Dissemination

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Dissemination is the final step in the research process. In an evidenced based practice project, this would be the implementation step. It is critical that the information be shared. It is the responsibility of the team to disseminate the results especially when individuals (both human and/or non-human) have given of their time and energy to participate in the project. It is a moral responsibility.

Many granting agencies request specifics on the audiences and mechanisms that will be utilized to meet this goal. Usually the proposal (grant, dissertation, project, etc.) identifies the areas were this information will be clinically significant, for example, by suggesting the journals that would be interested in the findings. No matter the size of the study, a review of the findings can be made in some public venue at the local, regional, national or international level. Posters may be a first step as criteria for acceptance are usually less stringent. Posters provide an opportunity to synthesize the study from the conceptual framework, question to be answered, methods used, the sample characteristics, findings, through the discussion. Poster sessions give individuals an opportunity to ask questions and share their ideas on a one-on-one format. Podium presentations still require the same information, but there is a specific timeframe in which the content is to be delivered. A larger audience may be reached in this context and often the abstract and/or presentation is published in the meetings proceedings. Both of these steps provide the opportunity to organize the material in a meaningful way and helps in the preparation of a manuscript. Manuscript preparation should involve the team with each person contributing in some way to the final product. It is good, however, to designate the primary author up front so this person can be responsible for keeping the writing on task. It is also helpful to have a journal in mind when writing as it can help target specific requirements that might be request (i.e. nursing journals often want a conceptual framework which might not be asked for in other professional journals). If asked to do major edits to the manuscript by the editor it is usually wise to attend to this request by addressing each question specifically. Identify what has been changed or why not in the response to the editor recognizing that the person who made the suggestion may very well review this response. The wider audience you wish to reach with your findings can be influenced by the journals availability through a national search engine like PubMed. Additionally, journals are given an "impact score" which is assigned by such things as the numbers of readers/subscriptions and commonality of citations.

Dissemination can be made more difficult when the findings are not significant or do not provide a clear explanation of the results. However, it is still critical that this information be shared. Posters and presentations are still available. Publication is also important to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of approaches (i.e. timing of and modifications to the intervention, sample population and size). More attention can be placed in the discussion section to explain the possible reasons for the results.

This final step in the research process is an invaluable contribution and one that requires fortitude and integrity. Holistic nurses often have complex studies to present, as they are interested in the body-mind-spirit and how it is sustained for healing of the self and others. The greater the body of research literature we have the more support there is available for others to provide holistic care.