

LISTENING TO STORIES: A NARRATIVE MEDICINE APPROACH TO DEVELOPING CULTURAL HUMILITY

Sally Huang, MD, MS
Stanford University
Palo Alto, CA

Francis Lu, MD
UC Davis
Sacramento, CA

Background

Cultural humility is essential to understanding the complexity and intersectionality of cultural identity. Narrative medicine, as initiated by interdisciplinary scholars in the 1990's, provides a method of engaging with creative texts and understanding narrative structure that can facilitate the development of cultural humility.

Aims

This workshop will teach skills to employ and demonstrate how a narrative medicine approach can aid practitioners in developing cultural humility.

Methods

After an introduction to narrative medicine, session participants will take part in a 50-minute narrative medicine process, which involves group close reading of a creative text, examining not only the themes and content of the story but also form (how the story is being told); reflective prompted writing in the shadow of the creative text; and voluntary sharing of writing. Discussion will focus on participants' experiences of the process and how examining narrative elements such as voice, metaphor, and character can help us better understand cultural identity formation.

Potential Outcomes

Participants will leave the workshop with an experiential and theoretical understanding of the narrative medicine workshop method, which encourages openness to multiple interpretations of the same narrative and promotes a stance of self-reflexivity in understanding one's own relationship and response to a narrative. In examining how our own backgrounds might affect our engagement with any story, we can draw a connection to cultural humility, the importance of taking a non-essentializing approach to culture, and the intersubjective quality of any clinical encounter.

Discussion

This workshop raises several future directions of inquiry for the intersections between cultural psychiatry and narrative medicine, including how developing a sophisticated understanding of narrative structure and function can help us understand the complexity of patient narratives, and how narrative medicine workshops may be used to encourage self-reflexivity and the development of cultural and narrative humility in practitioners.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Define narrative medicine and describe the narrative medicine workshop method.
2. List three ways that a narrative medicine perspective and practice can enhance one's cultural humility to understand the complexity and intersectionality of cultural identity