

Episode: *Author Interview: "How the Arts Help Us Hold Grief and Maintain Collective Care"*

Guest: Tara Rynders, RN-BC, MFA, BSN

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the *Author Interview series* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I'm your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative format for accessing the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Tara Rynders, a registered nurse with more than 20 years' experience and founding Artistic Director of The Clinic, an arts and play-based company that provides workshops and performances related to burnout and secondary traumatic stress. She's here to discuss her article, *How the Arts Help Us Hold Grief and Maintain Collective Care*, in the July 2022 issue of *The Journal*, [Arts-Based Research and Health Care](#). Tara, thank you so much for being on the show today. [music fades]

TARA RYNDERS: Thank you for having me. It's a pleasure to be here.

HOFF: To begin with, what's the main ethics point of your article?

RYNDERS: Yeah. Thank you for that question. I believe as a nurse, there's many ethics points that we experience on a daily basis, however, are not really held, and there's not a space to reflect upon all that we carry as nurses. And so, ethically, I get curious around the ways that our lives, our work intersect with the lives of our patients and the spaces that we're holding for them consistently. And then leaving with their lives, leaving with some of the most difficult suffering that they experience, holding that space with them and then not having a safe space to be able to reflect, to allow those emotions to be revealed, to complete them before we move on into another space or another space with a patient, or even before we even come home and bring home with us the work that we experience on a daily basis.

HOFF: Mmhmm. And what do you see as the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from this article?

RYNDERS: My hope is that those persons who are coming into this work of caregiving and nurturing and holding other people in some of their most difficult times is the need for you to care for yourselves and the need for safe spaces to tell the truth about how you feel, to tell the truth about what happened. I can say that many times when we're caring for another person, we tend to swallow our own emotions, our own tears many times, even. And so, I'd like to offer again this redefinition of what resiliency may be. And so, I hope that you take away a sense of softening being the most important part of this process in caring for yourself, a space to soften and to feel your emotions and to have a support system, a community around you that allows you to do that authentically.

HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to your article that you didn't have the time or space to fully explore, what would that be?

RYNDERS: Yeah, I think a lot of this article focuses on the grief that we experience as caregivers and nurses and health care providers. And I speak a little bit about what I believe resiliency is. And I would like to add this idea of joy and running to that what brings us joy, to creating space for play and for pleasure in our lives. And that that's a whole deep, deep well of opportunity to care for ourselves, looking at not just telling the truth about the hard things, the sad things, the losses, but running to those people who make us laugh, who care for us, things that we enjoy, things that bring us pleasure. [theme music returns]

HOFF: Tara, thank you so much for being on the podcast with me today and for your contribution to the Journal.

RYNDERS: Yeah, it's my pleasure. Thanks for having me.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of the July 2022 issue for free, visit our site, [JournalofEthics.org](https://www.journalofethics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.