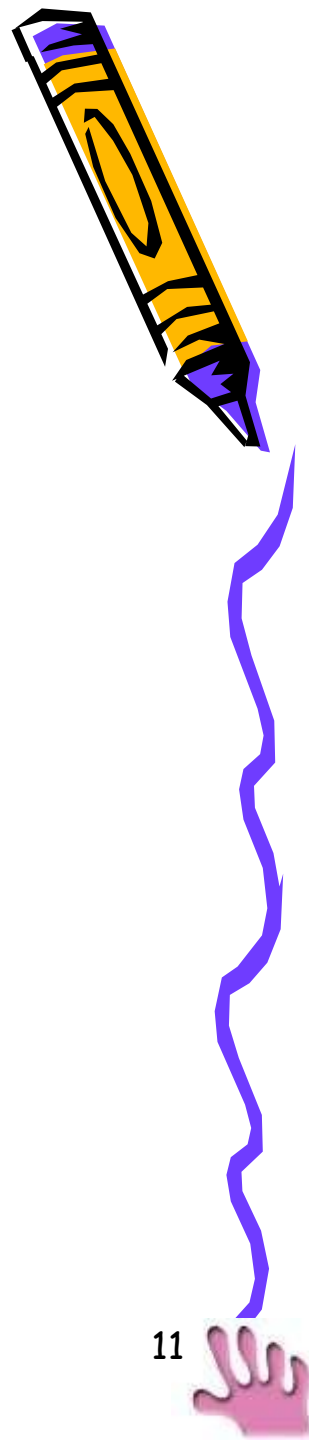
Learn from yourself



The autobiographical theory

The process of telling oneself

- *The retrospection*
- *The interpretation*
- *The creation*



The autobiographical theory



The retrospection

It is to evoke the past with more fluid eyes

The interpreting

It is rethinking and reflecting on today by comparing and identifying the profound differences

The creation

It is placing in the right place (right for us) the actions, the decisions, the choices made, to learn even today



The autobiographical theory



The retrospection

*It is to evoke the past with
more fluid eyes*

*That time I was just.... But
now looking at the distance...*

The interpreting

*It is rethinking and reflecting on
today by comparing and identifying
the profound differences*

*One aspect of personality: how I
was... how I am... if I think
about it...*

The creation

*It is placing in the right place (right for us) the actions,
the decisions, the choices made, to learn even today*

*I think back on a choice... the actions that followed...
what do I learn for today?*



*Autobiography:
you mean?*

Over time of complexity

- ➡ **plurality of proposals and disorientation**
- ➡ **many opportunities and widespread discomfort**
- ➡ **new values and loss of values**

The world and the human in a story

- ④ **No one has the truth in their pockets**
- ④ **Where are the keys?**
- ④ **One knowledge is no longer enough**
- ④ **Aptitude to produce knowledge from life**
- ④ **Changing rhythm: between speed and slowness**

Autobiography and knowledge

- **Autobiography is interpretation, sense attribution, connection (plot)**

From living to the will to tell

- **Autobiography is:**

- *is an alter ego that helps us to prepare for the loneliness of old age (stare secum)*
- *write of himself to make moral assessments and self-assurances, for pleasure or to fill in the empty time*
- *is a challenge to the non-sense, especially when you take note that the passions and values of the past have passed and now there are other understandings*

From living to the will to tell

Autobiography is:

- *space a bit narcissistic and confusing, but that teaches us to take care of ourselves*
- *ability to investigate what is hidden to others (heuristics of the inner world)*
- *space of slowness, composing patience, respect, cautious revisiting*

Telling/telling: a right

You have the right to tell yourself and also the duty to do it, and not just for yourself.

Every narration related to what we have lived, or believed to live, is the mirror of our social being as well as individual, because it is a space of encounter with all those who have passed through our existence (ghosts or bodies), staying there for more or less long.

The unveilings

autobiography helps us to know our way of thinking. To tell oneself is to seek (or build) a possible design taking into account the uniqueness and autonomy that each person has received in support of life and that must be celebrated

The life Mentor

From the myth to the life stories of each of us, woman or man, are become mentor all those who - possibly not belonging to the our family- we were taught, addressed, helped and advised.

Without these figures our life at the service of others would be different, but what makes them special is the masterful role they played.

They can also be characters (ideal or real), writers, artists, thinkers whose ideas renew us. The mentor is human and superhuman, he is real and unreal.

Rummage through your story and go in search of your mentor. Who is your mentor? From whom have you learned the art of being at the service of others? talk about him. Introduce us to your mentor.



The unveilings

- **Autobiography is a social ritual because it tells us how the expectations/needs of others have been influential in the construction of our lives.**
- **So the question of aesthetics becomes ethical**

The encounter with the enigma of existence: who have I been?

- the story-telling of himself becomes a pretext to return to reflect on the multiple senses, on the multiple possible or impossible explanations of existence, of being
- is reason for continuous learning
- the story of self becomes research and philosophical/ religious deepening, without which the A would be little thing
- is the moment when the writing leaves the words and opens to silence

The encounter with the enigma of existence: who have I been?

- It turns out that events, as recursiveness, speak of the same things: lives become adults through handfuls of happiness, that is, lives come to old age without ever having done something really adult
- the story-telling becomes space of thought ... until the not - thought
- A becomes the space of "feeling", "observing", "looking", "touching" ... feeling you are still alive

Autobiographical courage: shaping oneself

The autobiography:

- **is the sign of taking care of oneself throughout life, between reasons, emotions, feelings of still existing**
- **introduces a pedagogical intentionality on the traits of existential incompetence**
- **which path/processes of self-training is possible to fill this incompleteness**
- **the transition, crisis, is accomplished when, in solitude, you write your own A and you share it with others**



Autobiography?





Autobiography and education



The adult is considered an adult because he has a story to tell. Is by telling that he affirms his identity and plans his training



**As an adult it is not uniquely definable, but has
multiple identities:
personal, legal, social, cultural, professional,
emotional, biographical ...**



**In our path we take
professional identity
as a focus, as a point of view as a whole.
Our whole person is inevitably involved
in every expression of himself**



The adult experiences a process of continuous construction of himself, of his own knowledge strategies, of the propensities to act and think in a certain way, a process that is *formative* in a broad sense



The educability has found ways of realization in practices rooted in the therapeutic paradigm:

- ***in the interventions aimed at the recovery / support of skills and competences in disadvantaged people***
- ***in the professional retraining process or in the career project support***



The autobiographical orientation is proposed as a
'third way' aimed at building different ways of
learning and knowing, through reflective, narrative
and relational practices in the presence of 4
general criteria



1

Confidence in the competence of the subjects (criteria of organizational autonomy)



2

The recognition of the intrinsic learning processes, self-generated, especially in the conditions and in the 'transition' phases (criteria of autobiographical improvisation)



3

**Circularity and constructive reciprocity between research
and training, between processes of construction of
meaning and lived experience
(criteria of the learning interdependence)**



4

**The review of the role and function of the educator, not
anymore as instructor, trainer, teacher, but animator,
facilitator, guide of self-directed learning
(criteria of creative leadership)**



**The autobiographical method has as foundation the
subjectivity, uniqueness,
vitality of one's own process
of the adult and his different ways of learning, of
transformation and self-expression,
of attribution of meaning to one's own practices**



1. Historical-philosophical anchors:

gnòthi seautòn

(know yourself)

in the sense of

Epimelèisthai heautoù

(take care of yourself)



The most significant moment of this formative tradition is represented in the history of our culture by the Confessions of St. Augustine, which suggested not only a method of self-analysis and meditation, but also a way to rediscover the inner Master (conscience). True learning always happens from the inside.



2. Historical-philosophical anchors:

Learning from experience

(American pragmatism)

With its ideal of potential endless growth
of the individual towards
independence and self-control



3. Historical-philosophical anchors:

Cybernetics of the observing systems

(Heinz von Foerster)

He poses the problem of the observer's
observation.

Recursiveness and tautology of every description



A critical note:

The individualistic connotation and
psychologizing drift
of the autobiographical approach



One way out:
The intersubjective dimension
of life stories



Autobiography is a self-teaching 'practice':

an ecological approach to the knowledge
that combines acquaintance and
knowledge by promoting self-
observation, listening and comparison
with others



Autobiography is a metacognitive 'practice':

In the story there are not only contents and facts. There is a structure of thought, a logic underlying the choices made and the interpretations of the emotions experienced. The story makes visible the way we act, allows self-reflexive practice (as precious as it is neglected in the teaching profession) generating adaptations and acts that end up becoming thought and style in us



Autobiography is a heuristic-explanatory 'practice':

The story is reflection: it is a reconstructive process of reality, of what and how it happened. Reflective as a word is like a replay from different angles. During decentralization, I can focus on what's left in the background: the importance of details; words can show elements that by acting can slip away, circumstances neglected, reconstructions made ...



Autobiography as a motivational 'practice':

Talking about oneself is unfolding the path of their choices and their own growth. It is the rediscovery of the ability to learn, to decide, to change. This is the best condition to recover the desire of the chosen job and the values in which you believe.



Autobiography as a transformative 'practice':

The autobiographical dimension opens up a possibility of choice, projects acquired attitudes and potentialities into the future unspoken. Talking about oneself is not merely a retrospective action, but an opportunity for openness and change



Autobiography is a 'practice' of self-care:

Telling what you do, collecting reflections for yourself on cases and days, it means taking some time for reviewing your work, to return to the complex flow of the hours, of the decisions, of the difficulties and the satisfactions. It means dedicating space and time to the things you do, because they deserve it. What you do at work is important. And it is attested to at least in front of oneself



TO THE READER

This, reader, is a sincere book. It warns you from the beginning that I have not proposed, with it, any purpose, if not domestic and private. I have not held in any consideration n6 your advantage nor the my glory. My strength is not enough for one that purpose. I have dedicated it to the private benefit of my relatives and friends: so that after having lost me (as it will soon be their turn) can find you again some traits of my qualities and moods, and by this means they nourish knowledge fuller and more alive they have had of me. If I had written it to win the favor of the people, I would have adorned myself better and I would present myself with a studied attitude.

I want you to see me here in my way of being simple, natural and usual, without affectation nor artifice: because it is myself that I paint. They will read here my faults taken to the surface and mine natural image, as far as the public respect. What if I had found myself among those peoples who are said to still live in sweet freedom of the primitive laws of nature, I assure you that well I would gladly have painted myself here in full, and everything naked. So, reader, I myself am the stuff of mine book: there is no reason for you to spend your time on such a frivolous and vain subject. So goodbye; from Montaigne, on the first of March one thousand five hundred and eighty.

(M. Montaigne, *Essays*)

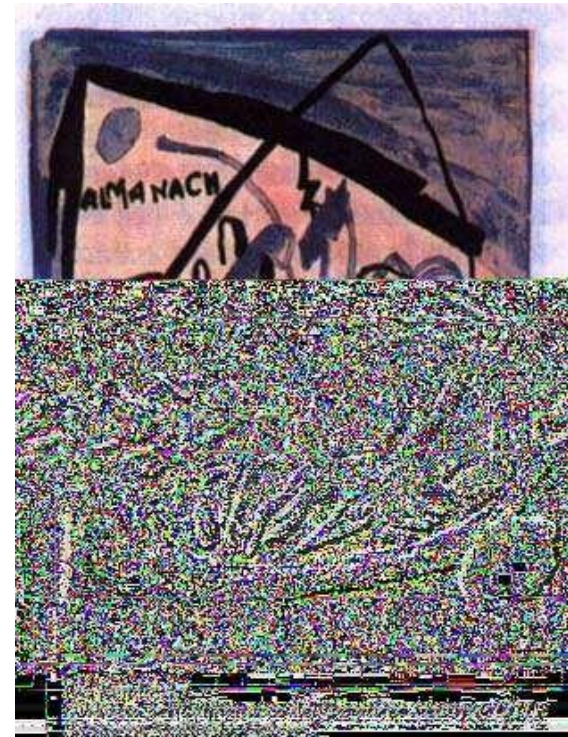
Biographic interview





What is an interview?

An oral exchange between two people, one of them (the interviewer) searches, asking questions strictly predecided, to collect informations or opinion from the other part (interviewed) about a particular topic.





The interview in the biographic field

In the biographical field, the interview is about gathering information on how people have lived or are living certain salient moments of their lives, or the totality of their existence.





THE INTERVIEW **ACTIVATE A RELATIONSHIP**

The interview always activate a relationship:

- *Not accidental, but intentional and sought*
- *‘asymmetrical’, because the roles are not interchangeable. Who asks the questions does not give the answers!*





THE INTERVIEW

AN ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONSHIP

An asymmetrical relationship, in which the interviewer:

- ⇒ *puts the interviewee at ease*
- ⇒ *is able to listen to the other*
- ⇒ *and help him/her express what he/she feels or thinks*
- *is able to keep silent or speak just enough to encourage the other person to express him/herselfs*





The interview

A PARTICIPATE RELATIONSHIP

The way of being, of presenting oneself, of
'feeling' of one has repercussions on the
way of being, of feeling of presenting
oneself of the other





- Both with the interviewer's manner of posture and speech during the interview
- Both with the choice of a sequence of questions to achieve the purpose



The attitude of the interviewer *(roles, rights and duties during the interview)*

During the interview, each of the two protagonists has precise rights and duties. And since the relationship is asymmetrical, the rights and duties are also asymmetrical:

The interviewee has all the rights and the interviewer has all the duties

(Cfr Rogers).



Il cavaliere azzurro, 1903



The rights of the interviewee

- ✦ *be accepted unconditionally*
- ✦ *not being judged and/or analysed*
- ✦ *To be confronted by one who tries to empathise (empathy)*
 - *Choose where to start, which episodes to remember autonomously*
- ✦ *Knowing in advance what use will be made of the information provided by him/her*
- ✦ *The right to confidentiality and secrecy*





Active, interested and non-judgmental listening

Attention not only to words but to the whole set of behaviours, ways of being and doing
(postures, expressions, silences, voice inflections, tones..)

It's listening with all the senses





Active, interested and non-judgmental listening

The interviewer must be able to **listen** and **hear himself/herself**:

- ◆ Distinguish between himself and the interviewee
- ◆ Recognise the feelings and emotions he/she experiences
- ◆ Be aware of his/her thoughts and pre-understandings
- ◆ Be interested in the other person and what they say
- ◆ Welcome the other's narrative as something unique and unrepeatable





Congruence and authenticity

There must be
agreement between
the words and the
interviewer's feelings





In practice...

Where to interview?

*In the place of greatest safety and warmth for
the interviewee*

How to interview?

With recorder

What is the subject of the interview?

Some existential subject areas





The requirement of the interviewer

1. An attentive and respectful availability
2. A non-invasive curiosity
3. An ability to be actively neutral
4. A sufficient awareness of one's communicative style





tricks...

use technical devices (memory enhancers) to obtain the particular version (interpretation) of the facts given by the interviewee

facilitate the explication of experiences, of the reflections that the situations generated, of the motivations that prompted certain choices rather than others

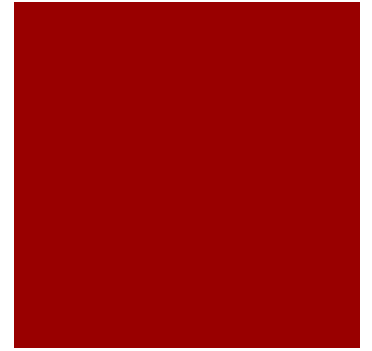
allow the images connected to the choices and situations told to emerge

take care not to get trapped in standardised emotional scripts built up over time through endless stories

foster new awareness with appropriate stimulation



autobiographical text structure



1. introduction
(presentation oneself)

2. plot

2.1. event

2.2 event

2.3. event

3. conclusion

The autobiographical pact



1. **be honest** (writer)

2. **believe in the writer** (reader)

everyone writes his own truth; the
reader believes the writer because he
says 'his' truth (Philip Lejune)



reasons

**Why do you
write or tell
oneself?**

**Background and reasons
for writing**



reasons

**The tendency
to confess**

**Expose yourself, expose your
guilt, reveal yourself without
any shame**

reasons

**The tendency to
justify oneself**

**In an apologetic or more subdued
way; tendency to defend their
actions even criminal**

reasons

the tendency to know oneself

Adopting a language different from the spoken one, to make clear in the own past, in front of choices of life, to turns choices or subite; tendency to draw an own portrait



reasons

**The tendency
to testify**

**To denounce, to tell an
extreme experience not lived
by the majority**

reasons

**The tendency
to reflect
philosophically**

**On one's own experience and
connections with life, to leave
thoughts and reflections to
those who come after or read**



reasons

**The tendency
to seek
meaning**

**To one's own existence, to
grasp a leitmotif beyond the
transformations within oneself**



reasons

**The tendency to
self-gratification**

**To seek further success, civil
recognition, social approval**



reasons

**The tendency to
cultivate one's
own well-being**

**Writing to feel less bad, to
forget suffering, paradoxically
facing it with the pen**

stylistic models

**Autobiography
autobiographies**

Writing pattern

stylistic models

Writing is a sort of composite bricolage or patchwork, where multiple motifs and themes are mixed

ERRATIC TREND

stylistic models

**The chronological order
strictly respected
prevails over the other
reasons: affections,
reflections,
psychological
reconstruction of
themselves**

**the development follows the
sequence of events**

stylistic models

**Sequential but irrelevant
to the narrative, he
dedicates himself to
discovering himself
(exhibitionist tendency)
up to the dark corners of
his mind and his
existence**

**TREND
INTROSPECTIVE**

stylistic models

The author takes the opportunity of his own story to dwell on aspects not attributable to his psychological identity, but see him protagonist or spectator of dramatic events

**TREND
HISTORICAL-SOCIAL**

stylistic models

The story of the narrating self and of the author takes second place, motives that go beyond the personal sphere are privileged: reflections, meditations, considerations on the meaning of living, suffering, evil, beauty, justice...

**TREND
THEORETICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL**

stylistic models

Scriptures that draw from facts and experiences an opportunity to reconsider one's life from a poetic-aesthetic point of view: the themes of love, of the evil of living, of melancholy prevail...

**TREND
LYRICAL-POETIC**

stylistic models

It is evident the tension to give its own version of the facts, its own truth, its own point of view on historical events

**TREND
TESTIMONIAL**

stylistic models

The writer is in an almost distant position not to appear too much, as if he used a voice-over to tell collective stories: familiar, professional, friendly, civic, social...

**TREND
CHORAL**

3. Narrative Care: Meet, take care, learn from yourself

NARRATIVE CARE

Resonances from autobiographical workshops for social workers

By Savino Calabrese

1. The articulation of the Narrative Care project

NARRATIVE CARE was a research-training course using the autobiographical method: research because it intended to investigate and observe - through professional stories, therefore within the materiality of social work - if and how individual stories are accepted, and in what way they contribute to co-constructing the socio-educational intervention; training because, through group work, a process of collective co-construction of existential and professional meanings is elaborated. The use of Autobiographic Methodologies, as a tool for self- and other knowledge, was developed within a broader context, that of "MY LIFE in EUROPE: a new Methodology to insert Your Life IN the EUROPE contest", by NKEY srl of Santa Croce sull'Arno (Pi), "on the therapeutic, social and cultural value of autobiography" (quoted from the website mylifeineurope.nkey.it).

The recipients of the project were social workers from different areas of intervention, both public and private, who favour the pedagogical-educational approach in their professional and voluntary commitments.

The training group was heterogeneous, as it was made up of individual operators from different services/bodies/organisations, but united by their interest in autobiographical practices and their intention to adopt these methodologies in the ordinary practice of their social commitment.

The partner organisations were: "Don Bosco" Orientation Centre - Lead Organisation (Andria, Italy), Bit Association (Debrecen, Hungary), Viva Femina (Rzeszow, Poland); - all organisations are engaged in training and educational activities. In particular, the Lead Organisation (Italy) has been using autobiographical methodologies for some time. The aforementioned partner organisations address targets for whom the LIFE Narrative can have not only an educational but also a therapeutic value. The experiences, which the three partners have realised, will constitute methodological know-how that has already been tested and recognised in both academic and social work environments.

The training course focused on three specific objectives

- learning the theoretical and methodological foundations of writing practices and the autobiographical interview (the trainees wrote their own 'professional autobiography' or volunteering autobiography, which will be published on the Narrative Care website)
- to know how to accompany the users of their organisations to write their own autobiography, experiencing the potential of self-care and relationships thanks to life stories (these biographies, due to issues of confidentiality and protection of pain stories, will not be published, but have been returned to the protagonists)
- share learnings and good social work practices with their partners and the respective local and national communities (this objective was achieved by continuous comparison during the various workshop sessions).

The three groups of actors involved met: online for the first session; in Debrecen for the second session; in Rzeszow for the third session.

A significant moment was, still in the form of international mobility, the participation, in Bologna, in the concluding event of the European mega-project on Autobiography carried out by the NKEY Association of Santa Croce sull'Arno.

The outcome of the training process will result in the collective production of a booklet/document (available on the Narrative Care website), in the dual language, English/national, on the good practices of self-writing, autobiographical interviewing and writing the life stories of its users, whose guidelines can also be applied in different contexts and times.

2. The social worker between motivations and desires

One dimension explored was the story of the 'beginnings' of one's 'vocation' for solidarity commitment. Let us hear it directly from the protagonists:

Rosa

I met, by chance, Anna Maria Di Leo in the teachers' room of the Liceo Scientifico 'Nuzzi', where I was serving as a teacher of Italian and Latin. Annamaria invited me to join the Centre as a member and to collaborate in the activity for which the Association was founded in 1994: school and career guidance. I replied that professional and family commitments precluded me from taking on other responsibilities. A few years went by and my life was moving along the tracks of everyday life, when in 1993 a painful event upset it: the sudden and shocking death of my sister, with the consequent transfer, to my home, of my mother, who was rather frail and above all tried by the premature death of her daughter. I matured the conviction of limitation, transience and temporariness which, accompanied by the feeling of not being able to cope with all the tasks to be carried out, resulted in the desire to ask for early retirement. As soon as I had imprinted this change of direction on my existence, I went to the Don Bosco Centre, where I met two office workers who clarified to me the area in which they carried out their work.

From that moment on, I decided to dedicate the skills I had acquired over many years of teaching, as well as part of my psychophysical resources and the material time I would carve out, to the Association's mission.

Nuccia

One October morning about 20 years ago, at a very particular time in my life, a meeting with the then president Anna Maria di Leo, gave a positive change to the way I looked inside and around me.

I was walking down the street, caught up in my thoughts, my worries and my fears, I was on my way to the hospital to assist my mother who was struggling between life and death, I could neither hear nor see anything around me, but a hand on my shoulder brought me back to reality. It was the hand of Annamaria di Leo who, knowing all the events I was going through at that moment, stopped me and among many words of encouragement, invited me to the centre's headquarters, which was then located in Viale Roma, to show me the activities they were carrying out and the interests they cultivated. He urged me to do so, as this would help me to shortly take my mind off the acute and continuous pain that was destroying me. After a few days, I was contacted to attend an explanatory meeting on the orientation course that the centre's staff would shortly be starting in all the middle schools in Andria, aimed at eighth-graders who were about to choose which high school to attend. I remember going there reluctantly, but once I was there, when they began to explain the aims and methods of the course, my mind was immediately captured and involved in the discourse, and that was the beginning of a collaboration that has now lasted for more than twenty years

Diana

I met Fr Vincenzo Merra and Fr Salvatore Simone, (...) in 1981, I joined the youth group and as such, I was to give my availability for a commitment within the community. I was proposed to be the animator of ACR. I was already part of it and gladly accepted the assignment, taking care of the 9-11 year olds.

It was natural for me to accept this new adventure: at first I worked alongside the older animators, then, as the training progressed, feeling more confident and able to guide the children, I started accompanying them in groups and during school camps.

Rossana

It was blazing that day. Towards dusk, I decided to go out with my children to buy an ice cream. By chance, I met a friend whom I had not seen for a long time, we exchanged the usual pleasantries, and when I asked her 'what are you doing for fun', she told me about her work as a volunteer at the Don Bosco Centre. Her enthusiasm made me curious.

Silvia, that is the name of my friend, told me about the school orientation for pupils in the third year of secondary school and about her activity, which involved only two days a week, with the exception of the months from November to February, when she had to be available every day, in order to allow students to enrol in higher education by the date set by the Ministry of Education. In saying goodbye, he told me that in volunteering there is always a need for a helping hand, thus inviting me to think about the possibility of starting to get involved again outside the home.

In September, when my children started school again, I thought about Silvia's proposal. The idea of being able to dedicate part of my time to others and to get involved again, beyond family commitments, was very appealing to me. So I decided to contact my friend, starting my 'second life', which after a few decades still sees me an active part of the volunteer centre with the role of secretary and treasurer.

Luana

On a hot and boring summer afternoon I was at home, carefree, and never thought I would respond to the invitation of two nuns, who suddenly appeared at my door. The intercom rang: after the 'Come down, Luana, we are the nuns', I, annoyed, but also intrigued, rushed down the stairs to meet them. I was not familiar with them, because in the parish I used to see them doing so much at mass on Sunday mornings in preparation for liturgical celebrations, but I never would have thought that those two could come right up to me and 'ruin my life'. It was them, Sister Delfina and Sister Annamaria. I already liked the latter, she had come from a small village in northern Italy and was to serve in our parish; she had a sweet smile on her face. That afternoon they went for a nice walk, certain that they would meet someone to get involved, looking for new people and young people to invite into the parish. However, they needed someone who could donate some of their time. I accepted their invitation. From that moment on, I threw myself into a new experience.

Giovanna

The day I decided to join Caritas as a volunteer was during the winter of 2017. I was with a friend of mine, we were walking and exactly we were in Viale Roma, in Andria. "I got a message from Don Mimmo asking me if I am available to go to the earthquake zones to support the people of Accumoli and Amatrice, for 15 days. Eh, but I cannot. Do you want to go?" Rosa began. The story continued with an acquaintance interview with Don Mimmo, regional Caritas contact person, whom I did not know before. With a CV in my hands, I went to the parish of St Andrew the Apostle to introduce myself. First, I appreciated the request to provide a CV, I think it was a sign of care and respect for what one does and this further motivated me to introduce myself.

It was early afternoon, the parish immersed in silence, I looked out into the offices and Don Mimmo was waiting for me, behind a desk. I sat down and he asked me what I was doing at that time and why I wanted to do this service. Then, as the story goes, I went there for 15 days and then a second time for two months; this is my birth as a Caritas volunteer, my first wanderings, there I issued a 'Yes, I am there'.

Angela

I was initiated into associationism by my best friend, I can say that she is my teacher, her name is Lilla Bruno.(...) I was always with her when she invited me to go for a pizza with some AIMC members, the president and the spiritual father of the group Don Gianni Massaro, now bishop of Avezzano. Although I was shy, even if I did not show it, I accepted willingly and so we found ourselves gathered around a table. During dinner, I really enjoyed the atmosphere and the harmony that was established with each member of the group as if I had known them for some time. I think that was the moment I decided to join, beyond the aims and objectives of the association itself. I decided to join because I wanted to be part of that group of people. I did not join immediately, because there was no opportunity afterwards, but even though I wasn't a member I felt part of it.

Annamaria

In the summer of 2012, through a social channel, I learned that a group interested in a training course in clown therapy would soon be set up in my town, at the behest of a doctor I already knew. I immediately told the organiser of my interest as well as my curiosity to participate in the course that was to start soon.

I still remember very well that hot and sunny Saturday morning of 15 December 2012, when I went to the headquarters of the Andria nursing home, where in the large and bright hall with its large blue windows a press conference was to be held to present the course. The ASL BT health authority also supports a press conference of the first preparatory course for clowntherapy in Andria, which was to start a few hours after it was supported. The room was packed and although it was very spacious and well lit at times and only for a few seconds it seemed dark because of the many people present. I was 39 years old and my second daughter, Angelamaria, had recently been born. Thus began my adventure in the world of clown therapy.

Giada

Ever since I was a little girl, there has always been this desire within me to be able to make myself useful and be of help to people in need. At the beginning of this New Year, even though the pandemic had not passed, people's everyday lives were getting back on track, and one day in January a friend of mine and another person told me about community service. From that moment on, I started to learn more about what it consisted of, and the more I read and informed myself, the more interested I became in participating. Despite the thousands of fears and doubts that were swirling around in my head about whether I was suitable for this role, I took courage and filled out an application for the project I had chosen. I arrived on 9 April on a warm morning and went to the place where I had my interview. I came out of that location very scared and confused because I was stuck at the time of the interview. Despite this, I passed the selection.

Lilla

It was 1 February 2019, the day on which the F.I.D.A.P.A. of Corato, chaired by my dear friend M. F. Casamassima, was celebrating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the section with a candle ceremony (...) During the evening I learnt that the F.I.D.A.P.A. of Andria was about to cease its

activities due to a lack of members and at the same time I was offered membership of the Corato section. I make no secret of the fact that I was flattered by the invitation, but I could not help thinking about the sad fate of the Andria section... I was shocked and saddened by the news. There is a bond of heart and blood that binds me to this association: back in 1976 my mother had been a founding member of the Andria F.I.D.A.P.A.. (...) My heart was taking over while my mind was insistently suggesting that I find a solution for the Andria section: my town's section needed a figure who could take care of it (...) With grit and determination I thought of contacting the then president Marilina Bevilacqua and asking her for a meeting, through Gabriella Bonadies, a historical member and former Fidapa president. She told me that on that very day she was about to send the national headquarters the document with which she would officially declare the section in my town closed. I immediately stopped her and promised to give her a hand in re-establishing the section and in lifting the situation. Driven by a strong motivation and helped by a large and close-knit group of friends, today I can proudly say that the Andria F.I.D.A.P.A. has as many as fifty active members, united and driven by the undersigned who, in the meantime, has become its president, taking over from Annalisa Zaccaro.

Joanna (Poland)

At first, I worked as a volunteer on European projects. I did translations, helped in organising meetings with partners, went to meetings with partners. The projects mainly dealt with the problems of people with disabilities, the excluded and the unemployed. I really enjoyed the meetings with these people during the project in various meetings and workshops. I have constant contact with some people to this day.

After some time, inspired by my mentor, I decided to set up a foundation where I still work today. Now more as a social worker.

Magda (Poland)

I returned to work in Rzeszów in December 1999. I found a job at the Regional Labour Office. It was before Poland became a member of the EU and EU experts worked in Polish self-government structures to teach us about EU programmes and funds and how to use them. I was hired as a translator for EU experts at the Regional Labour Office. That is how I got to know the EU, the programmes, the funds and started to participate in projects. One day in June 2002, I decided that I was tired and bored working in the labour office in Rzeszow. I was looking for a more fulfilling job that would allow me to work from home, have more time for my son and to travel and earn more money. As I learned more and more about EU funds, I decided to turn my life around and quit my job at the labour office. It was a bit scary, but I have never regretted it. Therefore, in 2002, I left my job at the Regional Labour Office and started working in my company Business and Development Centre.

Norbert (Hungary)

At that time, I did not know that I would later work in social work, as I continued my high school studies in finance and accounting. It was a sunny summer day in 2000. Exactly the first day of this season (1 June). That afternoon (2pm), I met a girl in the park in my hometown and we started talking about what she was studying and where. She was studying to become a social worker and talked a lot about subjects, university and university hostel life. She talked in detail about how she deals with people in need as a helper. The subject still touched me; I felt I wanted to help people who are in a worse life situation than ordinary people. Despite my previous experience, I ended up in a different field of education, but I have always been interested in psychology, philosophy and

social sciences. I want to know more about our mind, spirit and emotions. That day I decided that I would rather do social work in the future. Since that day, I have been looking for opportunities to become a better helper, first as a volunteer.

Edhina (Hungary)

In Debrecen, there was a course on developing social sensitivity. I remember that a very nice woman held it. She was a kind, calm, balanced woman. She was fat; with her size, she hugged everyone. She always wore a skirt, and I had the feeling that anyone could hide behind her skirt, like a small child. We had to create a family tree and write life stories about the people we selected. I really enjoyed these tasks and became more and more interested in the social profession. When it came time to choose a career, I only selected professions that gave a social qualification. That is how I ended up studying sociology at the University of Debrecen.

It is clear that the beginning, the origin of availability towards others is always rooted in an 'encounter'. An encounter with an unsuspecting witness. Relationship arises from relationship we might say. The call of life comes through an encounter with someone who is already dealing with that life in some way and who, as if by magic, ignites a thought, a feeling, a question. It moves the will and the heart, which thus become entangled in an affair of solidarity and passionate and competent generosity.

These encounters not only marked the beginning of an adventure, but also the origin of a style and a way of thinking and living life. These witnesses have not infrequently also been, according to the operators, mentors and teachers, sometimes consciously and more often without knowing it.

This is how an individual willingness is transformed into a breeding ground for a contagious and beneficial solidarity mentality.

Not infrequently, the willingness to 'take care of another person' has germinated at a time when the practitioner himself knew the hard lesson of pain and suffering, thus evoking the ancient image of the myth of Chiron, the wounded healer-centaur son of Kronos (Zeus' father) and the oceanic nymph Filira.

In the wounded healer, the dimensions of 'time' and 'generativity' are concentrated together, but also vulnerability and the need for self-care. Almost as if, they were 'founding seeds' of the helping professions.

In a story from the Jewish Talmud, there is an old legend about the coming of the Messiah:

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi happened upon the prophet Elijah who was standing at the door of the cave of Rabbi Simeron ben Yohai. He asked Elijah: "When will the Messiah come?" Elijah replied, "Go and ask him yourself."

"Where is he?"

"He is sitting at the city gate."

"How will I recognise him?"

"He is sitting among the poor covered with sores. The others remove the bandages from all their sores at the same time and then put the bandages back on. But he takes off one bandage at a time and then puts it back on again, saying to himself: "They may need me; if that happens I must always be ready so as not to be a moment late".

The traces of the 'myth' have the merit of pointing the way to the 'caregiver'.

3. To relaunch a practice of self-writing for social workers

Can social workers take care of themselves? Can autobiographical writing also be a practice of self-care for social workers? I take the category of 'self-care' and like to reinterpret it in terms of 'hospitality'.

When we listen to the story of the other asking for help, in fact, we are challenged in the virtue of hospitality. It is significant that in nomadic culture the guest is the bearer of salvation.

Hospitality has healing power. However, caring for the guest requires each one to be an attentive and truthful frequenter of his or her own interiority.

This is why the 'attention' required by self-writing is at the same time the taking of distance from the self. It is a reflexive practice capable of attending to one's interiority and creating the disposition to take responsibility for the other as 'other-than-self'.

Paraphrasing James Hillmann, one can say: for the other to open up, it is necessary for the practitioner to withdraw. One must 'withdraw' in order for the other to have living space. This retreat is an act of intense concentration. Self-writing, as a solitary act - whether practised in a group or in the secrecy of one's own room - fosters *stare secum*, a source of pacification and good companionship with oneself and a condition of liberating acceptance of the other.

The *cura sui* creates that necessary empty space that legitimises the fragilities of those who welcome and those who are welcomed, without vain omnipotent promises of magical healing. Rather, it opens up the opportunity for a 'journey' whose starting point is the construction of a tale of life made in two. As long as the person asking for help remains alone in his or her tale, he or she remains the victim of a vicious circuit of screwing and deadly loneliness. If housed in the free and 'chaste' (non-judgmental) space of listening, the one who tells and the one who welcomes the tale build new and warmer narratives of life.

4. Narrative Care: Exercises and writing practices

NARRATIVE CARE

Teaching tools for collecting autobiographical interviews and writing biographies.

Form 1

The first module aims to

- introduce the basic concepts of autobiographical thinking and methodologies
- experiment, through appropriate exercises, autobiographical writing as social workers or volunteers
- describe the organisational contexts in which each person carries out their service
- write a short autobiography of themselves as social workers or volunteers

Exercise 1: Explore self-perception as a care worker by completing the following incipits immediately and automatically.

I AM

I AM

I AM

I AM

I AM

I AM

I AM

I AM

Exercise 2: explore your own representation as a “volunteer” giving a definition of it (max 10 lines)

THE VOLUNTEER IS

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Exercise 3: Compare the answers in exercise 1 with those in exercise 2. Write considerations highlighting assonances and differences. Give a final evaluation

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4th exercise: That time I decided to engage in social work. Tell about that particular episode or situation in which your choice to put yourself at the service of others is rooted

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5. Exercise: Group sharing to identify the generating and motivating elements for service to others, as they emerge from the different narratives

Sixth exercise: TELL YOUR ORGANISATION (let the following emerge in the narrative: the mission, its core values, some organisational elements, tasks and actions, location in the territory)

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7th exercise: YOUR MASTER... who is the inspiring figure of your being in the service of others. Describe his or her person, his or her charisma; highlight some elements of continuity or discontinuity in your relationship with him/her.

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8th exercise: Group sharing

9th exercise: THE TEXTS OF MEMORIES Write down memories of your social work with key words on post-it notes and then write the corresponding story for each of them

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10th exercise: THE WORDS OF SERVICE. Identify in the stories of the exercise some key words describing 'service to others'

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11th Exercise: Group sharing of writings and analysis of different contributions

N.B. For the next meeting bring an object and a photo that each person associates with the 'service' or social work

12th exercise: THE PHOTO Narrative (describe the photo, contextualise it, and tell a detail of the circumstance to which it refers)

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13th exercise: THE 'SUBJECT STORY'. (Reflective writing exercise. Describe the object, the reasons why it is associated with the service or social work, let ambivalences of meanings emerge)

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14th exercise: That time someone took care of me.... (From care given to care received. Resonances and reflections)

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15th exercise: Reflections on/on group writing. Representations, imaginaries and myths of the care service.

16th exercise: From stories to writing a short autobiography of oneself as a volunteer or social worker

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Form 2

The second module aims to

- introduce the characteristics of an autobiographical interview
- describe the interview process: technical, organisational, postural, communicative aspects
- practise in pairs, among group members, how to administer a biographical interview

Some interview templates and the biographical game cards of the My Life project.

The training modules gradually develop the necessary skills required for interviewing:

1. Knowing how to use an interview-recording device. To ensure attention during the interview it is suggested not to write.
2. Knowing how to unwind and transcribe the recorded text
3. Having the interviewee - as author of the text - read the transcript, offering the possibility of corrections, additions, deletions
4. Obtain the interviewee's authorisation to publish the autobiography on a non-profit basis (see-attached form, subject to different national laws on the subject)

Below are two examples of biographical interviews:

An example of a CHRONOLOGICAL 'plot

Childhood:

1. When were you born? Where? How many in your family?
2. Tell me about your parents and siblings... make a short presentation for each of them
3. Describe your relationship with family members.
4. What is your first memory?
5. Do you have some photos some objects that remind you of your childhood, or depict your family?
6. Are there any particular smells related to the environments of your childhood or home?

Youth:

1. Which schools did you attend? Do you remember any schoolmates? Any episodes?
2. What were your hobbies as a boy?
3. A funny episode from your childhood.
4. Dreams about the future.
5. People you met in your youth who were important to you.

6. Tell me about when you first fell in love.
7. What about your wife (or husband)? Was it the first love? Tell me about your wedding day
8. What song is related to your 'love'?
9. An object dear to you that reminds you of your youth. Will you show it to me? What do you love about this object?

Adulthood:

1. What was your job?
2. Is there any episode from your job that has stuck with you?
3. Tell me about a turning point.
4. Was there a very important person in your adult life? Tell me about this person
5. Your current family, who are they? Do you have any photos? Describe them to me?
6. A great sorrow....
7. Your social life as it is...

Old age:

1. Tell me about the first time you went to get your pension ... what emotions and thoughts?
2. Tell me about some changes that occurred in your life as an elderly person
3. What are the things or people that make you happy today?
4. Is there anyone who is close to you now?
5. today's family, your grandchildren.
6. What are your favourite pastimes?
7. Your achievements and hopes for the future.
8. If you had to use an image (a metaphor, or a song, or an animal, or an object) that represents you. what would you resemble?
9. What makes you think you resemble ..?
10. What message would you like to put in your life story? What would you like people to remember about you?

An example of a THEMATIC 'plot

1. Love in my life

- 1.1 The first person who turned my head

1.2 My closest friends from my teenage years. An episode from which I realised she was really my friend

1.3 What struck me about women (when I was young I liked a lot of them!)

1.4 Meeting my wife

1.5 Where did you first see her? Where were you when you came out?

1.6 What did you love about him during your marriage?

1.7 Over the years what remains of love (optional)

2. Football

2.1 How I learned to play

2.2 My role in the team

2.3 The team: description of my teammates

2.4 The most beautiful victory

3. The war

3.1 Tell me about an incident during the war in which you experienced solidarity between families

3.2 A painful account of a wartime day

3.3 A carefree day during the war

3.4 What did you do the day you heard that the war was over?

4. The work

4.1 What jobs have you done?

4.2 Describe the work environment where you spent the most time

4.3 What relationships have you maintained with work colleagues?

4.4 Tell me about a work episode in which you were appreciated

4.5 Tell me about a work episode that left a bitter taste in your mouth

4.6 A turning point in your working life

4.7 Retirement: rest or...

5. Sociality

5.1 What is life like in this neighbourhood and how are you part of it?

5.2 What are the differences compared to your country of origin

5.3 A nostalgia for your homeland

5.4 One thing you liked most about this land

Form 3

The third module aims to

- identify, among its clients, the person to be interviewed
- make the necessary arrangements to carry out the interviews
- carry out four interviews of one hour each
- show the interviewee the transcript of the interview
- obtain the interviewee's authorisation to use the biography for social and non-profit purposes

Each volunteer in his or her own premises carries out the work. The trainer, who offers advice and support to each volunteer throughout the interview process, constantly accompanies the process.

Form 4

The fourth module is dedicated to classroom work in which the arrangements for writing the biography are constructed, considering the following parts:

- Transforming the interview material into an organic narrative, a biography of the interviewee
- Drawing up a preface, describing the reasons and the way of identifying the person to be interviewed; the way of constructing the autobiographical pact; the construction of the interview plan in four meetings of approximately one hour each.
- Drafting an afterword in which the volunteer gives back his feelings, emotions and the impact on himself of that narrative encounter

The group examines some biographies produced by other volunteers and constructs agreements on the styles and editing of the biographies. See the relevant slides on styles and motivations of biographies.

Conclusion

EX-POST REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

The project made it possible to initiate interesting collaborations and virtuous intersections with organisations that propose autobiographical methodologies in different ways from those of Narrative Care and for the achievement of different objectives, in particular of a therapeutic nature. In fact, thanks to the intermediation of Savino Calabrese, a lecturer at LUA, even before the application of the Narrative Care pathway for Erasmus +, small scale, I initiated effective contacts and consequent exchanges of ideas with Carla Sabatini, head of the NKEY Foundation, of Santa Croce sull'Arno, which was in charge of the realisation, by now at an advanced stage, of the important European project 'My life in Europe', hinging on the therapeutic validity of autobiographical storytelling, to be conducted and stimulated through the specific playful system of the use of 'cards'. We agreed to include the multiplier event of "My Life in Europe" in the Application Form of Narrative Care as a significant and fundamental stage of the whole process. This element, together with the undoubted originality of the project idea, which was also supported by the patronage of LUA in the person of its President, Dr. Stefania Bolletti, contributed to the decidedly positive assessment by Indire and the granting of the requested funding. The synergic complementarity of the two paths was further confirmed by the participation of Grazia Chiarini and Sergio Brunetti, from NKEY, in the Narrative Care mobility in July 2022 in Debrecen, Hungary, where ample space and attention was dedicated to the explanation of the card game.

On a personal level, I experimented with the cards to focus on aspects of my person and my life and used some of them to interview Francesco, an aid worker from Caritas in Andria, as part of the Narrative Care training. The result is a 21-page booklet that sheds light on a tormented and tiring existence.

"The two projects contaminated each other by virtue of the common autobiographical methodology: in My Life in Europe through the development of narrative stimulation tools; in Narrative Care through the assumption of the use of cards as a further method of conducting the biographical interview carried out by the participating operators towards the different categories of people at risk of social marginality.

The experience also revealed an unexpected outcome: the cards stimulate narratives that are the result of association, imagination, and therefore qualified by emergencies of sense and meaning for the narrator, rather than a narrative responding to chronological or thematic criteria. Borrowing, therefore, from C. G. Jung the principle of synchronicity, the result is a biography very much characterised by plots of meaning, which constitute not only the qualifying point of autobiographical methodologies, but also the value, in terms of self-empowerment, of telling one's story.

A happy intersection, therefore, which remains as a heritage of knowledge for the two projects'.
(S. Calabrese)

The complementarity of the two paths was highlighted by Rosa Del Giudice and Savino Calabrese during the My life in Europe multiplier conference, held on 11 January 2023 in the Sala Tassinari of the Palazzo d'Accursio, in Bologna, which was attended, among others, by Marianna Porro and Rossana Forlano (Italy), Dalma and Anna (Hungary), and Susanna and Jan (Poland) for Narrative Care.

The card game will also be used in a short narrative orientation course that is part of the 'Dream or I am desktop' project concerning social anti-mafia interventions supported by the Region. The path entitled "Scrivo dunque sono" (I write therefore I am) started on 3 March 2023 and is aimed at 12 students aged between 16 and 18 from the IISS "Colasanto" and the IPSIA "Archimede di Barletta, Andria branch.