OBJECTIVES
1. To illustrate that people have a variety of “selves” that are not usually recorded in the medical record.
2. To appreciate the fuller understanding of the many dimensions of how a “patient” may be viewed by his/her family and by self.

TARGET AUDIENCE
Healthcare professionals and health professions students

EXERCISE
Instructions:
1. Provide each participant with one sheet of paper and a pen or pencil.
2. Instruct participants to fold paper in half.
3. Direct participants to recall an older adult that they have interacted with recently, perhaps a “difficult” person they have cared for.
4. On the front of the folded paper, instruct participants to describe the person as they would typically describe them in their notes or in the medical record. Give participants several minutes to write this description.
5. Next, ask participants to turn the paper over and write on the back side how the person’s family or friends might describe the person.
6. Finally, ask participants to open the paper and to write on the inside how the person might describe themselves, including the person’s “self-talk” about how they describe themselves to themselves.

Debrief through a discussion of what they have discovered about the person through considering these different points of view. How might this different view change how they care for the person?

ADAPTATION
Introduce Eric Cassell’s\(^1\) idea of suffering being distress when the person feels that their sense of self is threatened. How does the medical care system diminish or sustain a person’s fullest sense of health? What actions can care providers take to support the healing of the sense of self?

Used as introduction to person-centered care for WAGECC’s Master Faculty Scholars Program and Professional Development Program.

\(^1\) Cassell EJ. *The Nature of Suffering*. 2nd ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; 2003. Physician and author Eric Cassell, widely cited on the subject of attending to the suffering person as a primary goal of medicine, has defined suffering as "the state of severe distress associated with events that threaten the intactness of the person."