



# Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics

## Let's Close the Gap in Medical Care for NDErs

Your Support Can Help IANDS in an Exciting New NDE Education Initiative!

Chances are, you are a near-death experiencer—or you know one—who has felt harmed by disclosing the experience (NDE) to a healthcare professional. In a recent study (Holden et al. 2014), 88 experiencers reported their perceptions of 188 of their most memorable experiences disclosing their NDEs to medical, mental, social, and spiritual/religious healthcare providers. *In one-fifth of cases*, they said they felt harmed by the experience. The harm took several forms.

- Although professional literature on NDEs abounds, these experiencers said their healthcare providers did not recognize the experience as an NDE;
- Although research shows that experiencers usually feel adamant that their experiences are real; that the experiences are qualitatively different from other states of consciousness such as hallucinations or dreams; and that hundreds of cases exist in which experiencers accurately perceived things during their NDEs that seemed physically impossible for them to have perceived, these experiencers' healthcare providers assumed the NDE must not be real – must be, for example, hallucinations;
- Although research has shown no relationship between NDEs and mental disorder, these experiencers were sometimes diagnosed with a mental disorder *based on the NDE alone*; and
- Although research has shown that NDE aftereffects are typically spiritually beneficial, these healthcare providers considered the NDE somehow spiritually malevolent – evil, or “of the Devil.”

Every healthcare provider is bound by an ethic to do no harm, but harm continues to be done. This continued

harm is the “gap” in medical care for NDErs. Interestingly, in that study, harm was just as common for experiencers whose NDEs occurred in the mid-1900s as in the early 2000s – despite extensive publication of research on NDEs over the past four decades.

One of IANDS’s goals has been for health professionals to be educated about NDEs so they are much less likely to harm experiencers who disclose their NDEs. The cited study indicates that this goal is yet to be achieved. Recently, IANDS signed on for an opportunity that promises to advance this goal substantially.

In Spring 2020, the academic journal *Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics: A Journal of Qualitative Research* (NIB), published by Johns Hopkins University Press, dedicated a special issue to the topic of ethical treatment of patients who have had NDEs. The issue, entitled “Healthcare After a Near-Death Experience,” included:

- Narratives by 12 experiencers describing how healthcare providers responded to their disclosure of their NDEs, including one by IANDS President Emerita Nancy Evans Bush, known for her expertise on the topic of distressing NDEs;
- A co-commentary article entitled “Closing the Medical Gap of Care for Patients Who Have Had a Near-Death Experience” by Lilia Samoilo, BA, a counselor and an IANDS member and volunteer, and Diane Corcoran, PhD, RN, US Army Col (ret), President Emerita of IANDS;
- Commentary articles: one by physician bioethicist Jeffrey P. Bishop, MD, PhD, and another by Rev. Betty M. Glover, an ordained Episcopalian priest and former hospital and police chaplain.

## An opportunity for IANDS, with your help

As it stands right now, access to this special issue is restricted: Until Spring 2021, it can only be purchased, and after that, it will be available only to academics as individual articles through their academic libraries.

The opportunity we have is to increase the impact of the issue and related materials through a cooperative effort with the NIB Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Our cooperative effort would aim to distribute the stories and commentaries more widely, and at no cost to readers. Wider distribution includes:

Conversion of the NIB special issue into an issue of *VOICES: Personal Stories from the Pages of NIB*, a publication with a full-color cover and containing all the contents of the special issue plus 6 additional narratives. Of the 18 total narratives, 12 come from NDErs who are IANDS members or have spoken at IANDS conferences;

Creation of a web page that includes:

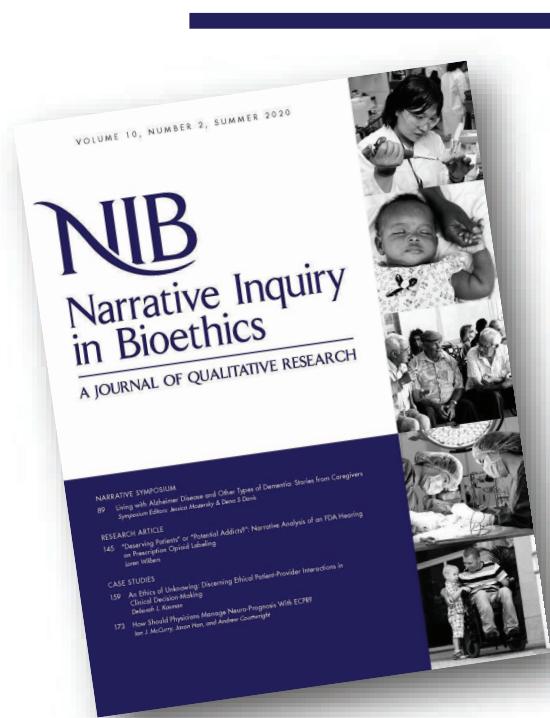
- A PDF of the entire publication that can be downloaded and distributed for free—a condition known as “open access;”
- A discussion/teaching guide to facilitate a deeper

understanding of the issues raised in the *VOICES* issue that healthcare educators can use in their curricula;

- Links to podcasts of interviews on Lee Witting’s IANDS NDE Radio and by Dr. Karen Wyatt;
- Links to resources such as an IANDS web page on this topic and further reading;
- Dissemination of the link to the web page, including a PDF of *VOICES* and the Teaching Guide through the NIB Foundation’s social media channels and newsletter; and
- Printing of additional hard copies of *VOICES* on request, at cost, which IANDS can distribute to medical personnel through many channels.

The total cost to make this opportunity a reality is \$25,000. The IANDS Board recently approved allocation of \$12,500 from the Education and PMH Atwater Research Funds. Both the NIB Foundation and IANDS are seeking donations from the community to help us achieve this goal.

We need to raise *an additional \$12,500* to fully fund this project. **The deadline for this initiative is December 31<sup>st</sup>!** If you would like to contribute to this unprecedented opportunity to make experiencers’ voices heard and to



*Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics (NIB)* is published by Johns Hopkins University Press on behalf of [the Foundation for Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics](#) and provides a forum for exploring current issues in bioethics through the publication and analysis of personal stories, qualitative and mixed-methods research articles, and case studies. Articles may address the experiences of patients and research participants, as well as health care workers and researchers. *NIB* is dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of bioethical issues by engaging rich descriptions of complex human experiences. While *NIB* upholds appropriate standards for narrative inquiry and qualitative research, it seeks to publish articles that will appeal to a broad readership of health care providers and researchers, bioethicists, sociologists, policy makers, and others.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

close the gap in medical care for NDErs, we invite you to join us in this cause. Simply go to [iands.org/donate#education](https://iands.org/donate#education) and contribute to the **NIB/VOICES Initiative**. Check with your employer if your donation may be eligible for a matching gift.

All donors will receive a complimentary copy of the PDF version of the *VOICES* issue as soon as it's available. Donors contributing \$50.00 or more will also receive a complimentary printed copy of the *VOICES* issue as soon as they are available.

Through education and training of healthcare professionals, **we can save future near-death experiencers from the unnecessary pain of psychological and spiritual harm.**

For more information about the original NIB special issue and the *VOICES* initiative:

- A sample *VOICES* web page and magazine (the topic is "#MeToo in Surgery: Narratives by Women Surgeons"). [https://nibjournal.org/voices/  
metoo\\_in\\_surgery/](https://nibjournal.org/voices/metoo_in_surgery/)
- Article: Samoilo and Corcoran's "Closing the Medical Gap of Care for Patients Who Have Had a Near-

Death Experience." Link: [muse.jhu.edu/article/756188](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/756188)

- Article: Nancy Evans Bush's NDE narrative on "Healthcare After a Near-Death Experience." Link: [muse.jhu.edu/article/756200](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/756200)
- Podcast: Dr. Karen Wyatt interviews Lilia Samoilo and NIB Managing Editor Heidi Walsh about "Near-Death Experiences and Healthcare: Bridging the 'Medical Gap of Care'." Link: [tinyurl.com/interview-gapofcare](http://tinyurl.com/interview-gapofcare) or [youtu.be/QQikr9\\_9Gz0](https://youtu.be/QQikr9_9Gz0)
- Podcast: Lee Witting of IANDS NDE Radio interviews Lilia Samoilo about the "NIB NDE Symposium & Closing the Medical Gap of Care of NDE Patients." Link: [talkzone.com/episodes/204/10813.html](http://talkzone.com/episodes/204/10813.html)

**We hope you will join us with your financial support!  
Please donate now!**

## Reference

Holden, J. M., Kinsey, L., & Moore, T. R. (2014). Disclosing near-death experiences to professional healthcare providers and non-professionals. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 1(4), 278-287. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000039>

## A CALL TO ALL IANDS PHYSICIANS

Dear Fellow IANDS Physicians,



The NIB Project is a golden opportunity for physicians to raise the torch for near-death experiencers. Our leadership is long overdue. As a current member of the IANDS board, I am pledging \$1,000 to begin the physicians' initiative toward our fund-raising goal.

All IANDS physicians, please me with your generous contributions.  
Thank you!

*Rebecca S. Valla, MD*

# Calling All Artists!

If you are a drawing/painting artist or a photographer, please consider donating a work to IANDS for an initiative that is in-the-works.

IANDS is partnering with the Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics Foundation to produce a print-and-online package of materials on the topic of "Closing the Gap in Medical Care for Near-Death Experiencers."

We are soliciting artwork donations from which a committee will select:

- The work to appear on the cover of *VOICES: Personal Stories from the Pages of NIB*, and
- Works from among the remaining submissions to appear on the IANDS webpage(s) associated with the initiative.

The primary audience for these materials will be medical personnel -- physicians, nurses, chaplains, etc. Thus, the artwork might reflect such themes as:

- Medical professionals' role in responding helpfully, rather than harmfully, to near-death experiencers' disclosure of their NDEs.
- One or more personal experiences of help and/or harm disclosing an NDE to a healthcare professional.

More details about submissions:

- **Original:** The submission must be an original work not published elsewhere.

- **Copyright:** The artist will retain copyright for the work and will donate its use to IANDS.
- **Color:** The cover of *VOICES* is full-color.
- **Title:** The title of the work should be included with the work.
- **Credit:** Each artist will be credited, along with a link to the artist's home webpage, if the artist wishes.
- **Specifications:** Submissions must be sent as hi-res JPG/TIFF/EPS/PSD or PDF files.
- **Deadline:** Submission must be received by **October 31, 2020.**
- **Submit to:** Susan Amsden at [iandsconference@gmail.com](mailto:iandsconference@gmail.com)
- **Decision:** Artists will be notified within two weeks following the deadline date.

This email has gone out to all IANDS members and other affiliates. If you know someone who may not have received this email but might be interested in making a submission, please forward this email to them.

For questions, please contact me at the email address below. Enjoy getting your creative and inspirational juices flowing!

Jan  
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