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As healthcare systems continue to grow and the accelerated paced of scientific discovery brings about new medical therapies, understanding and advocating for one's health becomes more complicated. Lacking clarity and understanding about one's care plan can make illness an even more vulnerable time for patients and their families. While the fast-paced and ever-evolving nature of the healthcare industry requires efficiency and productivity, it also calls for empathy. The ability to actively listen, offer reassurance and simply be kind play an important role in promoting the holistic wellness of patients and caregivers. This session brought together experts who have made it their mission to build stronger relationships within healthcare through empathy, offering insights as to how we can foster more compassionate conversations across the health industry.

## Featured Speakers



**Sandra Leung**  
Executive Vice  
President,  
General Counsel,  
Bristol Myers Squibb



**Laura Adams**  
Special Advisor,  
National Academy of  
Medicine, Catalyst  
X4Health Principal,  
Laura Adams  
Consulting



**Shanelle Gabriel**  
HBO Def Poet,  
Singer, Activist,  
Advocate for Lupus  
Awareness



**Erin Galyean**  
Author, Speaker, &  
Trainer

# Building Stronger Relationships Across Healthcare Through Empathy

## Key Points and Resources

- Healthcare providers have the power to be effective in connecting with patients through **the art of presence - the ability to be intensely focused on the current moment**
- **Humanizing language helps patients feel like individuals as opposed to test subjects.** As care plans become more involved and treatments become more complex, being cognizant of the language used in interactions is increasingly important.
- The challenges of navigating the healthcare system can lead to patient and caregiver fatigue, making it difficult to advocate for yourself or a loved one. “Badass Advocate: Becoming The Champion Your Seriously Ill Loved One Deserves” by Erin Galyean offers **strategies to help family members and caregivers confidently ask questions and play an active role in developing a care plan.** Visit the Badass Advocate website for additional resources.
- **Self-care is an important component of patient and self advocacy.** “Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others” by Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky provides insights and basic practices to maintain emotional, psychological and spiritual wellness while working to serve others. The Trauma Stewardship Institute also provides resources including additional literature, videos, as well as workshops and consulting information.
- **Sharing personal experiences can help others.** The Research Evangelist Podcast hosted by lung cancer survivor and patient advocate Dave Bjork features biomedical researchers discussing their work and personal stories.