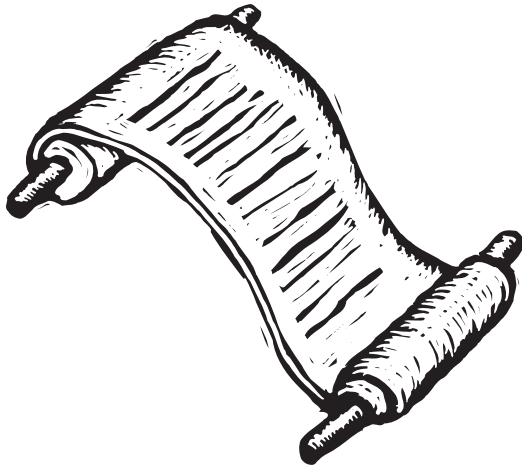


# Healthy You

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*Better Health for Life from  
Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network*



## How Stories Can Lead to Spiritual Healing

Rev. Allan Kramer-Moyer loves visiting with the elderly, and finds inspiration in those who consider each day a gift. As vice president of Pastoral Care Services at Phoebe Ministries in Allentown, Kramer-Moyer has the opportunity to talk with elderly people in a variety of situations, from independence to assisted living to nursing home and hospice care. Listening to their stories, he's developed an interest in the connection between narrative and healing, especially as people approach the last years of life. "New studies show how important storytelling is for physical healing," he says, "but as a chaplain, I am more interested in the spiritual aspect."

For the past 10 years, chaplains-in-residence at Phoebe Ministries have written down the life stories of nursing home residents as part of a life-review program. After the narratives are printed, residents can share them with relatives as a way of passing on their wisdom and values.

Kramer-Moyer sees the narratives not simply as legacies, but as a spiritual exercise. Recalling the good experiences of their lives makes people grateful, he says, and reflecting on how they made it through tough times reminds them of their inner strengths. "They look back and realize their lives have meaning and significance," he says. "Feeling connected to others and to God, they become more content with their present situation and confident that they'll be able to face whatever the future brings. I call that spiritual healing."



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