

presence.

The Art & Science of Human Connection.



In a world where we are hyper-linked by technology,

we are increasingly separated by a lack of human connection. Even as technology is critical to quality and safety in the delivery of care, it inadvertently creates barriers between the patient and the health-care team.

Presence champions the human experience in medicine. We believe that being present is integral to the art and the science of medicine and predicates the quality of medical care. The experience of suffering and the care of those who are suffering is the most poignant of human experiences; we believe both of these can be better addressed in society and in our health-care systems. The inadvertent, adverse effects created by the unintended intrusion of technology include missing obvious disease revealed by the body, patient and physician dissatisfaction, and unplanned loss of social rituals, all of which negatively impact outcomes.

Presence will unify the best talent to strengthen the human dimension in medicine and medical education, focusing on three areas: harnessing technology for the human experience in medicine; studying and advocating for the patient-physician relationship; and reducing medical errors. By engaging colleagues in every university discipline, from comparative literature to environmental engineering, our goal is to foster research, dialogue, and collaboration between seven Stanford schools to produce measurable and meaningful change.

Presence will benefit from the living labs of our hospitals and clinics, partnering with our campuswide colleagues to catalyze scholarship and interdisciplinary applied research via collaborations, a Fellows program, and education programs for medical students, residents, junior faculty, and others. We will also utilize design thinking strategies to propose solutions, apply best practices, and translate knowledge into the educational curriculum. Over time, we anticipate providing a variety of educational events to engage the local community.

Presence supports Stanford Medicine's Precision Health efforts to define and develop the next generation of care that is proactive, predictive, and precise.

Presence is founded and directed by Abraham Verghese, MD, whose life work has focused on the experience of suffering and illness and the unique, and sometimes lethal, stresses of being a physician. One constant—whether in his academic work or his novels—has been his love for medicine, his championing of the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship, and, above all, the shared experience we all have of being alive as embodied, mortal beings.

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