

# *The Sweet Spot of Communication© Participant Survey Results*

Lehigh Valley Health Network  
Department of Infection Control  
Interactive Educational Session  
October 26, 2018

**THE NARRATIVE INITIATIVE, LLC**



2018

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# The Sweet Spot of Communication®

## Participant Survey Results

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Background

**The Narrative Initiative, LLC**, (or TNI) uses unique facilitated narrative techniques and interactive didactic sessions to invite health care providers to come together and examine the challenges to creating a kinder, more compassionate culture of health care. A “culture of kindness” in the health care work environment is associated with improved patient safety. A kind culture decreases the potential for non-professional behavior while promoting staff wellness and mitigating the effects compassion fatigue inherent in health care professions. Yet there are many challenges to acting in a kind manner in the current health care culture. Such challenges include time constraints for patient-provider interactions, lack of opportunities to proactively decompress difficult experiences, and *lack of effective patient-provider communication*. Dr. Lorraine Dickey founded **TNI** in 2017 based on 10+ years of research-based, peer-reviewed, unique, facilitated narrative techniques designed to help professionals and community members examine communication challenges inherent in critical relationships, including the critical patient-provider relationship. Our work with the healthcare professionals is included in our program *The Professional Caregivers’ Plan for Resilience* (P-CPR®).

Our first step in P-CPR® is to lay the educational foundation of perceived communication. We have named this paradigm **“The Sweet Spot of Communication”** (SSOC). The primary teaching point is learning to identify when verbal and non-verbal communication along with tone can be leveraged to enhance understanding while simultaneously supporting the needs of the listener (a.k.a. the perceiver of the communication.) Finding this “sweet spot” can prove very effective in enhancing the success of any critical communication, personal or professional. By success we mean communication where the person speaking and the person listening both walk away from the conversation with very similar understandings of what transpired. It is important to realize an act of kindness is only felt to be kind *if* the receiver/perceiver of the act *believes* the act is kind...regardless of the intent of the person performing the act. The primary point here is: Perception is Reality.

Ordinarily we follow this didactic teaching with a facilitated narrative session on a topic of interest to the group. The Narrative Kindness Project seeks to use the prompt of “Kindness” to allow participants to practice the communication skills they just learned while addressing barriers to kindness in the workplace environment using personal story.

Of note: this session was unique in that TNI was asked to teach the concepts of “The Sweet Spot of Communication®” as a stand-alone 1-hour interactive educational session. Therefore, our standardized, validated narrative participant survey was slightly adapted so we could compare survey results from this session with our current database.

This report details the following results: Part I: Audience demographics, Part II: Participants impressions of their SSOC learning experience benefitting their personal and professional resiliency, their ability to listen closely without judgement, and their ability to immediately use new learned skills in their personal and professional lives, as measured by Likert scores, and Part III: Participant open comments about their perception of the value of this SSOC interactive educational session.

### **Key findings:**

The SSOC interactive educational experience was *exceptionally* well received by participants who represented the fields of clinical medical professionals, non-clinical medical professionals and administrative professionals. Most have worked over 20 years their reported field of work. *Our adapted SSOC survey results showed all participants (n = 15) “definitely agree” their SSOC experience benefited their personal and professional sense of resiliency and their ability to listen without expectations.* (Median Likert scores = 5 and 5 respectively with Range = 0 and 0 respectively; 5 = strongly agree). *All participants also definitely agree they left with the impression they could immediately use new communication skills learned in their professional and personal lives.* (Median Likert score = 5, Range = 0).

**Note:** while it is not unusual for TNI Narrative Session participant median scores on the Likert questions to be “5”, it is highly unusual to have the ranges = 0 on any one question, not to mention on all 3 Likert questions. Though this session was specific to SSOC and did not include participant stories, the uniformity of these results concerned me. I communicated these unusual results to the Director and asked about any positive bias she could identify. In her comments she noted she had introduced some of TNI’s work with Kindness after attending *The Gathering of Kindness USA* in July 2018. However, she believed these results reflected how well the SSOC concepts were received and that they were “spot on” for her group.

Participant themes on open-ended comments on the value of their SSOC experience centered on: *reflection/heightened awareness, positive value statements, the value of this experience for their professional and personal lives, and educational value.*

The major comment as to how their narrative experience could be improved: **More!... 50% of participant comments addressed wanting a longer session and/or more exploration of other topics.**

## DETAILED RESULTS

### TNI SSOC Participant Survey Results

A total of 15 participants attended this learning experience from the Department of Infection Control at Lehigh Valley Health Network.

A total of 15 surveys were completed.

#### Part I: Demographics

For reporting purposes, the following fields of work were divided into three major categories: Clinical medical professionals (those in fields of work primarily involved in patient care: *Nursing and Ancillary medical staff including medical technicians*), Non-clinical medical professionals (those in fields of work supporting, but not directly involved, in patient care): *Non-clinical ancillary staff including project coordinator and quality / research*, and Administration members (those in fields of work in health care primarily in an administrative capacity): *Physician and Nursing Managers / Directors*.

#### Field of Work

15 participants reported the following fields of work:

##### Clinical medical professionals

n = 10

##### Non-clinical medical professionals

n = 2

##### Administration Professionals

n = 3

#### Years in Field of Work

Participants ranged in experience in their field of work from 1-2 years to > 20 years. **Note: 73% of participants reported > 20 years of experience, and all participants have > 10 years in their field of work.** This reflects a very senior group of professionals.

1 year = 0

5-10 years = 0

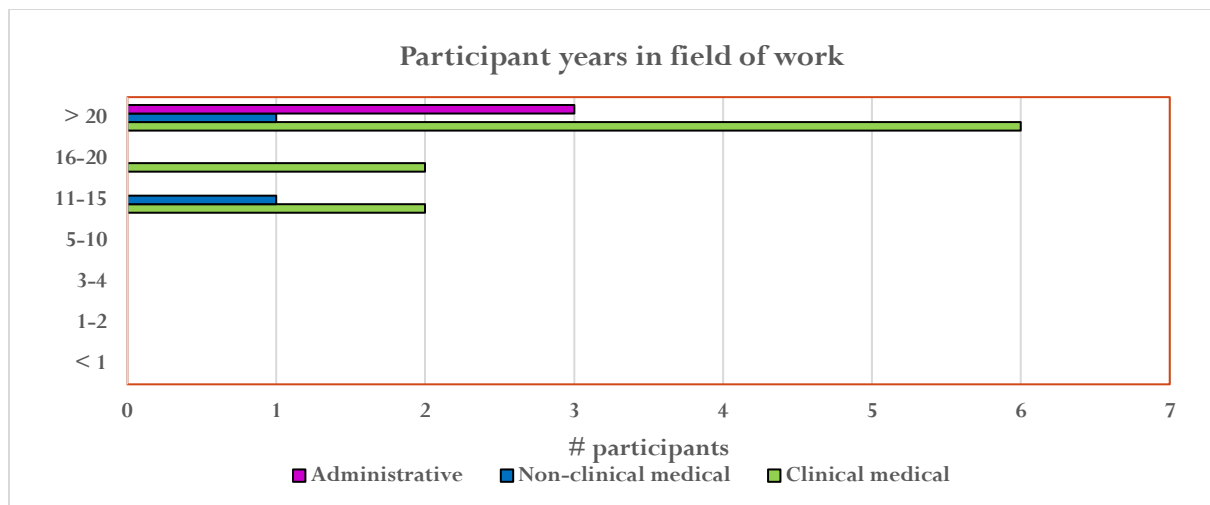
1-2 years = 0

11-15 years = 2

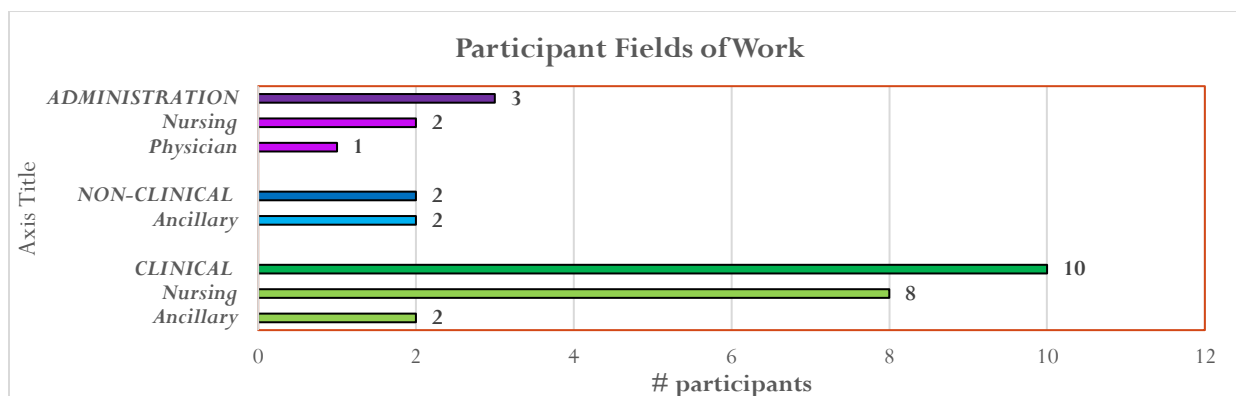
3-4 years = 0

16-20 years = 2

> 20 years = 11



The following graph shows participant years of experience in their reported field of work by the same major categories: Clinical medical professionals, Non-clinical medical professionals, and Administrative professionals.



## **Part II: Participant responses to statements evaluated with Likert scoring**

Participants were asked to respond to the following three statements:

*Please give your honest opinion for each statement. Circle 1 of 5 possible answers that **BEST DESCRIBE** your opinion of your experience with today's SSOC session.*

### Likert Scoring

5 = definitely agree

4 = probably agree

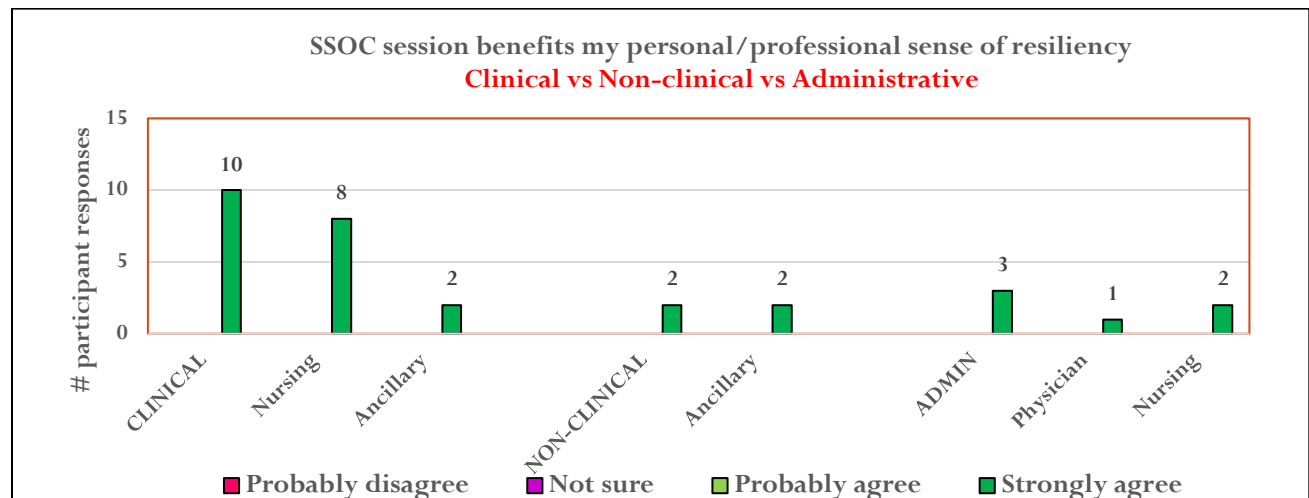
3 = not sure

2 = probably disagree

1 = definitely disagree

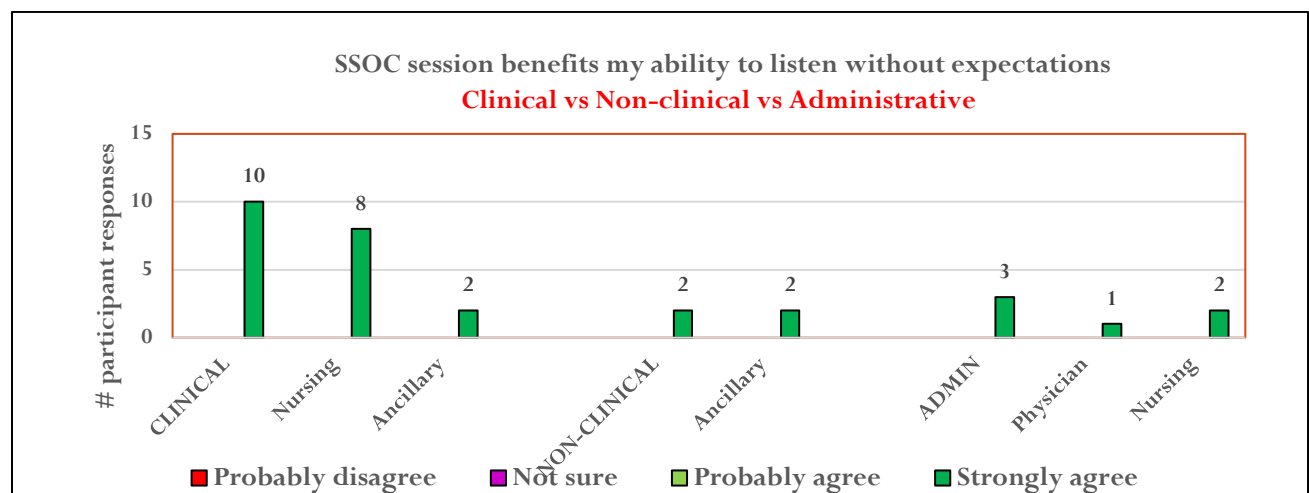
**Question 1: Today's SSOC experience will benefit my personal and/or professional sense of well-being and resiliency.**

	<u>Median</u>	<u>Range</u>
Clinical medical professionals	5	0
Non-clinical medical professionals	5	0
Administrative professionals	5	0



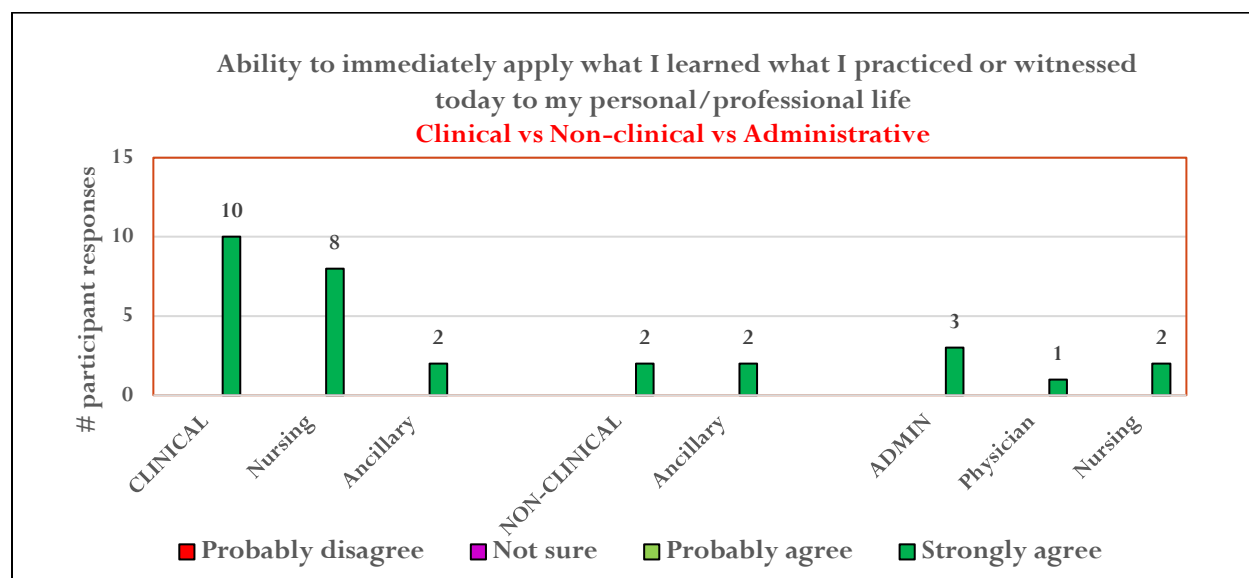
**Question 2: Today's SSOC experience will benefit my ability to listen closely without expectations.**

	<u>Median</u>	<u>Range</u>
Clinical medical professionals	5	0
Non-clinical medical professionals	5	0
Administration professionals	5	0



**Question 3: I will be able to apply what I practiced or witnessed today to my personal and/or professional life.**

	<u>Median</u>	<u>Range</u>
Clinical medical professionals	5	0
Non-clinical medical professionals	5	0
Administration professionals	5	0



### Part III: Participant open-ended comments

Participants were asked to comment on three open-ended questions. Results are shown by frequency of major category of comment. Individual comments are then detailed by category.

**Question 1: What are your impressions about the value of this SSOC experience as it relates to your personal and/or professional life?**

#### **Key findings:**

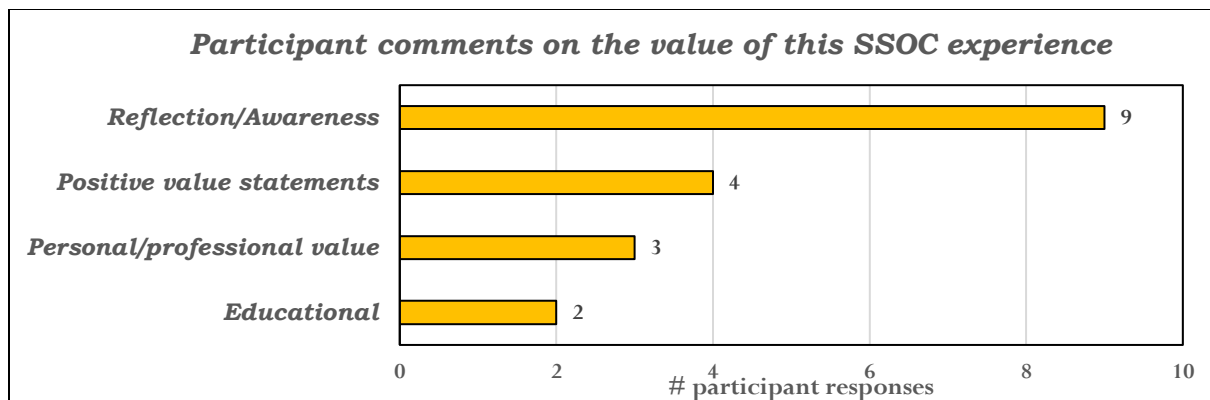
**A total of 18 participant comments were made.**

**50% made comments about Reflection / Heightened Awareness of communication**

**22% made comments on the positive value of this experience**

**17% made comments on the value of this experience in their personal and/or professional lives**

**11% made comments referring to the educational value of this experience**



### Reflection/Awareness

1. I need to practice this. I'm very concrete/sequential and often don't p/u on "outside the box" type of emotion. I look at things practically and often as a list that needs to be crossed off due to time!
2. Not to judge, to be kind
3. Incredibly enlightening, especially the verbal/non-verbal/tone information
4. it is beneficial to see it logically presented
5. Amazing to learn (again) the percentages of perceived communication
6. Sounds amazing and makes so much sense.
7. Life is crazy and hard to change actions overnight
8. I hope it will aid me in being a kinder person
9. Everyone can benefit from improving their communication skills -- to help others and to help themselves.

### Positive value statements

1. Enlightening
2. Extremely valuable.
3. Excellent information
4. Love Love Love it and the message

### Personal and professional value

1. I can definitely see elements presented in my own life –
2. Family (husband/child) I think a lot of this will help at home
3. Will be very helpful in dealing with family issues in my life

### Educational

1. Having tools as described in the SSOC experience is priceless.
2. Needs to be practiced

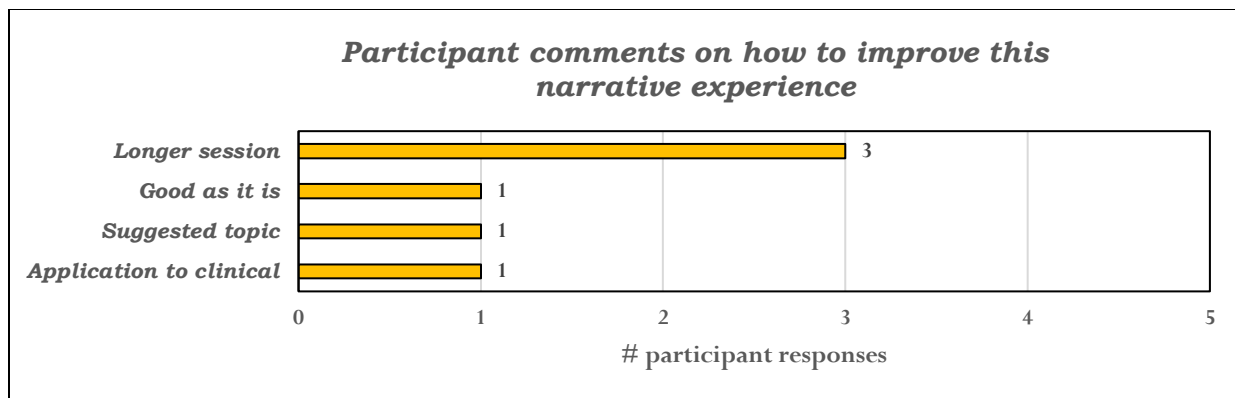
**Question 2: How can we improve this SSOC experience to better benefit you?**

### Key findings:

*A total of 6 participant comments were made.*

*50% made comments about wanting more time for this experience*





#### **Longer time**

1. Continue to offer on-going training/resources.
2. Longer session
3. More interaction to be able to work with examples

#### **Good as is**

1. As you already are.

#### **Suggested topic**

1. Discuss intimidation regarding logic, empowerment

#### **Application to clinical**

1. Get into health care at large

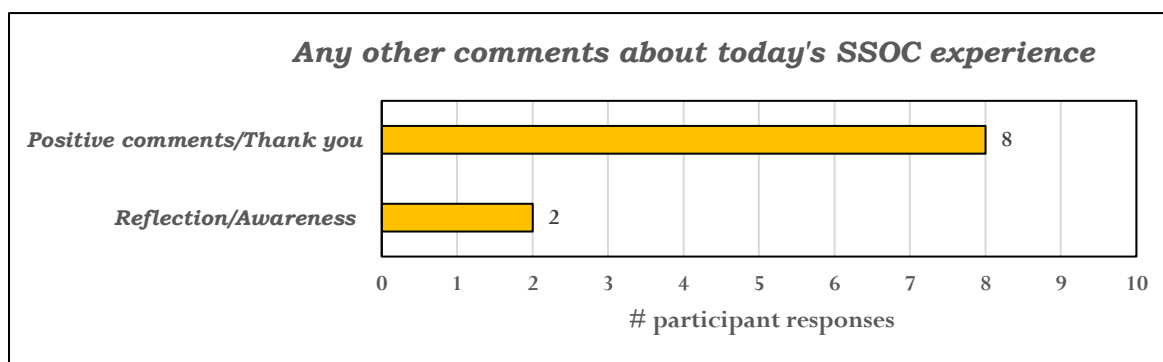
**Question 3: Do you have any other comments about today's SSOC experience?**

#### **Key findings:**

*A total of 10 participant comments were made.*

*80% made comments reflecting a positive experience/thank you*

*20 % made comments about Reflection /Heightened Awareness*



#### **Positive comments/thank you**

1. Thanks for coming
2. Thank you for all you are doing.
3. Outstanding and much needed
4. Intriguing
5. Thank you

6. It was awesome!
7. Thanks for coming
8. Thank you

#### **Reflection/Awareness**

1. This speaks to the sense of trust expressed here...but I have a faith life and am often frustrated that in a spiritual setting people are often NOT KIND. This experience today helped illuminate everyone struggles with kindness. Believing in God alone doesn't exempt us.
2. This is my 2nd experience with your program and I try to incorporate everything heard in my everyday life.!



---End of report ---  
November 2, 2018