

# ADVENTURIE TALES

*A Framework for Therapeutic Story Creation by and for Children*



**Barr Kazer**

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*A Framework for Therapeutic Story Creation by and for Children*

**Adapted and developed by Barr Kazer**  
**(based on the story-telling concept of Gill Morton)**

This work has been adapted from Gill Morton's Therapeutic Story Group Model for schools which has been fully described in:

- Working with Stories in Groups (in *Clinical counselling in Schools*; Ed Nick Barwick, Routledge 2000).
- Using group narrative with troubled children (in *Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal*; February 2004, Vol 15 no 1).
- Therapeutic Story Groups: educational psychotherapy in a school setting (in *Why can't I help this child to learn—understanding emotional blocks to learning*; Ed Helen High, UKCP/Karnac series, Karnac books 2012).
- Safe Space for change in the outside world of school with Jill McWilliam (in *The Psychotherapist*, November 2013).

Gill Morton with Jill McWilliam and Michael Reeves (UKCP registered Educational Psychotherapists) continue to deliver their framework for embedding TSGs in schools, with associated training programmes, materials and supervision.

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The Caspari Foundation for Educational Psychotherapy included the Therapeutic Story Group model in their MA in Educational Psychotherapy [www.caspari.org.uk](http://www.caspari.org.uk).

### **Supplementary Resources Disclaimer**

Additional resources were previously made available for this title on CD. However, as CD has become a less accessible format, all resources have been moved to a more convenient online download option.

You can find these resources available here: [www.routledge.com/9781909301306](http://www.routledge.com/9781909301306)

Please note: Where this title mentions the associated disc, please use the downloadable resources instead.

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***For a story truly to hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity.***

***But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination;***

***Help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions;***

***Be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations;***

***Give full credit to his difficulties, whilst at the same time suggesting solutions to the problems which perplex him.***



(Bruno Bettelheim, 1991, p5)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This practical guide owes a huge debt of thanks to Gill Morton. Her article about group therapeutic story telling in the *Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal* (2004) was my initial inspiration for the concept of Adventure Tales. Since reading it, over the last ten years I have adapted and developed her concept of story telling in my own way and in my own workplaces. But many of the core ideas remain Gill's and I am most grateful to her on behalf of all the children with whom I have worked and helped through those ideas. Underpinning Adventure Tales are the sound therapeutic theories that Gill has meticulously researched and developed over the years. I thank her for being my inspiration.

Also with grateful thanks to:

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- Brian for the space to create this book.

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# INTRODUCTION

This framework for therapeutic story creation comprises:

- Children's Log – a printable resource, containing the core Adventure Tales framework into which the children's created Adventure Tale can be inserted quickly and easily, a chapter for each session.
- This practical guide, containing:
  - Getting started – How to run an Adventure Tales group
  - Steps for organising an Adventure Tales group
  - 'How to be' – The therapeutic process in Adventure Tales
  - Session format
  - Captain's Log
  - Children's Log – a copy of the printable version which can be photocopied
  - Glossary – some useful phrases for the recorder
  - Proformas (for photocopying): Atex outline, appointment slips, Memory Book instructions, letters for meetings, Certificate of Achievement
  - Evaluation tools (for photocopying).

## Who this book is for

This Adventure Tales practical guide is to support troubled, unhappy children aged between about 7 and 12 years, children who are troubled but not in crisis. Their concerns include anything that walks through a child counsellor's door. Almost all troubled children thrive in Adventure Tales, working in a group of four children.

Adventure Tales work in metaphor, the children creating a new Adventure Tale to help them share and resolve feelings that may be unacknowledged, unbearable, suppressed or acted out. These feelings seriously undermine children's happiness and ability to function fully in their life, forming behaviours that are adverse to their well-being, eg withdrawal, aggression, sadness.

Together, four children create and illustrate an Adventure Tale about an 'Exploration into the Unknown Land'. The children are the Explorers. The counsellor and the recorder are the Captains who keep the Explorers safe and bring them safely home. The Explorers decide what actions to take or not to take in the Adventure.

The counsellor and the recorder maintain the confidentiality of any personal information given by the children. Because the work is in metaphor, the children are not revealing any 'secrets', confidentiality issues rarely arise for the children and trust is able to build rapidly within the group. Nevertheless, the children are asked to be respectful both in and outside the group of any knowledge they may have gained about each other.

At each session the Explorers are given a brief scenario by the counsellor, such as 'there is a shadow circling in the mist'. The children then offer their ideas, fears and solutions; the Captains may also offer suggestions and the chapter is created.

Each scenario thus enables children to create a unique, thought-provoking Adventure Tale which for them is exactly that – a tale or story. However, when it is read therapeutically, the Adventure Tale can be viewed as a metaphor for the children's internal journey. Unconsciously, the children bring their real-life troubles into the Adventure, disguised as monsters, dragons, deserts, volcanoes, etc – there is no end to the inventiveness of the unconscious.

Safely contained within the Adventure Tale, the children successfully overcome these adversities; they try out a new way of being; experience new, possible futures; find courage and skills within themselves; all of which transfer to real life.

The Adventure Tales group is supported by a counsellor working therapeutically with the children through the metaphors they bring to the Adventure. Each session follows the same routines, which provide consistency and the contained place where children feel safe. The routines create the creative, reflective space for the Adventure Tale making.

The recorder makes notes of the children's ideas, discussions, dilemmas and solutions thus freeing the children from worry about the mechanics of writing and releasing their creativity. Later the counsellor writes up the Adventure Tale, subtly including therapeutic insights, into the prepared, printable framework. Every session the children each receive an Adventure Tale print-out of the previous session's chapter, with their words in individual colours, and they experience the joy of reading their own words while therapeutic insights are reinforced.

The children benefit from Adventure Tales on many profound levels: therapeutically, socially and educationally. Specifically, Adventure Tales help:

- develop inter- and intra-relationships
- enhance emotional literacy
- resolve emotional issues
- improve ability to think round own problems
- improve tolerance of difference
- increase trust in other people



- stimulate the imagination
- increase self-esteem
- increase the ability to express views clearly and calmly
- increase confidence in literacy skills, especially reading.

The Adventure Tales practical guide is targeted for use in schools by a counsellor working alongside an empathic adult recorder such as a teacher, SENCo, INCo, teaching assistant or child support worker. It will also be useful to other professionals working with children in other settings.

Evaluation of Adventure Tales has consistently shown that teachers and parents all observe the restorative effect of Adventure Tales as the children show a better balance of feelings and actions.

Adventure Tales groups are cost-effective: four children for ten weeks, each session costing a group counselling fee plus the cost of one hour of recorder's time.