Transforming healthcare through digital storytelling

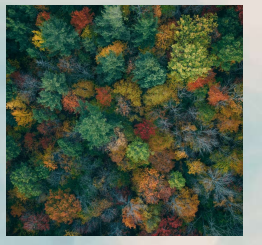
Dr Pip Hardy and Tony Sumner
Co-founders, Patient Voices Programme

Kaohsiung Medical University
18th November 2026

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Overview

- Introducing ourselves
- Introducing Patient Voices
- Stories and statistics
- Stories 'to entertain and to teach'
- 'The medium is the message'
- What makes a good story?
- Sharing our stories
- Reflection



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Introductions

Please tell us:

- Your name
- One thing you really like
- One thing you really dislike
- Your experience of facilitating story circles
- What you hope to gain from this session



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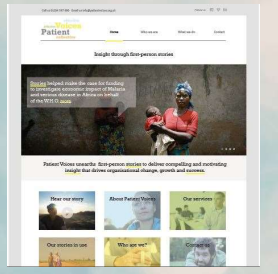
Patient Voices

patience, *noun*. calm endurance of pain or any provocation; perseverance

patient, *adj*. having or showing patience

voice, *verb*. give utterance to, express

Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964



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Our aspiration

'...to capture some of the unwritten and unspoken stories of ordinary people so that those who devise and implement strategy, as well as clinicians directly involved in care, may carry out their duties in a more informed and compassionate manner.'

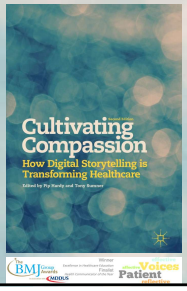
From *The Patient Voices Rationale*, Hardy 2004



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Patient Voices

- Established in 2003
- The first – and only – digital storytelling project focused solely on healthcare
- ~ 1400 stories facilitated/recorded
- ~ 900 stories released
- ~ 200 workshops, plus some home visits!
- ~ 3 million hits on the website annually
- 14 papers and 8 book chapters published
- 1 book written, 1 PhD and 1 MSc completed
- 3 international and 2 national awards won



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Where we've worked



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Stories and statistics

'Statistics tell us the system's experience of the individual, whereas stories tell us the individual's experience of the system…'

Tony Sumner, 2009



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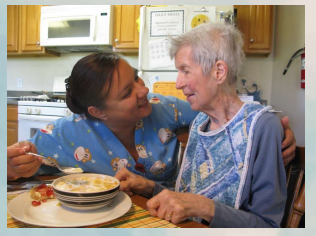
Why tell stories?

'Stories promote empathy, which in turn prompts reflection and serves as the motivation for learning and acquiring new knowledge.'

Rita Charon, 2002

'The plural of stories is culture.'

James Munro, 2017



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'We tell stories to entertain and to teach.'

Why else might you tell stories?

- Introducing yourself
- Introducing a module
- Illuminating a topic
- Delivering a lecture
- Opening Board meetings
- Case study / qualitative data
- Team building
- Increasing awareness
- Prompt for reflection
- Therapeutically



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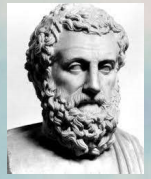
What makes a good story?

'A whole story is what has a beginning and middle and end.'

Aristotle

'…but not necessarily in that order.'

Jean-Luc Godard



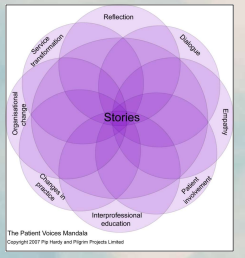


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What research revealed...

Patient Voices stories are valued for their:

- authenticity
- veracity
- flexibility and versatility
- brevity and succinctness
- emotional power.....



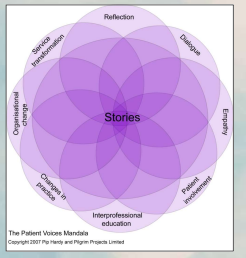
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What we can learn

'There are many aspects to the Patient Voices stories... I take every chance I can to recommend that the medical profession takes ten minutes a day to go through the different stories to try and understand what patients cannot always put into the right words.

Then, maybe, just maybe, we may get a better understanding of how people are feeling ***so we can all communicate properly****.'*

Brian Clarke, patient storyteller



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Why tell stories?

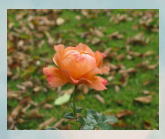
'The culture of the mind must be subservient to the culture of the heart.'

MK Gandhi

'Storytelling is the mode of description best suited to transformation in new situations of action.'

Schön 1988





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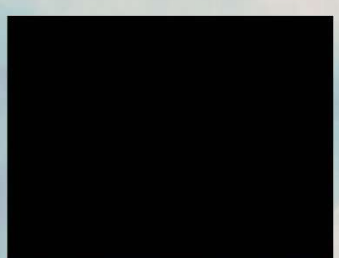
Getting to the bottom of things



www.patientvoices.org.uk/flv/0110pv384.htm Jean Bailey-Dering 2007

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EAR: a model for reflection

Effective
What did you think?

Affective
What did you feel?

Reflective
What will you do?

Sumner, 2009



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Impact: Getting to the bottom of things

- Highlights impact of Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Reminder that patients are people first
- RCN changed syllabus
- Revelation re continence/mobility led to review of continence questionnaires
- Student nurses recognised the importance of listening to patients' stories
- GPs recognised the importance of listening to patients' stories
- 35,165 views on Patient Voices website



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What is digital storytelling?

Digital stories are short, first-person videos consisting of still images, a voiceover, music and video (sometimes), created by ordinary people about things that really matter to them.

Digital stories are a *distillation* – they move us from the narrative to the *essential* story.



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Digital storytelling involves...

- Deep reflection
- Creative writing
- Photography, painting, drawing
- Image and video editing
- Groupwork
- Peer support & review
- Voicework & performance
- Music
- Meaning-making

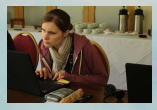


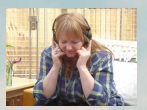



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Digital storytelling is....

- Creative
- Reflective
- Contemplative
- Collaborative
- Emancipatory
- Democratic
- Participatory
- Validating
- Transformative
- Universal



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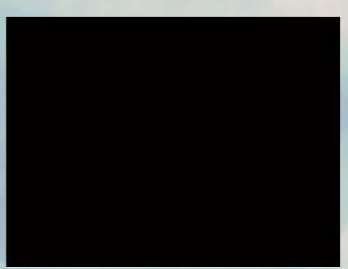
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https://www.patientvoices.org.uk/flv/0257pv384.htm Matthew Critchfield

23

Yeah, I'll go



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EAR: a model for reflection

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Sumner, 2009



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What makes a good story?

Your thoughts?



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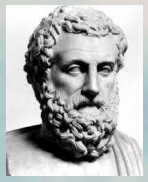
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Time for some storytelling

Please spend three minutes writing a short story about:

The first time....



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How was that for you?

Any volunteers to read their story?



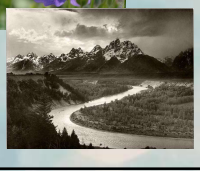
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'A picture is worth a thousand words.'

'When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence.'

Ansel Adams





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Walking in someone else's shoes

'These stories allow us to walk in someone else's shoes for a few minutes.'

Medical Officer
National Institute of Medical Research
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



NB. The *Saving Brains* stories can be seen here:
www.patientvoices.org.uk/savingbrains.htm

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Thank you

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tony@pilgrimprojects.co.uk
www.patientvoices.org.uk
@PatientVoicesUK

effective
affective Voices
Patient
reflective

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