



# “Perseverance”

## 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 Narrative Medicine Digital Library](#) into your rundown.

### **Workshop sections:**

<b>WELCOME</b>	<i>~2-4 minutes</i>
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Guidelines reminder to create a safe environment. Introductory note about **perseverance**, how we manage to stay grounded, hold faith, and thrive through disruptions and chaos. This includes news about health such as a particular diagnosis, or how we weather acute or chronic illness. How might traditions, spiritual practice, being in community, or mindfulness practices have a role in guiding our thoughts, actions, and reactions? How might they sustain us? Are there touchstones that help us hold memories and experiences as a source of strength?

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?

<b>WARM-UP WRITE &amp; SHARE</b>	<i>~13-15 minutes total</i>
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### **Write #1 (5 minutes)**

We don't always know what we can handle. Sometimes skills we don't realize we have show up precisely when they need to. Reflect on a hardship you've experienced; a difficult situation you thought you would never get through but did. With the wisdom and hindsight you possess about it now, write a message to your former self using one of the following prompts. Be sure to keep your pen/pencil/typing moving:

- One thing to remember...
- Don't believe the voice that says...



### **Partial share, no feedback (8-10 minutes)**

Recognizing the vulnerability of this first write, give everyone an opportunity to share simply their first sentence or two. We'll revisit this subject again in a later write.

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.

<b>THIRD OBJECT – ENGAGE, DISCUSS, AND WRITE</b>	<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 Narrative Medicine Digital Library](#).

### **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 elements of **perseverance**? Was there a particular way the artist or subjects found a way forward through a difficult time? Was there something that sustained them? Something to hold on to? Something they discovered was always there or became necessary in a new way?

<b>BREAK</b>	<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**

*~32-42 minutes total*

### **Write #2 (7-10 minutes)**

With the third object still in mind, and the first piece you wrote, do a longer write. This time, don't focus on the hardship or your former self. Instead, focus on the person, animal, thing, or practice that helped you persevere. Write an ode to them (or it). Make sure to write it clearly as your title: "An Ode to [blank]." Then structure the ode any way you like, poetry or prose or something in between. Here are some optional prompts to start you off:

- You've always been there...
- Imagine my surprise...

### **Share (20-25 minutes)**

Give everyone an opportunity to share their entire piece. Time-permitting, either open for light, positive feedback, or invite people to simply 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 on this exercise, be sure to make the writing time shorter so the pieces will be shorter too and everyone will get an opportunity to share and receive feedback.

### **Discussion (5-7 minutes)**

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

## **WRITE #3**

*5-6 minutes total*

### **Write #3 (3 minutes)**

Time-permitting, do a final write. Use prompts inspired by the third object or these suggested prompts:

- When I wake up tomorrow...
- I can't wait to tell you...

### **Optional share (2-3 minutes)**

You may only have time for folks to share something in the chat or a single word aloud. If you are pressed for time or did a longer write, ask participants to circle a word or phrase that stands out for them. Share it in the chat so the group ends on people's words.