



U.S. National Library of Medicine
National Network of Libraries of Medicine

NNLM *All of Us*

Graphic Medicine & Health Storytelling



nnlm.gov/all-of-us

All of Us
RESEARCH PROGRAM

The
Future of
Health Begins
With You

Activate!

Program Summary

Graphic Medicine is an emerging field that can be used to share health stories and provide health information. “The combined language of words and pictures that is the comic medium gives approachability and emotional impact to these personal stories, and even to the clinical data they sometimes include” (NLM Graphic Medicine exhibit). Your library can use graphic medicine to engage the public through graphic novel book clubs, discussion groups, library displays, and programs that prompt people to make their own health-focused comic or zine. Participants can research health information in MedlinePlus, <https://medlineplus.gov/>, explore stories in a graphic medicine book, and use resources from the NLM Exhibit Graphic Medicine - Ill-Conceived and Well-Drawn, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/graphicmedicine/>. The aim is to create a more open dialogue around health, provide the public with health information through MedlinePlus and other NLM resources, and to create a better understanding of health topics.

National Library of Medicine Resources

Graphic Medicine - Ill-Conceived and Well-Drawn online exhibit, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/graphicmedicine/>, provides information about selected books included in the collection, sample lesson plans and activities, information about the traveling exhibit, and flyers you can use in your library.

MedlinePlus, <https://medlineplus.gov/>, is a great resource for extensive consumer health information in both English and Spanish. MedlinePlus features hundreds of health topics, easy-to-read materials, drug information, interactive tutorials with audio, news, videos, and more.

Outside Resources

Graphic Medicine, <https://www.graphicmedicine.org/>, Graphic Medicine is a site that explores the interaction between the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare. Created by a community of academics, health caregivers, authors, artists, and fans of comics and medicine. Here you can find reviews and current news about the topic of graphic medicine. There is also a sister site for Spanish speakers -- medicina gráfica, <https://medicinagrafica.com/>.

How to Make a Zine, <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Zine>, A zine is a small self-published product that can be created on a variety of topics and is often used as a means of telling one’s story, sharing thoughts, and artwork. Zine making is also another great approach of sharing health stories. This website provides a good introduction as well as instructions on how to fold a small zine.

Make Belief Comix, <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/>, is an online comic creation website that can be great for younger audiences. It makes it easy to build a personal online comic.

Collaborate!

Possible Partnerships

This program could take on many community partnerships and extension activities. Some examples include:

- Colleges and Universities (art and creative writing departments)
- Throw a Comic Con at your library and feature workshops on graphic medicine
- Focus the theme of the program or book club on a current National Health Observance to highlight a specific health topic or awareness activity
- Collaborations with local clinics and health facilities -- Sketches from Outside the Margins as an example, <http://rxoutreach.org/sketches-from-outside-the-margins/>.
- For further information about the NLM travelling exhibit, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/about/exhibition/contact-us.html>, please contact NLMExhibition@mail.nih.gov.
- Local comic book stores, art museums, and galleries.
- Local artists and writers to help host comic creation workshops.
- Create an exhibit of hand-made comics and zines to showcase the work of program attendees.

For help connecting with potential partners in your community, contact your NNLM Regional Medical Library, <https://nnlm.gov/regions>.

Educate!

Relevant NNLM Trainings

Information about NNLM Trainings, <https://nnlm.gov/training>, and full course descriptions can be found online. Many of the courses are offered throughout the year online; however, feel free to reach out to your local NNLM representative to discuss the possibility of in-person training for your library. NNLM course offerings include:

- Stand Up for Health: Health and Wellness Services for Your Community
- Beyond an Apple a Day: Providing Consumer Health Information at Your Library
- Activate, Collaborate, and Educate: Health Outreach and Programming in Your Community

The NNLM New England Region also has a website for their Graphic Medicine Initiative, <https://nnlm.gov/ner/graphic-medicine>. On this website they feature information about webinars on the topic of graphic medicine.

Program Plan

Graphic Medicine Comic (or zine) Creation

Resources

- Paper
- Scissors
- Pens and pencils
- Colored pens, pencils, and markers
- Old magazines (with lots of pictures for people to cut out and include in their book if desired)
- Graphic Medicine Books
- Tablets for MedlinePlus demonstration and health information research

Audiences

- Adaptable to various age groups

Planning

Order graphic medicine novels from the National Library of Medicine exhibit to use as examples during the program. Reserve a space that provides tables and chairs for participants to comfortably create their comic throughout the program. Plan to have tablets for people to access MedlinePlus to get more information about health topics for their comics.

Gauge the comfort of the audience as to whether they would like to have very personal comics/zines or would benefit from having a prompt presented by the program facilitator. In order to plan for some programs, it may be beneficial to align the theme of a program to one of the National Health Observances, <https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/default.aspx>, (for example -- May is Mental Health Awareness Month; October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month). This will assist in the focus of the program as well as the marketing. Another alternative in the planning process is to prepare writing prompts or topics for participants to pick to be the focus of their comic and to help inspire their writing. Some sample prompts can be:

- Select, research, and write a comic on a health topic that you feel needs to be discussed more in your community to promote better health
- Select, research and write on a health topic that you feel has a lot of stigma surrounding it in our society. Write a comic to provide factual information about this topic.

- Make a comic about a recent visit to the doctor, hospital, or clinic. You can highlight things that were comical, uncomfortable, or ways that you felt supported. Include informative tips to help other people navigate these interactions in the future.
- Make an informative comic that is a how-to for people to ... (ex. Getting the most of out of a Dr. visit, tips for remembering to take medicine, tips for talking to family about health, etc).

Marketing

Use graphic medicine novels in a library book display to help promote the upcoming program. Highlight the program in the library's program newsletter and/or website.

Implementation

- Begin the program by doing a quick introduction into graphic medicine and the purpose of the program
- Do a quick demonstration to MedlinePlus. Encourage individuals to use MedlinePlus in the making of their comic or zine as a way to make sure we are spreading factual health information. Remind them that they can also use MedlinePlus to answer their own questions that may pop up during the process or afterwards.
- If providing a prompt for people, introduce the prompt or topic. If no prompt is provided, invite people to write about their own personal health stories or an informative comic. Provide examples from the graphic medicine books.
- Give people a few minutes to brainstorm and plan out their process. Remind them that it's not based on artistic ability and things can be abstract, the focus is on telling our health stories and providing information to others.
- Create! A majority time of the program will be in creating the comic or zine. Staff members should circulate around the room throughout the process asking questions and assisting if needed. Encourage idea-sharing and collaboration among participants. Perhaps play music in the background to help with the creative atmosphere.
- At the end of the program, invite people to share out their creation or experiences in creating. Did they discover anything interesting about the health topic? How did they feel was the best way to present the information in the comic?

Evaluation and Reporting

For evaluation of this program if you receive NNLM funding -- The NNLM National Evaluation Office, <https://nnlm.gov/neo/members/evalmaterials>, has a list of evaluation methods that should be used when completed this project. For any questions, please feel free to contact NNLM MAR Coordinator. Library staff involved in the project will fill out the All of Us Partner Staff Questionnaire as well as any additional follow-up surveys for staff.

Program Plan

Graphic Medicine Book Club

Resources

- Books from the NLM Graphic Medicine Exhibit
- Tablets for demonstration and use of MedlinePlus

Audiences

- Adaptable to various age groups

Planning

Solicit participants who may be interested in the book club. Provide the books ahead of time for book club participants. Think of possible questions to prompt discussion in the meetings. Also look at information available through MedlinePlus to help supplement discussions on related health topics. Reserve a room that will provide a space for participants to talk and discuss without interruption.

Marketing

Use graphic medicine novels in a library book display to help promote the upcoming program. Highlight the program in the library's program newsletter and/or website.

Implementation

- Arrange room that best facilitates discussion among book club participants
- Conduct book club for the selected audience group. Some may be more formal with guided questions from library staff as facilitator; other meetings may be more open and provide casual discussion
- At some point introduce MedlinePlus as a source for people to look up health information about topics discussed in the selected graphic medicine novel.
- Provide opportunities for follow-up, additional programs for people interested in health information and graphic novels. How participants can continue exploration of graphic medicine on their own, etc.

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Example Budget

Summary budget is presented as an example. You can edit and modify budget to fit the needs of your library, your individual library program plan, and prices of your library's approved vendors for materials.

Item	Price	Quantity	Total
15-30 copies of Books from the Graphic Medicine exhibit for use in library book display, references in comic book making programs, or graphic novel book clubs, https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/graphic-medicine/collection.html	\$25.00	30	\$750.00
Blank Paper (for comic making programs)	\$50.00	1	\$50.00
Color Pens, Markers, or Pencils	\$10.00	15	\$150.00
Black Pens or Pencils	\$10.00	10	\$100.00
Glue Sticks	\$1.00	25	\$25.00
Scissors	\$2.00	20	\$40.00
Old Magazines - from used book store or library's old magazine supply	\$0.50	40	\$20.00
Marketing and Promotion, printing and copying	\$150.00	1	\$150.00
Tablets - to demonstrate MedlinePlus during programs and for health information research	\$350.00	10	\$3,500.00
Staff Time - to plan and conduct program (per hour)	\$30.00	80	\$2,400.00
Total			\$7,185.00

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