

ARTICLE TITLE: Health narratives as a therapeutic tool for health care access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

<p><u>Key points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People with IDD face unique barriers when it comes to getting health care. These barriers have led to individuals with IDD having worse health outcomes than those without IDD.• Occupational Therapists can work with individuals with IDD to create health narratives to overcome these barriers and advocate for health-promoting practices	<p><u>Glossary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate: A person who supports a cause• Autonomy: Control over oneself• Barrier: Things that make it hard to do something• Health Literacy: The ability of a person to understand health information to make decisions about their health• Health Narrative: a story used to describe an individual's health history• IDD: Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities• Semi-Structured Interview: Interview with a set list of some questions• Systemic Barriers: Policies, practices or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded
<p><u>Why this article matters:</u></p> <p>Individuals with IDD do not receive the same level of health care as those without IDD and there are things we can do to close that gap, such as health narratives.</p>	
<p><u>Description of the study:</u></p> <p>Researchers explained the barriers that individuals with IDD face in healthcare which include communication, health literacy, inexperienced healthcare providers, location, cost, autonomy, and support.</p> <p>Health narratives were put together during a larger project, "Research Engagement for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities", which allowed 67 individuals to create their own health narratives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health narratives were created in three phases.<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Phase one included an interview to discuss preferred communication methods, who they wanted to share the narrative with, and purpose for the narrative.	

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2. Phase two involved a semi-structured interview to find out personal and family health history, areas of confusion, and to talk about healthcare.
 3. Phase three had participants read their health narratives and let them make changes.
- Three participants in the larger project shared how they used their health narratives.
 1. John shared his health narrative with a friend before a medical appointment and worked through how to communicate well with his doctor.
 2. Nicole used her health narrative to advocate for fair treatment in healthcare for herself and others.
 3. Kayte used her health narrative to make changes in the healthcare system by sharing it with politicians and lawmakers.

Research questions:

The purpose of this article is to show how occupational therapists can use health narratives to address barriers and facilitate inclusive and meaningful healthcare for those with IDD.

Important results:

- Health narratives are effective tools and an inclusive way for individuals with IDD to advocate for themselves in healthcare.
- Health narratives help in the process of addressing systematic barriers in healthcare that individuals with IDD face.
- Three individuals with IDD shared how they used their health narratives to successfully advocate for themselves and others with IDD in the healthcare system.

How the results will be used:

- Occupational therapists should work with their clients with IDD to make and use health narratives.
- Individuals with IDD should use their health narratives to advocate for themselves in a healthcare setting.
- Researchers should study whether health narratives improve health literacy.

Full article reference: Doerpinghaus, A., Hladik, L., Gray, M., Dulaney, N., ^Barton, K., ^Rogers, J., ^Noblet, N., & Ausderau, K. K. (2022). Health narratives as a therapeutic tool for health care access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07380577.2022.2099603>