



# #ListeningtoLearn

Using the Power of Story to Improve Patient-Centred Care

Toolkit



Association of Registered Nurses  
of British Columbia



## Contents

Welcome from the ARNBC Patient Advisory Council..... 3

Background ..... 4

#ListeningToLearn Initiative ..... 5

    Goal ..... 5

    Purpose ..... 5

    Patient Stories..... 5

    Tips for getting the most of out of patient stories ..... 6

        Stories about Patient Care ..... 6

        Stories about the Health Care System ..... 6

    Nursing Educators ..... 7

Tell a Story ..... 7

Spread the Word ..... 8

Let us know your thoughts! ..... 8

References ..... 9



## Welcome from the ARNBC Patient Advisory Council

On behalf of all of us on the ARNBC Patient Advisory Committee, thank you for interest in the #ListeningToLearn Initiative! As patients and caregivers, we understand the critical role that nurses and other health care providers play in delivering high quality and safe patient care. We also recognize the role that other key players such as policy makers, administrators and government have on health care delivery. While there is no doubt that many British Columbians who use the health care system are cared for by exceptional health care providers, there are also many patients, caregivers and families that have had experiences that show us how health care can be improved.

Through our involvement Patient Voices Network (PVN), we have come to understand that one of the most effective ways to create change in both practice and policy is to share our stories. Powerful stories can influence policy change and transform the health care system. By utilizing the lived experiences of patients, families and caregivers, there is opportunity to remind health care providers about the good work they do to provide patient-centred care, as well as the ways in which practice can be improved to facilitate a more positive patient experience.

Whether you're a nurse, other health care provider, administrator, or a policy maker, we hope you can utilize these stories to continue the good practices that contribute to patient-centred care, and improve practice and the health care system. Together, we can continue to work towards ensuring every single British Columbian receives high-quality patient-centred care.

*The ARNBC Patient Advisory Council*



## Background

ARNBC has heard from many patient partners about the importance of using stories to highlight experiences with the health care system and as tools to improve nursing practice and health care delivery. Specifically, ARNBC's Patient Advisory Council (PAC) has identified this topic as a key priority for the Association. The health care system today is more complex than ever. Health care providers are faced with many constraints that impact their ability to provide patient-centred care, and the health care system struggles to meet the needs of patients.

Reflecting on the lived experiences of patients and caregivers is known to be an effective learning tool that can improve or change practice.<sup>1</sup> Further, by listening to patient and caregivers' stories, those who are involved in health care delivery are able to gain a better sense of the needs, expectations and values of patients in order to improve and transform practice, as well as to inform policy.

How exactly can you use patient and caregivers' stories to achieve this? As illustrated by Patients Canada<sup>2</sup>, stories can:

1. Encourage **discussion** to allow health care providers and policy makers to examine and learn from patient experiences
2. Identify **targets** for change
3. Inform how partnerships can be built with patients to **co-design** improvements
4. Support the **changes** to practice, processes and policies
5. Help **evaluate** changes based on identified targets



Patients Canada (2017).

<sup>1</sup> Adamson, E., & Dewar, B. (2015). *Compassionate Care: Student nurses' learning through reflection and the use of story*. *Nurse education in practice*, 15(3), 155-161.

<sup>2</sup> Patients Canada. (2017). *Stories*. Retrieved from [http://www.patientscanada.ca/site/patients\\_canada/assets/pdf/patientscanada-brochure.pdf](http://www.patientscanada.ca/site/patients_canada/assets/pdf/patientscanada-brochure.pdf)



## #ListeningToLearn Initiative

The #ListeningToLearn initiative was developed to provide a platform for patients and caregivers to share their experiences through storytelling. Using these stories, the intent is to provide an opportunity for those involved in health care delivery to reflect on and discuss how the patient experience can be improved, and to recognize the good practices that contribute to patient-centred care through the perspectives of patients, families and caregivers.

### Goal

To utilize patient stories to:

- Highlight the positive contributions of nurses on patient-centred care, and to build on good practices.
- Highlight practices and policies that impede patient-centred care through the lived experiences of patients, families and caregivers.
- Influence practice and policy changes to improve patient-centred care.

### Purpose

The purpose of this initiative is to:

- Provide an opportunity for patients, families and caregivers to share their stories about their health care experiences.
- Encourage nurses, and other health care providers across the province to engage in self-reflection, and re-examine the way they provide care to patients.
- Facilitate reflection and debate.
- Increase awareness among policy makers around the issues that exist in the delivery of health care through the eyes of patients/caregivers, and the impact these issues have on their health and well-being.
- Provide a tool for educators (within health profession schools and workplaces) that can be used for teaching and learning purposes in relation to patient-centred care.

### Patient Stories

Every single story captured comes from the lived experiences of patients, family members and/or caregivers. Whether you are a student, nurse, health care provider, policy maker, administrator, etc., lessons can be learned from each story to improve the patient experience. These patient stories can either be used as an individual self-reflection exercise, or as a teaching and learning tool in large groups. Stories will be updated regularly.

*\*Stories have been edited for clarity, grammar, and length, however, the experiences captured in the stories have not been modified.*



## Tips for getting the most of out of patient stories

Some stories touch on issues around patient care, while others touch on system level issues. In order to get the most out of the patient stories, the following are some key tips/questions for you to consider.

### Stories about Patient Care

If you are someone who is involved in providing direct patient care, you may find the following tips and questions helpful. Approach these stories with an open mind, and try to challenge yourself and question the status quo.

1. Read the patient stories carefully
2. Was it a positive or negative experience, or both?
3. Read between the lines. What are the key themes or messages that are being conveyed?
4. How does this make you feel?
5. Have you been part of a similar experience? If so, how did you handle the situation?
6. What are some of the key issues that negatively impacted the patient experience? What could have been done differently?
7. How will you use this to improve your own practice?
8. What are some of the good practices highlighted in the story? How can you integrate this into our own practice?
9. What have you learned? How will you continue to utilize patient stories to inform your practice?

### Stories about the Health Care System

If you are someone who is involved in management or policy making, you may find the following tips and questions helpful.

1. Read the patient stories carefully
2. Was it a positive or negative experience, or both?
3. Read between the lines. What are the key themes or messages that are being conveyed?
4. How does this make you feel?
5. For stories that highlight negative experiences, what are some system level issues that may have impacted this experience?
6. How does this story align with some of the issues that currently exist within your health care system?
7. What policy implications does this story have?
8. What policy changes need to be in place to improve the patient experience?
9. How will you continue to utilize patient stories to inform your work?





## Nursing Educators

Nursing students are the future of the profession. Reflective practice is a key aspect of nursing practice, and utilizing patient stories as a teaching and learning tool can be useful in influencing students' approach to nursing practice. Ideas on how you can integrate this into your nursing curriculum include:

1. Self-reflection assignments utilizing existing stories.
2. Utilizing stories as a foundation for class discussions or online discussions.
3. Utilizing stories to facilitate debates about a particular practice or policy issue highlighted in the story.
4. Building off practice and policy issues highlighted in stories and incorporating them into other projects or assignments.
5. Utilizing stories as ideas for simulations.

## Tell your Story

If you have a story that can influence practice and policy changes, or know someone who does, let us know by contacting us at [admin@arbc.ca](mailto:admin@arbc.ca). Everyone plays a part in improving the patient experience!

Some questions and tips for you to consider include:





1. Describe a patient experience that has made a big impact on you. This can be from the perspective of a patient, family member or caregiver. Please provide as much detail as possible.
2. Were you, or your loved one cared for by a nurse, or other health care provider? How was the interaction with the health care provider?
3. Were you happy with the care? If so, what made the experience positive?
4. Were you unhappy with the care? If so, what made the experience a negative one? (I.e. were you treated with disrespect? Were your concerns not addressed? Did the health care provider dismiss your needs?)
5. How did this make you feel?
6. How has this impacted the way you see health care? How does it continue to impact you? (I.e.: have you lost trust? Would you go back to the provider?)
7. What could have been done differently?





## Spread the Word

Help us use the power of story to improve patient-centred care. You can help share information about this initiative with your networks through a variety of social media channels:

- Facebook 
- Instagram 
- Twitter 
- LinkedIn 

Need some Hashtags? Use some of the ones we've developed below!

- #ListeningToLearn
- #NursingKnows
- #Patients'VoiceMatters
- #WeCanDoBetter
- #Let'sDoBetter
- #We'reListening
- #ListenAndLearn
- #RespectingThePatientVoice

## Let us know your thoughts!

Have you used these stories as a teaching or learning tool? We want to hear about your experiences. Let us know how we can improve this initiative to ensure that the stories of patients and caregivers are being utilized to influence practice and policy as best as possible. Send us an email at [admin@arnc.ca](mailto:admin@arnc.ca)





## References

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