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New models of care: Using storytelling as a way to better understand cancer survivor's needs

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The reality of oncologic illnesses obliges those of us in healthcare to consider the paradox of living life while preparing for death or conversely living when the struggles make the thought of death come as a welcomed guest. It is within this chaos of illness where the rhythm of the universe lies. This is the state of the sacred that leads to an expanding awareness of healing and wholeness. The patient and the healthcare practitioner join in a story of each other—we become parts of each other's story. By fostering the richness and depth of stories and by looking beyond the lens of nursing and medicine this project uses storytelling to form a picture of how the needs, and ultimately the decisions the individual makes, shape the patterns of the group. Likewise, story telling is a way to learn of the "problematics" that too often go "un-narrated. When we begin to hear through the filter of cultural conformity and the social structures which embrace—or constrain—the person living with cancer we create new ways of healing. This project explores the emic wisdom of the storyteller and can be used in practice and in teaching. Acknowledging that when one steps beyond the boundaries of our profession we can explore the needs of populations more fully. In practice, it is a therapeutic model to create a sacred space to heal. As a teaching model it is used as a foundation to educate students about all ways of knowing.

Biography

Kathleen Jablonski will complete her Doctorate of Nursing Practice in Transcultural Leadership from Augsburg College in May 2015. She is a Professor of Nursing at the University of St. Catherine in St. Paul, MN and practices oncology as a Clinical Nurse Specialist at Optum Health. Her lifelong work with cancer patients and cancer survivors has been presented in a variety of forums from survivor support groups to national organizations.

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