Narrative Medicine: Discovering the Person within the Patient

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Background

- Narrative Medicine: Model of practice developed in 2001 by Rita Charon, MD, PhD
 Narrative Competence: To absorb, interpret,
- and respond to patient stories
- Purpose: To promote empathy, reflection, professionalism, and trustworthiness
- Explore connections between:
- Provider and patient
 Provider and self
- Provider and colleague
 Provider and society

Methods

- Launched at VTCSOM in 2017 (Class of 2021)
- General themes
- $_{\odot}\mbox{Longitudinal}$ elective course through M1-M2 years
- Meet in faculty home/shared meal/safe space
- Substantive discussion encouraged
- Personal and creative response form basis of exploration of self
- Emphasis on relationship-building
- Three phases with compositions, creative responses, and sharing
- Introduction and personal memoir
- Health Narrative of a familiar person
- Health Narrative of an unknown person and "Parallel Chart"

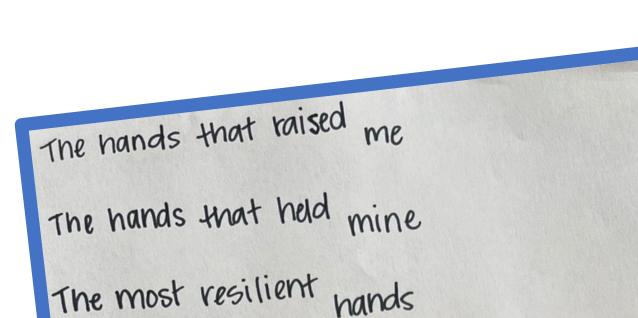
Results

65 student participants

- Excellent student and faculty satisfaction (average 4.8/5 on course evaluations)
- Development of Articulation creative journal
 Four issues since 2019
- 39 Narrative Medicine student published pieces
- 64 total published pieces
- Expanded faculty from 2 to 4
- Reunions initiated by students
- 15 of the 31 Gold Humanism Society Honorees from Classes of 2021-2024

Reflections from Students

"Narrative medicine was a big reason for me to stay connected with my humanity and





Conclusions

This course has illuminated the value of practicing Narrative Medicine. Narrative

creativity."

The course instructors "offer a thoughtprovoking and safe space for us to explore challenges of medicine, both personally and professionally, and find ways to approach some of these larger questions of being a physician, and also being a human."

The class provided "great guidance in our writing and development as future doctors, but also as humans and thinking through how we hold all these truths in concert. I think these are things that will continue to grow and develop as we progress."

"The Parallel Chart allows us to hold onto our humanity during medical school."



Medicine:

- fosters critical reflection
- builds community
- sparks creativity
- promotes self-care
- honors compassion and empathy

Selected References

Charon, R. (2006). *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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Albom, M. (1997). *Tuesdays with Morrie*. New York: Random House.



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