

## INTRODUCING GRAPHIC MEDICINE: CARE AND COMICS

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Since around 2000, there has been a growing body of work which tells medical stories using the form of comics. This genre has come to be called “Graphic Medicine” and has been organized and supported with annual (since 2007) global “Comics & Medicine” conferences and a publication series at The Pennsylvania State University Press. The seminal “Graphic Medicine Manifesto” was published by that press in 2015.

In my presentation I would like to begin with a survey of the genre’s history and to transmit a sense of its scope. Graphic Medicine publications are composed and illustrated by physicians, nurse practitioners, patients, patients’ family members and other creator/observers. Sometimes they are testimonies of actual cases and other times they are imagined and constructed. The perspectives offered and illustrative styles are wildly variable. The scope of vision might be broad and sociologically dense, displaying the patient’s lifeworld or only show the experience of an isolated figure.

I believe that Graphic Medicine can make claims to offer a unique instrument of mediation. As such, it can be used to facilitate the relation between doctors, students, patients and families. Comics can illustrate the imaginative and symbolic representations of figures and their dynamic relationships.

Furthermore, I propose that its features are sympathetic to and supportive of the goals and methods of Whole Person Care. Graphic Medicine is holistic as it presents a contextualizing situation, while subjective draughtsmanship enhances the affective dimension. And they are also anxiety reducing - for after all, they are still comics. ■