



In the Incubator: Capturing Patient Stories

For all the value of data and metrics, personal stories have a unique power to inspire, motivate or teach us to be more compassionate and understanding. Because doctors and nurses see people at their most vulnerable or most relieved, they often hear patients speak about struggles and triumphs. A new project at West County Health Centers trains clinic providers and staff to record videos of patients telling their stories—when such impactful moments organically emerge. West County hopes sharing these videos in exam rooms will help build empathy and trust among staff, patients and the community.

The Impact of Stories

In our daily lives we are constantly bombarded with new information. What sticks are stories, ideas and details animated by narrative and emotion. Listening to the personal stories of others, especially those about emotional issues like health, can help us learn and make an impact on how we behave.

For a clinic sharing stories can humanize the too-often stressful and arcane process of getting healthcare. Hearing from patients who struggled with difficult health issues or who received care that made their lives better can put other patients at ease, keep staff motivated and help organizations learn how to improve their practices. Hearing stories from staff and volunteers can help build trust in the community.

Dispelling Exam Room Boredom

Sitting in a sterile exam room waiting for your turn with the doctor can be a disconcerting, even frustrating experience. To help provide a more interesting, comfortable patient experience, WCHC is installing monitors with Apple TVs to allow patients to watch channels of programmed video content. Along with videos about maintaining a healthy lifestyle, those waiting in the exam room will be able to watch videos of both patients and staff telling their personal stories. This gives patients something to do while they wait, and lets them learn about the organization and get acquainted with the care they are about to receive.

How It Works

- At WCHC providers and staff are equipped with iPads. Along with accessing electronic health records, these tablet computers have cameras that can record video.
- Providers and staff should be on the lookout for personal stories from

patients. These stories should be about their health or wellness journey, or about their care at the clinic.

- As a staff member or provider recording a story, ask the patient if the clinic could record their story to share on West County's internal Apple TV network, website and other communications. If need be, explain why you found their story worthwhile and how others could benefit from hearing it.
- If the patient agrees, ask them to fill out a release form.
- Next the staff or provider adjusts the lighting in the room. Light should be focused on the front and sides of the patient's face, not lit from behind where they would be in shadow.
- Mute outside noises by closing the door. Turn the volume up on the iPad.
- Launch the Camera app and drag the slider to select "video."
- Hold the iPad horizontally (as a paper printed in landscape mode) and frame the patient in the center. Make sure there isn't too much "headroom" in the frame above the patient. If you can, rest the iPad on a level surface to prevent shaking.
- Tap the screen to activate the automatic exposure rectangle. Center the rectangle on the speaker's face.
- Press the "record" button. Then count to five and signal to the patient they should begin. When they finish speaking, count to five again before pressing the "record" button again to stop.
- Tap the thumbnail image of the patient in the corner of the screen and review the recording. Let the patient watch it to make sure they are comfortable with the recording.
- The video is automatically saved in the Photos app.
- Upload the video to a secure server to protect patient privacy, and delete it from the iPad.
- The staff member who recorded the video should then alert their supervisor, who can arrange for final editing and review.
- The video can then be used in the Apple TV channel, as well as in other communications such as the clinic website.
- For privacy reasons, when sharing patient stories don't use any identifying information beyond the patient's first name and image.

"Even though most people don't know how to shoot video, everyone knows when it's not good. The things I'm dealing with in this tutorial are the simple mistakes that people make and how to avoid them."

-Inese Heinzl, Encore Fellow at West County Health Centers

Best Uses, Biggest Impacts

To determine if a patient story is worth sharing, clinics should look at four criteria. First, it should be about the patient's health, their wellness journey, or the care they received at that clinic. Second, the story should be emotionally compelling. Third, it should be a story that others could benefit from hearing, particularly if it can inspire them to make good decisions about their own health. Finally, recorded stories should be less than five minutes long.

“Providing the know-how of recording patient stories almost as they occur allows us to get that in-the-moment quality, that sense of unscripted, natural sincerity.”

-Inese Heinzl, Encore Fellow at West County Health Centers

Lessons from Practice

- When WCHC first decided to try to record personal stories, they asked staff to simply report when a patient shared an appropriate story with them. A videographer would later contact the patient to try to schedule a meeting for the patient to recount their story on video. However tracking down the patients and arranging suitable recording times proved to be challenging. It was better to try to capture patient stories in the moments just after they were first told.
- In piloting attempts, WCHC has found that patients are very open to sharing their stories. Patients can feel as though they rarely get a chance to make themselves heard. This is especially true for patients from underserved communities. Once they get warmed up it can be hard to get them to stop

What's Next?

West County will soon be premiering their first set of staff and patient stories on their internal Apple TV network, as well as deploying the iPad video training to staff to start collecting more stories.

Learn More

- West County Health Centers serves Western Sonoma County, California. They develop and test technology solutions as part of CCI's Innovation Centers for the Safety Net program. Visit their website here: <http://www.wchealth.org/>
- Learn more about WCHC's video collaboration work here: <http://www.careinnovations.org/knowledge-center/videos-exploring-video-collaboration>
- This training procedure was developed by Encore Fellow Inese Heinzl. Learn more about the Encore Fellows in Community Health Centers here: <http://www.careinnovations.org/search/results/search&keywords=encore/>
- Find more Incubator briefs on our website: careinnovations.org.