



# The “S” Word Physician Suicide and Storytelling

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Janae Sharp

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# Presenter Disclosure

**Presenters:** Jessi Gold, MD, MS, Janae Sharp, Jessica Bentzley MD

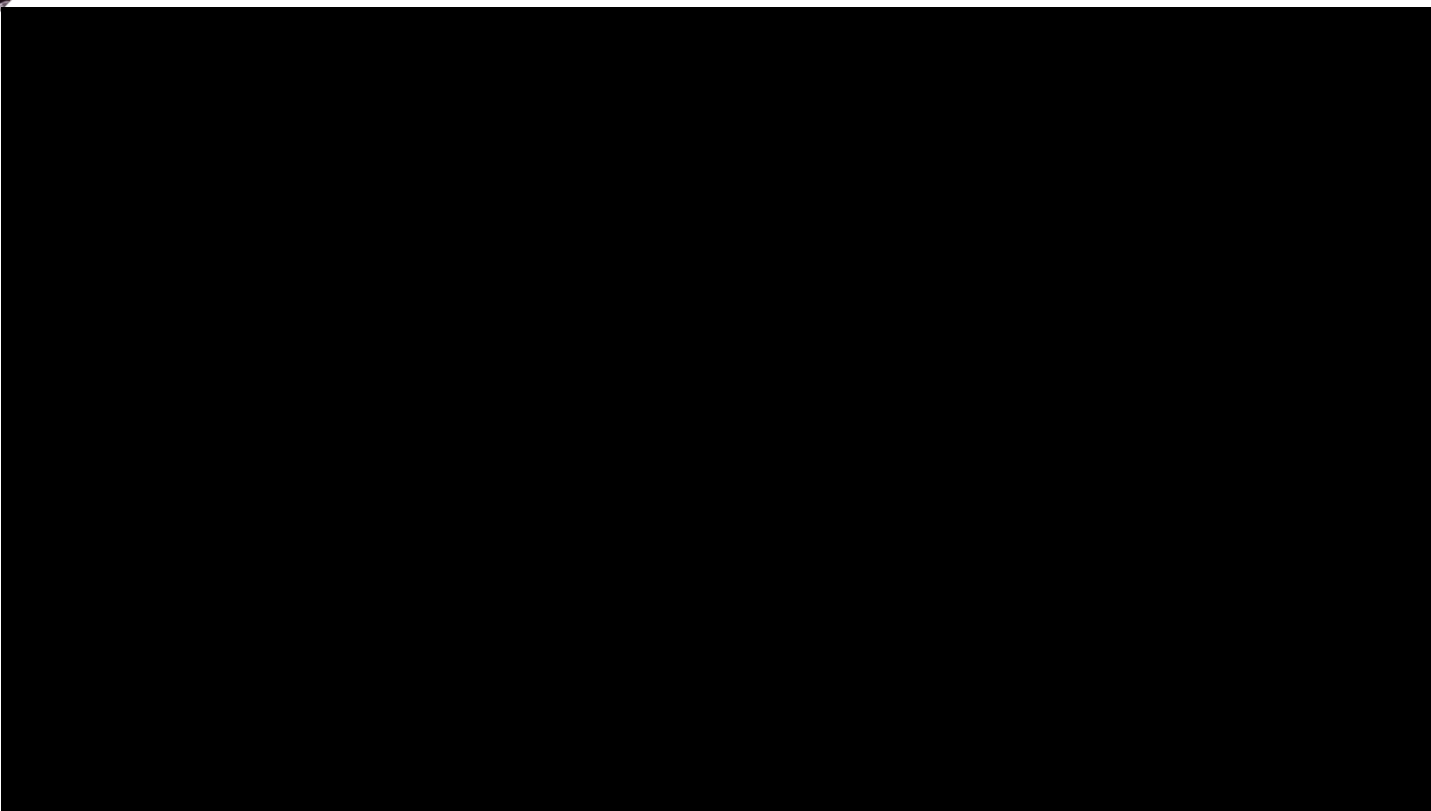
**Relationships with commercial interests:** **None**



# Objectives:

At the conclusion of this talk, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss Storytelling and Physician Suicide
- 2) Compare and Contrast Methods of Storytelling
- 3) Describe the Role of Physician Leaders in Prevention



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# Discussion Questions:

What Are Your Initial Reactions to Janae's Story?



# Discussion Questions:

What Is It Like to Hear about Physician Suicide from a Family Member and NOT a physician? Is it more or less impactful?

Does The Narrative Have More Salience Because she has Children?

# Janae's Thoughts about Storytelling

Thoughts about telling my story:

1. It is sometimes frustrating when you tell your story. A lot of health tech companies are selling software.
2. I want to help reduce physician suicide and burnout- but discussions about the topic aren't honest. Can we have an honest discussion about a really complex topic?
3. The survivor role is changing. Stories about Suicide and reactions helped me during healing. It also meant that when I meet people it frequently comes up as a topic in conversation which can be distracting for people. The balance of giving space for a heavy topic and not dragging your life down is a difficult one.



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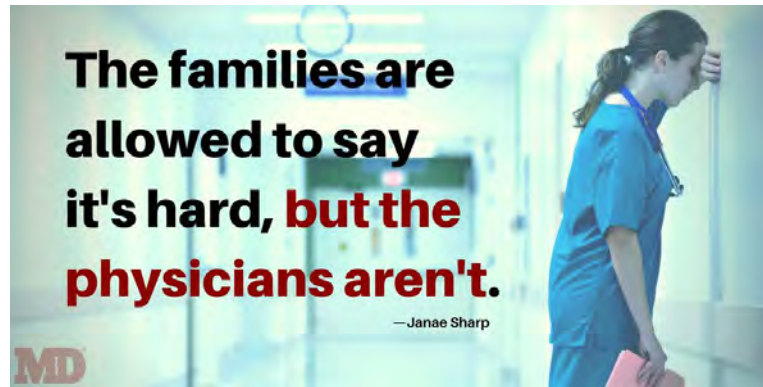
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What types of conversations are allowed about suicide?



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# Physician Self-Disclosure Narrative

Read the stories in front of you

“Kathyrn” by David Muller, MD (in NEJM, 2017 March)

“I Solemnly Share” Rahael Gupta (JAMA, 2018, February)



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# Physician Self-Disclosure Narrative

“I spoke to Kathryn’s parents soon after she died and stayed in touch with them throughout the first few days. The day after Kathryn’s death I accompanied her mother to the medical examiner’s office so that she could identify her daughter’s body. Afterward, she asked if we could travel uptown to see Kathryn’s apartment. An hour later, I found myself standing silently in the doorway to Kathryn’s room, staring at the open window, sensing its terrifying allure, and trying hard not to imagine what it must have felt like to take that final step out.”



# Physician Self-Disclosure Narrative

“Once—and I have never shared this before—I stepped into the street on my walk home from the library.

I knew that the bus hurtling through the night would not have time to stop before colliding with my darkly dressed frame, fracturing my bones and scattering my belongings.

I imagined my head hitting the asphalt and my brain banging around inside of my skull, bruising irreparably with each impact. I imagined the bus driver’s horror as he turned off the ignition with shaking hands and leapt out of the vehicle to locate my body. It would be a catastrophe that the trauma surgeons could not salvage. I would die.

“Goodnight, Peppermint. Goodnight, Tom. Goodnight, Raggedy Ann.”





# Physician Self Disclosure Narratives

- 1) What are your reactions to them?
- 2) Is there a difference between someone telling their own story and telling the story of a student?
- 3) How are your reactions different to their pieces as compared to Janae's story?
- 4) Does written word convey a different meaning or salience than a video (or seeing a narrative in person?)



# Acknowledgements



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