

Dying To Talk: UCSF Heart Sounds

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Dawn Gross, MD, PhD

Overview

UCSF Heart Sounds is a special podcast series by Dying to Talk dedicated to promoting wellbeing and community through conversations about the universally experienced though rarely discussed moment in medical training: the first patient death. Each episode features an early career UCSF physician in conversation with palliative medicine attending and talk radio host, Dawn Gross. Though every physician is as unique as the story they share, every conversation ultimately illuminates our shared humanity, such that UCSF Heart Sounds becomes the stethoscope for listening to the heart of what matters.

Data Snapshot

Eight episodes have been recorded and at the time of this report, five have been released to the public with the remaining three scheduled for release over the next three weeks. At the conclusion of their recording sessions, guests reported feeling close to other people, useful, relaxed and loved. They wish that they could have conversations like these several times a month if not weekly. Of the nearly 500 episode plays to date, listeners span the globe, tuning in from the US, Mexico, Germany, Ecuador, Australia, Argentina, Canada, UAB and the Netherlands.

Resources

[Dying To Talk](#)
[apple](#), [google](#), [iheart](#), [spotify](#)
[Rize Up Sourdough](#)
[Wholesome Bakery](#)



Project Details

Eight doctors representing the specialties of hospital medicine, internal medicine, pediatric neurology and adult neurology join in conversation with hospice and palliative medicine physician, Dawn Gross, to share their first experience of a patient dying while under their care. The diversity of story tellers and stories told offers a glimpse into the highly predictable though rarely prepared for experiences of grief shared with patients, families, loved ones and colleagues. By creating a safe space for each story to be heard, voices representing a diversity of specialty, spiritual, racial and gender identities illuminate our shared humanity while simultaneously cultivating a culture of curiosity, self-compassion and empathy. Each episode includes invitations for community engagement via the creation of “Huggles” (an in-person or virtual gathering with the intention of giving and receiving the experience of being held and hugged while you share stories of your own). A Dying To Talk production team “Huggle” was held with podcast guests to promote and cultivate cross-specialty empathic support. Surveys assessing guest experiences were shared during the “Huggle.” Listener experience data continues to be collected and analyzed. Gift card incentives are being distributed to randomly selected listeners who provide feedback. Music was created and generously provided by Craig Minowa of the band, Cloud Cult. Deep gratitude to the Dying To Talk Team: Sound Engineer, Fernando Vives, Production Director, Joanna Lin, and Executive Producer, Matt Martin.

Project Challenges

Three challenges influenced the timing and production of UCSF Heart Sounds: First, doctors are hard to schedule, especially when still in residency; Second, navigating UCSF Bear Buy to make grant allocated purchases of any kind takes more patience and attempts than placing an IV in a person with peripheral vascular disease; and, Third, remember to remove all dog collars and cat bells before hitting record and be sure to have sufficient lint brushes on hand when Percy is in the recording studio.

Lessons Learned

Anything is possible. The universe loves to eavesdrop. Be prepared to say “yes” when your deepest wishes come true. Ask for more money than you think you need because a well-seeded dream is far more likely to flourish than one that is forced to ration at inception. And, everything goes better when a team of talented, passionate and creative people drop into your lap so share what you are up to so they know how to find you.