THE LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM® IN ACTION

Beryl Institute
April 2014

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Yale-New Haven Hospital
Colette Brune

On March 26th in 1911, on the family farm near St. Paul, Minnesota, Colette and her mother were born. Colette grew up with two sisters: Thelma and Mary. Colette’s father, Lewis, was a farmer and worked hard to support his family.

Growing up in a rural setting, Colette learned to appreciate nature and the beauty of the surrounding landscape. She spent many hours outside, exploring the fields and forests with her siblings.

Colette’s love for nature extended to her work as a nurse. She believed in treating her patients with kindness and compassion, understanding that each individual was unique and required personalized care.

Colette’s dedication to nursing was recognized by her peers and her community. She served as a nurse during World War II, providing care to soldiers in hospitals and medical facilities.

Throughout her career, Colette maintained a strong sense of community. She was an active member of her church and participated in various volunteer organizations.

In her later years, Colette continued to be an inspiration to those around her. She remains a beloved figure in her community, remembered for her kindness and her unwavering commitment to the care of others.

GETTING TO KNOW THE "PATIENT" AS A "PERSON"
The mission of The Living History Program®

To provide a basic life information story of our patients so we can provide care to the heart and soul.
What is a “story”? 

A living and breathing chronicle of the patient’s non-medical history
AWARDS: LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM

Sheila Brune, Creator

- Bright Ideas Award - Iowa Society for Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations
- Innovations in Patient Care – Iowa Association of Nurse Leaders
- Healthcare and Aging Award - American Society on Aging, in collaboration with Pfizer
- Success Story – Press Ganey
The Beryl Institute recently announced a partnership with Sheila Brune, creator of the Living History Program to help personalize healthcare and improve the Patient Experience.

- Utilized at over 40 hospitals
- Enhances the patient experience through the use of life stories
- Strengthens patient connections by using life stories
THE LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM© AT YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL

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The Living History Program© at YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL

- Flagship hospital, Yale New Haven Health System
- 1,541 licensed beds
- 3,900 physicians, over 100 specialties
- 12,450 employees, 2600 volunteers
- 80,503 inpatient discharges FY 2013
- 1,100,534 outpatient encounters FY 2013
History of Program at YNHH

- SHCA conference presentation, @ 2004
- 2006: Reviewed patient satisfaction results and chose a medicine unit focused on improving patient satisfaction
- 2006: Program implementation
- 2011: Youth volunteer project, volunteer histories
- 2011, Partnership with Trumbull College
- To date: 63 volunteers, 2680 hours of service, 808 patient histories, 71 volunteer histories
“Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

- Theodore Roosevelt
What do patients want?

- Don’t hurt me
- Heal me
- Show me that you care
Getting the Story

- Volunteers trained as storywriters
- Patients selected by nursing staff
- Volunteer interviews patient (and/or family) using standard tool
- Volunteer prepares written story and returns to patient bedside to share story with patient
- Copy of story left with staff
A trip down memory lane ...

- Favorite toys or pets from childhood
- Childhood events and chores
- Important inventions you have lived to see
- What school was like—how you got to school
- Favorite teacher and why
- Any fads of your youth
- How they met the “love of their life”
- Best vacation
- Most amazing thing that ever happened to you
Most beautiful place you ever visited
Using the Story

- Stories validate the person
- Stories re-focus patients and families
- Patient uses story to reminisce
- Staff use story to connect with patients, “I read your story”, “I loved reading your story”
- Staff will better understand their patients
- When we make connections with patients about what is important to them, the message we impart is “We care about you”
TAKING THE PROGRAM TO THE NEXT LEVEL...
THE UNIQUE LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

TRUMBULL COLLEGE
YALE UNIVERSITY
AND
YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL
“...for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.”

- Francis W. Peabody, MD
  October 21, 1926.
The Problem

- Documentation requirements have increased
- Time spent with patients has decreased
- Physicians and nurses no longer know their patients
18-32% of patients could correctly name their hospital physician
60% could correctly name their nurse
There was no agreement between patients and physicians on planned tests or procedures for the day 38% of the time

- Communication Discrepancies Between Physicians and Hospitalized Patients. (Arch Intern Med, 2010 Aug.)
- Hospitalized patients’ understanding of their plan of care. (Mayo Clin Proc, 2010 Jan.)
Patients feel their emotional needs are not being met and their care teams do not know their personal story.

- 98% of physicians believed they addressed patients’ fears and anxieties
- 54% of patients stated their physicians never addressed their fears and anxieties

- Communication Discrepancies Between Physicians and Hospitalized Patients. (Arch Intern Med, 2010 Aug.)
Background/Objective

- In the Department of Medicine, the average length of stay is 5 days
- Patients admitted to Yale-New Haven hospital often report that their emotional needs are not being met.
- Our residents and interns often feel overburdened and have competing demands placed upon them.
It is how we learn about our world

Converts strangers into people with whom we can empathize

To empathize one must be curious enough to know their patients

There are no uninteresting patients

Curiosity - On being a doctor (Annals of Internal Medicine, 1999 Jan)
Recognize the importance of each patient’s personal narrative

Train Yale undergraduate students to perform patient-centered interviews and chronicle a patient’s life history

Create a written narrative
  - Edited by each patient
  - Each story printed and laminated
  - Shared with the care team
  - A copy provided to each patient
The Solution Methodology

- 16 self-selected undergraduates of Trumbull College at Yale University trained by Yale University facilitators in open ended interviewing skills.
- 17 open-ended questions were used.
- Inclusion criteria: the ability to speak English, absence of hearing impairment and well enough to participate in a 45-minute interview.
- Two candidates chosen; one to be interviewed, the other as the control.
Examples of Interview Questions

- Are you spiritual? What does that mean to you?
- Where do you live and with whom?
- What event has had the biggest impact on you?
- What do you most value or love?
- Is there anything you have always wanted to do but haven’t?
- What do you most want your medical team to know about you?
Results

- 33 patients participated
- 16 undergraduates performed all the interviews.
- All study patients received surveys upon discharge. Quantitatively, we discovered statistical significance by our patients interviewed for the following questions:
  - Were nurses responsive to your emotional needs?
    - (P-Value = 0.008)
  - Did you feel appreciated and understood by your caregiver?
    - (P-Value = .003)
This study created an environment where the patient’s story served as the cornerstone necessary to build a therapeutic alliance.

This unique living history project has positively impacted the patient’s experience. Additionally, the undergraduate interviewers experience the transformative nature of bearing witness to a patient’s personal narrative.
“There are no words more significant than those spoken by a patient who has placed his or her life in your keeping.”

Medicine is both humbling and addicting, both mysterious and odd, and ultimately, “a transcendent profession where the reality of the body is the surest pathway to the mysteries of the soul.”

Courtney Davis
Trumbull College: 2011-2014

125 Living Histories Produced

Trumbull College Team

40 students Trained

Yale-New Haven Hospital