



The BUMC Narrative Writing Program (NWP): Writing from the Front Lines of Clinical Care, Education, and Research

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INTRODUCTION

Narrative-based education for health sciences professionals shows promise for fostering:

- Communication³
- Cultural competence⁴
- Empathy^{5,6}
- Professionalism^{7,8}
- Self-reflection to promote vitality and mitigate burnout^{7,9-11}

Faculty writing groups and workshops may:

- Promote publications and presentations¹²⁻¹⁴
- Improve writing skills¹³⁻¹⁵
- Bolster confidence in writing^{13,14,16,17}

Writing groups, writing workshops, and writing coaches lead to increased publication rates for participants.¹⁸

OBJECTIVES

The NWP's educational objectives include:

- Developing **writing competencies**
- Aiding in the preparation of narrative writing for **journal submission**
- Fostering **reflection** and **self-awareness** for professional and personal well-being
- Supporting **empathic engagement** with patients, learners, colleagues, and self
- Refining **listening skills** to interpret personal narratives
- Developing **leadership skills**, including emotional awareness, openness, and compassion
- Educating about the significance of narrative for **career development**

The NWP contributes to BUSM's strategic research and educational scholarship missions by investing in our faculty's academic development and personal vitality.

METHODS

We designed and implemented a cohort-based course to help faculty engage with narrative themes and writing skills relevant to their daily lives.

The NWP curriculum includes:

- Experiential literary seminars
- Reflective writing exercises
- Narrative writing workshops

We are piloting the program in the BUMC Department of Medicine from January-June 2018, with monthly meetings held on Thursday afternoons.


RESULTS

We have conducted evaluations throughout the NWP's conceptualization and implementation.

Preliminary feedback has been positive, with participants expressing increased self-efficacy and competence in writing, as well as satisfaction with the program's provision of a designated time and space to engage in narrative education.

As a result of NWP sessions, participating faculty have expressed various commitments, some of which are included in the figure below.

EXAMPLES OF PARTICIPANT COMMITMENTS



Submit a piece
Spend more time writing
Just write and not fixate
Pause more often—and think
Write poems to record difficult feelings at work
Think more about patients' perspective on their care
Think about perspective more when I write
Start writing as soon as possible
Write more and worry less
Value every moment
Read more stories