HOW AND WHY TO WRITE IN RURAL PRACTICE: THE PROS OF PROSE

Background: Writing is an essential skill that gives a voice to the under-documented realities of rural Canada, creates an introspective respite from the demands of rural practice, and facilitates inter-professional connections that transcend remote isolation. Ironically, writing is often unexplored by rural physicians due to these same challenges. This session, taught by scholarly writing experts from 6for6 (a research training program for rural doctors) will demonstrate how and why physicians should write in rural practice, reinforcing these lessons with interactive activities that empower attendees to engage in their own scholarly writing project as an exercise in creativity, academia, translation of medical knowledge and self-exploration. Intended Audience: This session is appropriate for anyone interested in strengthening their writing skills. No previous experience is necessary. Activities: Attendees will participate in small-group breakout activities and large-group discussions to strengthen their writing skills with free writing, plan their project with mind mapping, and discuss the benefits and rationale for writing in rural practice. Participants will have the opportunity to identify their own barriers to writing and discuss potential enablers or strategies for addressing these barriers. These activities engage participants in the planning process of writing and encourage creativity. Outcomes: Participants will be armed with the tools necessary to start writing as a rural practitioner or further their existing progress on a writing project. Background: Writing is an essential skill that gives a voice to the under-documented realities of rural Canada, creates an introspective respite from the demands of rural practice, and facilitates inter-professional connections that transcend remote isolation. Ironically, writing is often unexplored by rural physicians due to these same challenges. This session, taught by scholarly writing experts from 6for6 (a research training program for rural doctors) will demonstrate how and why physicians should write in rural practice, reinforcing these lessons with interactive activities that empower attendees to engage in their own scholarly writing project as an exercise in creativity, academia, translation of medical knowledge and self-exploration. Intended Audience: This session is appropriate for anyone interested in strengthening their writing skills. No previous experience is necessary. Activities: Attendees will participate in small-group breakout activities and large-group discussions to strengthen their writing skills with free writing, plan their project with mind mapping, and discuss the benefits and rationale for writing in rural practice. Participants will have the opportunity to identify their own barriers to writing and discuss potential enablers or strategies for addressing these barriers. These activities engage participants in the planning process of writing and encourage creativity. Outcomes: Participants will be armed with the tools necessary to start writing as a rural practitioner or further their existing progress on a writing project.

1. Recognize why a rural physician should write. 2. List strategies for writing as a busy clinician. 3. Develop a conceptual framework for their own writing project. 4. Identify next steps in their own writing project.
How and Why to Write in Rural Practice: The Pros of Prose

Presenter: Wendy Graham
Team Members: Shabnam Asghari, Cheri Bethune, Tom Heeley, Ashley Patten

Disclosure

We have NO affiliation with a pharmaceutical, medical device, or communications organization.
Learning Objectives

After today’s workshop you will be able to:

1. Recognize why a rural physician should write.
2. List strategies for writing as a busy clinician.
3. Develop a conceptual framework for your writing project.
4. Identify next steps in your writing project.

Why Write in Rural Practice?

- Relax
- Enjoy an oasis for emotions and thoughts
- Hobby and creative outlet
- Hone a professionally relevant skill
- Contribute a rural voice to academic/medical discourse
The Problem: Barriers!

Activity 1: What is your Barrier?

• Take a few moments to consider why you don’t write.

• Write on sticky pad- as many reasons as you like

• Stick them up on the wall
### Facing Challenges for Not Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges for Not Writing</th>
<th>Strategies to Get Started</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do not have any ideas</td>
<td>Seek guidance from a mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have nothing to write</td>
<td>Write with a seasoned author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have time</td>
<td>The “to do” lists never end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have expertise</td>
<td>Set realistic deadlines and stick to the deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not write very well</td>
<td>Write a letter to the editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know where to begin</td>
<td>Write a book review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review manuscripts for journals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Favorite ‘Home Remedies’

- The ‘wash cycle’ draft
- Cabin Writing: The ‘Lone Wolf’
- 1 hour, 1 paragraph
- Pajama time
- The ‘Cut’ file

I Do Not Have Any Ideas

- What is happening in the community?
- Conduct research
- Develop a research idea
- Review literature & Consult
- Write a research plan

Barriers to investigation and taking care of the patients

An opportunity may not arise again
What should I write?

Activity 2: Three ideas that would be worth sharing with others...
What are you passionate about?

Activity 3: Free Write
Letter to the Editor

Response by the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada to “Maternal morbidity and perinatal outcomes among women in rural versus urban areas”
Sarah AE Lesperance, Chair, Maternal & Newborn Care Committee
Katherine Miller, Rochelle Dworkin, Tom Smith-Windsor
Society of Rural Physicians of Canada

Novel Idea or Concept

Figure 8 strategy: Practical guide to finding your niche in a community engagement initiative
Daniel Hewitt, Thomas Heeley, Ariella Abramovitch, Zachery Hynes, Gillian Bartlett-Esquiland, Shabnam Asghari, Glennis Rideout, Carl Knight and John Sheldon
Canadian Family Physician August 2017, 63 (8) 586-588;
Novel Idea or Concept

Continuous quality improvement project

Program description
Antibiotic Stewardship in a remote health region: signs of success

CJRM 2017:22(1)

- Alison Morris, MD
- Memorial University of
- Newfoundland, St. John’s,
- NL
- Labrador–Grenfell Regional Health Authority
- Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL

Presentation becomes a Manuscript

Stages of Writing & Writing States

- **Pre-Writing Stage** (e.g., thinking, reading)
- **Writing Freely Stage** (e.g., no criticism)
- **Revising Stage** (e.g., revising, re-writing)

Left-brain
- critical editor

Right-brain
- creative source

Activity 4: Brainstorming
Mind Mapping

• Why do it?
  • Unleash non-verbal, visual part of brain and to harness right brain’s power of association

Stage 1: Quick-fire bursts
Stage 2: First reconstruction
Stage 3: Incubation
Stage 4: Second reconstruction
Stage 4: Final stage

Example Mind Map

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Activity 5: Mind Mapping

Activity 6: The First Paragraph

- Why is this important (what is the hook?)
- Why should people care?
- What is the gap or lack of understanding?
- What should people know?
Write one page.

Activity 7: Sharing your First Paragraph
Activity 8: Action Plan Moving Forward

Pragmatic Strategies

- Place to write
- Time to write - scheduled versus sporadic
- Inspiration
- Partner or group (expectation, support, reward)
- Patience
- Practice
Summary

• The most common barrier to writing is lack of time
• Developing the first draft is often the most challenging step
• Elaborating on the content of conference presentation is an easier way to start
• Publishing in peer-reviewed journals gives the satisfaction of contributing to the field