

An aerial photograph of New York City at dusk. The sky is a mix of purple, blue, and orange. The city lights are on, and the Hudson River is visible in the background. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

## Patient Narratives

Canadian Academy of Audiology  
October 12, 2017

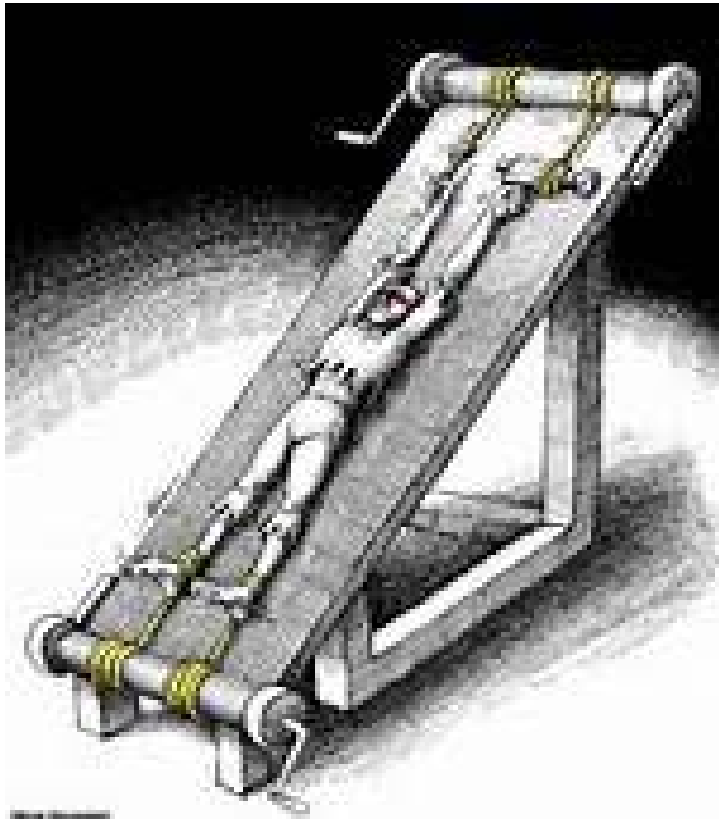
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# Disclosures



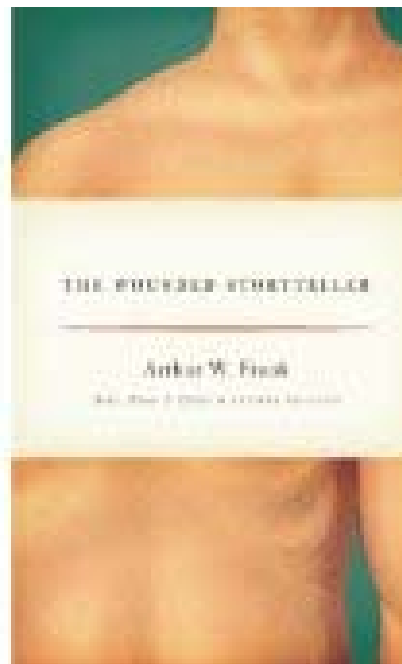
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# Narrative Medicine



# Narrative medicine

- **“.....a tool to give voice back to patients, fragile people, and persons who had no right to speak and claim how they lived their disease” Maria Giulia Marini (2016)**

# Patient Narratives

- The processes of getting ill, being ill, getting better (or getting worse), and coping (or failing to cope) with illness, can all be thought of as enacted narratives within the wider narratives (stories) of people's lives
- Narratives of illness provide a framework for approaching a patient's problems holistically, and may uncover diagnostic and therapeutic options
- Taking a history is an interpretive act; interpretation (the discernment of meaning) is central to the analysis of narratives (for example, in literary criticism)
- Narratives offer a method for addressing existential qualities such as inner hurt, despair, hope, grief, and moral pain which frequently accompany, and may even constitute, people's illnesses
- The lost tradition of narrative should be revived in the teaching and practice of medicine

### **Narratives in diagnostics**

- **Allows an understanding of how a patient experiences hearing loss .....**
- **Encourages empathy and promotes understanding between the clinician and patient**
- **Supplies clues to issues in a person's life**

### **Narratives in treatment**

- **Encourages an holistic approach to managing hearing loss**
- **Is intrinsically therapeutic**
- **May precipitate other therapeutic optins**

### **Narratives in Education**

- **Are often easy to remember**
- **Are grounded on experience**
- **Encourage reflective learning**

### **Narratives in Research**

- **May generate research questions**
- **Help set a patient-centered agenda**
- **May challenge conventional wisdom**

# Narrative Medicine

- **Clinical practice fortified by the knowledge of what to do with stories**
  - Absorb
  - Honor
  - Be moved into action



# Patient Narratives

**“The practice of listening to patients’ stories and responding sensitively to them provides an opportunity for more clinically effective as well as more empathic care.”** Garden, 2010

- **Listening**
  - **Many clinician find it difficult not to interrupt**  
(Erdman, 2014)
    - Physicians interrupt on average within 18 seconds.
- **Responding Sensitively**

# Goal of Rehab Audiology

Erdman 2000

To facilitate adjustment to the auditory and non-auditory consequences of hearing loss

Counseling is the essence of successful rehabilitation

# Talk to me

what's  
your  
story?

Tell me your story.  
I'll listen.



# Eliciting the Patient Story

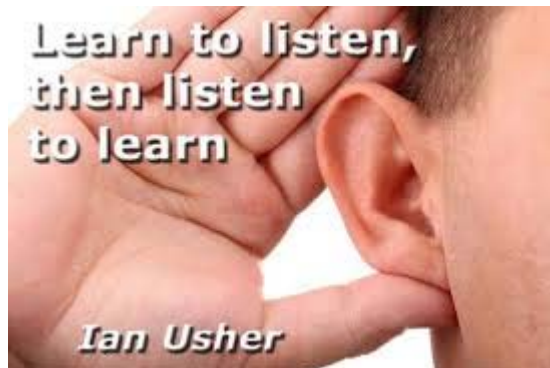
- **Greeting**
- **Create a comfortable environment**
- **Acknowledge the people in the room**
- **Comfortable seating (avoid computer head)**
- **Ask open ended questions**

# Listen

When you talk,  
you are only  
repeating what  
you already know.  
But if you listen,  
you may learn  
something new.



The word  
**LISTEN**  
contains  
the same letters  
as the word  
**SILENT.**



# Listen

- **In order for Narratives to work in clinical practice, the clinician must learn to listen.**
  - **Put down the paper and pen**
  - **Stop asking questions**
  - **Develop a listening posture**
  - **If questions are necessary, probe gently**

# Listening Skills: Not Passive

- Minimal Encouragers
  - Head nods, really?
  - Letting the person know you are listening
- Paraphrase
  - Sum-up what was heard
- Acknowledge/reflect feelings

- **Helping Phrases**
  - It sounds like you feel...
  - If I understand you right....
  - I'm not clear on what you mean by...
- **Provide Feedback**
  - Descriptive rather than evaluative
  - Specific rather than general
  - Checked to ensure clear communication
- **Silence**
  - Sometimes no words are better than wrong words



# Counseling Avoidances

- **Reassurance**
  - We want to reassure parents/children that they should not be upset, worried or unhappy
- **Persuasion**
  - Wanting to persuade others to see it your way

# Empathy common thoughts

- To be in someone's shoes
- To cheer someone up in a moment of sorrow
- to share someone's grief
- To know how you feel

# Empathy

- **Cognitive empathy: understanding another's point of view**
- **Affective empathy: understanding another's feelings**
- **Action empathy: displaying understanding in treatment**

**The key here is to appreciate the patient's story by attempting to understand their message, acknowledge their feelings and accept their beliefs**

**Denial of the effects of hearing loss is less common than many believe.**

# empathy



