

Let's talk

Guidelines for
Integrating **Patient**
Stories into Your
Meetings



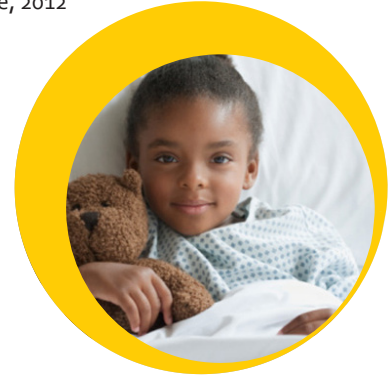
*Storytelling is the essential human activity.
The harder the situation, the more essential it is.*
Tim O'Brien

*Patient engagement is the blockbuster drug of the century
and it should be considered malpractice not to use it.*
Forbes Magazine, 2012

Benefits

Research is telling us more and more about the benefits of patient engagement:

- improves quality and safety
- enriches the patient experience
- increases satisfaction among patients, families and staff
- improves health outcomes



How do you find patients to participate?

Everyone has a story or experience to share. Deep learning can take place from both positive and/or negative experiences. Don't worry about it being the "perfect" story to match your meeting. Most people are willing to share their story when asked directly. Recruit participants through your colleagues and team members who work directly with patients.

In-person opportunities are considered the most valuable but when the time or interest level of the patient doesn't allow for in-person presentations, consider asking them to write out their story or send you a video that you could share.

Always consider how a patient story will benefit both the patient and the audience. Difficult experiences are hard to listen to but they are even harder to share. Create a safe space for learning by being prepared.

See [Pre-invitation Worksheet](#) on p. 4

Tips for preparing the audience

If having a patient at your team table is new, here are a few things to help your team prepare:

- Sharing a personal health story makes the speaker and the audience very vulnerable. Encourage your team to be supportive to all patients and to one another.
- Ask them to shut off all devices (close computers and put phones away) while the patient is present and to focus on the learning that can take place.
- If people have to leave during that part of the agenda due to other appointments, meetings, please let the organizer know ahead of time.
- Let your team know that emotions are perfectly acceptable and expected during patient stories. If it becomes too difficult, they can always excuse themselves from the room.
- If there is time for questions, make sure the questions focus on some of the learning that can take place from the story. Commentary about details or personal anecdotes can take place later during the team debrief.



WITH
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:
the Patient Experience
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Considerations for Story Day

- Have a designated person available to meet the patient upon arrival and to walk them out and debrief if necessary.
- Make sure a support person or someone the patient trusts is seated nearby.
- Let the patient know if someone has to leave during their talk.
- If any questions came up during the story, make sure to follow-up and respond in a timely manner.
- A team debrief after a patient story is incredibly valuable. Make sure to schedule time immediately following whenever possible.
- Focus the discussion on what your team can learn from the story. Avoid getting caught up in the details or allowing people to justify certain actions that were taken. This becomes unproductive. If actions need to be taken, create a quick action plan with follow-up at future meetings.
- Contact patient within 24 hours with a sincere thank you for their contribution to your team meeting.
- If you are aware of any relevant impact from their contribution, make sure to relay that back to the patient.



Pre-invitation Worksheet

Thinking through and planning for the items below will contribute to a positive experience for your team and for the patient.

Audience

- Who is the intended audience?
- How many people will be there?
- What are their roles in the organization?
- Will anyone linked to the patient's story be in the room? (if yes, inform patient ahead of time)

Logistics

- Date/time options
- Where/who should the speaker be meeting upon arrival
- Suggested length of time/ placement on agenda
- Will anyone from the media be in attendance? (if yes, inform patient ahead of time)
- What will the physical layout of the room be like?
- Will the patient be expected to stand/sit when speaking?
- Will there be a podium or a table?
- Who will walk out/debrief with the patient afterwards?

Considerations

- Is there a theme or angle of their story you'd like the patient to focus on?
- Do you want time for audience questions? (if yes, ask the patient if there are any off-limit topics/questions)
- Is it okay if the patient brings personal items?
- Is it okay if the patient brings a support person? Any limitations on who it could/could not be?
- Have you personally heard this patient story? (if not, you might want to consider asking to hear it ahead of time to avoid any surprises)



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