

Writing for Publication

Shirley A. Smoyak, RN, PhD, FAAN

**Editor, The Journal of Psychosocial
Nursing and Mental Health Services**

At the end of the workshop, the participant will be able to:

1. Select the publishing medium to which to submit a manuscript
2. Identify how editors conceptualize “what’s new”
3. Use the information about the review process to create a personal plan for publishing

Content Outline

- A. Get the writing habit
- B. Thinking ahead
- C. Doing the Work
- D. The Review Process

A. Get the writing habit

Start in small steps; sneak up on the idea.

Forms include:

1. Letter to the editor
2. Published Minutes
3. Newsletter article or report
4. Journal article (refereed and non-refereed)
5. Book or video review
6. Monograph
7. Chapter in a book
8. Book

All of the above have different rules/guidelines for submission, and the process varies very widely.

B. Thinking ahead

1. What do you have to say?

a. an opinion

based on what?

formed how?

how strongly held?

b. news about clinical practice

phenomenon of interest?

dimensions of experience?

setting?

number of cases?

c. report a survey or evaluation

topic?

subjects?

timeliness?

B. Thinking ahead

1. What do you have to say (continued)?

d. report a study

questions examined?

who, what, when, where, why?

results?

implications for practice

e. a literature review or analysis

f. other

first person experience

B. Thinking Ahead

2. Who is your audience?

a. health professionals or the general public?

b. level of understanding?

c. specialty?

d. operative assumptions?

B. Thinking Ahead

3. What's new?

- a. synopsis of news
- b. new clinical idea
- c. new education idea
- d. disagreement with an accepted practice, idea, etc.
- e. new people, new settings, new processes
- f. reformulation of old beliefs, ideas, practices

C. Doing the Work

1. Get organized.

Gather your data, ideas, vignettes, case examples, etc., and develop an organization plan that works for you.

C. Doing the Work

2. Sort out:

- a. What is that I just discovered, but others might already know?
- b. What is that I just discovered, and it's new to others, too?
- c. What should we all be thinking about? studying?
- d. What have others written about? Use the relevant, recent literature.

C. Doing the Work

3. Use expository style

- a. Practice writing marvelous, complete, engaging first sentences. (But never try to write the first sentence first!!)
- b. Be clear and explicit.
- c. Work on transitions between paragraphs.
- d. Track the main point from beginning to end.
- e. No surprises, please.
 Don't add new ideas in the summary or conclusion.
- f. Document controversial statements.

C. Doing the Work

4. Become familiar with manuals of style, handbooks for writers, and copyright law.

D. The Review Process

1. Start the review process with your colleagues.

- a. Before submitting a manuscript, review it with your colleagues.
- b. Think “drafts”! (It’s a rare piece that doesn’t undergo revision and change.)
- c. Incorporate comments, revise and ask colleagues to review again.

D. The Review Process

2. Review Boards

a. Review boards are comprised of professionals who are content, specialty experts, or experienced administrators, educators, clinicians or researchers.

b. Review board members not only review manuscripts, but help the Editor to identify “hot” and timely issues and topics.

c. Representation geographically, and sociodemographically.

D. The Review Process

3. Blind Review

There are variations in how this “blind” process is managed.

D. The Review Process

4. Editor's role

- a. Select Board members.
- b. Work with managing and other editors.
- c. Manuscript decisions
accept/revise/reject
- d. Work with authors on revisions.
- e. Keep the journal current, forward-thinking and credible.
- f. The editor's chief role is to help prospective authors produce stellar articles. (They are the author's best friend, not an enemy.)

John Gardner, “On Excellence”

An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellent plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity, and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity, will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.