

The Value of Patient Stories in Pre-Registration Physiotherapy Education



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BACKGROUND

In 2011, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy in Wales invested in training clinicians and academic staff in how to take patient stories. Cardiff University Academic Staff have used this methodology to enhance the student experience within the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy Programme primarily to enable students to consider the illness experience and psychosocial aspects of person centred healthcare pre placement. The stories we collected proved to be very valuable in enhancing the student experience.

WHAT IS A PATIENT STORY?

1000 Lives Plus (2010, p4) defines patient stories "as the experience of a range of potential storytellers, communicating for different reasons with a range of different audiences".

These storytellers maybe patients themselves and/or their carers/families or healthcare professionals. Of particular interest is the story told by an individual from their own perspective as it creates the opportunity to gain an understanding of the healthcare experience of the storyteller. Collectively, stories can help us build a picture of what it is like to be a patient/service-user (1,000 Lives Plus, 2010).

OUR AIM

Patient stories have gained popularity in facilitating service improvement, however, we wished to use patient stories

1. To create curriculum enhancing learning opportunities
2. To enable students to meet people who live with or have recovered from a range of illnesses and conditions.
3. To broaden the students understanding of the psychosocial issues and psychological impact of these conditions.
4. To provide service users with the opportunity to share their experiences and, vitally, demonstrate that there is a human being behind each health condition.

CREATING DIGITAL STORIES

A variety of methods were utilised to engage service users in telling their stories.

- Face to face interviews in individual's homes: audio and/ or video recorded. Transcripts provided.
- Expert patients came into the classroom to speak with students about their experiences individually or be interviewed in small groups.
- Stories were captured using a digital video camera and iPhone providing audio-visual information.

The recorded stories were developed by our learning technology manager, into digital stories. Lutz and Huitt (2003) found that learners are able to synthesise information in greater depth if presented with short sequences of learning. With this in mind, each interview was cut into series of 15-20 minute 'chunks'. Each chunk was bookended with open questions posed to prompt reflection or quick and simple multiple choice questions were posed as a way for students to quickly assess their understanding. Once created each story was embedded in the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) allowing each story to be disseminated to a wider student audience with increased accessibility on mobile devices. We have used Margaret's Story as an example of this innovation.

MARGARET'S STORY

Margaret told the students about what it meant to live with COPD. She described every day as a challenge 'a bit like wading through mud'

She explained that COPD rarely comes alone there were inevitable side effects. She also explained that her husband and carer lived a life of anxiety.

Margaret told students about her daily medication routine and how important oxygen was to her quality of life.

To hear Margaret tell her story please scan the barcode using a QR code scanner

Sadly, Margaret passed away on April 26th 2016. Her story is a lasting legacy for pre-registration physiotherapy education in Wales



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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REFERENCES

Lutz, S.T and Huitt, W. G., 2003. *Information Processing and Memory: Theory and Applications*, located at: <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/papers/infoproc.pdf>, date accessed: 25th May, 2016
Tee A. and Gray J. 2010, *Learning to use Patient Stories*, (Cardiff, 1,000 Lives Plus)

THE VALUE OF PATIENT STORIES

Patient stories are inspirational

- ✓ Remind us why we do what we do
- ✓ Inspire students to be person/ family centred in healthcare provision
- ✓ Students request more of this type of learning experience

Patient stories are educational

- ✓ Educate students from the patient experience rather than the therapist experience
- ✓ Equip students with new insights, knowledge and skills
- ✓ Prepare students for the responsibility of shared decision making with patients/service users fostering the fundamental idea that patients are equal partners in healthcare

Patient stories are innovative

- ✓ Digital stories provide effective, engaging and emotively powerful learning experiences for educators and students