



#1: Thinking About Getting Your Work Published

Who Should Publish?

- You
- Community/coalition leaders or members
- Community practitioners and researchers
- Program managers
- Academic partners

Why Publish?

Most of us secretly have considered writing something that merits being published. You, your staff or coalition partners may have gained useful experience about which policy, systems and environmental change strategies work or do not work. Much of this work remains unpublished and lessons learned are not shared with others. As a community health practitioner, you even may have written program summaries, grant reports, press releases, letters to the editor, or policy briefs for state legislators. However, writing for publication in an academic or professional journal or textbook somehow seems more intimidating, perhaps because it has to undergo a peer-review and professional editing process. Given the obvious fear factor and time demands you face, publishing will help you: ¹⁻²

- Expand or share knowledge or ideas in your chosen field or discipline
- Provide useful lessons that could change others' practices in organizations worldwide
- Establish a network of people interested in your topic/methods/results who can offer feedback to enhance your work
- Provide recognition or ownership of ideas/innovations for both you and your institution
- Enhance career opportunities or advancement
- Obtain personal gratification from seeing your name in print

When and What to Publish?

Now!!! You already have case examples of compelling community successes, lessons learned or outcome data to share. You may have even submitted a poster or presentation for a local meeting, grantee workshop or conference. If so, you probably wrote a summary and abstract of your work, which was reviewed prior to acceptance. Congratulations, you've already taken the first step toward publication. It's fairly easy to turn your summary, poster or PowerPoint/oral presentation itself into a written paper. If you aren't ready to embark on such an ambitious project, you could:

- Write a letter to your local newspaper editor
- Create a success story for a community newsletter
- Review a new book, cd, film, video, website or software package for a professional journal
- Volunteer as a peer reviewer to gain experience and familiarity with what is being published

What If I Have No Experience in Writing and Publishing?

Partner with others to write! Collaborative writing is helpful because: 1) multiple perspectives and ideas enrich the work, 2) workload is shared, 3) skills of one author can supplement deficits of other(s), and 4) experienced writers can mentor new ones. Community members welcome the opportunity to co-author because professional recognition, community service and publishing are stepping stones to promotion. Potential writing partners might be colleagues, professionals and volunteers from: 1) your project team, institution or agency, 2) local schools, colleges and universities, 3) health and human service agencies and foundations, or 4) other community-based organizations. Be sure to decide order of authorship, roles and responsibilities of each author *before* you get started.

1) Dixon, N. (2001). Writing for publication- A guide for new authors. *Int'l J Qual Health Care*, 15(5):417-21.

2) Duff, D. (2001), Writing for Publication. *Axone*, 22(4): 36-9.

What is Standing in My Way?

Although benefits are many, real and perceived barriers must be overcome to get your work in print²

- Uncertainty about the publication process
- Time
- Failure to recognize your expertise
- Reluctance to put your work "out there" for critique
- Lack of confidence in scholarly writing



This resource, others, and more information are available at: www.sophe.org