



Health and Medical Communication Speakers Series (Virtual Presentation)

Monday, 10 May 2021 at 3:30pm US Central Time Via WebEx

(Link to talk will be distributed upon registration – space limited to 40 synchronous attendees)

The Coping with COVID Project: Everyday Stories and Negotiations of Public Health

Dr. Kathryn Yankura Swacha, Assistant Professor
Department of English
University of Maine



**The webinar will be hosted on WebEx. Registration is required.
Please register by sending an email to CHMCEvent@gmail.com.**

Abstract:

Storytelling is a crucial component to how we, as humans, make sense of the world. This use of storytelling includes how we think about our personal health, and how we approach public health crises, like the current COVID-19 pandemic. Examining the stories that people tell reveals how people develop understanding and use knowledge within their everyday contexts. Stories told about daily life during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, can show how people interpret and respond to public health recommendations—like wearing masks and maintaining 6 feet from other people.

In this talk, Dr. Swacha will discuss findings from her ongoing project—The Coping with COVID Project—that invites individuals to share stories and images depicting how they have adapted COVID-related public health guidelines in their daily lives. Dr. Swacha will also discuss how insights from such story-driven research can help health and medical communicators design communication materials that reflect a specific audiences' day-to-day contexts, needs, knowledge, and constraints. Attendees will learn strategies for gathering and incorporating stories into different kinds of public health communication projects and materials.

Speaker Bio:

Kathryn (Katie) Yankura Swacha is an Assistant Professor of Professional and Technical Writing at the University of Maine, where she also directs the English Department's Internship Program. She is particularly interested in how people make sense of health information in their everyday lives, and she works closely with community partners on research and health communication projects. Her work has appeared in journals like *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine*, *Rhetoric Review*, and the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*.

This talk is co-sponsored by the Center for Health and Medical Communication (CHMC) at Louisiana Tech University, the Eunice C. Williamson Endowment in Technical Communication, and the Southwest Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association. For additional information on this virtual presentation, or on the Speakers Series, contact CHMCEvent@gmail.com.