



Royal College of Physicians

Dr Danielle Ofri' Biography

Danielle Ofri, MD, PhD is an Associate Professor of Medicine at New York University School of Medicine but her clinical home is at Bellevue Hospital, the oldest public hospital in the country. She is a founder and Editor-in-Chief of the [Bellevue Literary Review](#).

Her newest book is "[What Patients Say; What Doctors Hear](#)," an exploration of doctor-patient communication and how refocusing the conversation between doctors and patients can improve health outcomes.

Danielle Ofri is the author of four other books about life in medicine:

- [What Doctors Feel: How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine](#).
- [Medicine in Translation](#)
- [Incidental Findings](#)
- [Singular Intimacies: Becoming a Doctor at Bellevue](#)

She was also editor of a medical textbook—*The Bellevue Guide to Outpatient Medicine*—which won a Best Medical Textbook award.

Danielle Ofri writes regularly for the [New York Times](#) and [Slate Magazine](#) about medicine and the doctor-patient relationship. Her essays have also appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Atlantic*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Lancet*, *CNN* and on *National Public Radio*.

Her essays have been selected twice for *Best American Essays* and also for *Best American Science Writing*. She is the recipient of the McGovern Award from the American Medical Writers Association for "preeminent contributions to medical communication."

She has given TED talks on [Deconstructing Perfection](#) and [Fear: A Necessary Emotion for Doctors](#), and has also performed stories for the [Moth](#). She is featured in the upcoming documentary: "[Why Doctors Write](#)."

Danielle Ofri lives with several unfinished novels in various states of disrepair under her bed, three kids and husband, and the forever challenges of the [cello](#) in a singularly intimate Manhattan-sized apartment.

Presentation Blurp

Topic: Improving health through engagement with patients

Presentation title: What patients say, what doctors hear (and vice versa)

Despite modern medicine's infatuation with high-tech gadgetry, the single most powerful diagnostic device is still the doctor-patient conversation. This deceptively simple tool can achieve the majority of medical diagnoses. However, what patients say and what doctors hear are often two vastly different things.

In their anxiety to convey their symptoms, patients often feel an urgency to 'make their case' to their doctor; and as a result of immense pressure to be efficient, doctors often multitask while patients speak and can therefore miss key elements of the conversation. If you add stereotypes; unconscious bias; conflicting agendas; and a fear of lawsuits and misdiagnosis, then the risk of medical error multiplies.

Dr Ofri's presentation will examine whether refocusing the doctor–patient conversation can lead to better health outcomes.

CME objectives

At the end of this session, participants should be better able to:

- 1 understand the elements of good communication
- 2 discuss how both physicians and patients can contribute to breakdowns in communication
- 3 explore ways in which better communication can improve health outcomes.