Everyone has a story

The power of narrative to improve health and health care

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future of storytelling
The Use of Narrative in Healthcare:

Improving patient care

Helping patients self-manage their lives
My Life, My Story: VA’s healthcare improvements through deliberate storytelling
Narrative Medicine: Every Patient Has a Story

MEDICAL EDUCATION

Tuesday, March 28, 2017 | by Kim Krisberg, special to AAMCNews

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Narrative Medicine

Narrative Competence

• Attention to the patient’s story
• Representation of that story
• Affiliation with the story as a path toward empathetic engagement
To sum up...narrative can improve patient care

- Provides context for individual, patient-specific meaning of an illness
- Allows for the construction of meaning from one’s circumstances
- Addresses existential issues of suffering
- Promotes understanding between clinician and patient
- Provides rich source of clues for diagnoses
- Encourages empathy
- Provides framework for holistic approach to treatment
Can Narrative Help Promote Health Behavior Change?
Canary Health Insights

Directing health in one’s life story is critical to health improvement.

Most with chronic conditions don’t direct their health.

Stories of others who changed their narrative arc resonate and are powerful.

Successful self-management leads to owning the direction of one’s health and life.
Using Narrative Communication as a Tool for Health Behavior Change: A Conceptual, Theoretical, and Empirical Overview

Leslie J. Hinyard, MSW
Matthew W. Kreuter, PhD, MPH
Storytelling Helped Control High Blood Pressure

“Telling and listening to stories is the way we make sense of our lives,” said Dr. Thomas K. Houston, lead author of the study and a researcher at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester and the Veterans Affairs medical center in Bedford, Mass. “That natural tendency may have the potential to alter behavior and improve health.”
Narratives can promote increased understanding leading to behavior change by...

- Helping to overcome resistance to a message
- Facilitating observational learning
- Influencing perceptions
3 ways narrative can be proactively used to promote behavior change

1. Simulation Exercises
2. Modeling Health Behaviors
3. To Reach Population Subgroups
How is narrative being used by Canary Health?

Service Design Thinking

User-centered  Co-creative  Holistic
Examples of how narrative is used by Canary Health

Impacting participants – outreach to outcomes
• Stories used throughout programs
• Outreach and recruitment materials
• Discussion board using story-telling
• Coach notes to participants
• Videos for encouragement and motivation

Supporting and educating Canary Health staff
Marketing and Selling of services and supports
• Stories relevant to customers and prospective partners
  Participant experiences
  Customer staff and decision-maker stories
OUTREACH TO OUTCOMES

Outreach
- Prioritize, segment, develop personas, stories re changing life, getting motivated

Educate Activate
- Stories re: chronic diseases, worsening trajectories, prevention possible

Sign-up Show-up
- Stories re: intervention success, overcoming inertia, optimizing future

Participate
- Stories re: others who overcame barriers, solved problems, provided and received support

Succeed
- Authentic stories re: long-term behavior change with positive outcomes;
Sometimes we can help our patients to re-write their stories. For instance, we might be able to help people with chronic illness to move from a chaos story [of fear and powerlessness] to a transcendent story [of hope], allowing them to see themselves as people who have a manageable disease, not as people who are in the process of dying.

Jeffrey Borkan
Outreach #1: A Call to action to sign up

• Muriel had not yet recognized health as an actor in her life story
• Muriel didn't sign up
Outreach #2: A story

- Muriel showed interest by opening the email
- Story illustrated a different health trajectory than Muriel’s
- Not every story resonates with every patient

“When my health suddenly plummeted, it didn’t mean I had to go down with it.”

- Kelle, workshop participant

When Kelle’s active lifestyle took a sudden turn with the diagnosis of a chronic condition, her identity as an adventure athlete faced to the ultimate challenge. Although she couldn’t climb the world’s highest mountains anymore, a 6-week online workshop taught her there were new adventures to undertake, and provided her with the tools and support to choose her own adventure. In just 6 weeks, Kelle learned methods to manage her chronic condition that last a lifetime.

Select Your Free Workshop
Outreach #3: The story

This story resonated with Muriel:

• A familiar health trajectory
• A similar emotional response
• Muriel signed up

“I didn't think I had a chronic condition.”

- Javier, workshop participant

Javier had always been self-sufficient. As his health began to decline due to inherited chronic conditions, he pushed on, ignoring the warning signs. Life goes on, right? Until the pain didn’t let it anymore. When Javier finally admitted he was facing a health crisis he joined a 6 week online workshop. With the help of peer support, he felt empowered to take on his health challenges and significantly improved his quality of life.

Select Your Free Workshop
Discussion Center

ChristineS
Having health issues.
I suffer from a number of health issues myself. First being Fibromyalgia. Still trying to find exercises I can do and still be able to help my husband.
Posted 2 hours ago  Category: Health
Post a suggestion  Give encouragement

LB
How about a two step dance side to side and then front to back a few at a time? I am not sure if this will help but I hope so and much luck to you and your husband.
Posted 30 mins ago

ChristineS
Thank you for your suggestion. I could try. Would have to be small steps as I also have bursitis. When I go to the doctor the question is, what’s not wrong. That list is shorter.
Posted 1 hour ago

Lucila BADGE
I cannot imagine how hard it is helping your husband with the pain of fibromyalgia, ChristineS. You can check in the “Resources” tab for some help such as Health and Nutrition or the National Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Association.
Posted 2 hours ago

5 people posted suggestions  3 people gave encouragement
Hazel
Husband not supportive of my trying to lose weight

Created: about a month ago  Category: Communication

💬 Post a suggestion  ❤ Give encouragement

3 people made suggestions  0 people gave encouragement

Susan says
I hear you! I have similar problem with my mother who doesn’t seem to realize that I have to be careful about what I eat and she gets offended when I won’t eat her muffins.

Posted: about a month ago

June says
Maybe by you wanting to change, your husband might feel like you want him to change as well. He may also worry that if you change, will you still want him. I don’t know if that is what is going on, but you never know. A strategy my husband and I use is, when one of us has something to talk about we start off with.. I really need to talk to you about something and I don't want it to turn into an argument, I am going to talk about my feelings and you just need to listen until I am done, is this a good time to do this? We have been together a number of years and it has taken lots of practice.

Posted: about a month ago
Subject: Storytelling 101 webinar

Date and Time: Thursday, June 15, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Speaker: Vanessa Chase Lockshin, President, The Storytelling Non-Profit

Registration is required

Click here to register: https://nei3a-webevents.webex.com/nei3a-webevents/onstage/g.php?MTID=eb800de9b6dc7bfe28e1d7f76e1fd9d7a
Everyone has a story

The power of narrative to improve health and health care

Stories From the Field

Pattie League
Program Administrator
A Matter of Balance

Rob Schreiber
Medical Director of Evidence-Based Programs
Hebrew Senior Life