

Reflections on COVID-19: The 6-Word and 55-Word Stories Around Us

As healthcare providers, we experience a lot of intense situations and tend to have little time to reflect on these experiences. This is amplified by the current conditions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. As our institution continues to prepare to meet the local healthcare demands, we recognize that this situation has created a unique environment for all of us. The way that we experience it varies.

Reflective writing is an avenue for exploring how these situations affect us, and it provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what our medical practice means to us, our patients, and to others. Sharing these stories increases our connectedness, strengthens our community, and encourages us to continue our collective pursuit to advance healing and reduce suffering.

We invite you to participate in one, or both, of these exercises and hope that it helps you process your experience. [Submit your reflective writing here >>](#)

Created by Wesley Dutton, MD and Jennifer Molano, MD. Adapted from the University of Washington with permission. Questions: Jennifer Molano, MD at molanoje@UCMAIL.UC.EDU

1. The 6-word Story

A story written about an experience using only 6 words.

[6-Word Story Instructions](#)

They tend to contain 3 basic elements: conflict, action, and resolution.

For Example, "For sale: Baby Shoes. Never Worn." ~Ernst Hemingway

2. The 55-word Story

The art of creating a complete short story in exactly 55 words.

[55-Word Instructions](#)

Not a poem. Not a bunch of random thoughts. Just a potent story.

A few tips:

Start by just writing. Then edit. Keep the most important ideas and points. Cross out the rest.

Remove additional words (a, and, the). Experiment with different formats.