

A photograph of a young man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, smiling at the camera. He is standing in a store aisle filled with colorful fabrics and patterns. A woman is partially visible behind him.

NARRATIVE MATTERS: HEALTH EQUITY, HEALTH BEHAVIORS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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knowledge changing life



Disclosures

- No disclosures to declare

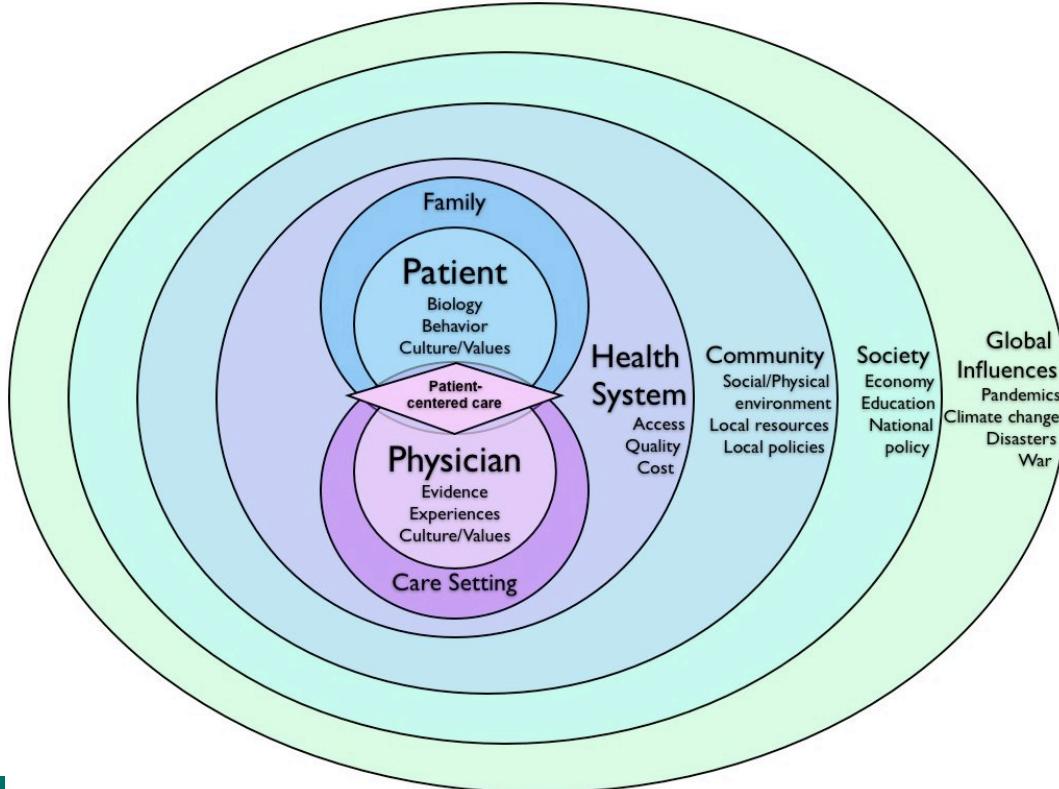
Objectives

- Recognize the role of personal narratives in shaping health behaviors
- Identify the mechanisms by which individual experiences can exemplify health equity and social justice
- Describe ways in which researchers can apply narrative inquiry as a methodology

WHAT'S
YOUR
STORY?



Socio-ecologic model



- Myriad of factors that influence health outcomes
- What happens when we travel “upstream” to uncover the roots of disease and disability?

Social justice and health

Social justice defined as:

“justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society.”

It is one component to achieving health equity



Why is rigorous research on social justice and population health necessary?

- Existence of disparities
 - e.g. existence of social inequalities in health
- Causes of disparities
 - innate vs. social explanations
- Solutions to disparities
 - Individualistic “lifestyle” v. structural interventions

Community engagement - principles



- Clarity about who is engaged and goals of the effort
 - Knowledge of a community's history
 - Build trust and relationships
 - Seek commitments from formal and informal leadership
 - Importance of collective self-determination
 - Mobilize assets and develop capacities
 - Long term commitment



Community Engagement Continuum *



* International Association for Public Participation

Narrative inquiry

What is narrative inquiry?



- An approach that focuses on narratives – experiences as lived and told
- Representation: qualitative researchers hold different perspectives!
- “...much, if not all, qualitative and ethnographic writing is a narrative production.” (DENZIN)

Produces a specific type of knowledge, beyond aggregate data or large samples of entire populations

What is narrative inquiry NOT?

- “Soft” or “soft science”
- “Touchy feely”
- Non-rigorous



What does narrative inquiry require of a researcher?

- Listening to participant experiences
- Acknowledging the mutual construction of the research relationship
- Acknowledging the process of telling one's story and reflecting on life as part of explanation to others

Narratives and vulnerable populations

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Gain insight into diverse voices

Narratives demonstrate human agency

Construction of selfhood through social relationships and institutions



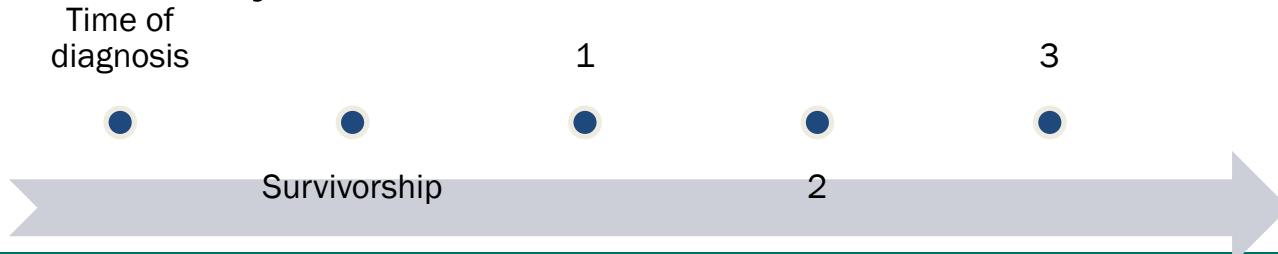
Case Study

- Provides community-based substance abuse and mental health treatment, education and support
- Primarily serves criminally justice involved women
- Values of restorative justice and advocacy



Case Study – racism, residential segregation, and breast cancer survival

- Employing phenomenological inquiry and narrative analysis
- Adaptation of a life history calendar method and residential history

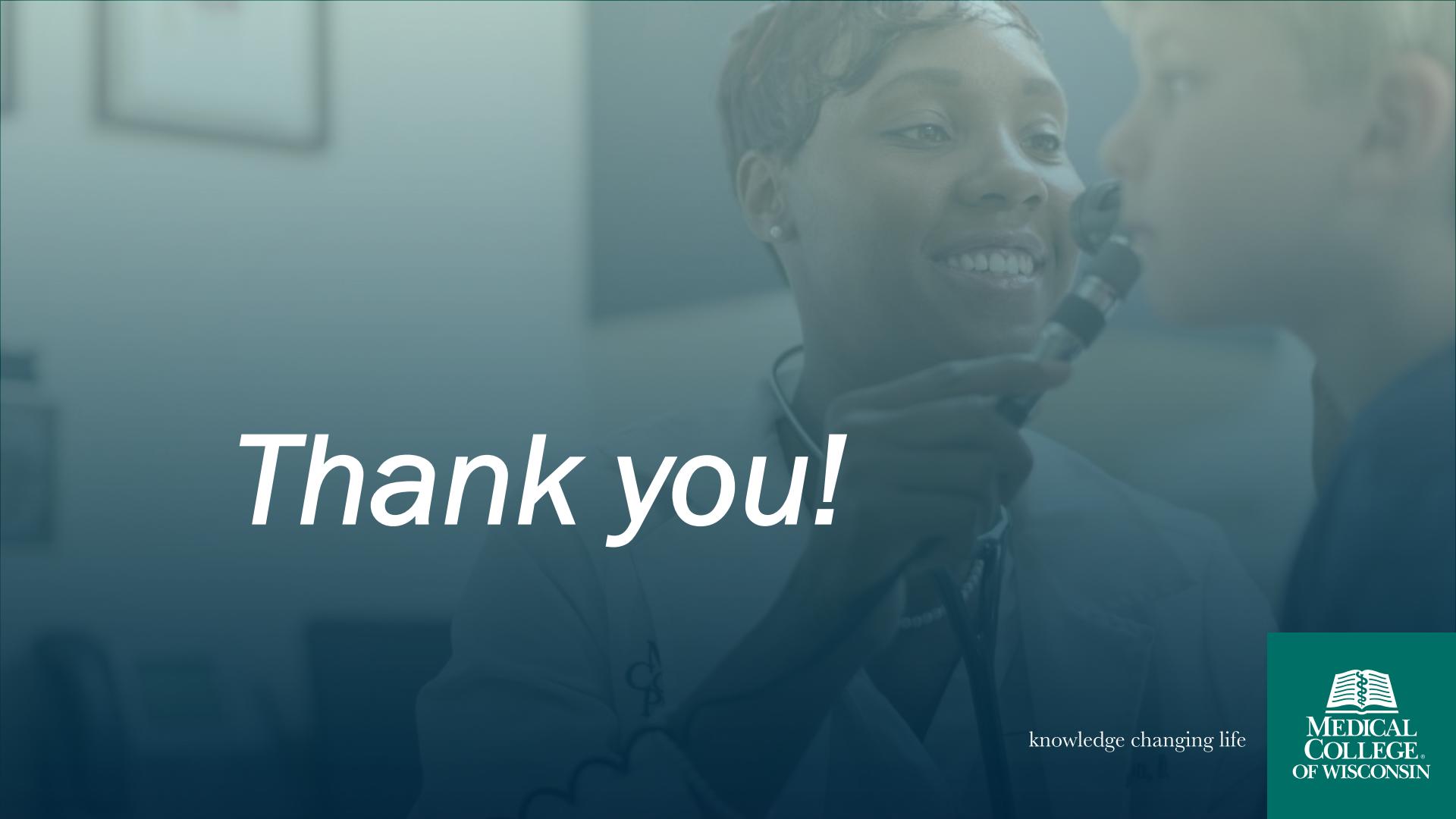


Narratives and health messaging

- Employing personal narratives in message design (Hecht ML, Miller-Day M 2007, 2010)
 - First person may be most effective in impacting outcomes (Winterbottom A, et al 2008)
- Narrative effectively lowering risk and promoting healthy behaviors (e.g. STDs, cancer) (Kiene & Barta, 2003; Kreuter et al, 2008; Larkey & Gonzalez, 2007)

References

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Thank you!

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