

From the Promised Land to Born to Run; Themes of Mental Health Recovery and Aging in the Story and Songs of Bruce Springsteen

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Introductions and Welcome

- Originally scheduled in May, which is Older Adults and Mental Health Month
- Rescheduled for September, which is Recovery and Suicide Awareness Month
- About me: I'm a fan, not an expert on Bruce Springsteen. I have been a clinician for 24 years. 😊





What We Will Cover Today

- Springsteen and Aging Themes
- Springsteen and Recovery Themes
- Applicable Narrative and Expressive Therapies
- Case Presentations
- Bringing Emotion to the Therapeutic Relationship with Music
- Reducing Stigma, Cultivating Resilience





Springsteen & Aging Themes

- “Do you feel like you have found your true self?”
- “You never get there, nobody does. You become more of yourself as time passes by...in the arc of your life, there are so many places where you reach milestones that add to your authenticity and your presentation of who you really are.”





Springsteen & Aging Themes

Springsteen on Broadway

- “And I want to show how this, one’s coming of age—has to be earned. It’s not given to anyone...It takes self awareness, a desire to go there...and confront all the very fearsome and dangerous elements of your life—your past, your history.”
- “All I do know is when we age, the weight of all of our unsorted baggage becomes heavier, much heavier.”





Springsteen & Aging Themes

Thunder Road by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. Link to youtube, url:
<https://youtu.be/UDIDawmeel0>



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Springsteen & Aging Themes

Kingdom of Days, by Bruce Springsteen and the E. Street Band. Link to youtube, url: <https://youtu.be/eQEQT3Qaq28>



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Springsteen & Aging Themes

I'll See You In My Dreams, by Bruce Springsteen and the E. Street Band. Link to youtube, url: <https://youtu.be/dJkaZ8hQM60>





Springsteen & Aging Themes

- Springsteen became a grandfather this year
- Will turn 73, the same age his father was when he passed away in hospice
- Has had 2 crippling depressions in his 60s (more later) and a cervical spine surgery that could have ended his music career





Springsteen & Aging Themes

- Questions or Comments?





Springsteen & Recovery Themes

- Family history of undiagnosed and diagnosed mental health issues, especially his father
- 3 major depression episodes, one in early 30s, then two in his 60's that "crushed" him. One episode he described as "agitated depression" and "manic"
- Long history of psychoanalysis, therapy and psychopharmacology
- Antidepressants and benzodiazepines both mentioned as part of his recovery





Springsteen & Recovery Themes

- Suicidal thoughts but no attempts
- Deaths of several close friends, one from suicide, and the death of his therapist
- Mother diagnosed with dementia and had to enter a long term care facility (along with his mother in law)
- Depressed music, “Death to My Hometown” and “This Depression.”



**This Depression, by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. Link to youtube, url:
<https://youtu.be/AtnJexfbZ0w>**



Springsteen & Recovery Themes

The Wish, by Bruce Springsteen and the E. St. Band. Youtube url:
https://youtu.be/YV3t_hTDNbw



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Springsteen & Recovery Themes

<https://youtu.be/Wca8mQbbwBI?t=566>





Springsteen & Recovery Themes

Questions and Comments?



Understanding Applicable Narrative & Expressive Therapies

Narrative Therapy

- “The problem is the problem, the person isn’t the problem.”
- According to the philosophy behind narrative therapy, storytelling is how we make meaning and find purpose in our own experience (Standish, 2013).





Understanding Applicable Narrative & Expressive Therapies

Narrative Therapy

- Reality is socially constructed, which means that our interactions and dialogue with others impacts the way we experience reality.
- Reality is influenced by and communicated through language, which suggests that people who speak different languages may have radically different interpretations of the same experiences.
- Having a narrative that can be understood helps us organize and maintain our reality. In other words, stories and narratives help us to make sense of our experiences.
- There is no “objective reality” or absolute truth; what is true for us may not be the same for another person, or even for ourselves at another point in time (Standish, 2013).





Understanding Applicable Narrative & Expressive Therapies

Expressive Therapy—

- Expressive therapy uses forms of creative expression such as writing, art, and music, to help people explore and transform difficult emotional conditions.





Understanding Applicable Narrative & Expressive Therapies

- While you cannot call yourself a art therapist or music therapist unless you are one, you can use expressive therapy as an intervention on a treatment plan and in a therapy session.
- “Expressive therapy to assist client with learning to express feelings in a useful and meaningful way”





Understanding Applicable Narrative & Expressive Therapies

- Elements of Narrative therapy to assist client...
- Empower client to re-author their story in a way where they blame the problem and not themselves for what happened to them...
- Help client uncover meaning and purpose in the story of their life...



Case Presentation Female Client

If I Should Fall Behind, by Bruce Springsteen and the E. St. Band. Youtube url:
<https://youtu.be/mSQ6iRazzco>



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Case Presentation Male Client

The Promised Land by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. Youtube url:
<https://youtu.be/IPg2IK6OLGM>



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Case Presentation

- **Questions and Comments?**





Bruce's "Safe Place"





Bruce's Other "Safe Place"





NAMI---Ways to Reducing Stigma

- **Talk Openly About Mental Health**
- **Educate Yourself & Others**
- **Be Conscious of Language**
- **Encourage Equality Between Physical & Mental Illness**
- **Choose Empowerment Over Shame**
- **Be Honest About Treatment**
- **Don't Harbor Self Stigma**





Cultivating Resilience—

“An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”

- **APA—10 Ways to Build Resilience**
- **Make Connections**
- **Avoid Seeing Crises as Insurmountable Problems**
- **Accept that Change is Part of Living**
- **Move Toward Your Goals**
- **Take Decisive Actions**





Cultivating Resilience—

“An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”

APA—10 Ways to Build Resilience

- **Look for Opportunities for Self-Discovery**
- **Nurture a Positive View of Yourself**
- **Keep Things in Perspective**
- **Maintain a Hopeful Outlook**
- **Take Care of Yourself**





Cultivating Resilience—

“An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”

Questions and Comments?



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Cultivating Resilience–

Land of Hope and Dreams by Bruce Springsteen, Youtube url:
https://youtu.be/fW_Vny_aXNM



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Cultivating Resilience—

Born to Run, by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. Youtube url: <https://youtu.be/lxuThNgl3YA>

