



“Access”

Narrative Medicine Workshop Rundown

Description:

This guide is timed for a **1-hour, 30-minute** virtual workshop with **8-10 participants** and includes a short break. It assumes you have already held an introductory “Attention” group and set group guidelines. Adjust your time estimates for groups that are larger, smaller, or of different lengths. Same for in-person groups: adjust timing and exercises as necessary.

Look for facilitator tips, production notes, and sample language throughout to help make your workshop successful. Feel free to copy and paste third objects, prompts, and other exercises from the [Accessible Digital Library](#) into your rundown.

Workshop sections:

WELCOME	<i>~2-4 minutes</i>
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Guidelines reminder to create a safe environment. Introductory note about **access**, how expanding access to things like healthcare and other vital resources should be viewed as a common good, not limiting. Think of the many types of barriers—physical, linguistic, systemic, institutional—people face in life, but particularly accessing healthcare. When access is referring to people with disabilities, how do we move from treating disability as a binary of illness vs. wellness, having vs. lacking, to a place of honoring a wider breadth of experience around disability and access? How do we design systems that work and are accessible for everyone at the outset, without the need for adaptation or specialized design?

Remind everyone there will be a short break midway through the workshop.

Production note:

This is a great chance to bring your own thinking and experience to this workshop. Why did you choose this workshop? What do you hope these explorations bring participants?

WARM-UP WRITE & SHARE	<i>~15-18 minutes total</i>
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Write #1 (13-16 minutes total)

Divide your page/screen into two columns, Column A and Column B. Start by spending about **3 minutes** filling Column A with a list of qualities or traits you have now or wish you had. Don't overthink it, make them simple. Fill Column A with as many words as you can.

Next, move to Column B and spend another **2-3 minutes** filling each line, this time, with the word/phrase most *opposite* to the word or phrase you wrote in Column A.



Next, spend **1 minute** reading through your lists as a series of paired opposites. Select one pair with the most energy around them, positive or negative. Perhaps these are the qualities/traits you've worked hardest to move toward or away from. Pay attention if there is a pair you're resistant to write about. Be willing to pick those!

With the pair you chose, do a longer write—about **7-9 minutes**—working them into one of the following prompts. Be sure to keep your pen/pencil/typing moving:

- On the path between [word A] and [word B], I find myself...
- Even without [word A] or [word B], we ...

Production note: Since you're starting group with this exercise, be prepared to put simplified instructions for each step in the chat in case you have late arrivals.

Partial share, no feedback (2 minutes)

Have everyone read aloud only their pair of words. Encourage everyone to also put these in the chat as an offering for people to consider as a prompt for any other write this session.

THIRD OBJECT – ENGAGE, DISCUSS, AND WRITE	<i>17-20 minutes total</i>
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For third objects and prompts or exercises that pair best with this workshop, [visit the Accessible Digital Library here](#).

Preface (1 minute)

Before sharing your screen with the third object, encourage everyone to continue the level of active engagement when you shared each other's words. Encourage them to keep a list of what they notice about the piece, first impressions, words or phrases, their own experience in their body and any emotional reaction.

Engage with third object (6-7 minutes)

Share your screen. If a written work, mimic other workshops and have a participant read aloud and a second volunteer read it again. Whatever the third object, have everyone jot a list for themselves what they notice about the piece, the questions they have.

Discuss (10-12 minutes)

Facilitate discussion about what people notice or respond to, what stands out. Use skills honed in previous workshops. Does everybody gravitate to the same things or different? Was there something you brought to your observation, any aesthetic preference or bias? Was there something familiar that helped you identify with the material, or was there no point of reference? Was anything about the piece difficult or challenging for you? Name it.

With the subjects of the third objects in mind, do you recognize experiences of **access** or **lack of access**? Was there a particular way the work challenged your assumptions or what you



understood about access? Are there ways you are moved to act differently? An idea for removing barriers? A way to think about spaces differently, a way to redesign them so they are usable by all people?

BREAK	<i>5 minutes</i>
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While it is nice to stay inside the dream of a workshop, it's also important to normalize taking breaks. "Powering through" may leave some people behind who have access needs you are not aware of. Encourage people to keep phones and other devices tucked away, but also to stretch their body, use the restroom, grab a snack, and/or do what they need to rest and recharge.

WRITE #2, SHARE, DISCUSSION	<i>~32-41 minutes total</i>
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Write #2 (9-11 minutes)

With the third object still in mind, spend 1-2 minutes thinking of an experience recently where you or someone you know was prevented from participating in something, where you (or they) were excluded in some way. When you have that in mind, write for 8-10 minutes

- They don't know what to do with people who...
- If I were in their position...

Share (20-25 minutes)

Give everyone an opportunity to share all or part of their piece. Time-permitting, open for light, positive feedback or invite people to put words or phrases that stand out to them in the chat.

Production note: If you think your group would benefit from a fuller round of feedback and support here, consider making the writing time shorter so the pieces will be shorter and everyone will get an opportunity to share and receive feedback.

Discussion (3-5 minutes)

Open discussion on the writing/exercise, ways we might talk about or relate to the theme of access as it relates to our health.

WRITE #3	<i>4-5 minutes total</i>
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Write #3 (3 minutes)

Time-permitting, either do additional prompts inspired by the third object, or look back at the lists you started the workshop with, particularly Column B, the qualities or traits *opposite* from yours. This is now a character: Opposite You. Give them a name. Now write from their perspective using one of the following prompts:

- Everyone assumes...
- It's just as hard for you as it is for me...



Optional share (1-2 minutes)

Using some of Opposite You's qualities and Opposite You's name, write those in the chat so we end on our words. Be sure, as facilitator, you name these aloud as they come in.