

READING PATIENTS: OUR STORY OF NARRATIVE MEDICINE

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As Dr. Rita Charon, pioneer of the field of narrative medicine, said “Literary accounts of illness can teach physicians concrete and powerful lessons about the lives of sick people” but also “enable physicians to recognize the power and implications of what they do” (Charon et al, 1995).

Through various narrative medicine exercises, we have explored the benefits of narrative medicine for health care professionals. More specifically, we have created a reading club for medical students and developed a reading module as part of the Physician Apprenticeship Course for medical students at McGill University. Moreover, we led short writing workshops based on prompts from short stories and poems for health care professionals at Anna-Laberge Hospital.

During our workshop, we will briefly review our narrative medicine initiatives and then dive into a narrative medicine exercise with the group to demonstrate its potential benefits among health care professionals. We hope that by providing concrete examples of narrative medicine projects we have developed and implemented, we will facilitate the integration of narrative medicine into participants’ own practices. ■