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Tell me your story: Listening to the patient voice at the heart of health care storytelling

Eula Miller¹, Carol Haigh¹ and Pip Hardy²

¹Manchester Metropolitan University UK

²Patient Voices, UK

Introduction: This presentation describes the use of digital stories to enhance and complement existing training and education around dignity, respect and privacy in the mental health context by providing a platform for the patient voice. Privacy and dignity are fundamental to the wellbeing of individuals within the healthcare system and every member of the nursing workforce should prioritize dignity in care, placing it at the heart of everything they do. Yet, many staff needs more training on these issues, particularly when caring for those with mental health needs.

Objectives: A mental health Trust in a large city in the Northwest of the United Kingdom wished to explore ways in which digital technology could be used to raise awareness of issues such as dignity and respect commissioned a series of three-day digital storytelling workshop enabled survivors of mental health services, clinicians and managers to work together as partners, to develop a shared understanding of dignity and mental health- via digital stories.

Methods: Digital Storytelling involves the creation of short, often personal 'stories' on industry standard software and hardware in workshop environments. These short multi-media clips weave together images, music, story and voice. The focus, content and presentation of the stories are entirely in control of the story teller.

Results: Digital stories created by mental health service users sit at the heart of an online educational resource. Watching the stories enables staff to engage with the affective dimension of care and reflect on the impact of care that promotes dignity – or the lack of it – through participation discussion about the elements of dignity inherent in the story. At the end of the workshop the service users reported enhance feeling of empowerment and worth. The mental health trust concerned went on to use the stories in other ways to ensure that the voice of the patient was always at the heart of all decision making.

Conclusion: Use of the stories in undergraduate nurse education, CPD, induction and recruitment reveals creative engagement with complex issues and as a growing awareness of dignity-conserving care in mental health care.

Biography

Eula Miller is a registered Mental Health Nurse and registered Adult Nurse. Currently, she is working as a Senior Lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is a Senior Fellow of The Higher Education Academy (SFHEA). Her educational practice involves teaching both Under-graduate and Post-graduate students. She holds an honorary contract, practicing professionally in the field of Acute Mental Health Nursing. Her doctoral study and research endeavors since completing her doctorate have focused on developing strategies for hearing the missing voice of stakeholders working within health services and developing the emotional resilience of nurse educators, nursing students and health professional practitioners within the NHS workforce.

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