



TIPs for a Successful **Poster** Presentation

Dynamics enables critical care nurses to share important knowledge and practice strategies with their colleagues. It also provides nurses with opportunities to enhance their presentation skills. The following tips have been included in all speaker kits to provide suggestions/support for presenters who are developing their public speaking skills. If you are an experienced speaker, you may wish to pass these tips along to colleagues who are interested in developing their own presentation skills. You might encourage them to submit abstracts for next year

Presenters

- ✿ Anticipate the types of questions your poster might generate and be prepared to respond to them
- ✿ Know your subject matter well; you will feel much more confident responding to questions
- ✿ Focus on a manageable amount of information and avoid cramming too much information into your poster
- ✿ Handout material can augment your presentation and increase the satisfaction of participants
- ✿ Dress in business attire; a professional image gives you that first impression advantage
- ✿ Keep a glass of water handy in case you are overcome with a tickle in your throat or dry mouth
- ✿ Wear comfortable shoes
- ✿ Bring business cards to allow interested delegates to contact you at a later date

Interacting with Delegates

- ✿ Poster presentations provide superior opportunity for networking and dialogue
- ✿ Always recognize questions as legitimate, and respect the participation of interested delegates
- ✿ Never display indifference or disrespect for a question; even if you think it is very inappropriate

- ✿ If you are unable to answer a question, don't be afraid to admit it
- ✿ Shake hands and make eye contact when responding to questions
- ✿ Smile; warmth and friendliness goes a long way in opening up conversation
- ✿ If you are uncomfortable initiating conversation, begin by welcoming individuals who stop at your poster and ask them where they are from
- ✿ You may continue a conversation by either asking if they are familiar with your study etc or by briefly describing an aspect of the topic presented (e.g. why you asked the question, what you found)

Poster Preparation

- ✿ Most hospitals have audio-visual departments that can assist you to prepare a professional poster
- ✿ Talk to people who have presented posters to get ideas for structure and format; if you get a chance, attend other poster presentations

Organizing Content

- ✿ A poster should take no more than 5 minutes for a reader to comprehend
- ✿ Your goal is to be brief, concise and appealing
- ✿ Aim to make complex ideas simple, instead of simple ideas complex
- ✿ Plan your poster by identifying the purpose of your presentation (e.g. do you want people to use your strategy, learn a procedure, change their practice)
- ✿ Consider how advertisers grab your attention and think of ways to attract delegate's interest to your poster by incorporating your purpose into a catchy heading
- ✿ Try to answer the 6 questions of journalism: who, what, when, where, why and how
- ✿ Organize your content into groupings that follow a logical sequence
- ✿ Introduce groupings by sub-headings using bold/larger size font
- ✿ Utilize point or bullet form instead of sentence/paragraph structure
- ✿ Incorporate diagrams, graphs, or pictures to emphasize or complement content

- ✿ Avoid excessive use of jargon or large polysyllable words; language should be simple and easy to follow
- ✿ Maintain gender and racial neutrality
- ✿ Identify all of the critical points that you feel should be included, then edit, review and edit again

Visual Appearance

- ✿ A professional looking poster leaves a positive first impression regarding the quality of the content
- ✿ The goal of a successful poster is to make it eye catching and visually appealing
- ✿ Keep content simple and uncluttered
- ✿ Colour adds important visual attraction and can be added in background mounts, text, pictures, diagrams or charts
- ✿ Avoid text in red or green - it can be used for non-essential highlighting; a significant portion of the population is red/green colour-blind
- ✿ Ink jet printers provide high quality colour presentations if printed on photography paper (printer settings should be set according to the paper quality)
- ✿ Coloured foam mattes purchased from art supply stores provide professional backgrounds.
- ✿ To plan your poster, mark out an area equal to the size of the poster board on a piece of paper (newsprint picnic table paper from a party supply store is ideal); use this as a background to keep the space for your poster in mind
- ✿ Use your background to practice different display combinations
- ✿ Font size should be at least ½" - 3/4" high for text, 2" - 3" for headings
- ✿ Aim to keep columns 3" - 4" wide and ensure sufficient "white space"
- ✿ Use upper and lower case lettering rather than all upper case
- ✿ Do not use more than 2 different fonts on one poster
- ✿ Text that is written on white is much easier to read; mount pages that contain text onto contrasting background
- ✿ Don't be afraid to experiment with different shapes e.g. mounting a pie chart onto a round matte

- List text in point form

Poster Specifications

- Useable area on the poster board is 4 feet high by 8 feet long
- Poster boards are Velcro friendly; pins or tacks can also be used
- A chair is usually provided in front of each poster for your convenience

Assembly

- Posters can be blown up professionally onto very large boards or divided into several smaller sections; sections can be assembled at the conference
- Professional looking posters can be prepared for minimal cost if you do most of the work yourself and have access to an ink jet or laser printer, high quality printing paper and a few art supplies
- Avoid pastes or glues on backgrounds that might wrinkle or appear bumpy
- You can mount pages of text onto cardboard poster board and tape the outside edge of the text page to the background; to conceal the taped edges, lay a cardboard matte over top "windowing" the text - glue can be carefully applied between the cardboard matte and background

Transporting

- Carry your poster onto the plane rather than sending it through the regular baggage where it may become damaged or lost
- Posters that consist of several small pieces can be assembled at the conference; these are often lighter, less expensive to produce and easier to carry
- Large poster valises are available; your hospital visual services may have one to loan (if other presenters are coming from your hospital you may be able to fit more than one poster into a valise)
- Large posters can be rolled into cardboard tubes (available from office supply stores)
- Protect corners of your poster from curling or becoming bent; add a rigid background into the poster carrying bag to keep it flat