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Witnessing the Shared Story of Intergenerational Trauma in a Chinese Canadian Family: An Autoethnographic Narrative
Témoin de l'histoire du traumatisme intergénérationnel dans une famille sino-canadienne : Récit autoethnographique

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ABSTRACT
This paper presents the narrative of the first author's witnessing of a parent-offspring dyad sharing intergenerational trauma (IGT). The narrative described in this paper is part of a study that involved the construction of IGT narratives in Chinese Canadian families (Chou et al., 2023a, 2023b). Arvay's (2003) Collaborative Narrative Method was utilized to develop participant narratives, while autoethnographic data was used to construct the researcher's narrative. The paper introduces an intergenerational family dyad (father-daughter) engaging in a facilitated process that involved sharing their IGT stories with each another, as presented from the researcher's perspective. The study has implications for researchers and practitioners encountering IGT in the Chinese diasporic community and other ethnocultural groups. It provides insight into a scarcely studied phenomenon, illustrating how IGT narratives can be shared in a facilitated and supportive manner.

RÉSUMÉ
Cet article présente le récit du premier auteur témoin du processus de partage d'histoires de traumatisme intergénérationnel (TIG) dans une dyade parent-enfant. Ce récit fait partie d'une étude qui comprend la construction de récits de TIG dans des familles sino-canadiennes (Chou et coll., 2023a, 2023b). La méthode narrative collaborative d'Arvay (2003) a été utilisée pour développer le récit des participants, et des données autoethnographiques ont été utilisées pour construire le récit du chercheur. L'article présente une dyade familiale intergénérationnelle (père-fille) qui participe à un processus facilité comprenant le partage mutuel de leurs histoires de TIG, ensuite présentées du point de vue du chercheur. L'étude a des conséquences pour les chercheurs et les praticiens qui travaillent avec le TIG dans la communauté diasporique chinoise, ainsi qu'avec d'autres groupes ethnoculturels. Elle donne un

aperçu d'un phénomène rarement étudié et montre comment les récits de TIG peuvent être partagés dans un cadre facilité et bienveillant, et a des répercussions sur la recherche et la pratique clinique.

Intergenerational trauma (IGT) refers to the transmission of psychological trauma from one generation to the next and its influence on subsequent generations (Chou & Buchanan, 2021). As a construct, it has been found to be associated with higher vulnerability to stress, anxiety, depression, and negative psychological outcomes in subsequent generations (Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008; Sangalang & Vang, 2017). IGT is an emerging focus of study in ethnocultural communities (Sirikantraporn & Green, 2016), but there have been only two IGT studies on the Chinese diasporic community (see Chou et al., 2023a, 2023b; To, 2014). Though the literature on IGT is extensive, little is known about the process and influence of sharing trauma narratives across generations (Fivush et al., 2019).

Intergenerational narratives, which are the stories shared across generations, have been found to be associated with identity development, especially for individuals from interdependent cultures (Merrill & Fivush, 2016; Reese et al., 2017). These narratives are embedded in a narrative ecological system that connects personal stories within one's family and culture (Merrill & Fivush, 2016). Individual autobiographies exist within dynamic and bidirectional ecological systems, including micro-systems (e.g., parent-child reminiscing and shared family narratives), exo-systems (e.g., intergenerational narratives), and macro-systems (e.g., family history, cultural history, and master narratives) (Fivush & Merrill, 2016). Intergenerational narratives are lived experiences of past generations that serve as "vicarious memories," shaping one's understanding of the self and of the world, thus forming one's own narrative identity (Pillemer et al., 2015). Generally, the transmission of intergenerational narratives can be associated with psychological well-being and enhanced intergenerational understanding (Chen et al., 2021; Merrill & Fivush, 2016).

Research about IGT narratives is limited but shares a common theme of silence across generations. Wiseman et al. (2006) explored the narratives of the offspring of mothers who had survived the Holocaust. The study found that there was silence regarding the parents' personal traumatic experiences, as well as feelings of anger and guilt directed towards the parents by the offspring. Another study by Liem (2007) highlighted how the narratives related to the Korean War were silenced, a silence that was enforced by the state, community, and family. Similarly, Nagata's (1993) study demonstrated an absence of communication about internment camp experiences in families of Japanese Americans during World War II. Reasons for not sharing trauma across generations may be related to the emotional challenge of expressing traumatic narratives, disruptions related to trauma symptomology (e.g., avoidance, difficulty regulating emotions,

and impairment to attention and concentration), wanting to prevent the offspring from being impacted by horrific past events, and believing that sharing traumatic narratives may not serve the task of generativity (Kiser et al., 2010; Matheson et al., 2019; Merrill & Fivush, 2016). As a result, family meaning-making processes related to family narratives and identity can be affected by traumatic events (Kiser et al., 2010).

Fivush (2019) suggests that the sharing of traumatic family narratives may be beneficial for subsequent generations, even more so than not sharing at all. This suggestion appears to be supported in a recent mixed-methods study about intergenerational communication of traumatic experiences associated with Indian Residential Schools and the connection to offspring well-being (Matheson et al., 2019). In the study, Matheson et al. (2019) found that over-disclosure, as well as silence, was correlated with diminished adult offspring well-being. Meanwhile, moderate levels of communication were associated with positive well-being for offspring. The researchers' qualitative analysis also demonstrated that direct communication about traumatic experiences related to Indian Residential Schools tended to involve excessive details, and silence was associated with speculation and negative feelings. Taken together, it appears that moderated communication, as opposed to silence, about experiences of trauma may be beneficial for the offspring generation.

Exploring and Addressing Intergenerational Trauma Through Narratives

There is limited understanding when it comes to potential treatment for IGT within families, and even less so for ethnocultural communities. Proposed interventions and considerations for addressing IGT include the use of a transgenerational genogram to understand how trauma and resilience are transmitted across generations within an ecological framework (Goodman, 2014), honouring cultural practices and reclaiming history (Duran et al., 2008; Roy et al., 2015), and sharing trauma narratives in a systematic way within families (Figley & Kiser, 2013). In Isobel et al.'s (2019) Critical Interpretive Synthesis of the IGT treatment literature, the researchers found that prevention of trauma transmission was the core intervention for addressing IGT; this included resolving parental trauma and actively supporting parent-offspring attachment. Furthermore, Isobel et al. (2019) critique the individualized nature of trauma interventions, highlighting the need to address IGT within families as well as the relational and social contexts of individuals, a position also endorsed by other scholars (see De Haene, 2018; Goodman, 2014; Roy et al., 2015).

What is clear in the IGT treatment literature is that there is value in both addressing trauma within family systems and sharing trauma narratives in a supportive and empathic manner (De Haene et al., 2018; Isobel et al., 2019; Figley & Kiser, 2013; Kiser et al., 2010). The sharing of traumatic narratives forms part of Figley and Kiser's (2013) Empowerment Treatment Approach for helping

traumatized families. According to Figley and Kiser (2013), this therapeutic approach builds on research related to traumatized families and is theoretically driven. The approach outlines five phases for the therapist: (a) joining the family, (b) understanding and framing the family's trauma response, (c) building helping skills, (d) sharing and healing, and (e) moving forward. As described, a core therapeutic component of their approach involves bringing members of a family together to share their trauma narrative with one another. Members weave their stories and insights to develop a healing theory for their own circumstances (Figley & Kiser, 2013; Kiser et al., 2010). The sharing of narratives can be valuable in offering a joint process of understanding and an opportunity for emergent reflections that can shape narrative understanding and identity (Kiser et al., 2010). Sharing difficult family experiences can provide opportunities for sense-making when members come with collective and/or individualized understanding of shared events (Koenig Kellas et al., 2006).

Understanding storied experiences as a therapeutic medium and witnessing challenging narratives within family contexts are central components of postmodern and poststructuralist counselling and family therapy (Andersen, 1991; Anderson, 1997; Dickerson, 2014; White & Epston, 1990). Poststructuralist and postmodern approaches to family therapy involve exploring the discourses (how language is used) and stories that shape individual and family lives, as well as inviting alternative ways to understand these experiences (Dickerson, 2014). Family therapy practices from this epistemological position can include deconstructing problematized or oppressive stories within families (Freedman, 2014; White & Epston, 1990), opening opportunities for constructing multiple versions of self and story in families (Dickerson, 2014), empowering families through honouring family knowledge and collaboration (Madsen, 2009), and intentionally using witnessing and reflection to promote a richer understanding of experiences and perspectives (Andersen, 1991; Anderson, 1997; Freedman, 2014; Weingarten, 2004, 2016). In relation to trauma, the use of narrative approaches and intentional witnessing creates space for integration—"to making the strange familiar, to home" (Weingarten, 2016, p. 206). The sharing of trauma narratives within families offers members opportunities to realize multiple realities and truths related to traumatic events and provides a cohesive joint narrative based on different perspectives (Kiser, 2010). Furthermore, the following practices are recommended for working with trauma in narrative family therapy: establishing boundaries for sharing narratives, stress inoculation techniques, titrating experiences, scaffolding, and coregulation (Figley & Kiser, 2013; Kiser, 2010).

The emphasis on trauma narratives in family therapy contexts has been used to support refugees and uphold ethnocultural worldviews. De Haene et al. (2018) proposed that the reconstruction of traumatic memories through the development of a coherent life story can serve as a central mode of posttrauma reparation for refugee families. Within refugee families, trauma narration is a relational process

that moves between remembrance and silence, involving multilayered meaning systems. Based on clinical reflection, De Haene et al. (2018) indicated that trauma narration within refugee family therapy is centred on three themes: restoring safety (relational stories of security), restoring meaning (relational stories of working around trauma), and restoring connectedness to family and community (co-authoring stories and silence within the family's broader social world). All three themes are central components of trauma therapy (Figley & Kiser, 2013; Weingarten, 2004, 2016).

In research contexts, narrative research, which draws from shared epistemological foundations such as the aforementioned postmodern and poststructuralist family therapy, provides a framework that can help understand and examine traumatic experiences (Keats, 2009; Reissman, 2008). As a methodology, it can facilitate transformative healing by empowering those who have experienced trauma and oppression to explore the meaning within these circumstances (Comas-Diaz, 2020). Narrative research offers an opportunity to examine the processes and themes that overlap in stories. Yet, despite recognition of the value of exploring trauma narratives within family contexts, there is still limited understanding regarding the process of facilitating discussions about trauma-based narratives in both research and clinical settings.

Purpose of the Study

This study provides an analysis of the first author's experience as a researcher witnessing a facilitated exchange of IGT narratives within a family dyad. Autoethnographic data was used to provide a rich and personal depiction of the embedded experience of a phenomenon that is scarcely studied (Berger, 2001; Ellis et al., 2011). There is limited research on the phenomenon of sharing traumatic stories across generations (Fivush et al., 2019), and no other study has examined this process in the Chinese diaspora. By utilizing his narrative as a researcher, the first author was afforded an opportunity to garner insight into the process of sharing IGT narratives, as well as to analyze cultural and contextual elements associated with this dialogue (Ellis et al., 2011).

It is important to note that the purpose of the study was to provide insight into the process of sharing IGT narratives. It was not to endorse the use of research methodologies as a therapeutic medium for IGT. Rather, the intent was to draw from the researcher's reflections about facilitating this dialogue, which can be insightful for both research and therapeutic settings. The context of the autoethnographic account is within the bounds of research, and though it may have been beneficial to the participants, the intent of the study was not to provide therapy. There would be ethical issues related to deception and consent, as well as dual relationships, should research methodologies be used for therapeutic purposes without consent. In this study, the participants were aware that their participation involved sharing their stories with family members for research purposes,

and they provided consent to do so. Furthermore, though there can be value in engaging in the reflexive process of autoethnography in clinical settings, the intent of this study is not to promote the use of autoethnography as a therapeutic approach to addressing IGT. Nonetheless, as there are limited published studies that provide personal accounts regarding the facilitation of sharing IGT stories within families, the process itself (with recognition of its contextual limitations) can be informative for research and clinical settings.

Method

Research Team Description

At the time of the study, the research team comprised the first author (a doctoral student) and the second author (a master's student, co-researcher, and interpreter) in counselling psychology at the University of British Columbia, as well as a cultural informant/broker. The cultural informant and the first author both identified as male, and the second author identified as female. Both authors identified as second-generation Chinese Canadian, while the informant identified as first-generation Chinese Canadian. The first author had minimal conversational Cantonese; the second author could speak and read Mandarin and Cantonese, and served as an interpreter and co-researcher for the study; and the cultural informant was capable of speaking, reading, and writing Mandarin and Cantonese. Though the second author held multiple roles in the research project, she is referred to as the interpreter throughout the rest of the paper, as that was her main role in the autoethnographic narrative. The interpreter role also included some cultural informant activities when the cultural informant was not available for direct consultation. For the remainder of this paper, the first author writes his account in first person.

Principal Investigator's First-Person Account of the Study

As the principal investigator, my curiosity about IGT in Chinese diasporic communities started early in my doctoral studies when my grandfather died. I learned more about my own history and the trauma that was part of his and my parents' experiences. Growing up, my grandfather would experience night terrors, and it was only in his passing that I learned that he was subjected to struggle sessions in China. These struggle sessions involved public humiliation and torture, and were used to shape public opinion and to persecute counter-revolutionaries and dissuade counter-revolutionary thought during Mao's consolidation of power in China (Sullivan, 2007).

As for my parents, they were part of China's "Lost Generation," the generation of students who lost time and education as they were sent to the *laogai* (labour camps) during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (Gentz, 2014). My parents were at the *laogai* for several years as teenagers, occupying different jobs, and my father

remained for several years longer than my mother. I am still left with a sense of bewilderment regarding my family narrative and history. The challenges of these events are rarely spoken about. Yet this silence continues to speak ever so loudly as I seek to understand my own history and cultural identity. It is this silence that spurs my curiosity about IGT and how it can be shared communally and in families through stories.

Research Context and Participants

This study is part of a research project on the narratives of Chinese Canadian IGT (Chou et al., 2023a, 2023b) that involved a procedure for co-constructing narratives and sharing them within family dyads. This study portrays the last step of the research project and is based on my autoethnographic reflections, having witnessed the shared IGT narratives. Details about the participants and recruitment process are described in Chou et al. (2023a, 2023b). This paper focuses on one dyad, consisting of a father and daughter (pseudonyms: Henry and Lina). The autoethnographic reflections for this dyad were chosen as their respective participant stories are available as supplemental documents in Chou et al. (2023a, 2023b). It is recommended that readers review the stories to understand the context of the autoethnography presented in this paper.

The participants met the criteria of (a) being an adult (over 19 years old), (b) having Chinese heritage, (c) migrating to Canada after 1967, and (d) having experienced, in the case of the parent, migration-related trauma. Migration trauma refers to experiences of trauma prior to, during, and after migration (Foster, 2001), while trauma was operationalized as both

- individual: exposure (i.e., direct exposure, witnessing, or learning of the traumatic event[s] occurring to a close family member or friend) to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 271); and
- collective: traumatic events or wounding that impacts a group of people (Hirschberger, 2018).

Participants were provided with a $25 gift card for each interview they took part in. Interviews were conducted between 2016 and 2017.

Procedure

The study procedures were approved by the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research and Ethics Board. Arvay's (2003) Collaborative Narrative Method was adapted to construct narratives of IGT for the participants (see Table 1). Linguistic (Mandarin, Cantonese, and English) and cultural considerations were incorporated using a multilingual research design for transcription and translation (McDonald & Chau, 2008). There were seven steps involved in the narrative construction. The last step is described in detail as part of the autoethnographic narrative.

Table 1
The Collaborative Narrative Method Steps and Adaptations

Step	Description
Setting the stage	Setting the stage for the narrative co-construction involving consultations, recruitment, and pre-interview conversations.
Co-constructing narratives	Semi-structured life story interviews about IGT experiences were developed to focus on IGT. Offspring participants were asked about their parent's trauma and how such moments influenced them, while parental participants were asked about traumatic experiences and how these experiences affected their offspring.
Transcription and translation	The interviews were all transcribed into English. Interviews that were conducted in Chinese were translated and transcribed into English.
Researcher's interpretation	Transcripts were read based on four different interpretive readings: (a) reading for content, (b) reading for the self as narrator, (c) reading for the research question, and (d) reading for relations of power and culture.
Writing narratives and collaborative verification	From the transcripts and readings, narratives were constructed into a blended text that incorporated relevant events told by the participants in chronological order and written in first person. These narratives were then verified and revised based on a follow-up interview with the participants.
Narrative analysis	After consensus on the final draft of the narratives was reached with the participants, the narratives were analyzed for themes shared across the narratives.
The family dialogue	The family dyad participants took part in a facilitated dialogue that involved each of them sharing their narratives with their family member. These family dialogues were approximately three hours long and guided by an interview protocol.

Note. Arvay's (2003) Collaborative Narrative Method was adapted for this research project to accommodate multilinguistic research considerations, including translation and a family dialogue process.

Given that the focus of the study was IGT, trauma-informed research protocols were followed to create a safe environment that allowed the facilitation and expression of fearful feelings and events (DePrince & Freyd, 2004; Durham, 2002). During the interviews, I gauged participants' levels of distress by tracking their non-verbal and para-verbal expressions and provided an empathic presence. Participants were aware that they could choose not to answer any particular question and could take a break at any time during interviews. These interpersonal

strategies were drawn from my experience as a counsellor working with clients from traumatized backgrounds. Participants were provided with resources in the community should they choose to self-refer. They were also offered the opportunity to debrief after each interview. As the research was emotionally saturated, I offered each participant an optional one-hour debriefing meeting within three months of the study's end (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007; Josselson, 2007). Furthermore, the counselling team at the agency with which I partnered for this study offered each participant an optional one-hour counselling session within six months of the study's end. None of the participants reported the need to utilize these respective supports. Lastly, research partners debriefed with me about any emotional processes that were elicited during the narrative constructions (i.e., interviews, transcription, translation). These debriefings took place during team meetings.

The Family Dialogue and Autoethnographic Reflections

Autoethnography functions as an approach to analyzing personal experiences to understand cultural experiences (Berger, 2001; Ellis et al., 2011). In this study, the field experience of witnessing the family dialogue serves to understand personal and interpersonal negotiations involved in this co-constructed process. The narrative form is a natural extension of autoethnography as it situates an understanding of one's experience within relational and temporal domains, while for ethnographic experiences, analysis and descriptions are presented as stories (Berger, 2001; Ellis et al., 2011).

In preparation for the family dialogue, the participants were informed about the sharing procedure and what to expect. They were asked to prepare for the dialogue by re-reviewing their story and identifying only the most significant parts to share during the meeting. During the family dialogue, participants shared their stories with respective family members in the language they were comfortable with. Listeners were provided with a copy of each other's story in English and/or Chinese to address any potential linguistic barriers while listening to the story. These interviews were videorecorded, and a copy of the recording was given to participants. This interview informed my autoethnographic narrative of witnessing the sharing of IGT stories within families.

The steps taken for family dialogue involved a process of sharing and reflecting based on a guided process for sharing personal stories (Thornton, 2008; Westwood & Wilensky, 2005). First, the listener was invited to listen and reflect on the speaker's narrative and its impact on them. Any questions or comments were held in abeyance until after the sharing, and the listener was then provided with an opportunity to share reflections after hearing the story. Following this, the speaker shared final reflections or responses with the listener. This reflexive process was guided by me with the assistance of the interpreter in order to foster "good reflections"—reflections from the listener that recognize the perspective

of the speaker but provide an authentic and different perspective that can support an integrated understanding of the story (see Weingarten, 2016). After one individual finished sharing, the other was invited to share his/her narrative and engage in the same telling/listening/reflecting process. Upon completion of the second sharing, participants were then invited to share any last reflections prior to the session's ending. My own reflections, along with the interpreter's reflections, were shared at this point. This reflexive procedure parallels other approaches for sharing and witnessing narratives within family contexts (see Freedman, 2014; Weingarten, 2004, 2016). These interviews were videorecorded to capture the non-verbal aspects of storytelling, and a copy of the recording was given to participants. Throughout the dialogue, the interpreter provided translation support to me and the participants, offered clarification related to culture-bound expressions, and co-facilitated support.

After the family dialogues, I engaged in a reflective dialogue with the interpreter. We followed a format similar to the "reflecting team" process (Andersen, 1991), which involved reflecting on our own experiences and the voices of the participants. This step also included commenting on verbal and nonverbal material that had emerged during the dialogue, as well as the ways in which the process resonated with the two of us. A debriefing conversation was conducted with the participants a week after the family dialogue to follow up on their experiences of sharing their stories. Based on my experience of the family dialogue, reflections, and field notes, I drafted my own autoethnographic narrative of witnessing the dialogue, with the intent of providing thick descriptions of this contextual experience.

Witnessing the Sharing of Intergenerational Trauma Narratives

Presented below is my narrative of witnessing the participants share their respective IGT stories, along with a reflective dialogue between myself and the interpreter, as well as reflections from the participants after sharing their stories. The constructed IGT narratives are not included in this paper but can be found as supplemental documents in Chou et al. (2023a, 2023b).

The dialogue was facilitated by the first author and the interpreter, who helped with language interpretation. These narratives incorporate my own reflections and perspective of their sharing. It is a co-constructed experience, in the sense that a space has been created for dialogue between the participants about their stories and the narrative itself, and the narrative is based on the participants' contributions. Nonetheless, the voice represented here is my own, and my views may not necessarily reflect the participants' experience of the dialogue. Quotes have been selected to reflect the core dimensions of the narrative sharing, and the process of "narrative smoothing" (Kim, 2016) is employed to provide coherence in the story. The narratives do not convey all the nuances of the interaction, as the richness of

the conversation could never be fully represented in written form. Furthermore, some parts of this dialogue have been omitted to respect participant privacy. The final story has been reviewed by the participants to ensure their consent regarding the included content. Lastly, the participants are referred to according to their relationship titles to highlight the relational dimensions that were interspersed within the dialogue itself.

Narrative of Lina and Henry's Sharing

At the time of the narrative sharing, Henry was a 64-year-old man who was born in China and immigrated to Canada in 1990 after the events in Tiananmen Square. Henry wanted to share his story so that others could learn about the events that had occurred. During our interviews, Henry was expressive, and his stories were carefully constructed and recounted in detail. He shared with eagerness, but his was a story mired with sadness because of the losses that had transpired in his family.

Lina was a 23-year-old woman born and raised in Canada. She stated that both parents had gone through psychological traumas during their time in China. She indicated that, in her experience, her father is very open to talking about his life history. Throughout her story, Lina shared how her father's stories have had an impact on her identity and have directed her toward social justice initiatives and embracing feminist theories.

Witnessing the Dialogue Between Lina and Henry

I remember pacing around the room while the interpreter and I waited for Lina and Henry. The process was nerve-wracking. Maybe they backed out? Would this dialogue be helpful for them? How will this change their relationship? I received a text message from Lina—an apology for running behind—and I felt a sense of relief.

When they arrived, I met them and we chatted as I led them to the interview room. This was both familiar and unfamiliar. I felt the same nervousness I had when I first met them, yet they have also become familiar as I have gotten to know them through their stories. At the same time, the process of their sharing of stories in a constructed setting was unfamiliar. Would they be able to share openly? Would their experience of their stories be similar to how I experienced them? I wanted the manner of telling to be theirs. It was an opportunity for them to witness each other—perhaps in a similar kind of unfamiliar-familiar way. Though there was preparation to get to this point, there remained an unknown.

Henry's sharing. We arranged for the participants to sit across from each other while the interpreter and I sat perpendicular to them, with the video camera placed in an area that could record the four of us. They both smiled at each other awkwardly but endearingly, almost as reassurance. As we adjusted ourselves in

our seats, I explained the process, presented both with an English and a Chinese version of their respective stories, and invited one of them to start first. Henry indicated he wanted to start.

Researcher: What was it like to prepare for this?

Father (translated): Nothing out of the ordinary [*said with a smile*].

Daughter: My dad loves to tell me stories; it is a little bit different the other way around.

Father (in English): I think it is really important to let people know.

As Henry settled in, I gestured for him to start his story, and he began to speak in Mandarin. I watched as his story unfolded. I became oblivious to the verbal statements, only aware of the non-verbal cues and the words I could pick out that sounded similar to Cantonese. I trusted that the interpreter would inform me afterwards, and neither of us wanted to interfere with the sharing process. Our roles were to guide, not to disturb. As Henry shared his story, he directed his attention toward the interpreter and me. I wondered about the audience—is this aimed toward us? Does he understand that the intention is for him to share with his daughter? It was, of course, an unfamiliar process, a constructed process; however, as he continued, he began to direct his speaking toward his daughter.

As Henry was sharing, I looked at Lina's attentive expression. She was following the English version of the story. She mentioned that she understood Mandarin, but there were some words she did not know. I was aware of how often Henry shared his stories. Was this a repeat of what Lina already knew? Was the constructed process taking away from their experience, or was it an experience that was unique? I watched as she clung to the words shared by her father and envisioned what it was like for her to listen. She responded on occasion by nodding and responding. Occasionally, she would clarify in English.

As he was sharing, I remember having to balance the need to allow space to share but honour time limits. Even though an hour and a half was provided for his sharing, it was clear there was much more to the story. As Henry spoke, he began to expand more on each aspect of his story. Though this was appreciated, I was worried about whether he would be able to complete his telling within the allotted time. I interjected at one point to clarify the time constraint and invited him to share the details afterwards. I felt uncomfortable, yet I also trusted that this was necessary to let the rest of the sharing process unfold, according to the boundaries we had set for the sharing process.

At one point, it seemed that Henry was glossing over much of his story as he began to flip through the printed pages (later confirmed by the interpreter). I wondered whether he was leaving out key aspects, as I was aware from previous tellings that there were some significant emotional moments. I then realized that there were important moments missing, specifically related to his father (I had enough Mandarin comprehension to listen for familiar words such as "father"). I was not sure if Henry shared that part of the story and was worried that, in

requesting him to be brief, he may have skipped that significant part. I also knew that, by voicing my concern, I would be disrupting the process and maybe even shaping how Henry wanted to tell his story. This detail related to his father was, in my opinion, fundamental to understanding his story. After a moment of hesitation, I asked Henry if he could share about his father and expand. He took a deep breath and gathered his thoughts while looking down. I knew this was part of a co-construction—that this prompting might not occur naturally, and was an intervention. His tone shifted and softened, and he began to speak in a candid, solemn manner about his father. Noticing this, I was confident this was the right direction as it seemed to offset my previous interjection about the time limitation and enabled an opportunity for Lina to witness a side of her father that she may not have otherwise seen.

At the end of Henry's sharing, I asked him to hear the reflections of his daughter and invited her to share the impact of hearing her father's story in this setting and in the language she felt comfortable with. Lina proceeded to share in Mandarin.

Daughter (translated): Back in the day, it was unfair… is it because of the past experiences that makes you have to be prepared all the time?

Father (translated): During those times, my father didn't have a chance to protect us. We needed to fend for ourselves… we needed to do everything, and it was tiring and exhausting. So, I want to use all my power to help you so that you can make your own decisions. I want to help you, but I know there are things you need to face on your own.

Researcher [*directed towards the daughter*]: How does this influence how you see your father now after learning more about his story?

Daughter (translated): Whenever he shared the stories before, he would share the content, not the feelings behind the story. With the feelings, it is more of a whole story.

Father (translated): I didn't talk much about my feeling back then. Because, in China, if you talk about your feelings or emotions, that means you have a problem.

As he conversed with his daughter, I was reminded how the need to be cautious was part of Henry's IGT story. To share emotions was a problem: it meant you were a problem. It was unsafe, given the suspicions that permeated society at the time. This emotionality was important for his daughter, and I felt it was important to expand upon this reflection.

Researcher: When you saw your father being emotional, what was it like?

Daughter (translated): Emotions are a good thing, so you are not like a book and just content. I feel closer (to you) [*directed to her father, while wiping away a tear*]. The most valuable information was knowing how you felt about it. There is a lot here, and most of it I have either heard before or at least gotten the surrounding information in less detail. I think the most valuable part is knowing

how you felt about it. When you shared the stories before, you shared them with a smile, but it seemed inconsistent with what was going on. Now it has changed, knowing how you feel. When you're worried, it makes more sense now.

Researcher: What was it like to tell your story to your daughter?

Father (translated): Sometimes you [*directed to the daughter*] say you don't understand me and my friends. I didn't really believe you. I was afraid that you would go down the wrong path. I notice that you read a lot of books and they are important. You are more mature now… [You] have grown up now, and it felt that I was speaking to you as an equal. Before, I was an authority figure, and now, I am exchanging with you in a more equal level. We can better understand each other now.

Interpreter (translated): Since you heard your daughter share about emotions as being important, what did you feel?

Father (translated): I feel very touched. There are times I don't think she understands my intentions or efforts. I made a lot of sacrifices coming to Canada. I left during the "best time" in China, while others usually leave when things get difficult. Knowing each other better is a good thing. As we understand each other more, it is better for us.

As an observer with limited linguistic capabilities and outside their relationship, I nevertheless could not help but be affected by witnessing their dialogue. I could only piece together parts of their dialogue, but I was able to understand the desires of both. For Linda, the precipice of her desire was to truly know and feel close to her father; for Henry, it was to be understood, to know that his daughter understood his intentions. Ironically, they both shared the same desire—a desire to connect, to know and to be known.

Lina's sharing. After a short break, we resettled into the process. As we prepared, we talked about how she would like to share her story.

Daughter: In broken Mandarin and English, how I normally speak to my dad.

Researcher: Before we start, how are you feeling?

Daughter: I feel good; I don't think I have ever talked about this stuff in much detail.

We joked about how her father would now have to be the one who listened, and Henry stated, "I understand that she has her own story."

As she followed her written English story, she started speaking in English and began to shift toward Mandarin. Once again, this was her process, and once again, I was an observer. As she spoke in Mandarin, she occasionally used English words such as "opportunity," "thankful," "stable," "family," and "unfair." It was clear this was how she communicated. It was her way of description, in what she colloquially referred to as "Chinglish." This was her telling. This was for her dad. This was the way that she wanted to express her thoughts to him.

They had a similar type of humour and understanding, and as I watched Henry, it was clear there was a sense of pride in listening to his daughter. I was

curious about what was going on with him. I wondered if he was thinking about her growing up as she was describing her experience of becoming an adult. There were parts of the story that may have been hard for him to hear; there were hardships in her story, and I was curious about how her father would react—would he feel blamed, or would it be an opportunity to communicate and hear? She was aware of this dynamic and, throughout her story, she lent an indication of her gratefulness to her family.

As she was sharing, she spoke in an animated manner, and it was clear the mannerisms she possessed paralleled those of her father. During moments when the content of her story was theoretical, I wondered if Henry understood it the way she had intended. Did he understand what she meant when she mentioned "feminism" and "intersectional feminism?" These perspectives were important to her, and I could see her desire to have her father appreciate why she was engaged with these concepts, as well as how important they were to her. It was as if her speech was a passionate plea and a desire to really be known. Hers was also a desire to advocate for herself.

I realize that this process itself was also uncomfortable. There is a social hierarchy in Confucian Chinese relationships, with the father as the authorial head of the family (see Hwang, 2011). To speak about the mistakes of one's parents means subverting these social conventions. These difficulties truly highlighted the constructed aspect of this conversation because the telling and even naming of mistakes could be difficult. I realize the risk of damaging the relationship and the consideration required not to do so. Part of what made this sharing truly unique was the opportunity to hear someone—of a different generation—speak earnestly. The story and even the process served this purpose for them. As Lina shared, she emphasized some of the current aspects of her narrative, how the narrative had unfolded since taking part in this project, and how her circumstances have changed. Part of her emphasis may serve to protect the relationship, yet it also names the changes she has experienced.

As Lina neared the end of the discussion, she shared her desire for greater closeness. She shared how grateful she was for her parents: "I am so proud of you guys; you guys are okay, and you are such great parents." As she spoke with tears in her eyes, her father looked at her with an endearing smile.

Father (translated): She never told me this before… Chinese culture is very different; there are good things and bad things about the culture. I don't love Chinese culture. In Chinese history, people are classified into different classes. There are Confucian relationships where there are hierarchies, and even though I do not like this, I am still impacted by it. I can understand your pressures—I have my opinions, but you can have yours as well.

Researcher (translated): What stood out for you the most?

Father (translated): I hope whatever [my daughter's] concern is that she can talk to [her mom and me]. I was upset when you were not eating. I realize that

when I was younger, with all my difficulties, it has hardened my heart to understand other people's difficulties. So, I was not as sensitive to other people's issues. I didn't know that sickness affected you so much. Your mom tried to explain to me the sickness, so I read a lot of books and researched more about the sickness. I realized that, because of this sickness, [Lina] might not be able to attend classes or might have to miss school. But there are still a lot of things I still do not understand… I feel very happy to hear from my daughter.

Researcher (translated): How do you see your daughter differently now that she has shared this?

Father (translated): She has grown [*directed towards the interpreter*]. I can only see one side of what I experienced, but today I was able to see you and your feelings on your end [*directed towards his daughter*].

Daughter (translated): I understand that back in the day, you had a lot of stress and pressure, and that was a problem of the country you could not do anything about. Now the pressure on you has gone down, and you have softened.

Father (translated): Now the pressure has decreased as my daughter has grown up.

Researcher (translated): As your daughter has grown up, what are some of your thoughts and feelings?

Father (translated): Her understanding of the world is basically correct; there are a lot of places where there are inequalities [*looking towards the interpreter*]. You said some things that are really good [*looking at his daughter*]. There are some things that you might not be able to change, but you are right in having to speak about it. If you do not say your thoughts or feelings about a particular subject, everyone will think that you think the same as everyone else.

Researcher: Do you have any last thoughts about what you heard from your dad?

Daughter (translated): I am very happy that we can put the stories together. In the moment, you might say things that are not nice, but the intentions are good. I understand more about that. In the future, if we get into a fight, at least we know each other's intentions.

Father (translated): Don't "yell" at me [*smiling*]. Before, nobody "yells" at me, but now that I am at home, everyone "yells" at me [*laughing*].

In that moment, I felt it was an appropriate acknowledgement of the different ways each had come to know the other's rooted identity. The threads of their reflections had woven together in an unbroken fashion following the father's first sharing. For Henry, a father's knowledge of his own biases and historical knowing were being clarified. For Lina, there had been a piecing together of her father's intentions. The differences in the reflections were clear: Henry responded contextually, providing a broader perspective in his account of self-history before indicating his desired point. For Lina, speech included a shifting perspective, but was always directed toward how she sees her father. Perhaps an explanation can

be found in the difference in cultural background. There are some features of the constructed sharing process that were more familiar to Lina, who was socialized in a Canadian cultural context. The contextualized sharing that Henry provided may not have been what I had expected, but it very much fit his communication, cultural influence notwithstanding. Regardless, what appeared in the interaction was a commitment to know each other. The *in-betweenness* of their relationship that played out in this constructed process is a commentary on narrative epistemology. It highlighted the *knowingness* present in a desire to understand the other through the stories that are told.

The purpose of sharing stories differed for each person. For the father, the purpose was advocacy—to raise awareness about what happened in China. For the daughter, it was self-advocacy and a desire for connection. My purpose was to further the project through their progressive participation. It is interesting to consider how the co-constructed process can wind toward different effects given different intentionalities, whether explicit or not. The interaction, regardless of its purposes, was a shared experience between them—a marker in their lives. I had the privilege of witnessing an intimate conversation between the two of them.

There was a sense of relief at the end of the sharing. Each person had journeyed into a dialogue that was foreign to them, and as researchers, we had not known what to expect; we merely set the conditions. Along with relief, both expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to take part in the study and to hear from each other. Henry's laughter at the end of the session was normative for their relationship, but also, as I saw it, an acknowledgement of the changing father-daughter dynamic. I felt a deep sense of privilege. Although I was aware that their intended audiences were each other, there were private moments that allowed me to get a glimpse into their ever-changing relational narrative.

A reflective dialogue. Afterwards, the interpreter and I gathered to discuss our reflections on the process. We discussed the balance of facilitation that prioritized the process's natural unfolding. Specifically, we wondered whether it was helpful to interrupt Henry's sharing and whether doing so had resulted in too much abridgement. We appreciated the relational dynamism for Henry in his role as father and the change in roles relative to his daughter, which must have made it difficult to share his emotions. We realized the final sharing constituted a shift and an opportunity for his daughter to witness his emotions. His narration included counter-cultural aspects, as referred to by Henry in reference to disliking aspects of Chinese culture. These aspects ostensibly made it difficult to divulge deeply and to share "equally" with emotions, given that it went against aspects of Confucian cultural heritage.

We reflected about *how* the stories were told. For instance, we noticed how Henry would share his story in anecdotes, starting in a broad and contextualized manner and then narrowing to a lesson or a point he wanted to make. We wondered whether this narrativizing was cultural or unique to Henry. There were

also differences in tonality as he was prompted to explore emotions during the sharing—emotions unfamiliar to Henry yet appreciated by Lina. We recognized that, despite the subtlety and brevity of these moments, they were profound in the context of this father-daughter relationship and mutual knowingness.

We contemplated Lina's courage and Henry's patience. It was very courageous of Lina to share her story with her father. After all, such narrating was uncommon for her, and some aspects of what she shared were previously unknown to her father. As for Henry, we reflected on his attentiveness and clear desire to see and understand his daughter as he patiently listened to her.

One moment stood out in particular as we reflected on their sharing in light of their relationship and respective stories: Henry shared about his attempt to understand his daughter's "sickness" (in reference to mental health challenges related to her eating restrictions). In Lina's narrative, she was under the impression that her father did not understand. As we watched her expression during Henry's response, we saw *surprise* on her face, leading us to wonder about its impact on her. It was a piece of the relational narrative that was shifting—a realization that her father did indeed try to understand, a fact not known to her beforehand. Likewise, we reflected on Lina's acknowledgement of her father and mother during her reflections. The response touched upon Henry's desire for his intentions to be understood. There was an understanding that the untold aspects of the parents' stories were grasped.

Reflecting further, I realized the process was truly about shifting the audience of the told story from ourselves as researchers to each other. I think these goals were accomplished to a certain extent. I have no control over what Henry and Lina will do afterwards and whether or not this work was sufficient. However, I can only hope that their dialogue will continue, now that they have each other's stories written down. I hope the written artifacts will be a reference point they can build upon as their stories continue to unfold.

Epilogue. We followed up with Lina and Henry about a week after the sharing session, partly for reasons of ethical care and also to offer an opportunity to debrief. The interpreter chatted with Henry while I conversed with Lina. Provided below is a summary of the dialogue during the follow-up.

Henry. Henry expressed appreciation for being able to take part in the research project. He did not indicate that any issues had come up afterwards. Instead, he informed us that he felt the whole research process had been valuable. He felt that participating improved communication between him and his daughter; they developed a better understanding of each other. During the conversation, he conveyed that there were grammatical errors in the Chinese version of his story, but he generally felt the overall narrative represented what he had said. He expressed gratitude for being able to share his story and inform other people about the experiences he had gone through.

Lina. Lina did not feel any difficulties had arisen after sharing her story with her father but instead found the session beneficial. Taking part in the study was part of a change process for her, and she was not sure if that was transpiring because she was thinking more about her life story or because she had taken part in the research process. She found it beneficial for her father. Both her mother and father have made comments to her about how she has grown as a person. Since participating, both parents have been more permissive of her activities and have become more trusting.

As for the research question, she felt able to see how her father's story has shaped her as a person and to see some of the parallels in her own life. Regarding their relational dynamic, she felt her father had slowly become more egalitarian. She appreciated that the research process had been intentional and the parameters set had been helpful. Lina discussed the unnaturalness of creating an intentional space to share stories in this manner. Through the study, she was able to understand her father and his emotions better, and more able to express her life experiences to her father.

Research Reflections. I believe the concluding dialogue between the participants was the cumulative fruit of their participation in the study. I recall progress even in the second interview with Henry, who indicated that he felt a weight had lifted. Lina, meanwhile, began to feel that her parents were trusting her more. The threads of these narratives became interwoven in their sharing session. It is not possible to unravel whether the shifting relational dynamics are due to the dialogue itself or to their taking part in the constructed process of this research study. What is clear is that we were able to get a glimpse into their lives and into their understanding of their relationship, their individual stories, and their further story of their experience of each other. What a gift and privilege to share in their encounter as a researcher.

Discussion

Having witnessed and engaged in the shared narratives, we recognize that: the autoethnography can inform both narrative IGT research and clinical contexts on how IGT narratives can be shared; and cultural dimensions interspersed throughout the dialogue illustrated both generational and ethnocultural understandings related to research and clinical work with the Chinese diasporic community in Canada.

The autoethnographic narrative portrayed a recognition of relational hierarchies that can influence processes for sharing narratives between generations. In the Confucian concept of society, relationships are hierarchical and intertwined with ethics that dictate decorum in relationships (Hwang, 2011). Individuals with lesser social power (i.e., the daughter) are to obey and respect those with more power, while individuals with higher social power (i.e., the father) must be

benevolent toward and supportive of their subordinates (Hwang, 2011). Though these relational rules were recognized by the dyad in this study, the limitations of these rules, as they manifest in their particular family context, were acknowledged (see Henry's reflection about Confucian relationships). The autoethnographic narrative illustrated the author's own cautiousness regarding these cultural rules and the ways in which the sharing process could be subversive (e.g., Henry identifying his own mistakes and the levelling of relational hierarchies in the reflective process). The way in which these cultural rules and values manifest can be influenced by acculturation, socialization, intergenerational relational dynamics, and family history (Lui, 2015). Though adherence to cultural worldviews may differ for each family and its members, these social conventions should be taken into careful consideration in both research and clinical contexts. This position aligns with the literature on cultural humility that centralizes self-reflexivity of one's own culture and positionality as a means to build trustworthy relationships between researcher and research participants (Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013).

Autoethnography provides a concrete example of the value of recognizing multiple realities and truths related to events experienced by family members, a core proponent of postmodern and poststructuralist family therapy (Dickerson, 2014). This was demonstrated in multiple instances, as when Lina realized that her father had attempted to understand her mental illness and when Henry recognized that his intentions were acknowledged by Lina. These differing perspectives enabled opportunities to provide an appreciation of multiple viewpoints and offered a shared framework for understanding each other's actions and emotions (Kiser et al., 2010). The reflexive process also demonstrated how an intentional witnessing structure can provide opportunities to deconstruct preconceived understandings of family narratives (Freedman, 2014). Through the witnessing structure, I described how our research team attempted to foster "good reflections" by inviting the family members to connect each other's stories to their own personal processes (see Weingarten, 2016). For instance, I asked participants how they saw the other family member after learning each other's story and, in doing so, invited the listener to connect the speaker's story to his or her own personal truths. These truths may be different from what the speaker was expecting, but expansive enough for shared acknowledgement and opportunities for narrative integration (see the participants' responses to the reflections they received about each other's stories).

Considerations for sharing trauma narratives within family contexts were also demonstrated within the autoethnography. The participants were aware of what the sharing process involved and were provided with a structure for sharing their narratives; this was similar to establishing the boundaries of the narration process (Kiser et al., 2010). Establishing these boundaries provided guidance for interaction within the sharing process and offered a sense of regulation and control over traumatic experiences that may have felt uncontrollable (Kiser et al., 2010). The

sharing based on the written narrative also served as a form of scaffolding for successive sharing of challenging circumstances, as well as opportunities to integrate these experiences in a storied form (Kiser et al., 2010; Weingarten, 2016). Lastly, the debriefing after the sharing process offered both the participants and the researchers a chance for continued consolidation of the IGT narratives and the experience of witnessing and being witnessed in the story-sharing process (Weingarten, 2016).

Implications for Counselling Research

This study aligns with perspectives identifying storytelling and narrative as a transformational research medium (Comas-Diaz, 2020). Narrative research enables an opportunity to re-examine experiences and foster a greater understanding of self and the stories of others (Hones, 1998). It can be a tool that empowers and promotes resilience by centralizing one's own voice in relation to oppressive circumstances (Comas-Diaz, 2020). As the participants themselves indicated, it was beneficial to take part in the study, and each reported a different understanding of the other through the act of hearing each other's stories. Though narrative research itself is not meant to be deliberately used as a therapeutic medium, it has the potential to be a healing discourse (Harter & Bochner, 2009). The exchange of IGT stories in this study demonstrated that witnessing, sharing, and co-constructing joint understandings of IGT within the participants' family was a formative experience for them.

It is important to note that there was a systematic and relational process underpinning the family dialogue that I witnessed. Narratives were collaboratively constructed utilizing Arvay's (2003) methodology and integrated McDonald and Chau's (2008) cultural and linguistic considerations for qualitative research design. It is this backdrop that helped construct the family dialogue and was not represented in the witnessed dialogue. Taking this into consideration highlights the intentional and relational process involved in narrative research, especially when examining underrepresented communities and disenfranchised experiences. Arvay's (2003) and McDonald and Chau's (2008) research processes incorporated deliberate steps to centralize collaboration, culture, and language in the co-construction of participant narratives. The witnessed dialogue was the last step that builds on these processes. These intentional steps support the position that narrative research is not just the end goal of constructing narratives but involves relational commitments and ethics that guide its process (Caine et al., 2013). It is this commitment that created space for the participants to share openly about their experience and about a phenomenon that is not typically discussed in families.

Lastly, the study illustrates a relational approach for conducting IGT research. The uniqueness of having a dyad or other members discuss IGT as a phenomenon enables an opportunity to provide a shared understanding. The sharing of stories

had different purposes for each participant, as connected to their cultural worldviews, with the joint understanding that the stories would be shared with their family member. For Henry, the rationale for sharing his story was that it serves as a purposeful lesson for his daughter. These intentions reflect cultural entities, both as generativity and as an act of benevolence (Cheng et al., 2010). For Lina, on the other hand, the dialogue served to help understand both her father's and her own experience. Taking a relational stance to research highlights an understanding of the different intentions and research goals that participants also bring into the study, and such a stance influences what narratives are constructed.

Implications for Counselling Practice

This research process provides parallels that can inform clinical spaces, especially as there are no empirical studies on how to share IGT stories within Chinese diasporic communities. The study adds to the therapeutic literature by outlining an example of storytelling and family dialogue regarding traumatic experiences that is consistent with postmodern and poststructuralist approaches to family therapy (Dickerson, 2014). However, it is unique as cultural and multilingual components are explicitly addressed within the narrative sharing process (e.g., providing translated copies of each other's stories, inviting participants to share in the language they feel comfortable with, and recognizing cultural understandings of relational hierarchies). Central to the autoethnographic narrative is an illustration of the value of witnessing IGT narratives in a family context. Witnessing IGT narratives can invite awareness that is empowering and transformational, and it can reveal multiple truths in relation to respective family members' stories (Freedman, 2014; Weingarten, 2004, 2016). Nevertheless, additional research is needed to further understand the therapeutic process and benefits of sharing trauma narratives within family contexts for ethnocultural communities.

The collaborative process demonstrated in the autoethnography required significant preparation to support participants in sharing their IGT with one another. The steps outlined in Arvay's (2003) approach (see Table 1) can be helpful for recognizing that multiple points of collaboration may be necessary to support the sharing of family IGT narratives. Though Arvay's (2003) approach is a research methodology, collaborative processes in family therapy and in co-constructing client narratives have been established in other therapeutic models. For instance, in Westwood and Wilensky's (2005) Therapeutic Enactment, a group-based psychodrama approach for working with trauma, the group facilitators must work together with individual clients to co-construct their narratives prior to sharing them within the group setting. Likewise, Figley and Kiser's (2013) Empowerment Treatment Approach incorporates several phases to prepare clients prior to sharing traumatic narratives within families. The preparation and collaborative steps are necessary to mitigate therapeutic ruptures and ensure successive sharing.

Collaborative intentions also serve as the foundation for Madsen's (2009) Collaborative Therapy, which centres on shared understandings and client empowerment to jointly address presenting concerns. In all the identified approaches, systematically privileging the relationship and the client's culturally bound knowledge in partnership is prioritized.

Ensuring successive sharing of IGT narratives involves, in part, consideration of a structured sharing process and boundaries to fit within a therapeutic context. In the autoethnography of this study, the written narratives the participants shared were approximately 20 pages long (double spaced, 12-point font). Though we had asked the participants to share only the most pertinent details, they ended up sharing their whole story, indicating that we had not provided enough structure or guidance. The 20-page narrative resulted in a much longer research interview (approximately three hours), which may not be viable in therapeutic contexts. There was also a risk that providing too much detail could de-emphasize the reflective witnessing process, and it became a point of concern when facilitating the sharing process (e.g., during Henry's sharing). For therapeutic use, guided storytelling typically abbreviates written stories to two pages so that emphasis is placed on client reflection (Westwood & Wilensky, 2005). The abbreviated form provides a degree of scaffolding that supports successive narrative sharing. With two pages, the amount of detail that could be shared is limited, thereby moderating the amount of traumatic information that could be provided and placing emphasis on the core aspects of the client narrative (Kiser et al., 2010; Matheson, 2020).

Lastly, as illustrated in the autoethnography, cultural and linguistic considerations were foundational to the IGT sharing process. These considerations included drawing from the cultural knowledge of the interpreter as a cultural informant, providing the written narratives in English and Chinese, and inviting participants to share their story in their preferred language. The interpreter's role was essential in supporting the facilitation of the story-sharing process. Not only did she provide interpretation, but she also served as a cultural bridge thanks to her understanding of the subtle cultural dynamics that occurred during the sharing. These sensitivities were important, especially when it came to fostering safety. As IGT is deeply intertwined with culture (Danieli, 2007), it may be valuable to have interpretation and cultural informants or brokers available to help navigate the process of sharing IGT stories in ethnocultural communities. Lastly, there was a debriefing step with the interpreter about the witnessed IGT narratives. Debriefing is a recommended practice when working with interpreters in counselling, especially when dealing with traumatic content (Lai & Costello, 2021). Overall, these considerations highlight some tangible strategies for incorporating cultural and linguistic considerations that can be translated into therapeutic contexts when sharing IGT narratives in families.

Conclusion

This paper illustrates my story of witnessing IGT narratives shared within a family dyad. These stories were not shared haphazardly, but instead entailed a process that emphasized relational integrity to foster intentional witnessing. There is a lack of research examining the process and impact of sharing IGT stories. This study offers firsthand reflections on a witnessed process of family sharing of such stories and its value as understood by the researchers and participants.

As a researcher, clinician, and son of Chinese migrants, witnessing the sharing of stories made me reflect on my desire to understand my own family's experiences. There is a sense of sadness in recognizing that this opportunity is not possible, given that the stories about my grandfather can only be learned through hearsay. Yet, I am excited to know that there is a yearning for stories to be shared even in diasporic spaces where silence seems to be the default. I felt transformed witnessing these story-sharing sessions; I was privileged to be part of a sacred dialogue between father and daughter. I am also encouraged to know that it is possible to create conditions for IGT stories to be shared in the context of Chinese families in Canada. My hope is that these more explicit intergenerational exchanges can continue meaningfully within the Chinese diaspora, as well as in other ethnocultural communities, through counselling, research, and other sociocultural mediums.

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