

## Up Front: Professional Writing Resource for Members

by Michael Nagy, PharmD, BCACP

As the academic and residency year begins anew, learners, preceptors, and interdisciplinary colleagues are likely to pursue new projects. *The Journal of the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin* aims to engage all as a professional resource to assist with the dissemination of regional scholarly efforts. Most recently, we have added a new module (#9: Transforming a Project into a Publishable Manuscript) on the [Emerging Writers Course](#) webpage.

### Tips on Manuscript Writing for Original Projects

Begin with the end in mind. Use a tool like [Journal/Author Name Estimator](#) and format your manuscript based on the requirements of the journal you are submitting to.

**Introduction section:** Think “funnel.” Begin broadly with what is known previously. Narrow down to the current gap in care your project is targeting, and how does your project address the existing gap? End this section with a purpose statement. To get started, leverage your initial project proposal and literature review performed.

**Methods section:** Explain your work thoroughly enough so that anyone outside your organization can replicate your work. At a minimum, include project design, setting, participants, intervention, variables collected, outcomes measured, and analysis performed. Consider leveraging figures to explain your intervention, such as a timeline. Use subheadings to help with clarity and cross-check results with methods to be sure nothing is missed.

**Results section:** While this is often the most straightforward section to write, a strong results section should have complementary figures and tables that allow readers to visualize the data. Demographics should be captured in a table, and a [CONSORT diagram](#) can assist with showing the flow of participants in the

project. Both figures and tables should be able to stand on their own with footnotes and labeling without reading the text. Keep this section free from authorship interpretations, and lastly, connect the figures and tables within the text to guide readers.

**Discussion section:** This can be the most difficult section to write; be sure to know what the journal you’re submitting to requires. Typically, start with your interpretation of your key findings from your primary and secondary outcomes. Go beyond restating your results. Next, take the reader on a deep dive into the pre-existing literature to help them interpret your results. The meat of the discussion should help the reader understand the significance of the results and whether they can be extrapolated externally. Afterwards, include your critical appraisal of the strengths and limitations. Go beyond surface-level appraisal, either by

explaining why a strength matters or how a limitation impacts the findings. Finally, this section ends with future directions of the project.

**Conclusion section:** Keep this simple. Generally, you don’t need to summarize the paper, as that is the role of an abstract. For the reader, what were the main pragmatic takeaway(s) from the project?

**General tips:** Consider having a person not involved in your project read your manuscript draft before submitting it to a journal. Does it make sense to them? If not, what can be clarified? If you need help, consider finding a writing resource at a local university or pharmacy organization. For example, the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin provides an [Emerging Writers Course](#) with on-demand modules.

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### Emerging Writers Course

The JPSW Emerging Writers series covers foundational writing topics for students, residents, and others interested in publishing. This series is comprised of 20-30 minute videos describing different aspects of writing. The goal of this series is to help authors develop the tools needed to successfully write articles for publication.

**Module 1: Publication Process, Authorship, and Peer Review**

Click [here](#) to view the slides. Below is a list of the tools highlighted in this presentation.

- [Narrative Peer Review Checklist](#)
- [Evaluation](#) for this session

**Module 2: JPSW Emerging Writers - Literature Searches & Intro to Citation Managers**

Click [here](#) to view the slides. Below is a list of the tools highlighted in this presentation.

- [Evaluation](#) for this session

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- ANDREW: Reference Management software (from Dr. Margolis): Best for research papers. [Zotero](#) software (for your library and journal folders) is a free tool with integrations with the very best software (and more).
- What? MAXIA Time Saver™ - browser extension, building/publishing, editing, and MOCHA.
- As you collect information and synthesize sources, have a method for keeping track of which reference goes with which information (pages, URL, etc. help).
- If you're doing a systematic research project, there are more sophisticated tools.