

**Title:**

Use of Storytelling to Decrease Stress

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**Session Title:**

Creative Arts in Nursing Posters

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**Keywords:**

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**References:**

Cook, K.A., Mott, S., Lawrence, P., Jablonski, J., Grady, M. R., Norton, D., Liner, K. P., Cioffi, J., Hickey, P., Reidy, S., Connor, J. A. (2012). Coping while caring for the dying child: Nurses' experiences in an acute care setting. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 27, e11-e21.

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**Abstract Summary:**

Nursing the sick and dying can be stressful. Stress-reducing interventions have the possibility to create positive emotional health. Storytelling, a cost-effective intervention to decrease stress, is a verbal recount of similar meaningful experiences that individuals share. Storytelling allows for stress management, providing opportunity to discuss concerns, simultaneously supporting nurse peers.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
1. The learner will be able to explain the steps of an effective storytelling intervention.	One feature of storytelling is the creation of dyads and/or small groups who self-identify with co-workers they feel comfortable with and who can provide support. Next a schedule should be set for meeting times, days, and places. Once the schedule is established the intervention should follow a set routine of steps to take such as identification of the storyteller and listener, prompting questions to

	guide the process, and reversal of roles for others to participate as storyteller.
2. The learner will be able to utilize this intervention in their own practice.	Once the storytelling intervention is understood, the steps that guide the intervention can be used for stress reduction. Nurses who choose to participate and who believe that the intervention will help with their workplace stress levels can utilize storytelling at any time.
3. The learner will be able to appraise the importance of the intervention of storytelling so that perceived workplace stress will be reduced.	During the process of storytelling the nurses reflect on and make meaning of the experience. Verbally communicating stories of patient events promotes healing by understanding and making sense of traumatic experiences creating a sense of connectedness, providing personal resilience, increasing coping, and decreasing stress.

### **Use of Storytelling to Decrease Stress**

Danna L. Curcio PhD, RNC, FNP

#### **Abstract**

Nursing sick and dying patients can be a source of stress and may create the potential for burnout and compassion fatigue (Ko & Kiser-Larson, 2016). Aside from the mental health and wellbeing of nurses, potential outcomes due to stress can increase hospital costs evidenced through absenteeism, decreased work performance, and decreased quality of patient care (Fathi, Nasae & Thiangchanya, 2012; Milliken, Clements & Tillman, 2007). Stress-reducing interventions have the possibility to create positive emotional health, and in turn, create positive patient care outcomes. Storytelling is an important, efficient, and cost effective intervention to decrease stress.

Storytelling is a verbal recount of a perceived meaningful event, to one or more individuals, that share similar experiences. The use of storytelling can allow nurses to manage their stress while being provided the opportunity to discuss concerns. Simultaneously, this activity may provide support to nurse peers who experience similar events and also may help nurses reflect on and make sense of the experience they tell about (Cook, et al, 2012; Macpherson, 2008). Peer support through storytelling creates meaning, which allows for coping and learning when the sharing of similar events transpires.

A small study conducted by this researcher revealed the significance of storytelling in reducing nurses' stress. Quantitative and qualitative data yielded significant responses, supporting the use of storytelling as a stress reduction activity. Further investigation in the use of storytelling to decrease stress is ongoing.

*Keywords: storytelling; stress; nurses; coping*

Cook, K.A., Mott, S., Lawrence, P., Jablonski, J., Grady, M. R., Norton, D., Liner, K. P., Cioffi, J., Hickey, P., Reidy, S., Connor, J. A. (2012). Coping while caring for the dying child: Nurses' experiences in an acute care setting. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 27, e11-e21.

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