Sharing Our Stories through Narrative Writing: From Reflection to Publication

Elizabeth Rider, MSW, MD \(^1\), Shmuel Reis MD, MHPE \(^4,5\), David Hatem, MD \(^6\)

\(^1\)Department of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School, \(^2\)Institute for Professionalism and Ethical Practice, Boston Children's Hospital, \(^3\)International Research Centre for Communication in Healthcare, \(^4\)Department of Faculty Development, Bar-Ilan University Faculty of Medicine in the Galilee, \(^5\)Hebrew University of Jerusalem, \(^6\)Department of Medicine, University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center

Background/Purpose

Narrative medicine—long considered a way to gain greater understanding of ourselves and our patients—aims to promote reflection, enhance empathy, support individual and professional development, and strengthen the ideals of the medical and other healthcare professions. Narrative, the writing and telling of our stories, helps to make meaning of experiences, and benefits both clinicians and their patients.

Workshop participants will have the opportunity to examine narrative and reflective writing and their use in healthcare education, to write a short narrative and obtain feedback from other workshop participants, and to experience a learning method they can use or adapt in their teaching.

An increasing number of medical and healthcare journals publish narratives and reflective writing. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss criteria and options for publication with two editors of the Reflective Practice section of *Patient Education and Counseling*, the official journal of AACH and EACH, and with clinician educators experienced with narrative and reflective writing in professional healthcare settings.

Learning Objectives

Participants will:
1. Consider the use of narrative and reflective writing in professional healthcare education
2. Write a short narrative, reflect on their writing, and receive feedback from fellow participants
3. Explore criteria for publication of narratives, identifying the qualities that increase the possibility of publication
4. Discuss resources for publishing healthcare narratives

Teaching Methods

1. Welcome and introductions of faculty and participants -- 5 minutes
2. Large group discussion -- 10 mins
   a) How have participants used narrative and/or reflective writing in their teaching?
   b) How has this reflective learning method been received?
3. Small group exercise -- 60 mins
   a) Participants can write and read aloud their narratives, reflect on the process of writing, and receive feedback
4. Large group discussion: criteria and pathways for publication -- 10 mins
5. Summary, reflection, and evaluation -- 5 mins

Teaching Materials

Participants will receive a syllabus that includes guidelines for narrative reviewers and reviewer feedback, a bibliography of evidence-based literature, a list of publishing resources, and additional educational materials to use in their own settings.

Evaluation Description

Participants will engage in group discussion of lessons learned and strategies to take home, and will complete a brief reflective written evaluation.