Blogging Guidelines

Do you have an experience or insight you’d like to share with your colleagues? Have you found a journal article or toolkit you’d like to comment on?

DiversityRx offers a forum to write about culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services. Review these blogging guidelines, and use the ‘Submit a blog’ link below to let us know what you’d like to write about.

What you can write about:

- A recent book, report, resource, journal article, or product
- Update on a project, organizational initiative — yours or someone else’s
- A newspaper article or ongoing media story in several publications
- Your thoughts about an event or a trend you’ve observed in the field
- Preview of an upcoming event and its significance to the field
- Analysis of an action or trend in the policy / funding world
- Personal experience in the world of cross cultural health care. That is, something that occurred in a training, clinical, or service delivery setting that you place in a broader context or could provide a valuable insight
- Report or commentary from a conference or meeting you’ve attended recently — one topic or speaker, or the entire meeting
- A brief interview with a leader in the field, a front-line person, or someone with an interesting perspective or work project
- Any other idea you have! Always feel free to run something by us [1].

How long your posting should be:

- If the topic is substantive, we suggest you make it long enough to show off your expertise: 500+ words
- If it’s a quickie, especially if you write many blogs, it can be shorter, but please write at least 200 words. You can also use a round-up format. See this Girl with Pen blog entry [2] for an example.
- Tip: You may wish to compose your draft blog in Wordpad or Notepad and copy it onto the blog form when you have a final version.

Sign your blog:

- End your blog by including your name, title, organization, city, and state or country (if not the US).

Contact us for instructions on how to submit your blog [3]
When we get your blog submission, we will review it and let you know when it will be posted. Our aim is to have at least one new blog posting a week.

- When your blog appears, please monitor any comments that may appear. As the author, you are encouraged to respond as appropriate by submitting your own comment. One catch-all comment in response to a batch of comments is fine, or you can address the comments as they come up.
- Please comment on each others postings – it will help stimulate other comments and discussion.
- You can submit more than one blog posting, and we will keep them in reserve if a backlog develops and they are not time-sensitive.

Tips for good blog writing:

- **Headlines are everything:** A new reader wants to be able to find useful posts very quickly. Often that means that s/he’ll scan through the front page, looking only at the headlines. If the headline is “Tuesday workout,” that doesn’t promise anything useful. But if it’s something like “Why running the day after lifting heavy weights is a good idea,” that might contain something the reader is looking for. You can see the difference: the second headline is much more informative (even if both posts contain the same info), and it shows the reader exactly what useful information the post will deliver. Get specific information and value in the headline, don’t leave it buried somewhere within the post. Or you may lose that reader.

- **Tell us what you think:** You should not just report on the subject you’re writing about, but include some commentary, reflection, or analysis.
  - how it fits into a larger context (That is, other articles or resources on the subject),
  - your perspective on how it might be useful (or not) to people, or how you have used it yourself,
  - talk about an excerpt from it that caught your attention or made you think.

- **Be yourself:** People expect blogs to reflect a personal viewpoint. It’s OK to say how you interpret or feel about something from your personal/professional experience, and it’s good to be passionate about a subject. Best not to step on people’s toes, but if you disagree with a point of view, say so in a factual or experience-based manner.

- **Use real life:** Personal stories keep us reading. Include a personal anecdote or, if you aren’t comfortable writing about yourself, include an anecdote about someone else.

- **Offer something useful:** Even if your posting is primarily a commentary or an observation, leave the reader with a resource or a reference that will be helpful.

- **Use links:** If you mention a report, a resource, an article, or another website, please link to it from the reference in your article. For Example: The Speaking Together [4] project is working on improving interpreter services in hospitals. The underlined text is, of course, linked to www.speakingtogether.org [5]

- **People don’t read - they scan:** A reader shouldn’t have to read every word of every paragraph to find the tips you want — they should be listed in bullet points, a numbered list, or highlighted in bold or in some other way brought to the attention to the reader. Make it easy for the reader to find the information!

- **Please do not market products nor bash anyone’s work.** Any critical evaluation should take a balanced approach, including both strengths and weaknesses.