

New Writing Program Mobilizes Writers and Therapists to Help Health Care Professionals

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 25, 2021 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – [New Directions in Writing](#), an offshoot of the Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, announces “The Things They Carry,” a series of free writing workshops for health care workers and first responders, designed to help them face the deep trauma of their experiences with the corona virus pandemic. The first workshop will launch on April 13, 2021 and are staffed by therapists and writers from across the country who have come together specifically to help health care workers. They include: Jessica Anya Blau, Sarah Boxer, Kate Daniels, Aimee Molloy, Aria Beth Sloss and Valerie Tripp.



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A recent survey of thousands of health workers by the Yale School of Public Health, recently published in the journal [PLOS One](#), found that nearly one quarter of all participants showed signs of PTSD, and almost half had probable alcohol use disorder.

The Things They Carry workshops – <http://thingstheycarryproject.org/> – will

pair experienced writers with therapists skilled at working with people experiencing PTSD. If the title sounds familiar, that's intentional: it honors Tim O'Brien, the author of "The Things They Carried," a groundbreaking meditation on the Vietnam War, memory, and the redemptive power of storytelling.

The workshops are the brainchild of Kerry L. Malawista, Ph.D., a psychotherapist in private practice in Potomac, Maryland, and McLean, Virginia. Malawista is a co-chair of New Directions, which offers a postgraduate training program for clinicians, academics and writers who want to bring modern psychoanalytic perspectives to their work.

"I see several frontline health care workers in therapy," Malawista said. "From them, I hear about the ghosts of the COVID deaths they carry, the patients they have treated, those who were lost to the virus and those who still haunt them. Like soldiers returning from war, they cannot close their eyes to all they have witnessed – the smells, sights and sounds of people who died while in their care. And sadly, like the soldiers that O'Brien memorialized, the ghosts often pursue them in their dreams... Along with talk therapy, writing provides an effective pathway to process traumatic memory."

Participants will learn a technique called "writing for resilience," in which writing prompts will be offered to encourage them to explore their COVID experiences, helping them to delve into their meaning. For the present, workshops will be held via Zoom.

Following the writing sessions, participants will have an opportunity to share what they have written, listen to other stories, respond to the group's writings, and explore their meaning in writing and conversation.

"Writing in the company of others has special benefits," Malawista said. "To have one's experiences witnessed and validated by other writers has been shown to relieve isolation and create a sense of solidarity... Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the life stories they have heard in the course of their work, as well as on the ways they can keep themselves calm and strong."

For more information contact Kerry Malawista, Ph.D., at ThingsTheyCarryProject@gmail.com

Learn more about New Directions in Writing at:
<https://newdirectionsinwriting.com/>

*IMAGE link for media:

<https://www.Send2Press.com/300dpi/21-0325s2p-writing-workshop-300dpi.jpg>

*CITATION: PLOS ONE:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0246602>