1\_LHBN\_17\_**Abstract** “Creative writing – and the life with cancer”

Abstract 2017

 **‘Discourses we live by’ – (How) Do they benefit the world we live in?**

(in other words, how we make sense of the world we live in and is this useful to society)

**Title:** “Creative writing – and the life with cancer”

Together with Oddgeir Synnes at Center of diakonia and professional practice at VID Specialized University, I have started research with and amoung participants in a creative writing course for patients suffering of cancer and their relatives. During spring 2016 this was part of my phd-studies, and Synnes is my supervisor in this project. The Norwegian Cancer Society provide the fundings for continuing the work. The research build upon earlier work on hope, creative writing and autobiographical narratives amoung patients (presented at ESREAs conferences in 2015 and 2016).

**Form:** A short powerpoint-presentation and introduction from those who are involved in this research about creative writing, life-stories and illness. We will give examples on texts that have been written during this spring.

**Methods:** Poems and short texts about life and death – in the context of cancer and sorrows from loss. Through their narratives, 12 participants (12 people) expresses how their life changes with serious deceases. Other topics within their writing is: the (im)possible life, roots, experience, contact, The Death, community, me and you.

According to Arthur Frank, narratives help to draw a new map after experienced serious illness: *”Serious illness is a loss of the destination and the map that has previously guided the ill person’s life: ill people have to “learn” to think differently”.*

Arthur Frank, 2013

Community work is about coming together, sharing and listening to the life-stories presented through poems and short stories (amoung other things). Which pedagogical strategies are needed for this kind of work? Through fiction, and sharing dreams and hopes, the participants in the group, learn to live differently during the writing course and experienced that the texts helps them finding “new” perspectives in life. They are searching a “new” language, and through existensial conversations with their texts they may find it. Their discourse is illness, and they create something together that brings hope and life to others, both inside and outside the group of participants.