ACKNOWLEDGEMENT VS. NON-ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CRISSES IN NARRATIVE STORYTELLING DEFENSE MECHANISMS OF DIFFICULT EVENTS IN INDIVIDUAL LIVES

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Narrative approaches to studying self and personality development in our lives is a natural extension of narrative work on development (Fiese, 1999; Fivush, 2000). This study examines the ways that individuals narrate difficult events. Drawing from past narrative research; redemption and contamination, discontinuity versus continuity, gaining insight, and repression are all narrative strategies individuals' may employ in talking about crises they experience. Individuals' acknowledging the impact of difficult events has been under-examined, in comparison to work examining how they do or do not gain insights or meanings. This qualitative study is based on narratives of individuals in the context of conversational interviews where individuals were asked if they had experienced crises in their lives. We classified individuals as having acknowledged having crises or failing to acknowledge crises. Individuals' who choose not to acknowledge crises in their lives during conversational interviews, may be using repression as a defense mechanism to keep from exposing difficult life events that cause stress in their life experiences. On the other hand, from a positioning point of view, individuals position themselves across social interactions while conversing with others (Bamberg, 2004). Individuals may resist acknowledging crises during conversational interviews as a direct result of feeling uncomfortable with the interviewer in question, and individuals position themselves accordingly – in ways to diminish intimacy.