



# ***Writing for publication***

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writer

# Why are we here?

- To help describe your work to others
- Enhance confidence and writing skills
- Better planning of potential articles
- Understand writing styles
- Improve editing and redrafting skills
- Overcome barriers to writing
- Enjoyment

# Why publish?

In this context...

- To inform; to promote good practice
- Secondary reasons: to entertain; professional development; kudos; enjoyment

NO 2 HB

# Audience

- Meet Nancy



- Staff nurse in A&E, 26, busy social life, eats on the run, struggles to carve out 'professional development' time

- Meet Dave



- Trust manager, 46, ambitious, professional, 'corporate', keen to promote the trust
- Nancy or Dave – who are you trying to reach?

# Style and length

- 1000-word report for the trust board or...
- 500 words on 'faith' in *Nursing Standard*?
- Long, detailed evidence-based study, or...
- Short, snappy reflection?

# Where to publish

- Weekly, generic professional journals, eg *Nursing Times*, *HSJ*
- Specialist nursing/medical journals, eg cancer care publication; *Hospital Doctor*
- Chaplaincy/faith press, eg *Church Times*
- Hospital/employer newsletter
- As part of a local report or strategy, eg trust business plan
- Local or national press
- Websites

# Style

## **‘Chewing gum drug could help curb obesity epidemic’**

An appetite-suppressing chewing gum or injection could be used to tackle Britain’s obesity epidemic...

*The Guardian*

## **‘Does my gum look big in this’**

Fatties could be helped to lose weight - with a new hunger-bashing CHEWING GUM...

*The Sun*

# Types of article

## **News story (eg in trust newsletter)**

- Punchy, informative, factual
- First para summarises main point – grabs the reader
- Reducing hierarchy of importance
- Soundbites, direct quotes
- Shorthand terminology: eg ‘trust chaplains’ rather than ‘a working party of faith leaders from the trust’s chaplaincy service’

# Types of article

## **Feature (eg in medical press)**

- Usually explores human dimension – lives and experiences
- Aim is to excite emotion, create images in readers' minds
- Flowing style, easy to read

# Types of article

## **Opinion/Point of view (eg for nursing journal)**

- Personal perspective
- Original view
- Aim is to generate response – may be provocative, controversial
- Often in reaction to topical event eg Bishop of Southwark
- Good starting point for new writers
- More colloquial language

# Types of article

## **Clinical/Academic (eg for *HSJ*)**

- Factual, evidence-based, objective
- Referenced
- More formal language
- Longer
- Aim to teach, inform, pass on credible information, enhance practice

# Types of article

## **Internal reports/strategies**

- Precise
- Condensed
- Factual
- Evidence based
- Accessible to all relevant disciplines

# Planning content

- Plan after deciding type of article and audience
- Choice of journal shapes topic
- Decide central message
- Generation of ideas: brainstorm; mind-map; haphazard; non-linear...
- ...but structure must be sound, logical, a progression

# Planning content

- Remember the aim of the article
- Consider sections (eg method, results, discussion, conclusion)
- Expand sections: rough notes of content; supporting evidence
- Permission?

# Planning content: exercise

## **Context**

Publicity over cutbacks in NHS chaplaincy services has prompted the editor of your trust newsletter to ask you for a 750-word feature on 'the role of the trust's chaplains'

An intro, a conclusion and three or four sections in between.

What might each section contain?

# Editing and redrafting

- First draft: put away and revisit
- Print off and read – aloud?
- Check for sense, ambiguities, flow, factual errors
- Show to a colleague?
- Repeat the process

# Getting it wrong

‘A brief synopsis of the job description entailed that the successful applicant would liaise closely with the health visitor.’

‘The job description said the applicant would liaise closely with the health visitor.’

# Getting it wrong (cont)

‘On successfully being called for interview it materialised that the vacancy would be part of a skill mix pilot study.’

‘I was told at interview that the post would be part of a skill mix pilot study.’

# Getting it wrong (cont)

‘To enable myself to be conversant within such fields entailed considerable background reading which facilitated a firm foundation in delivering appropriate support.’

‘I read a book. It helped.’

# Publishing process

- Submission
- Review
- Revision
- Acceptance
- Proofs
- Publication
- Feedback

# Common author mistakes

## **Gwen Clarke, clinical editor, Nursing Standard**

- 'Sending in an assignment/thesis rather than an article'
- 'Haphazard structure: no stated aim, context or logical order'
- 'Failure to read author guidelines'
- 'Poor referencing: incorrect style and/or out of date'

# Blocks and overcoming them

- Everyone gets stuck
- Consider the practicalities (eg venue, possible interruptions, noise levels)
- Avoid blocks before they occur. Plan content beforehand
- Don't write too soon. Think first, write second
- Be selective about what you include – don't try to include everything

# Blocks (cont)

- Try deadlines
- Avoid re-reading every sentence as you finish it – get into a rhythm
- Be flexible – reject ideas that are not working
- Take breaks but stay disciplined
- Relax

# Contact details

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