

# Writing Exemplars

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## ❖ Introduction - Definitions

- An exemplar is a story of a real patient that is told in order to illustrate an RN's practice/experience. The exemplar is written in the first person. It describes in detail a particular clinical situation that includes the nurse's thoughts, feeling, intentions actions, critical thinking and decision-making process.

UMHS Professional Development Framework Website

- An exemplar is a story about your clinical practice that conveys something memorable or something you remember as important, significant or that comes to mind periodically. "It is a story about a patient that conveys something you remember as important or significant and illustrates your clinical practice."

Patricia Hooper-Kyriaidis, 2003

## ❖ Storytelling

- The word "story" derives from the Greek and means knowing, knowledge and wisdom.
- Stories help people gain knowledge about various situations and values.
- The art of storytelling is focused on a desire to connect with listeners in a meaningful and purposeful way, regardless of the audience meaningful and purposeful way, regardless of the audience composition/size.
- One of the best ways to share values is by telling a story that is an example of the professed values.
- A story connects the story teller with the listeners/readers because the human experience related is common to us all.

Yoder --Wise & Kowalski, 2003

## ❖ What is a Story?

- An account of a concern off a concern in which the storyteller shares what matters to THEM in the situation.
- It is an account of what they understand and believe to be important, relevant, and worth talking about.
  - One's skill of involvement or level of engagement makes it possible to have stories.
  - The storyteller reports their thoughts, feelings, and experiential knowledge of an event.

## ❖ What Constitutes an Exemplar?

- A situation in which you feel your intervention really made a difference in patient outcome either directly (w/patient or family member) or indirectly by helping other staff members.
- A clinical situation that stands out as the quintessence of nursing.
  - This can be a situation that you witnessed from the observer's standpoint.
- A clinical situation:
  - That taught you something
  - That provided new understandings and changed your practice
  - Where you clearly saw a difference being made
  - That made you notice something new
  - That opened up new ways of helping or new lines of inquiry
  - That was particularly demanding

## Writing Exemplars

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- An incident that went unusually well
- An incident that was very ordinary and typical, yet memorable
- A situation in which there was a breakdown (things did not go well)

### ❖ **Exemplars may also:**

- Recount instances of early warning signs that you recognize before they could be validated by objective data.
- Demonstrate new clinical knowledge gained through working with a new procedure, new illness, or new technology
- Recount examples of healing relationships
- Include examples of expert coaching of a patient in a difficult situation or of colleagues in a clinical situation.

### ❖ **EXEMPLARS ARE NOT CASE STUDIES**

### ❖ **Exemplars ARE:**

- A written account as a narrative or story that reflects current practice.
- Written in every day language, not with a theoretical (e.g., nursing diagnosis) approach.
- Focused on clinical work – aspects or domains of practice:
  - Clinical judgment, wisdom, thinking and reasoning
  - Therapeutic relationships; caring practice
  - Grasp of a situation; ability to see a problem
  - Actions in a situation; performance; sense of responsibility
  - Response to changing situations; anticipatory skills
  - Engagement with the patient/family; skill of involvement
  - Agency; advocacy; response to diversity
  - Collaboration; teamwork
  - Clinical inquiry; innovation

### ❖ **Exemplars include:**

- A brief background or history of the patient
- A detailed description of what happened including as much dialogue as possible
- Why the situation is “critical” or significant to you
- What your concerns were at the time
- What you were thinking about as it was taking place
- What you were feeling during and after the situation
- What, if anything, you found most demanding about the situation
- What you found to be most satisfying about the situation

### ❖ **Developing Exemplars**

- How to get started:
  - Reflect on your practice
  - List possible stories
  - Talk out loud about your experience
  - Start writing without concern for grammar, spelling, wording, sentence structure—just start writing
- Before you start, consider whether the story represents your experience
- Write as much about the story on paper as is relevant, with as much detail as you remember.
- **Planning**

## Writing Exemplars

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- Exemplars take a little time to complete
- Allow yourself some time to contemplate about your experience

### ❖ **Developing Exemplars**

#### ➤ **Writing**

- Write the story down first as you remember it, fill the details later
- Write down what you actually did
- Relive the experience in your imagination, pause and rewind as necessary
- Use everyday language, don't muck with the words to "spiff up the language"
- Include a brief sentence about why this area interests you
- Give a first person account
- Include actual dialogue
- Change the name or don't use patient/family identifiers
- Describe your actual encounter

#### ➤ **Avoid**

- Generalizations
- Over speak, say it simply and to the point
- Summary statements "I just liked it"

### ❖ **Finished Exemplar**

#### ➤ **Include;**

- A brief background or history of the patient
- What you found most demanding
- What you found most satisfying

#### ➤ **If possible be submit a type written exemplar, but ok if on a napkin**

#### ➤ **1-2 pages, no longer than 5**

#### ➤ **Please include name, date and unit**