PRESENTING AT A CONFERENCE

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Presenting at a Conference/Writing for Publication
OVERVIEW

DEVELOPING AN ABSTRACT (p. 2)

An abstract presents the highlights of the work you hope to share with special emphasis on what you believe it will accomplish. For details see Writing an Abstract.

PRESENTING A PAPER (p. 3)

To present a paper means to share in an organized way over about half the time available (20-25 minutes in a 45-minute time slot or 15-20 minutes in a 30-minute slot) an idea/your ideas on a topic of special interest (from notes or from the actual paper) that you believe advance/s practice, education, or research. For details see Writing a Professional Paper.

CONDUCTING A WORKSHOP (p. 4)

To conduct a workshop means to engage others in an organized way into an experiential process over 65%-75% of time available (60-70 minutes in a 90-minute time slot or 30-40 minutes in a 60-minute slot) that you believe will help participants to enhance an activity related to practice (direct service, education, research, etc.). For guidance see Sample Workshop Agenda.

PRESENTING A POSTER (p. 5)

To present a poster means to present an idea/your ideas on a professional topic of special interest in “high concept” form. The poster usually rests on a table, and presenters engage viewers in a brief didactic presentation. There are many formats (serial presentations, ad hoc presentations while viewers stroll through the space, etc.). For details see Developing a Professional Poster.
GUIDE TO WRITING AN ABSTRACT

The purpose of an abstract is to help reviewers to determine the goodness of fit between your idea/work and the venue to which you are submitting (e.g., a conference/ theme, journal audience, etc.). An abstract presents the highlights of the work you hope to share with special emphasis on what you believe it will accomplish. Here are some (flexible) guidelines.

General/generic outline for a paper abstract

• Introduction/statement of purpose (1-2 paragraphs)
• Discussion/context/professional significance (bulk of text)
• Conclusion/implications (1-2 paragraphs)

General/generic outline for a workshop abstract

• Introduction/statement of purpose (1-2 paragraphs)
• Professional significance/goals (bulk of text)
• Projected structure/format/methods (1-2 paragraphs OR projected topical agenda)

General/generic outline for a poster abstract

• Introduction/statement of purpose (about a paragraph)
• Professional significance/goals (bulk of text)
• Conclusion/implications (1-2 paragraphs)
• How the poster will highlight the salient points to be made (1-2 paragraphs OR in bullet form)

In all cases if you will provide a bibliography or materials, state that at the end.
PRESENTING A PROFESSIONAL PAPER

Here are some (flexible) guidelines for conceptualizing, preparing, and writing a professional paper.

INTRODUCTION/STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (about 10%)
States the purpose of the paper/article; short, sweet, engaging. Speak directly to your audience; say how you want your thinking to concretely contribute to the profession. Include broad content statements, facts and stats that impress and express current state of affairs. Wrap up by stating how the rest of the article is organized (a conceptual "road map") and what is in the next section (transition).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE/DISCUSSION*
Discusses/critiques the thinking of others in relation to your own purpose. This is a discussion about what is known about your topic with what you think about what others think as the driving force. That is, your heartbeat must come through; this section is not a report of what has been written. Keep everything clearly tied to your purpose. Provide a clear context for the recommendations you make later. Use subheadings in this section to organize it thematically.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE*
The heart of your paper. Offer recommendations here, each of which is clearly tied to your purpose statement and logically anchored in the existing knowledge base (which you made evident in your Lit Review above). Provide an introductory paragraph; then offer implications for practice. It can help to think in terms of numbers, e.g., “There are four major implications for social work practice with...” (or policy - education - program design - research...). For clarity, consider giving each implication a subheading (word or phrase, not a sentence) under which you make the recommendation. You may have one or several, but the more you have the less each can be discussed in depth (and it's not about quantity but quality, so choose carefully).

CONCLUSION (about 10%)
Recaps your highlights. It may feel repetitive. It is, but with a qualitatively different mind set. In the Introduction you pointed out the forest you were about to cross and why it was important to do so. In the Review/Discussion you discussed what you know and think about the forest. In Implications you pointed out how the forest needs to change and why. Now as you leave you offer a backward glance to recap the experience.

Rules of Thumb
14-18 double-spaced pages, numbered (give or take)
12-point font with 1” margins all around (fairly standard)
Keep quotes to a minimum (e.g., three or four; quotes deprive you of your own voice)

*Length varies greatly according to quantity of literature on a topic. Also, these two sections are sometimes combined into one; if that is the case, keep your implications clear.
CONDUCTING A WORKSHOP

SAMPLE WORKSHOP AGENDA

TITLE OF WORKSHOP

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION TO A WORKSHOP AGENDA
At the end of this workshop participants will have a conceptual framework for… (what they are expected to know at the end of the workshop). They will have had opportunity to identify and explore … They will have had opportunity to develop their ability to … Finally, they will have had opportunity to compare and contrast the potential for applying (goal/skills to be learned) in their own practice settings.

SAMPLE AGENDA

AGENDA

Introduction
Participants, purpose, content, method

Conceptual Framework
Understanding …
(didactic presentation/large-group discussion)

Implications for Practice
Structured large-group exercise

Application to Practice
Structured small-group exercises
large-group discussion

Evaluation
Content
Workshop

A Selected Bibliography, related handouts, and work materials will be made available to participants.

(References if applicable)
PRESENTING A POSTER

Constructing a Poster

Be sure to know guidelines for size, style, materials, look, color, etc. and prepare accordingly

Be sure to know how the poster will be presented (wall, table, must stand alone, etc.) and choose/prepare materials accordingly

Vertical posters are easier to read than horizontal posters

Do not crowd material on the poster, whether you paste paper onto the poster board or write directly onto the poster. This is about highlights, not detail.

Consider the font (style and size). For example, distance from viewers will have an impact on size of text etc.

Content must flow logically, whether self evident or using navigation tools, e.g., arrows

Graphics, used to enhance rather than replace text, should not be so busy or psychedelic that they overwhelm the meaning of your content

Content

Purpose/Context: introduction to the topic; purpose for the poster; historical and contemporaneous context.

Literature Synthesis: special note of theoretical and empirical developments in the area of interest that anchor your idea/s or recommendation/s; key figures in the evolution of knowledge/thinking; new ways of thinking, controversies, etc.; conclusions about state of knowledge/thinking today.

Implications for Practice: application of your idea/s or recommendation/s to practice; focus on relationship between existing practice and your new ideas, i.e., how what you recommend will enhance practice.

Other: if appropriate reference to and contact information for obtaining a bibliography for the topic