

The Healing Power of Storytelling

Conference Program and Abstracts 2022



March 3rd – March 4th, 2022

Hosted By:

UCONN

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR
LIFE STORY INNOVATIONS
AND PRACTICE

Funded By:

John Allan Kunz Fund for Reminiscence and
Life Review

University of Connecticut OVP
Scholarship Facilitation Fund

Acknowledgements

Many individuals have volunteered and worked hard to achieve the goal of planning and implementing this conference. Our sincere thanks to all of you!

Conference Committee

Gerben Westerhof, Chair
Deena Stewart-Hitzke
Cheryl Brohard
Robin Mintzer
Donna Sislo
Diana Taylor

Awards Committee

Cheryl Svensson, Chair
Sharon Mackenzie
Nobutake Nomura

Abstract Review Committee

All abstracts submitted for the conference went through a blind review.

Gerben Westerhof
Deena Stewart-Hitzke
Cheryl Brohard
Robin Mintzer
Diana Taylor

Moderators

Christine Tocchi
Cheryl Brohard
Gerben Westerhof
Bill Randall
Millicent Malcolm
Tom Pierce

A special thank you to our conference presenters who represent an array of life story research and practice and are well-known for their expertise and rigor in their work.

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	4
Letter from the President	5
Program agenda.....	6
Awards.....	9
Keynote Presentation.....	11
Workshops.....	12
Paper Presentations.....	14
Poster Presentations.....	21
Graduate Certificate in Life Story Practice and Research.....	26



Dear conference participants,

As director of the International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice, I welcome you to the University of Connecticut and our first online international conference. While there are advantages and disadvantages to having an online conference, in the midst of COVID and other considerations, this format is advantageous for our international members. I am delighted to welcome attendees from Turkey, Netherlands, Australia, Canada, Jordan, and Belgium as well as our new members from various parts of the United States. I am particularly pleased to welcome undergraduate and graduate student presenters from around the world. Historically, the International Institute of Reminiscence and Life Review at the University of Wisconsin-Superior welcomed students to the conference inviting them to present their work which was oftentimes their first conference. The Center is proud to continue this tradition of welcoming and supporting students as they are the future of ICLIP and advancing life story work.

I appreciate the involvement and participation of our UConn faculty and student presenters. You will learn more about their expertise and body of work when they are introduced. This conference would not be possible without Dean Chyun's continued support. She has from the beginning supported the transition from University of Wisconsin Superior to the University of Connecticut. Dean Chyun always responds to all my requests for assistance (which are many!). Special thanks to Gerben Westerhof for his commitment to the transition and to ICLIP over the past four years. Gerben has gone above and beyond expectations by serving two terms. This was especially important during the transition. He has shown great ability to work with and lead the members of the board to support the Center. Gerben always made himself available whenever I needed his help. I thank Mikala Kane our publicity director for her help with advertising the conference across many social media sites and professional organizations. A special thank you to UConn Conference Services for all their expertise and assistance in the planning and with the technical aspects of the conference. It is always a pleasure to work with you.

We are working hard to increase our membership and invite those of you who are not members to join us. Information can be found on our [website](#). While our membership is growing, I urge everyone to identify other potential members. To our current members I encourage your participation and involvement in the activities of the Center. We cannot do it without you! It's a pleasure to see the growth of the Center. In a very short time, we have held two virtual events, developed a graduate certificate program, and increased our membership. While challenging, it has given me great satisfaction and I look forward to our future growth

In closing, thank you to each one of you for being here with us today. We are very pleased to be able to welcome those of you that have been with us since the early days of the Institute as well as our new members and faculty and students from the University of Connecticut. I sincerely hope you enjoy the conference.

Juliette Shellman
Director, The International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice



Dear members of ICLIP, faculty and students of UCONN and other participants,

As president of the advisory board and chair of the conference committee I would like to welcome you at this exciting online event. Online it is indeed - with a bit of pain in my heart as I would have loved to meet you all in person. However, the alternative of having no conference would be even worse. We made some time in the program to meet each other and promote your active involvement. We tried to make the conference varied with workshops, presentations, discussions, hands-on experience and even an international reception. So, I hope that the conference will be more than a long time looking at talking heads!

The theme of the conference is *The Healing Power of Storytelling*. I think this is very fitting, given the attention that the devastating power of storytelling has gained during the past years and the need we have for healing and wise environments that storytelling can also bring. During the conference, we have excellent examples of how storytelling can be used for the good. I am really looking forward to the keynote lecture by Jonathan Adler and Annie Brewster who will bring the best of research evidence and storytelling practice together. The preconference workshops similarly focus on research and applications. The posters and papers provide excellent examples of specific studies and applications of reminiscence, life review, and life story work.

I hope the conference will bring us closer together, despite the physical distance!

Best wishes,
Gerben Westerhof
ICLIP President
Department Chair Psychology, Health, and Technology
University of Twente, Netherlands

**THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR LIFE STORY INNOVATIONS AND
PRACTICE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
THE HEALING POWER OF STORYTELLING**

12:30PM –1:30PM Advisory board meeting, Chair: *Dr. Gerben Westerhof*

1:45PM – 2:45PM Preconference workshop 1

Using Qualitative Methods to Understand the Healing Patterns of Stories

Dr. Cheryl Beck & Dr. Thomas Long
University of Connecticut School of Nursing
Moderator: Dr. Christine Tocchi

Qualitative research is so valuable to life story work. This session will cover some frequently used qualitative research designs that can be used in life story work such as, phenomenology, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry. Examples of studies using these designs will be presented to illustrate their methodologies. In life story research, sometimes researchers do not use a specific qualitative research design but instead a general qualitative descriptive one. Content analysis is often used to analyze these types of data and will be discussed, and examples provided. In addition, narrative scholars have identified common patterns or structures in storytelling, even developing formal typologies. These formal typologies of narrative structures may be helpful to the qualitative researcher as well as to the life story practitioner.

By the end of the conference, attendees will be able to:

1. Distinguish between selected qualitative research designs that can be used in life story.
2. Describe two approaches for content analysis of qualitative data.
3. Describe narrative typologies and explain narrative patterns and structures.

3:00PM – 4:00PM Preconference workshop 2

Developing Life Story Books

Dr. Theresa Chrisman & Teuntje Elfrink
Story Catchers® Pro & University of Twente, Netherlands
Moderator: Dr. Cheryl Brohard

When talking about the healing power of storytelling, one cannot overlook the added value of life story work and life story books. Life story work involves reminiscence and recording aspects of a person's life- past, present, and future. It usually results in a physical product, such as an audio recording, video, or book. Both Theresa Chrisman and Teuntje Elfrink have hands-on experience with working in this field: Theresa with her project "Story Catcher" and Teuntje with the "Online Life Story Book". This practical workshop focuses on the actual process and creation of Life Story Books.

Learning Objectives:

After the workshop, the participant will have learned more about:

1. The process of life story work: reminiscence.
2. The logistics of life story work: creating the product.
3. The practicalities of life story work: elements of good practice.

4:15PM – 5:30PM International reception with award presentations
Moderators: Dr. Gerben Westerhof and Awards Committee Chair: Dr. Cheryl Svensson

FRIDAY MARCH 4

Welcome

- 10:00AM – 10:15AM Gerben Westerhof, President Advisory Board
Juliette Shellman, Director ICLIP
Dr. Deborah Chyun, Dean UConn SON
- 10:15AM-11:15AM Keynote presentation Moderator: Dr. Gerben Westerhof
Health Story Collaborative: Translating the Science of Narrative Identity for Healing Interventions
Dr. Jonathan Adler and Dr. Annie Brewster
- 11:15AM-11:45AM Panel discussion
Dr. Jonathan Adler and Dr. Annie Brewster
- 11:45AM-12:00PM SHORT BREAK
- 12:00PM-12:30PM *Developing your own Professional Practice in Life Story Work*
Life Story Graduate Certificate Program
Whitney Myers, Sacred Stories
Moderator: Dr. Juliette Shellman
- 12:30PM-1:30PM LUNCH BREAK
- 1:30PM-2:00PM Poster Session (5 poster presentations, 5 minutes each)
Moderator: Dr. Millicent Malcolm
1. *The Extent of Reminiscence Research Undertaken in Nursing Homes: A Scoping Review*
Yuxuan Yang, Leah Graf, Madisyn Longdin, & Abdallah Abu Khait
 2. *“My life is not over yet!” Life Story Books with Residents of Nursing Homes*
Theresa Chrisman
 3. *Surviving COVID-19: Older Adults’ Experiences and Resilience*
Madisyn Longdin, Leah Graf, Yuxuan Yang, Millicent Malcolm, Deborah McDonald, & Juliette Shellman
 4. *The Relationship Between Death Anxiety, Depression, and Reminiscence Functions in a Sample of Jordanian Community-dwelling Older Adults*
Abdallah Abu Khait
 5. *A Comparison of Life Events Recalled by Older Adults to Events Anticipated by Younger Adults*
Thomas W. Pierce, Brian Carle, Grace Flood
- 2:00PM-2:20PM Discussion with poster presenters in breakout sessions
- 2:20PM-2:25PM SHORT BREAK
- 2:25PM-2:55PM *How Can Storytelling Impact Sibling Relationships?*
Dr. Robin Mintzer & Dr. Diana Taylor
Moderator: Dr. Juliette Shellman

- 2:55PM-3:25PM Biennial meeting of all ICLIP members
Moderator: Dr. Gerben Westerhof
- 3:25PM-3:30PM SHORT BREAK
- 3:30PM– 5:10PM *Parallel paper session 1 (5 presentations * 20 minutes)
Moderator: Dr. William Randall
1. *Guided Autobiography for Early Dementia Diagnosis*
Steven Hoover
 2. *Modification of the Structure Life Review for People Living with Dementia*
Cheryl Brohard
 3. *Guided Autobiography Groups with Turkish Older Adults: First Impressions*
Deniz Pamuk
 4. *The Healing of Shame Through Oral Narration*
Galen Tinder
- *Parallel paper session 2 (5 presentations * 20 minutes)
Moderator: Dr. Thomas Pierce
1. *Reconciling the Other: Stories of Adoption through Collaborative Performance Autoethnography*
Michelle Cole, Robin Danzak, Christina Gunther
 2. *Caught Up in the Story: A Researcher's Reflections on Co-Constructing Personal Narratives about Life with Aphasia*
Katie Strong
 3. *Touch in Times of Skin Hunger*
Els Messelis
 4. *The Power of Written Stories on the Journey Toward Recovery*
Hanna K. Ulatowska & Gloria Streit Olness
 5. *High Tech and High Touch: The Impact of Life Story Work in Person-Centered Care and Memory Care*
Lisbeth Sanders, Farida Ejaz, Silvia Orsulic-Jeras
- 5:10PM – 5:25PM Closing Session
- Thomas Pierce - *International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review*
Bill Randall - *Narrative Matters Conference*
Gerben Westerhof – *Final Thoughts*

*Paper sessions will be recorded for attendees to attend one session and view the other session at their convenience.

The International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice 2022 Awards

The awards committee: Nobutake Nomura, Sharon McKenzie, and Cheryl Svensson, Chair

We are honored to announce the winners of The International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP) 2022 awards. We received several highly qualified nominations that made our selections difficult. We appreciate all the ICLIP members who took the time to submit nominations. By recognizing the achievements of others in the field, we will continue to promote the mission of ICLIP.

The Robert Butler and Myrna Lewis Exemplar Research Award Alison Kris, Ph.D.

Dr. Alison Kris has established herself as a respected researcher and leader in promoting reminiscence, life review, and autobiographical memories. Her scholarly and professional work has contributed to our field in a number of ways. She has numerous publications and is the author of the second and third editions of the *Gerontological Nurse Certification Review*, as well as giving many presentations at professional meetings. A noteworthy example of the quality of Alison's research reported the results of a study examining reminiscence by nursing home residents. These findings showed that older nursing home residents enjoy reminiscing both alone and with family members. The project was supported through external funding, and the results were reported in the highly respected journal *Memory*. In addition, Alison also makes time to participate in and volunteer with other professional organizations. She is the convener of GSA's Reminiscence and Aging Interest Group. Alison is also a member of the ICLIP Advisory board where she uses her skills to enhance the development of our organization. We feel Dr. Alison Kris is highly deserving of this award.

The James and Betty Birren Award for Excellence in Practice goes to Wendy Bancroft, MA

The recipients of this award include front-line workers/researchers examining the therapeutic uses and outcomes of life review groups, reminiscence therapies, and other autobiographical approaches. Wendy Bancroft meets these eligibility criteria perfectly. She has experience as a journalist, researcher, videographer, writer, and teacher. Since becoming a certified Guided Autobiography (GAB) instructor in 2014, she has taught GAB workshops through the Liberal Arts and 55+ Program, part of Simon Fraser University's Continuing Studies program as well in many other venues. She has built upon Dr. Birren's original method and developed new curriculums. For example, Wendy created a workshop series designed to support members of the Vancouver Second Generation Holocaust Survivors community (2G for short) to write about how this legacy had affected their lives. She continues to support the GAB instructor network as a trainer and readily shares her information and experience with other GAB instructors. We feel Wendy is highly qualified to receive this award.

**John A Kunz Award for Distinguished Service to the
International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice
Juliette Shellman, Ph.D. RN**

The recipient for this award has primarily focused on service to ICLIP and the promotion of Reminiscence and Life Review. Dr. Shellman has definitely met these criteria. She is a long-time member of the IIRLR, joining the advisory board in 2009 and becoming President in 2015. Without the tireless work of Juliette, we would not have ICLIP today at UCONN. She rose to the occasion when the IIRLR left University of Wisconsin Superior. Her belief in the organization and ability to pull people together to work on developing a new and stronger program has been stellar. In addition, for nearly twenty years, Dr. Shellman has promoted reminiscence and life review and other forms of life story work and contributed to interdisciplinary work in the field of Reminiscence and Life Review (RLR). She has done this through her extensive research on the effectiveness of RLR as an intervention to improve the health and well-being of people of different cultures, through her many articles published in peer-reviewed journals and books, and through her teaching. Dr. Shellman's commitment to the application and practice of RLR is in alignment with John Kunz's beliefs and the ICLIP mission. We are in unanimous agreement to present this award to Dr. Shellman in recognition of her accomplishments and commitments.

**Florence Gray-Soltys Graduate Student Award for Exemplary Research or Practice
in the Field of Reminiscence and Life Review
Deniz Pamuk, MSc Ph.D. candidate**

This award is given to a graduate student for exemplary research or practice in the field of reminiscence and life review that contributes to the ICLIP mission. This year's winner, Deniz Pamuk, is a doctoral candidate at Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey, and currently working as a research assistant at Muş Alparslan University, Department Gerontology, Muş, Turkey. Ms. Pamuk has focused on the study of gerontology from the beginning of her academic career. She has a breadth of experience in the field of aging that goes well beyond the classroom. Her interests have ranged from nursing homes to adult daycare centers and taken place in Germany as well as her homeland of Turkey. After completing the Guided Autobiography instructor training program in January 2021, she realized the power of life stories, both writing and sharing, and that prompted her to initiate her first qualitative research study. She formed two writing groups for ten older adults in the 3rd Age University called, Fresh Autobiography. This was a 7-week course conducted online due to the restrictions from COVID. Since it was a qualitative study, Ms. Pamuk kept copious notes, and records of the participants' stories, writing exercises, and evaluations. The awards committee congratulates Deniz and looks forward to her presentation at the ICLIP conference.



International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice Keynote Presentation

Health Story Collaborative: Translating the Science of Narrative Identity for Healing Interventions

The keynote presentation will describe the work of Health Story Collaborative, a non-profit organization that translates the science of narrative identity into a variety of healing interventions. The mission of Health Story Collaborative is to keep the patient voice alive in healthcare and to harness the healing power of stories. By collecting, honoring and sharing stories of illness and healing, we strive to make the process of navigating illness less isolating and to empower individuals and families facing health challenges. Our belief, supported by research, is that storytelling is healing for both story sharers and listeners. Stories have the power to transform individuals as well as the healthcare system. This presentation will describe the foundational research on narrative identity, including an overview of some of the most significant scholarship on the associations between narrative and health. It will then demonstrate the ways in which we translate this research into practice at Health Story Collaborative.

Jonathan M. Adler, PhD

Olin College of Engineering and Health Story Collaborative



Jonathan Adler is a clinical psychologist and a professor at Olin College of Engineering in Needham, Massachusetts. He is the incoming Editor in Chief of Personality and Social Psychology Review and served as an Associate Editor of the Journal of Personality and Collaborative: Psychology. Jonathan's research focuses on the relationships between identity development in adulthood and mental health. Specifically, he's interested in the way we make sense of the challenging experiences in our lives and the way that meaning making impacts our sense of self and our psychological well-being. Jonathan's research has been covered by the New York Times, National Public Radio, Scientific American, Huffington Post, and Elle Magazine, among other media outlets. He is the Chief Academic Officer at Health Story Collaborative and the Co-Director of the Healing Story Sessions program.

Annie Brewster, MS

Harvard Medical School and Health Story Collaborative



Annie Brewster is an Assistant Professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, a practicing physician at Massachusetts General Hospital, in Boston, a writer and a storyteller. She is also a patient, diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2001. In response to the disconnection she experienced in healthcare, both as a patient and a provider, and motivated by her belief in the power of stories, she started recording patient narratives in 2010. Integrating her personal experiences with the research supporting the health benefits of narrative, she founded Health Story Collaborative (HSC) in 2013. HSC is dedicated to helping individuals navigating health challenges find meaning, and ultimately heal, through storytelling. She is excited by interdisciplinary, cross-institutional collaborations that break through resistance to change.

Workshop 1: Using Qualitative Methods to Understand the Healing Patterns of Stories

Dr. Cheryl Beck, DNSc, CNM, FAAN



Postpartum depression and posttraumatic stress disorder due to traumatic childbirth are the two arms of Dr. Cheryl Beck's research program. Based on the findings from her series of qualitative studies, Dr. Beck developed the Postpartum Depression Screening Scale (PDSS) and authored many of the seminal works in the field, from her more than 165 journal articles. She also authored numerous books, including the preeminent research methods textbooks for undergraduate and graduate nursing education, e.g. *Essentials of Nursing Research*. She was awarded Book of the Year from the *American Journal of Nursing* multiple times, including for *Nursing Research: Generating and Assessing Evidence for Nursing Practice and Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorders: A Clinician's Guide*. She has also published these additional books: *Traumatic Childbirth*, *Secondary Qualitative Data Analysis*, and *Phenomenology: Focus on Methodology*. The focus of her teaching is on nursing research methods. She teaches qualitative and mixed methods research in the Ph.D. program. Dr. Beck is an associate editor for qualitative methods for the *Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing (JOGNN)*. She has received the Distinguished Professional Service Award from the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nursing. For her service she has also received The Jane Honikman Award for outstanding contribution to emotional health related to childbearing from Postpartum Support International.

Dr. Thomas Long



Thomas Lawrence Long's program of research is dedicated to medical humanities and health studies; the history of nursing; AIDS and culture; rhetoric and academic writing and publishing; and technical and professional communication. Beginning with early-modern research in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois in the 1970s, he has gone on to publish work based on his research in Yale's Beinecke Library, the Dean and Chapter Library of Norwich Cathedral, the Library of Congress, and the LGBT Community Center National History Archive in New York. He is the author of "Nurses and nursing in literary and cultural studies" (in P. D'Antonio, J. A. Fairman, & J. C. Whelan [Eds.], *Routledge Handbook on the Global History of Nursing* [pp. 37-54]. New York: Routledge), which has been selected by British nurse historian Christine Hallett for inclusion in a forthcoming collection of major works in nursing history. Dr. Long and Dr. Beck cowrote "Writing in nursing: A brief guide" in 2017, published by Oxford University Press.

Workshop 2: Developing Life Story Books

Dr. Theresa Chrisman



Dr. Theresa Chrisman completed her Ph.D. in social work from the University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work. She has a broad background in social work, with specific training in gerontology. She conducted a study using a life story book intervention with residents living in nursing homes (<https://stories.uh.edu/07222019storycatcher/index.html>). A LSW toolkit developed for this study was so useful that a patent was applied for and received (U.S. Patent No. 11058195). She enjoys listening to the life stories of older adults, which inspired her to develop the organization Story Catchers® Pro., whose main goal is to support others in listening and capturing the life stories of older adults into something tangible. For more information: <https://lifestorywork.org/>. Theresa lives with her husband, Kenneth, in Texas, and the couple has three children and four grandchildren. She loves to read, meditate, learn about others' stories, experience nature, and spend time with her loved ones.

Teuntje Elfrink



My name is Teuntje Elfrink, 33 years old and living in the beautiful city of Deventer (the Netherlands). I studied clinical psychology at the University of Twente (main subject: Mental Health Promotion). After graduation I worked some years in addiction care whilst working at the department of Psychology, Health and Technology (PHT) of the University of Twente as well. Currently I am working in this department as a teacher and my focus is the supervision of master students during their clinical internship. I was a researcher in the project Online Life Story Book, which is a digital intervention for persons with early dementia and their informal caregivers

Paper Presentations

Guided Autobiography for Early Dementia Diagnosis Steve Hoover

Guided Autobiography (GAB), a ten-week program designed to assist in life review and the sharing of theme-based stories, was modified for use with individuals with early-diagnosis of dementia. The program was designed as a pilot for the Greater St. Cloud Dementia Community Action Network (DCAN). The network was founded by a retired physician and was housed in a facility associated with the local health-care system. Individuals are either referred to DCAN for assessments and programming options or self-select based on news communications or personal referrals. All individuals are screened with an extensive protocol subsequently offered a variety of program options, including Guided Autobiography. Those interested in joining the class, along with care providers, are interviewed to determine the extent to which they will be successful. The interview centered around the following criteria:

1. The ability to “capture” a 1 – 2-page response to a weekly theme (ex.: Branching Points in Your Life). Some individuals were able to write or type their stories, while others spoke with their care provider who transcribed the story.
2. The ability to participate in the 90-minute class – reading the story, interacting in the small group sharing of the theme for each week.
3. Additional considerations involved transportation (the class was held in central Minnesota, October – December); designated out-of-class time to prepare for class; any health issues identified by the physician assessment.

Seven individuals participated in the first pilot. The paper will outline specific modifications and qualitative assessments indicating the success of the program.

Steven M. Hoover, PhD, is a Healthy Aging Coordinator in Central Minnesota Council on Aging

Modification of the Structured Life Review for People Living with Dementia

Cheryl Brohard

Around the world, the prevalence of dementia is currently reported as 55 million and expected to increase to 78 million by 2030 and 139 million by 2050, based on the World Health Organization. The decline of physical and mental abilities with people living with dementia (PLWD) is recognized as progressive and unpredictable. PLWD and their caregivers seek traditional medical treatment and complementary and integrative health approaches, such as a life review, to slow the progression. Relevant clinical presentation of disease and associated symptoms may interfere with everyday life and may impact participating in a life review process. Symptoms of depression, sleep problems, polypharmacy, and medical conditions contribute to the symptom profile. The complications of memory loss, forgetfulness, social withdrawal, and speaking or writing difficulties impact the ability of the PLWD to participate in a life review. A traditional 8-week structured life review intervention conducted by a professional developed 30 years ago required modification for this select group. Caregivers are eager to maintain the essence of the PLWD personality and their life for as long as possible and reduce the burden of caregiving. This presentation will provide a review of the curriculum changes to the structured life review based on the relevant clinical progression of dementia, the receptivity of the caregiver to conduct the life review, and findings from two studies using the modified structured life review for PLWD.

Cheryl Brohard, PhD, RN, CNS-ONC, AOCN, CHPCA is an associate professor at the University of Houston, College of Nursing. She has been a member of the ICLIP Advisory Board since 2018 and the organization since 2007. Dr. Brohard's research focus is on using autobiographical memories to aid in making healthcare decisions for seriously ill people. Currently, our team is conducting a study on training caregivers to facilitate a life review with a person living with dementia to decrease depression and build relationships with the caregiver.

Guided Autobiography Groups with Turkish Older Adults: First Impressions

Deniz Pamuk

GeroAtlas60 + Tazelenme University is Turkey's first university for older adults and was founded as a response from the field of gerontology to support modern society's expectations for longer and healthier lives. During Covid-19 Pandemic, because of the regulations for people over 65+ years old, the Distance Fresh Projects was initiated in order to prevent the learning processes of Tazelenme University students from being interrupted and to reduce the negative effects brought by social restrictions. Fresh Autobiography was one of these projects that were held during this process between April 2021-June 2021 with two Guided Autobiography Groups with older adults.

Despite it was excluded at the beginning, groups members asked to add the Death and Ideas About Death theme as well as the theme of Aging. At the end of the groups, participants were asked to evaluate their GAB experiences. They reported that it has a healing effect like therapy, especially on the most effecting branching points in their lives. It provided an opportunity for them to get to know each other which would be impossible in daily routine and increased the sense of intimacy. Listening to others' stories helped them to realize that other people may have the same experiences and in the same situations, there would be an opportunity to look at from a different point of view to the major events. These first impressions are found parallel to the findings of current literature of Guided Autobiography

Deniz Pamuk, Gerontologist, B.Sc., M.Sc., is a PhD Student at Akdeniz University Department of Gerontology and He also works as a research Assistant at Muş Alparslan University, Department of Gerontology. Her research interest is Guided Autobiography with older adults.

The Healing of Shame Through Oral Narration

Galen Tinder

Through empirically based quantitative research narrative psychologists have demonstrated that human identity is comprised in part by the stories about their lives that they tell themselves and others. It has been established that certain kinds of autobiographical reasoning are particularly conducive to psychological growth and well-being. While the outcomes of processing difficult life events through story-telling have been well-studied, the mechanism by which the healthy recounting of stories is accomplished has drawn less attention.

This paper, based on qualitative research, argues that story-telling and autobiographical processing most constructively take place through oral narration, and that guided storytelling, as in Structured Life Reviews, is inherently prosocial. The author will draw from his own qualitative research in Life Review to show that shame prevents many people from telling their story and forming a sense of narrative identity. These people might be termed the "unstoried," and can be helped through oral narration to begin processing and healing their shame.

Galen Tinder, Doctor of Ministry degree and certified in Narrative Practice, Structured Life Review, and Guided Autobiography. He is an independent practitioner and writer

**Reconciling the Other: Stories of Adoption
through Collaborative Performance Autoethnography
Michelle Cole, Robin Danzak & Christina Gunther**

Through a framework of reconciling the other, this collaborative autoethnographic performance co-constructs the adoption experience from three perspectives in three different families: a mother struggling with the ethical and emotional implications of the transnational adoption of her daughter; an adult reflecting on her childhood as an adoptee feeling loved, but different; and a woman who met her biological sister at age 28 after her parents revealed a lifelong secret. To develop individual adoption narratives, we applied autoethnographic tools of interactive interviews with family members, reflective writing, and document review (Ellis, 2004) of photos, letters, emails, and calendars. During one school year, we met monthly to discuss relevant literature, share and critique each other's methods and writing, and identify the common themes in our three, diverse experiences. The result of the iteration of the individual and group processes is a script that weaves together our adoption stories, the discoveries of ourselves, and how, after negotiating feelings and identities, we reconciled the other through positive, loving relationships.

Michelle A. Cole DNP, MSN, RN, CPN Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Global Learning, Community Engagement and Outreach at the University of Connecticut School of Nursing. Michelle's life story interests include pediatric health, cultural perspectives, and development of the next generation of nurses to serve as global citizens.

Robin L. Danzak, PhD. Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, Emerson College. Robin's life-story research interests include narrative inquiry, autoethnography, photovoice, and bilingual writing research.

Christina Gunther, EdD is an assistant professor and chair of the Health Sciences Department at Sacred Heart University. Christina's life-story lies within the fields of cultural literacy, diversity, equity, social determinants of health and social justice in the global arena.

**Caught Up in the Story: A Researcher's Reflections on Co-Constructing
Personal Narratives about Life with Aphasia
Katie Strong**

Storytelling is a fundamental aspect of being human. Our concept of our own identity is based largely on making a coherent story of our past experiences, present situation, and future goals. Our evolving stories are the principal vehicle by which we make meaning out of our experiences and through which we develop our identity. Making meaning out of traumatic life events can contribute to a healthier identity. Language plays an important role in a person's ability to create and tell a story about themselves and the telling of stories is critical for social interaction. However, people with aphasia are disadvantaged in participating in this social, meaning-making experience due to their reduced language capacity — a necessary tool in storytelling. Interest in how the process of co-constructing stories relates to identity renegotiation has gained interest in aphasia research. Speech-language pathologists (SLP) are particularly well suited for supporting identity renegotiation through narratives using their skills and expertise. Further, SLPs report having a role in supporting the renegotiation of identity in their clients with aphasia, yet also report not having the knowledge or skills to target such work directly. This autoethnography explores the experience of a researcher trained as a SLP and the experience she had co-constructing stories about life with aphasia. The work explores the differences in roles of the co-construction experience to traditional impairment-based intervention targeting language and communication.

Katie A. Strong, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is an assistant professor in Central Michigan University, at the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. She is the director in Director, Strong Story Lab. Her area of life story interest is the use of personal narratives to support adults with acquired communication disorders, particularly aphasia to explore pre- and post-stroke identity and cultivate hope for their future self. Guided Autobiography, Biographic Narrative Therapy, Therapeutic Songwriting.

**Touch in Times of Skin Hunger
Els Messelis**

There is no age or year on skin hunger. From the first sigh to the last breath: everyone needs human contact, connection and touch to some extent. Due to COVID-19, many suddenly realize and recognize that touch was and is not a fine surplus but an essential desire; this is not only for people who have high-quality family and friendship relationships. For my book 'Touch in Times of Skin Hunger' -Garant Uitgeverij- 20 in-depth interviews were conducted where the life story around an emotionally charged subject was discussed: skin hunger and how to deal with it, both among young and old and this both among individuals and professionals. Many tips for inspiration are provided to deal with skin hunger. Strength and comfort are also drawn from the countless haunting and resilient life stories of the extremely fascinating characters. Illustrations also show images behind the life stories.

Els Messelis is a gerontologist, writer, and owner of 'the lifestorylab' in Flanders, Belgium.

The Power of Written Stories on the Journey Toward Recovery
Hanna K Ultowski & Gloria Streit Olness

Storytelling through memoirs offers the wounded storyteller an opportunity for deep reflection extended over time, on the journey toward recovery. The current study examines over 40 memoirs of professional writers who are survivors of stroke, representing a variety of nationalities: the US, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, France, Australia, the Philippines, Russia, and Sweden. The trauma of the stroke was compounded by aphasia, a language impairment. Written narration provides a window into the post-traumatic growth of the authors. The stroke threatens their mortality. Their aphasia challenges the process of writing. Yet, the memoirs consistently reveal experiential wisdom, manifested in lessons learned during the process of healing and recovery. Among women, acceptance and recovery were grounded in the pleasures of the beauty of nature and meaningful relationships. Among men, recovery was driven by hard work towards a goal. For many authors, acceptance of changes to their professional life evolved into service to others. For example, the writers who were doctors volunteered with handicapped children or mentored other professionals. The lessons learned may apply both to the writers and to the readers. As noted by Arthur Frank, “the mutual responsibilities of the ill to express and the healthy to hear meet in the recognition that our creativity depends on our frailty.”

Hannah Ulatowski, PhD is a professor in Communication Disorders at the University of Texas at Dallas. Her area of interest is recovery from trauma.

Gloria Streit Olness Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is an associate professor in University of North Texas. Her area of life story is learning from narrators whose lives have been impacted by stroke and aphasia.

**High Tech and High Touch: The Impact of Life Story Work in
Person-Centered Care and Memory Care
Lisbeth Sanders, Farida Ejaz, & Silvia Orsulic-Jeras**

Life story programs hold promise for improving person-centered care and relationships between older adults and care staff in congregate care settings. A pilot life story intervention study with in-person interviews in 16 Ohio nursing homes (n=170) provided residents with complimentary biographical life story books and summaries, and staff with specific action plans to enhance care planning. Research was conducted by Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging. Participants experienced a decrease in depression. Practical implications of life story work include opportunities to help staff learn more about residents they care for, improve person-centered care, and honor resident preferences in care planning. Next, we will also explore the evolution of the LifeBio process from manual/web techniques to a life story app for iOS/Android called LifeBio Memory (2021), to streamline the story capture process with organized, vetted questions and voice recording. LifeBio Memory minimizes the need to hand-write or type individualized life story data with voice, natural language processing, and AI. During the development of LifeBio Memory, seven focus groups (n=35) were conducted with older adults, family care partners, and residential care staff. Feasibility of use and other general reactions to interacting with the new LifeBio Memory prototypes were examined. Results from the focus groups strongly suggest that LifeBio Memory is the preferred and efficient method--with human review and quality checks ensured. Further, a clinical trial utilizing the LifeBio Memory app in 10 assisted living, memory care, and nursing homes communities is underway.

Lisbeth Sanders is the founder and CEO of LifeBio. She helps implement the software and solutions leading to higher quality and lower costs as clinicians/professional caregivers truly know the people in their care holistically—beyond just their physical needs.

Silvia Orsulic-Jeras, for over 20 years, has been involved in the development, testing, implementation, adaptation, and translation of a variety of psychosocial interventions for persons living with dementia and their family caregivers as well as those managing multiple chronic health conditions.

Farida Ejaz, PhD, is a Senior Research Scientist II at the Center for Research and Education at Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging (BRIA) with 30 years of experience in applied aging research and primary data collection.

Poster Presentation Abstracts

A Scoping Review of the Extent of Reminiscence Research Undertaken in Nursing Homes Yuxuan Yang, Leah Graf, Madisyn Longdin, Abdallah Abu Khait & Juliette Shellman

More than 1 million older adults are living in nursing homes in the United States. Forty six percent of residents suffer from depression, of whom 5-25% are diagnosed with major depression. Approximately, 58% of nursing home residents are living with dementia. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated psychiatric disorders in older adults living in nursing homes. Reminiscence, the recall of memories, is one intervention that has shown to reduce depressive symptoms, improve quality of life, and improve cognitive outcomes. The purpose of this review was to determine the extent of reminiscence research undertaken in nursing homes, methodologies used, populations involved, geographic areas represented, and health outcomes examined. A scoping review of the international literature was undertaken using Arksey and O'Malley's six stage framework. Studies involving reminiscence and nursing home residents published in peer reviewed literature were identified based on key terms and searches in three databases (CINAHL, PUBMED, PsycINFO). The geographic scope of the included studies was widely spread across the world; However, out of the 32 articles, only 2 studies were conducted in the United States. Twenty-five different health outcomes were examined, including twenty-three psychological outcomes and two physiological outcomes. Depression and cognitive functions were the most frequently measured outcomes. Of the intervention studies (including quasi-experimental and RCT design), only two authors clearly define the type of reminiscence in their studies. Lack of theoretical frameworks underpinning the studies, inadequate sample sizes, and weak methodology were noted in this review. Recommendations for future reminiscence work conducted in nursing homes will be discussed.

Yuxuan Yang is a PhD student in UConn, school of nursing. Her research interest is the use of reminiscence in older adults with depression. Leah Graf is a junior nursing student at the University of Connecticut. Her research interests is the use of structured life review with hospice patients. Madisyn Longdin graduated with a BS in Psychology from the University of Connecticut, Abdallah Abu Khait, PhD, MSN, CNS, RN, is an assistant professor in the Hashemite University, SON in Jordan. His research interests include: 1) use of reminiscence for people living with neurocognitive and psychiatric disorders; 2) variation of reminiscence functions across cultures; and 3) the association between reminiscence functions and other mental health-related outcomes. Juliette Shellman is an associate professor at the University of Connecticut School of Nursing and Director of ICLIP.

“My life is not over yet!” Life Story Book with Residents of Nursing Homes
Theresa Chrisman

Depression and lack of meaning in life (MIL) are common among nursing home (NH) residents, contributing to a decline in overall health and well-being. Reminiscence interventions, such as Life Story Book (LSB), have been shown to improve psychological well-being and depression. LSB provides an opportunity to reminisce about the past and compile life stories and photographs into a book. A quasi-experimental switching replication design was used to study the effects of LSB on mentally alert NH residents (N = 21) from two NHs; NH-A (n = 11) and NH-B (n = 10). For three weeks, participants in NH-A received LSB, while those in NH-B received care-as-usual; the LSB intervention was then switched. Self-report measures of depressive symptoms (GDS-12R) and MIL (MLQ) were completed at baseline and two follow-up assessment points. Participants were interviewed about the LSB experience. Participants were female (81%), non-Hispanic white (52%) and African American (33%), widowed (52%) or divorced (28.6%), and had a mean age of 75 years (SD = 11.34). A one-way MANCOVA revealed no statistically significant difference on the GDS-12R and MLQ ($F(3, 14) = 2.50$, $p = .102$; Wilks' Lambda = .652; $\eta^2 = .35$). Further analyses of pre- and post-LSB mean scores for the entire sample (N=21) found a significant reduction in depressive symptoms ($M = 2.67$; $SD = 2.52$) and ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 2.29$); ($t(20) = 2.21$, $p = 0.039$). Participants reported LSB as enjoyable. Further research into the potential benefits of LSB for mentally alert residents of NHs is warranted.

Dr. Theresa Chrisman completed her Ph.D. in social work from the University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work. She has a broad background in social work, with specific training in gerontology. She conducted a study using a life story book intervention with residents living in nursing homes (<https://stories.uh.edu/07222019storycatcher/index.html>).

Surviving COVID-19: Older Adults' Experiences and Resilience
Madisyn Longdin, Leah Graf, Yuxuan Yang, Millicent Malcolm,
Deborah McDonald, Brianna Gorman, Carmella Gagnon & Juliette Shellman

The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating to individuals over the age of 65. Older adults in assisted living facilities have experienced loss on a variety of levels. Social isolation and loneliness have dramatically increased due to COVID-19 leaving older adults vulnerable to psychological stress. Reminiscence, a recollection of past experiences, is one intervention which can be utilized to promote resilience and healthy coping techniques. The aim of this study was to determine the feasibility of facilitating a virtual reminiscence intervention and its impact on older adults (N=20) residing in assisted living. Using a one-group, pre/posttest design, we compared changes in the outcomes of resilience and reminiscence functions. Findings indicate that a virtual reminiscence intervention is feasible in an assisted living facility. Although no significant changes were found regarding resilience and reminiscence functions, male participants showed greater increase compared to female for the changes in total reminiscence function score and two subscales of reminiscence function after adjusting for age and education level. Also, older participants presented significantly smaller increases in boredom reduction score but greater increases in regulating emotion compared to younger participants. Five themes emerged from qualitative data: enjoyment, learning about oneself, given the opportunity to express oneself, technical difficulties, resilience. Benefits and challenges of conducting virtual reminiscence sessions are presented in this study. Suggestions for future research will be discussed.

Madisyn Longdin is a UConn Alumni ('21), graduating with a BA in Psychological Sciences and a double minor in Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) and Gerontology. Madisyn is currently employed at a nursing home in Bristol, Connecticut, as a Therapeutic Recreation Assistant. Yuxuan Yang is a PhD student in UConn, School of Nursing. Her research interest is the use of reminiscence in older adults with depression. Leah Graf is a junior nursing student at the University of Connecticut. Her research interest is the use of structured life review with hospice patients. Carmella Gordon is the administrator of Heritage Commons Retirement Community. Brianna Gordon coordinated the technical aspect of the project and works at Heritage Commons Retirement Community. Millicent Malcolm, Deborah McDonald are faculty at the University of Connecticut School of Nursing.

The Relationship between Death Anxiety, Geriatric Depression, and Reminiscence Functions in a Sample of Jordanian Community-dwelling Older Adults
Abdallah Abu Khait

The purposes of this study are to investigate the relationships between death anxiety, geriatric depression, and reminiscence function subscales in a sample of Jordanian community-dwelling older adults and b) to measure the mediating effect of death anxiety on the relationship between geriatric depression and reminiscence functions. We will utilize a cross-sectional design with a sample size of 335 Jordanian older adults. Data will be collected by an online survey. The mediating effect will be examined by testing the interaction term of the model in R.

We expect that results from this study will: a) assist in understanding how reminiscence functions correlate with mental health conditions in a sample of Jordanian older adults, b) close the gap in the current literature on the relationships between reminiscence functions and mental health in Arab countries, c) support current evidence that reminiscence functions have a positive or negative association with psychosocial health and vary across cultures and d) contribute to the development of psychosocial and spiritual interventions that reduce geriatric depression and death anxiety in Jordan. Study implications and future directions will be discussed.

Abdallah Abu Khait, PhD, MSN, CNS, RN, is an assistant professor at the Hashemite University, School of Nursing in Jordan. He earned his PhD from the University of Connecticut School of Nursing in 2020. His research interests include: 1) use of reminiscence for people living with neurocognitive and psychiatric disorders; 2) variation of reminiscence functions across cultures; and 3) the association between reminiscence functions and other mental health-related outcomes

**A Comparison of Life Events Recalled by Older Adults
to Events Anticipated by Younger Adults
Thomas Pierce, Brian Carle, & Grace Flood**

The reminiscence bump effect is the tendency for older adults to recall more life events from their teens, twenties, and early thirties than from other decades of life. The purpose of this study was to compare patterns of life events recalled by older adults as they looked back at their past to life events anticipated by younger adults to occur in their future. Twenty-five older adults (mean age = 79.68 years, SD = 7.84) completed a lifeline by drawing the course of their life from birth to their current age, placing life events on the line and indicating their age when each event occurred. Sixty-five younger adults (mean age = 18.88 years, SD = 0.82) completed a future-oriented lifeline by drawing the anticipated course of their life from their current age to the age of their anticipated death, placing anticipated life events on the line and indicating their age at which each event was expected to occur. Younger adults reported a significantly higher frequency of anticipated life events from the reminiscence bump period (52.80%) than did older adults recalling events from their past (46.50%), $X^2(1, N = 924) = 5.93, p = .015$. A significantly higher percentage of life events anticipated by younger adults were negative (43.8%), compared to the percentage of negative events recalled by older adults (23.8%), $X^2(1, N = 924) = 32.60, p < .001$. Overall, the pattern of an anticipation bump for younger adults was similar to a reminiscence bump observed for older adults.

Thomas W. Pierce is a Professor of Psychology at Radford University and serves as the Editor of the *International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review*. He has a B.A. in Psychology from McGill University and a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Maine. He was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Center for the Study of Aging at Duke University Medical Center.

Brian Carle has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Virginia and a Master's Degree in Experimental Psychology from Radford University.

Grace Flood, M.A., has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Edinboro University and a Master's Degree in Experimental Psychology from Radford University.

Life Story Practice and Research

12-Credit

Online Graduate Certificate Program

The Healing Art and Science of Life Story Practice and Research

[Visit our website!](#)

The exploration and expression of past experiences through various Life Story approaches such as reminiscence, life review, narrative, or storytelling to name a few can be an incredibly instructive and cathartic act that teaches us much about ourselves and our families. And, in the right hands, it can be healing.

Life Story is a 12-credit online graduate certificate program offered by the University of Connecticut (UConn) School of Nursing. Students work with national and international faculty who specialize in guided autobiography, personal history, memoir writing, and other life story methods. Courses are all taught in an online asynchronous format and focus on innovations, research, and practice experiences. Course can be accessed from anywhere in the world at any time.

A key aim of UConn's Life Story online program is to offer a structured process for training various health professionals to practice life story techniques. The process of facilitating and listening to life stories requires rigorous and supervised training to ensure safe practice with positive health outcomes.

By applying life story methods effectively, a patient's thinking can be dramatically retrained. It can improve their mental health and well-being and serve as an intervention to improve mental health outcomes, especially in dementia patients, including depressive symptoms, life satisfaction, quality of life, and social isolation, to name a few. Some examples of life story counseling tools and activities include:

- Reminiscence (group and individual)
- Structured Life Review
- Narrative
- Personal History
- Oral History
- Guided Autobiography
- Storytelling
- Legacy Letters