

Outcomes of Narrative Medicine Methods in Interprofessional LGBTQ Health Education

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INTRODUCTION

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people are at increased risk for a number of health conditions including stress, substance use, mood disorders, and chronic health problems ⁽¹⁻³⁾.
- Across the globe, discriminatory laws, policies, and practices create barriers that affect the health of LGBTQ people and prevent them from accessing the health services they need ⁽⁴⁻⁷⁾.
- There is a need for medical care and prevention resources that can competently address the needs of this population, however, LGBTQ-related content is consistently lacking in health science educational programs⁽³⁾.
- We used narrative medicine methods to deliver LGBTQ health education to a health professional student audience. Narrative medicine allows students to develop their reflection skills and engage in empathetic interactions. **We aimed to share narratives of LGBTQ patient care, offer concrete strategies for improving care, and encourage interprofessional and humanities reflection.**

METHODS

- We hosted a seminar consisting of an expert panel of LGBTQ-affirming professionals and one transgender patient, a medical case study, and a narrative medicine poetry workshop. All students from Creighton University's health professional programs were invited to attend, with a cap at 100 students.
- Following the seminar, students were asked to submit a 250-500 word reflection on the seminar using a writing prompt (**Figure 1**). Written submissions were analyzed qualitatively. First, they were categorized based on format: creative, analytical, or mixed. Then they were coded, and meaningful categories and themes were constructed.

In the poem *it won't be a bullet*, Danez Smith writes, "In the catalog of ways to kill a black boy, find me / buried between the pages stuck together / with red stick." Pick one of the following 2 prompts and write 250-500 words in response:

- 1) In the catalog of ways to heal someone, where would we find you?
- 2) What is found in the catalog of ways to treat a Black LGBTQ patient?

Figure 1. Narrative Medicine Workshop Writing Prompts

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Figure 2. Health Professional Programs Represented at the Event

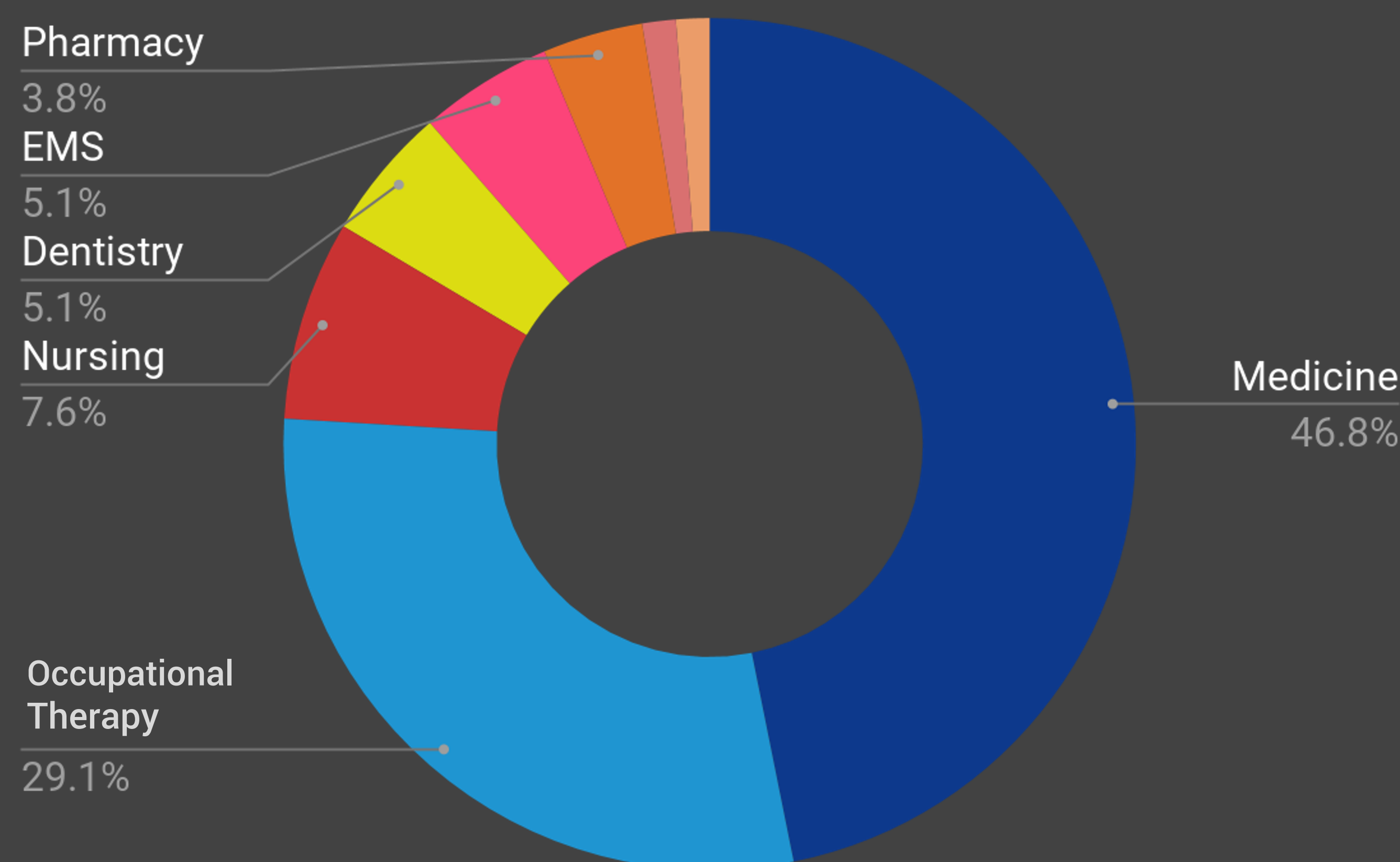


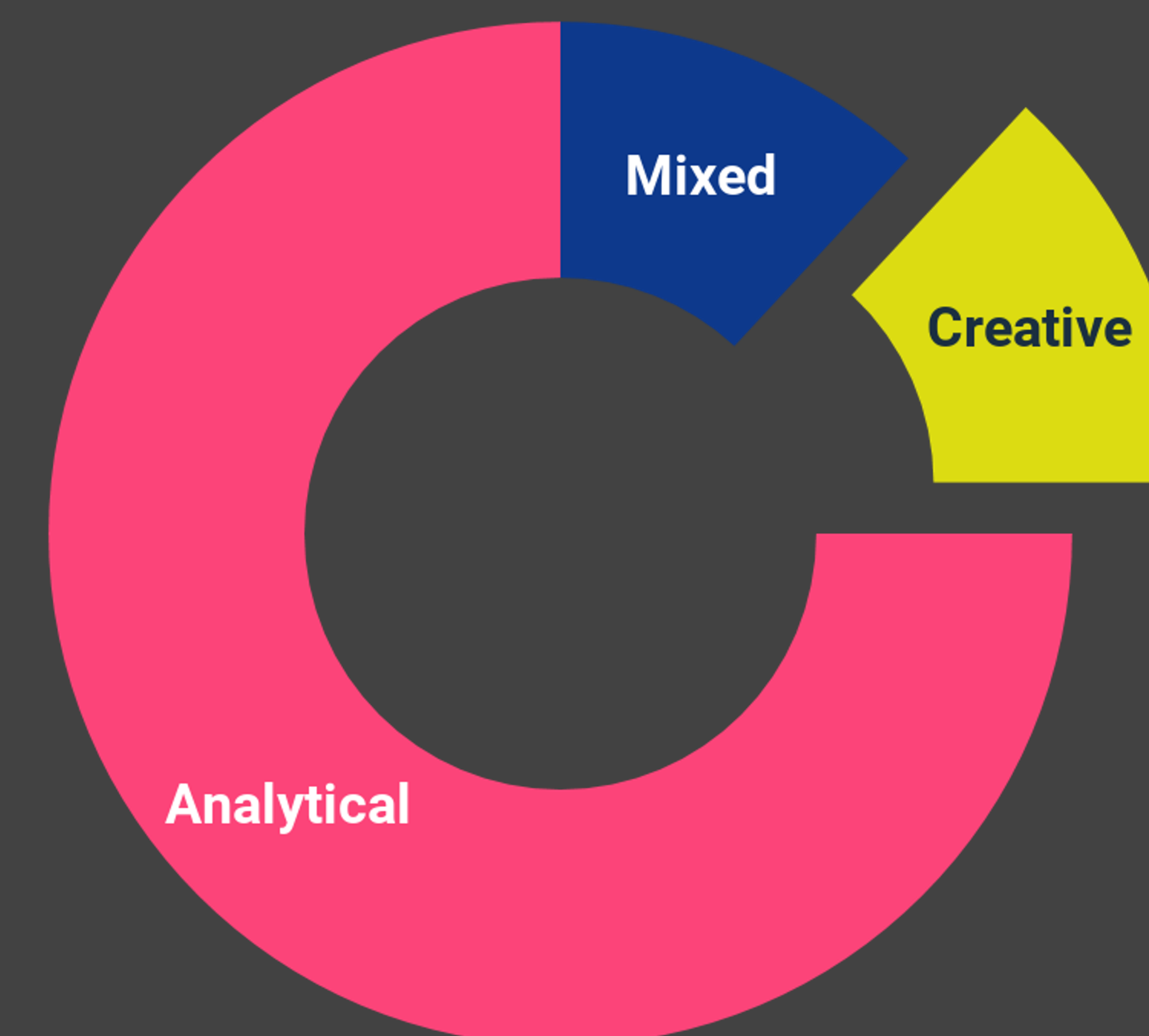
Figure 4. Most Common Codes Identified in Students' Written Submissions



CONCLUSION

- This seminar utilized narrative medicine methods to explore LGBTQ health issues beyond the facts, figures, and harmful pathologization often associated with health professional school curricula.
- Narrative medicine methods are typically more creative in nature compared with other methods used in health professional education. We use creative works to stimulate creative reflections. Although most students opted for analytical over creative reflections, the themes identified in their reflections suggest robust engagement with this topic and these methods.
- Narrative medicine methods may aid students in better understanding the issues that face their LGBTQ patients as they grow in their capacity to reflect and perceive the lived experiences of others. More work needs to be done to encourage creative engagement in health professional students.

Figure 3. Formats of Students' Written Reflection Submissions



Of the 84 students who submitted written reflections, 13.1% of students elected to write a creative reflection, while 75.0% submitted an analytical reflection. Despite the context of a narrative medicine workshop, without explicit instructions to write creatively, most students chose an analytical writing format for reflection.

Themes

- 1 Health professional students reflected on their duty to create a safe environment through direct interpersonal interactions and advocacy outside of clinical encounters.
- 2 Students expressed a desire to remain in a constant state of learning about their LGBTQ patients and about LGBTQ issues more broadly.
- 3 Students spoke to philosophical and ethical concepts involved with caring for LGBTQ patients.

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