



“Transition”

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>3-5 minutes</i>
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Guidelines reminder to create a safe environment. Introductory note about **transition**, which is continually part of the way we move through and engage with healthcare settings, illness and healing. A chance to consider the movement of bodies and spirit through stages – be it a diagnosis, a medical transition or affirmation, a physical move, a migration, or any other shift. 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>15-20 minutes total</i>
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Write #1 (5 minutes)

Transitioning from one thing to the next happens all day long. Consider the transitions that have happened today – from dawn to morning, from home to elsewhere. Think about how you move through them naturally and be sure to keep your pen/pencil/typing moving as you respond to one or both of these prompts:

- In the movement from here to there...
- From one moment to the next...

Share (10-15 minutes)

Give everyone an opportunity to share all or part of their writing aloud. Reminder to respect people’s privacy, to read without apology or preamble. For everyone else, bring attention to the writing, practice active engagement with what is being shared. If there is a particular word or phrase that stands out to you, write it down for yourself or type it in the chat.



THIRD OBJECT – ENGAGE, DISCUSS, AND WRITE	<i>16-20 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 share 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 (5-7 minutes)

Share your screen. If a written work, 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? With the subjects of the third objects in mind, do you recognize where transition shows up in your life, particularly in areas of health and illness? Without placing judgment on whether these forms of transition are good or bad, helpful or unhelpful, healthy or unhealthy, can you name them? 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.

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.

Production note:

We offer the following write/share/discussion to be used *instead* of prompts and exercises suggested with your chosen third object.



WRITE #2, SHARE, DISCUSSION

30-35 minutes total

Write #2 (15 minutes total)

One of the ways we notice transitions is through our awareness of ourselves as we go through the stages that take us from one way of being to another, straddling two “kingdoms” (in the in-between space between sick and well) or as we watch our bodies change through the process of illness and/or healing.

With the third object still in mind, do another write. We’ll begin by first with a written brainstorm. (4-5 minutes). If you were going to do a self-portrait of yourself as something, what would it be? This can be as straightforward or fantastical as you’d like to make it. Use these prompts as a guide or simply jot down the first things that come to mind.

- Are you a person, place, thing or something imaginary?
- What are some of your most obvious characteristics?
- What is your biggest hardship or gift right now?

Next, create a current self-portrait. You could start with a quick sketch or by describing the things that need to be included to make the portrait of you accurate. Consider how metaphors can be helpful in this kind of exercise. Also consider how any self-portrait offers recognition of a place of transition. Offer any **two** of these suggested prompts to start (10 minutes):

- “Where I’m calling from...”
- “Between two kingdoms...”
- “Between one mountain and the other...”
- “Across this distance...”
- “In the space between...”

Share (5 minutes)

As the exercise wraps up, ask participants to pick just one moment in their portrait to share (a word or visual snippet) – something inside their piece that feels the most true. Be sure to acknowledge that a writing exercise like this can feel vulnerable and that it is ok *not* to share. Reminder of privacy, to read without apology or preamble. For everyone else, bring attention to the writing, practice active engagement with what is being shared. If there is a particular word or phrase that stands out to you, write it down for yourself or type it in the chat.

Discussion (10 minutes)

Open discussion on ways we might consider transitions in our spaces of illness, health and healing. How is an awareness of who we are today helpful in processing and holding space for the ever-changing nature of ourselves and our lives? What do we most hope for ourselves in transitions we know are coming or that we’re worried are on the horizon?

**WRITE #3, SHARE***9-11 minutes total***Write #3 (3-4 minutes)**

Time permitting, do a final write. Invite people to consider what they'd like to say to their self-portrait right now. What does this portrait most need to hear?

- Besides, everything is...
- If there's one thing you should know...

Share (6-7 minutes)

Invite people to read aloud with no feedback. End on people's words.