



HOW TO CREATE IMPACTFUL LEARNING

I have been to a lot of in-services in my lifetime, and unfortunately, there are far more that I don't remember than those that I do. I have also delivered a lot of in-services myself, and naturally, some have been more impactful than others. Fortunately, with time and experience, I've fine-tuned my process for delivering high impact learning experiences. What follows are some suggestions to create your own high impact learning opportunities for staff.

“Erica was a great presenter, a really nice combination of speaking on topic and generating feedback from the participants. The material presented was on topic and meaningful for our purpose. She really did an exceptional job and I think in turn enjoyed her experience with the staff and residents here.” - Administrator

The power of a story

Stories have a way of resonating with staff in such a way that concepts can be better understood. I often speak about a distressing experience I had in which my use of non-verbal communication and ability to think quickly on my feet prevented a potential choking incident. During a jewelry making group, an individual with cognitive decline swallowed a large bead, and my verbal efforts were not met with success. What I did next highlights the power of non-verbal communication! I took a bead in my own mouth and spit it out in front of her, and immediately, she did the same. Often, when I speak about non-verbal communication, my audience believes it is common sense. However, this story often resonates with my audience in such a way that helps them to really grasp the importance of this concept. Often, individuals with dementia struggle with understanding language; as a result, one's use of non-verbal communication can be instrumental in influencing behaviors. As healthcare professionals, it is vital that tone, eye contact, physical space, inflection, and gestures are considered when attempting to convey a message.

The power of a video

I recommend that you pause right now and watch this [video](#) and reflect on its message. “The Simple Truths of Service: Johnny the Bagger is an inspiring video about a grocery store bagger with Down syndrome who changed the company culture and created customer loyalty by providing service from the heart.” When I speak to organizations about how to improve customer service, I show this video. I believe that as a result of watching this video, I am a better health care professional, and watching this video with others has inspired them to explore strategies in which they could seek to improve themselves and the organizations for which they work. If you haven't watched the video yet, I hope that you do now!

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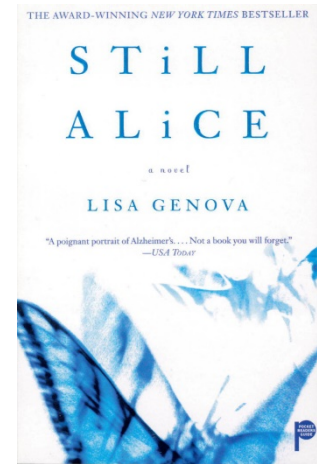
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The power of a book

At one organization at which I had the great fortune to work, I was provided with an autographed copy of [Still Alice](#) and encouraged to read it for a “book club” discussion. Although this book is fiction, it’s message is powerful.

During this staff meeting, the discussion centered on how lessons from the book could be translated into practice within the organization. This fictional book offers perspectives from Alice, an individual diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s disease as well as those of her family. In the book, Alice shares, “...and I have no control over which yesterdays I keep and which ones get deleted.” This quote is one of many that offer great opportunities to explore empathy, using Alice’s first person account of her experience with Alzheimer’s disease. It offers a glimpse into how Alzheimer’s disease can elicit feelings of helplessness. Recognizing and acknowledging the feelings of those for whom one cares can deepen relationships and lead to better quality care within healthcare organizations. Perhaps your organization doesn’t have the funds to purchase books for its staff. Try a movie showing or a discussion based upon a powerful article, and this could turn into a dialogue that translates into better outcomes for your organization!



Further Learning

Other mediums that often result in high impact learning include Ted Talks, poetry, children’s literature (which offers such powerful messages for adults!), and song! Listen to the powerful song by Brett Eldridge, [She Calls Me Raymond](#). The learning that emerges from a dialogue about this song alone can be transformational!

When she calls me Raymond
She thinks I'm her son
Tells me get washed up for supper
'Fore your daddy gets home
She goes on about the weather
How she can't believe it's already 1943
She calls me Raymond
And that's alright by me

So, next time you plan an in-service, think about how you can best deliver the information in a way that captures your audience so that the learning stays with them and ultimately translates into best practice and better outcomes for your organization!

This article was written by staff member Erica DeFrancesco.

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